

URGENT ACTION

THREATS AND ASSAULT ON ACTIVISTS

The Cuban authorities have threatened one of the country's leading human rights defenders because of his human rights work, and a prominent government critic has been assaulted on the street, apparently by state security personnel.

State security officials threatened **Elizardo Sánchez**, president of the Cuban Commission of Human Rights and National Reconciliation (Comisión Cubana de Derechos Humanos y Reconciliación Nacional – CCDHRN) in front of his home in the afternoon of 27 November. He had been returning from a meeting with the civil society platform group Cuban Democratic Alliance (Alianza Democrática Cubana – ALDECU). Two men in civilian clothes called out to him 100 metres from his home, which doubles as the CCDHRN headquarters, in the Havana municipality of Playa. He realised he had seen one of the men in security operations against peaceful protestors. He asked the men to identify themselves. One of them showed his identification from the Department of State Security (*Departamento de Seguridad del Estado*) but obscured his name. Elizardo Sánchez continued on his way and the men followed closely behind, telling him that he was a mercenary in the pay of Washington and that he would face “drastic measures” (*medidas drásticas*) if he continued his human rights work. Elizardo Sánchez has told Amnesty International that neither he nor other CCDHRN members have been threatened like this for the last 20 years.

Independent journalist **Guillermo Fariñas** also attended the ALDECU meeting earlier that afternoon. At 8.30pm he was stopped on the street in the Havana neighbourhood of Vedado by two men in civilian clothes. One of them hit him on the right forearm with a piece of wood and called him a “mercenary” and a “counter-revolutionary”. They then got into a car driven by a third person, of the type used by state security personnel. These incidents represent a worrying new development in government repression of peaceful activists.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the Cuban authorities to investigate immediately the threats against Elizardo Sánchez and the assault on Guillermo Fariñas;
- Calling on them to cease immediately the harassment of the two men and all other citizens who peacefully exercise their rights to freedom of expression and association.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 JANUARY 2013 TO:

Head of State and Government

Raúl Castro Ruz
 Presidente de la República de Cuba
 La Habana, Cuba
 Fax: +41 22 758 9431 (Cuba office in Geneva); +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)
 Email: cuba@un.int (c/o Cuban Mission to UN)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

Dr. Darío Delgado Cura
 Fiscal General de la República,
 Fiscalía General de la República,
 Amistad 552, e/Monte y Estrella,
 Centro Habana,
 La Habana, Cuba

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

And copies to:

Interior Minister

General Abelardo Coloma Ibarra
 Ministro del Interior y Prisiones
 Ministerio del Interior,
 Plaza de la Revolución,
 La Habana, Cuba
 Fax: +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)

Email: correominint@mn.mn.co.cu

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Cuban Commission of Human Rights and National Reconciliation was founded by Elizardo Sánchez in 1987. The authorities have denied it legal status, as they do to all organizations deemed to be critical of the government. Elizardo Sánchez spent eight-and-a-half years in prison between 1980 and 1992 in connection with his human rights work. Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience.

Guillermo Fariñas is an independent journalist who has been involved in a peaceful campaign for freedom of expression in Cuba. At the end of 2009 he started a hunger strike that lasted four months calling for the release of prisoners of conscience.

The Cuban Democratic Alliance (ALDECU) is a civil society platform, defined as “pluralistic analysis group” (*grupo plural de análisis*). Its members meet once a month to discuss socio-political and economic issues in Cuba.

The ALDECU meeting on 27 November was also attended by Antonio Rodiles, national coordinator of Citizen Demand for Another Cuba (Demanda Ciudadana Por Otra Cuba), an initiative calling for Cuba to ratify the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. He had just been released from 19 days in police custody. On his release, charges of “resisting authority” against him were dropped but he was warned against continuing his activism.

Name: Elizardo Sánchez, Guillermo Fariñas

Gender m/f: both m

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