

URGENT ACTION

MOTHER HARASSED FOR MARCHING FOR DEAD SON

The mother of a Cuban prisoner of conscience who died after hunger striking has been repeatedly harassed and intimidated in an attempt to stop her from organizing marches to commemorate her son's death. The next march is planned for 15 August.

Reina Luisa Tamayo is the mother of Orlando Zapata Tamayo, a prisoner of conscience who died on 22 February 2010, having spent several weeks on hunger strike whilst in prison. Since her son's death, Reina Luisa Tamayo has organized weekly marches on Sundays in the town of Barnes, Holguin Province, Cuba, to honour her son's memory.

Relatives and friends accompany Reina Luisa Tamayo on these weekly marches from her home to attend mass at the *Nuestra Señora de la Caridad* Church, in Barnes and from there to the cemetery where Orlando Zapata Tamayo is buried. Last Sunday, 8 August, the group reported that as soon as they tried to leave Reina Luisa Tamayo's house to start their march, they were confronted a few metres away from the house by hundreds of government supporters who blocked their way and beat some of the participants. They were pushed back to the house and followed into the house's garden. The participants tried twice more to leave the house and resume the march but they were again violently confronted by the government supporters, who stayed outside the house until late in the afternoon. According to Reina Luisa Tamayo, during all this time a police patrol was close to her house watching as the events unfolded and failing to intervene.

The group have reported how prior to 8 August, they have also been confronted by government supporters and state security officials who have gathered around Reina Luisa Tamayo's house and prevented them from marching, sometimes preventing them from reaching the church, the cemetery, or both. They have also reported how state security officials and police officers have set up check points on the routes to Reina Luisa Tamayo's house on the day prior to the march to prevent people from reaching the house and joining the march.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to ensure an immediate halt to the harassment and intimidation of Reina Luisa Tamayo by government supporters, and that of her relatives and friends and any other citizens who seek to peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association;
- Calling on the authorities to permit Reina Luisa Tamayo and others to march peacefully as is their right on Sundays.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 SEPTEMBER 2010 TO:

Head of State and Government

Raúl Castro Ruz Presidente
La Habana, Cuba
Fax: +53 7 8333085 (via Foreign
Ministry); +1 2127791697 (via Cuban
Mission to UN)
Email: cuba@un.int (c/o Cuban Mission
to UN)

**Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your
Excellency**

Interior Minister

General Abelardo Coloma Ibarra
Ministro del Interior y Prisiones
Ministerio del Interior, Plaza de la
Revolución, La Habana, Cuba
Fax: +53 7 8333085 (via Ministry of
Foreign Affairs)
+1 2127791697 (via Cuban Mission
to UN)

**Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your
Excellency**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Reina Luisa Tamayo is one of the Damas de Blanco (Ladies in White), a group of women relatives and friends of prisoners detained during a major crackdown on government critics in March 2003. In 2003, over several days, the Cuban authorities arrested 75 men and women for their peaceful expression of critical opinions of the government. They were subjected to summary trials and were sentenced to long prison terms of up to 28 years. Amnesty International declared the 75 convicted dissidents to be prisoners of conscience, 32 of them remain in prison.

Damas de Blanco organizes peaceful weekly marches in Havana where they distribute flowers and call for the release of their relatives and friends. In March 2010 Damas de Blanco organized a daily march for a week to mark the seventh anniversary of the arrest of their relatives. On 17 of March 2010, their march was forcibly broken up by Cuban police, who briefly detained several women. Some of the women claimed that they were beaten by the police.

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