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CUBA

Update on Prisoner of Conscience, Reinaldo Alfaro García, sentenced to three years' imprisonment

1 September 1998

AI INDEX: AMR 25/22/98

DISTR: SC/CO/GR



On 28 August 1998 prisoner of conscience Reinaldo Alfaro García was convicted and sentenced to three years' imprisonment, charged with "difusión de noticias falsas contra la paz internacional", "spreading false news against international peace". Amnesty International is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Reinaldo Alfaro had been detained on 8 May 1998, but the above-mentioned charge was reportedly due to a denunciation that he made in 1995 to a US-based radio station regarding a woman who was alleged to have been tortured and a military officer who Reinaldo Alfaro had been told went missing and later died. At Reinaldo Alfaro's trial, which took place at a provincial tribunal in Havana, the above-mentioned woman and the mother of the military officer both appeared as witnesses and denied the reports.

Reinaldo Alfaro García, Vice-President of the unofficial *Asociación de Lucha Frente a la Injusticia (ALFIN)*, Association for Struggle against Injustice, and a member of the executive of the unofficial *Partido Solidaridad Democrático (PSD)*, Democratic Solidarity Party, had also been charged with "propaganda enemiga", "enemy propaganda". This charge was reportedly brought because a few hours before his detention on 8 May 1997, ALFIN had convened the mothers of political prisoners to appear before the National Assembly of Popular Power where he and some of the mothers were planning to hand over a request for an amnesty for their sons to the President of the said assembly.

However, at Reinaldo Alfaro's trial this charge, which carries a maximum eight-year sentence, was dropped by the prosecutor.

Reinaldo Alfaro, who is a father of three, is reportedly serving his sentence in Combinado Sur de Matanzas Prison, Matanzas province. He is said to suffer from serious back problems as a result of earlier surgery on his spine. Amnesty International believes that he is a prisoner of conscience because he was imprisoned for the non-violent *exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association*.

Please send faxes/express and airmail letters preferably in Spanish. If not, in English or your own language:

- Expressing concern that **Reinaldo Alfaro Garcia** has been sentenced to three years' imprisonment, solely for the non-violent exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association.
- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Reinaldo Alfaro Garcia, on the grounds that he is a prisoner of conscience.
- Urging that all Cuban citizens be guaranteed their rights to freedom of association, assembly and expression, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and that the Cuban Government immediately cease to imprison, force into exile abroad or otherwise punish those who attempt to peacefully exercise such rights.

Please send appeals to:

Head of State and Government

Dr Fidel Castro Ruz

Presidente de los Consejos
de Estados y de Ministros

La Habana, Cuba

Telex and Fax: via Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see below)

Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency

Attorney-General

Dr Juan Escalona Reguera

Fiscal General de la Republica

Fiscalia General de la Republica

San Rafael 3, La Habana, Cuba

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Havana, Cuba

Telex: 511456 figse

Fax: + 53 7 - 333164

Salutation: Sr Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr Roberto Robaina Gonzalez

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 - 333 085 / - 335 261

Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

This document is sent to CARRAN coordinators for action by groups. It is also being sent to sections. Please check with the Caribbean Sub-Regional Team if sending appeals after 31 January 1999.

KEYWORDS: PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE1 / POLITICAL ACTIVISTS / CENSORSHIP /

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