

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 25/23/97

30 July 1997

Further information on UA 221/97 (AMR 25/20/97, 18 July 1997) and follow-up (AMR 25/21/97, 22 July 1997) - Arbitrary arrest/Legal concern/prisoner of conscience (POC)

CUBA Vladimiro ROCA ANTUNES

Marta Beatriz ROQUE CABELLO (note correction to name)

René GOMEZ MANZANO

Félix A. BONNE CARCASES

Odilia COLLAZO VALDES (released)

Amnesty International has learned that Odilia Collazo Valdés was released from custody two or three days after her detention by State Security officials in Havana on 17 July 1997.

The four other members named above of the Internal Dissidents' Working Group, arrested in Havana on 16 July 1997, remain in detention. They are now being permitted weekly family visits in the presence of officials but are not allowed to discuss with relatives anything related to the reasons for their detention.

At least one of them, Vladimiro Roca Antunes, has been permitted to talk briefly to his defence lawyer, Amelia Rodríguez Calá.

The four have not yet been formally charged but State Security officials reportedly informed the lawyer that they are under investigation on a charge of "enemy propaganda", which carries a maximum prison sentence of fifteen years.

However, information supplied by the Cuban authorities to foreign diplomats suggests that they may also face other charges. According to the Cuban authorities, they had "carried out intensive activity in recent weeks aimed at subverting the judicial and constitutional order of the Republic of Cuba".

They said they were seeking to disrupt the local elections (due to be held in October) by calling for a boycott, that they had released "false and inexact data" about the Cuban economy with the aim of negatively influencing foreign investment in the country, that they had the logistical support of the US Interests' Section in Havana (the USA and Cuba do not have full diplomatic relations) and that they were working with "leaders of terrorist groups based in the territory of the United States". The Cuban Government has alleged that it has proof that "terrorist elements", based in the USA and supported by the US Government, were behind two bomb explosions at hotels in Havana on 13 July.

Amnesty International continues to assert that the four Working Group members are prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully expressing views that are contrary to Cuban Government policy. It believes that the allegations made by the Cuban authorities are a deliberate attempt to discredit those inside Cuba who are seeking to peacefully exercise their civil and political rights in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It fears that the four may be subjected to psychological pressures to sign incriminating statements while in pre-trial detention, that they may not receive a fair trial and that, if convicted, they may face lengthy prison sentences.

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

- urging that Vladimiro Roca Antunes, Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, René Gómez Manzano and Félix A. Bonnó Carcasés be immediately and unconditionally released on the grounds that they are prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association;

- urging that, as long as they are in detention, they be provided with full judicial guarantees in accordance with international standards for a fair trial, including prompt and full information regarding the reasons for arrest and prompt, confidential and reasonable access to defence lawyers;
- urging that they be treated in a humane manner and not be subjected to threats against themselves or others in order to compel them to confess, incriminate themselves or testify against others.

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
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 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:

National Union of Jurists
Unión Nacional de Juristas
Apartado 4161
La Habana 4
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 10 September 1997.