

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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This is a limited action. Please send up to 10 appeals per section.

Further information on UA 21/93 (AMR 25/03/93, 29 January 1993) - Legal Concern/Health Concern/Hunger strike

CUBA: Amador BLANCO HERNANDEZ, aged 41, former university professor and President of the unofficial Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos "José Martí", "José Martí" National Human Rights Commission

Amnesty International remains concerned about the legal situation and the state of health of Amador Blanco Hernández who is on hunger strike in protest of his arrest. He had reportedly been convinced by a doctor to call off his hunger strike, but decided to resume it, apparently because the authorities still intend to bring him to trial on a charge of enemy propaganda. Since 18 February 1993, he is said to have been ingesting only water and his condition is said to have deteriorated.

Amador Blanco Hernández is being held in the infirmary at Santa Clara Provincial Prison but it appears that the authorities intend to transfer him at some point to La Pendiente Prison, also in Santa Clara, to await trial. In a message dated 20 February 1993 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which was smuggled out of the prison, he said that he was told on 19 February 1993 by the Jefe de Seguridad de Cárceles y Prisiones del Departamento de Seguridad del Estado (DSE), Head of Prison Security of the Department of State Security, that he would be force fed if he did not give up his hunger strike. He also wrote that he believes the prosecution intend to request a prison sentence of eight or ten years, he maintained his innocence and that he intended to carry on his hunger strike whatever the consequences ("*tengo la firmeza de continuar la huelga de hambre hasta las últimas consecuencias*").

From the information so far available, Amnesty International believes Amador Blanco Hernández to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely on account of his non-violent activities in support of human rights. He was arrested at his home in Caibarién, in the province of Villa Clara, on 10 December 1992 and taken to the DSE headquarters in Santa Clara but was subsequently transferred to Santa Clara Provincial Prison under investigation on a charge of enemy propaganda. As far as Amnesty International is aware, he has had no access to a lawyer but has been permitted family visits. He suffers from asthma and high blood pressure.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes and airmail letters either in Spanish, English or in your own language:

- urging the immediate and unconditional release of Amador Blanco Hernández on the grounds that he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely on account of his non-violent activities in support of human rights;
- expressing concern that he has reportedly resumed his hunger strike in protest at his arrest;
- noting that he suffers from asthma and hypertension and seeking information on his present state of health;

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- seeking assurances that he has access to proper medical attention and is receiving all the medical care he requires;
- urging that he be granted immediate access to a lawyer of his choice.

APPEALS TO:

1) Attorney-General:

Dr Ramón de la Cruz Ochoa
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
San Rafael 3
Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Havana, Cuba
Telexes: 511456 FISGE

Salutation: Señor Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

2) Minister of Justice:

Dr Carlos Amat Forés
Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Calle O, No. 216, 8vo piso
e/ 23 y Humboldt, Vedado
Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Havana, Cuba
Telexes: 511331 MINJU

Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

3) President of the Supreme Court:

Dr José Raúl Amaro Salup
Presidente del Tribunal Supremo Popular
Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Presidente Tribunal Supremo Popular, Havana, Cuba
Telexes: 511457 TSUPO

Salutation: Señor Presidente / Dear President

4) Head of Prisons, Department of State Security, Santa Clara:

Sr Boris Arradat
Jefe de Cárceles y Prisiones

Departamento de Seguridad del Estado

Carretera de Camajuaní, Km 2

Santa Clara

Provincia de Villa Clara

Telegrams: Boris Arradat, Departamento de Seguridad del Estado, Santa Clara, Cuba

Salutation: Estimado Señor / Dear Sir

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Director of Santa Clara Prison:

Señor Director

Prisión Provincial de Santa Clara

Santa Clara

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 9 April 1993.