

URGENT ACTION

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE FREED

Cuban human right activists Ivonne Malleza Galano and Ignacio Martínez Montejo were released from detention on 20 January, along with Isabel Haydee Álvarez, who was detained after calling on officials to release the two activists. They had been held for 52 days without charge, following their participation in a peaceful anti-government demonstration on 30 November 2011.

Ivonne Malleza Galano and Isabel Haydee Álvarez were released at 5pm and **Ignacio Martínez Montejo** at 9pm. On their release they were told by state security officials that they would face “harsh sentences” (“condenas severas”) if they continued their dissident activities.

Amnesty International had adopted them as prisoners of conscience, as they were detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, and had called for their immediate and unconditional release.

On 30 November, Ivonne Malleza Galano, a member of the Ladies in Support (Damas de Apoyo) to the Ladies in White (Damas de Blanco), and her husband Ignacio Martínez Montejo, were arrested by police officers while they were staging a peaceful demonstration in Fraternity Park (*Parque de la Fraternidad*) in Havana City. The protest was against hunger and poverty, and they were holding a banner with the slogan “Stop hunger, misery and poverty in Cuba”. Ivonne Malleza Galano was handcuffed and pushed into a police vehicle. Two police officers arrived, tried to confiscate the banner and detained her, along with Ignacio Martínez Montejo. Video footage posted on the internet shows Ivonne Malleza Galano being arrested by the police officers at Fraternity Park while the crowd gathered round her and asked the officers to let her go. Isabel Haydee Álvarez, an onlooker watching the demonstration, was detained after protesting that the authorities should let the couple go.

Ivonne Malleza Galano is a member of the Ladies in Support (Damas de Apoyo) to the Ladies in White (Damas de Blanco). The Ladies in White (Damas de Blanco) are a group of female relatives of former prisoners of conscience and current political prisoners. They organize peaceful marches where they distribute flowers and call for the release of those who are still detained. In 2005, the European Parliament awarded The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the Ladies in White. The Ladies in Support emerged as a solidarity group who support and participate in activities organized by the Ladies in White.

Amnesty International will continue to closely monitor their situation and will take further action as appropriate.

No further action is required. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the third update of UA 355/11. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR25/001/2012/en

Names: Ivonne Malleza Galano, Ignacio Martínez Montejo, Isabel Haydee Álvarez
Gender m/f: Ivonne Malleza Galano (f), Ignacio Martínez Montejo (m), Isabel Haydee Álvarez (f)

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