

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 25/34/96

EXTRA 133/96

Arbitrary detention / harassment /
possible prisoners of conscience

19 August 1996

CUBA Bernardo FUENTES CAMBLOR, journalist
Magaly PINO GARCIA, journalist
Jorge ENRIQUE RIVES, journalist (all three are members of *Patria*
and the *Concilio Cubano*, Cuban Concilium)

Amnesty International is concerned that Bernardo Fuentes Camblor, Magaly Pino García and Jorge Enrique Rives, all members of the independent press agency, *Patria*, who were arrested on 12 August 1996, could face imprisonment as prisoners of conscience or be forced into exile. These arrests are part of the recent crackdown by the Cuban Government which aims to prevent members of *Concilio Cubano*, of which *Patria* is a member, from freely exercising their rights to freedom of association, assembly and expression.

According to reports, the three journalists were arrested on 12 August at their homes in Camagüey, by state security agents and were not told the reasons for their arrest. They are currently being held incommunicado at the *Cuartel Garrido*, the state security headquarters in the province of Camagüey. As far as Amnesty International is aware, no charges have so far been brought against them. Bernardo Fuentes Camblor had reportedly recently been the victim of threats and constant harassment by the authorities.

In June 1996, Roxana Valdivia Castilla, the founder and President of *Patria*, which is based in Ciego de Avila, was forced to go into exile in the USA, following months of harassment and threats from the Cuban authorities that if she did not give up her journalistic activities or leave the country, she would be imprisoned.

On 2 August 1996, Ramón Alberto Cruz, the chief correspondent of *Patria*, and Héctor Valdivia (father of Roxana Valdivia) were detained and interrogated for eight hours before being released. Pedro Argüelles Morán, a contributing journalist for *Patria* was also held for questioning on 1 August 1996.

Since its formation in October 1995, members of the *Concilio Cubano*, which is made up of over 100 human rights groups, independent professional associations and political parties, have been subjected to harassment, threats and arrests. Meetings have also been disrupted in what appears to be a concerted effort by the authorities to prevent the organization from carrying out its activities. Many of those arrested have been interrogated for several hours and threatened with imprisonment if they carry on with their activities, before being released. For further information, see *Cuba: Government Crackdown on Dissent*, AMR 25/14/96, April 1996 and *Cuba: Dissidents Imprisoned or Forced into Exile*, AMR 25/29/96, July 1996.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

All media in Cuba are state-controlled and freedom of expression, association and assembly are severely limited. Over the past few years, a number of non-governmental organizations, involving political and human rights activists, independent journalists and trade unionists, economists, lawyers and others, have been formed. However, none has been granted official permission to operate even when they have made the appropriate application to the Ministry of Justice for recognition (their requests usually go unanswered). However, recently an application made in the name of *Naturpaz*, an ecological and pacifist

organization which is part of *Concilio Cubano*, was turned down by the Ministry of Justice, ten years after the application was submitted.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports of the arrests of Bernardo Fuentes Camblor, Magaly Pino García and Jorge Enrique Rives, all members of *Patria*;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released unless charged with a recognizable criminal offence;
- urging that members of *Patria* and other freelance journalists and members of the *Concilio Cubano* be permitted to carry out their legitimate activities without interference from the authorities.

APPEALS TO:

1) Attorney-General

Dr Juan Escalona Reguera
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
San Rafael 3, La Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Havana, Cuba
Telex: 511456 fisge
Fax: + 53 7 333164
Salutation: Sr Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

2) Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr Roberto Robaina González
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Calzada No. 360
Vedado, La Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores, Havana, Cuba
Telex: 511122 / 511464 / 512950
Fax: + 53 7 333085 / + 53 7 335261
Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of the Interior

General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra
Ministro de Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Plaza de la Revolución
La Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Havana, Cuba
Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

4) Department of State Security

Sr Director
Departamento de Seguridad del Estado
Villa Marista
La Víbora
La Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Director, Villa Marista, Havana, Cuba
Salutation: Señor Director / Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Cuban Journalists' Union (official body)

Unión de Periodistas de Cuba

Calle 23 No. 452

Apdo 6646

Vedado

Havana, Cuba

Editor of Granma (daily newspaper)

Sr Jacinto Granda de Laserna

Granma

Apdo 6260

La Habana, Cuba

and to diplomatic representatives of Cuba accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 September 1996.