PUBLIC AI Index: AMR 25/005/2006 15 December 2006

Further Information on UA 325/06 (AMR 25/003/2006, 05 December 2006) – possible prisoner of conscience/ harassment/intimidation and new concern: Fear of unfair trial

CUBA Ahmed Rodríguez Albacia (m), aged 22, journalist His family

Journalist Ahmed Rodríguez Albacia was reportedly released on 12 December, after nine days in custody. He is now reportedly awaiting trial on charges which have been used before to silence journalists critical of the government. Amnesty International believes that he will not receive a fair trial.

His trial could begin at any time. If he is imprisoned solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression, association and assembly in the course of his journalistic work, Amnesty International will consider him a prisoner of conscience.

Ahmed Rodríguez Albacia is a journalist working for the Cuban-based independent press agency *Jóvenes sin Censura* (Youth without Censorship). He has reportedly been charged with *difusión de noticias falsas contra la paz internacional*, "spreading false news against international peace", which carries a maximum four-year prison sentence. It is supposedly applied to anyone who spreads false information with the aim of "putting in danger the prestige or credit of the Cuban State or its good relations with another State.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Freedom of expression is very restricted in Cuba because of the complete control exerted by the government on all media outlets. Private ownership of press, radio, television and other means of communication is prohibited by law, thus the exercise of the right to freedom of expression is restricted by the lack of means of mass communication falling outside state control. Independent journalists, who criticize the government, are at risk of facing harassment, intimidation or criminal charges such as those Ahmed Rodríguez Albacia is now facing.

The right to a fair trial is severely limited in Cuba, with the courts and prosecutors under government control.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- -expressing concern that Ahmed Rodríguez Albacia may face an unfair trial;
- calling on the authorities to try Ahmed Rodríguez Albacia promptly and in accordance with international standards for fair trial;
- requesting that all independent journalists engaged in legitimate reporting and non-violent activities be permitted to carry out their work unhindered without fear of reprisals.

## APPEALS TO:

Head of State and Government

Raúl Castro Ruz Presidente interino La Habana, Cuba

Fax: + 53 7 8333085 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

+ 1 2127791697 (c/o Cuban Mission to UN) cuba@un.int (c/o Cuban Mission to UN)

Salutation: Su Excelencia/ Your Excellency

Attorney-General

Email:

Dr Juan Escalona Reguera Fiscal General de la República,

Fiscalía General de la República, San Rafael 3, La Habana, Cuba

Fax: + 53 7 669 485 + 53 7 333 164

Salutation: Señor Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr Felipe Pérez Roque

Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Calzada No. 360, Vedado, La Habana, Cuba

Fax: + 53 7 8333 085

Email: cubaminrex@minrex.gov.cu

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Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

**Interior Minister** 

General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra Ministro del Interior y Prisiones Ministerio del Interior, Plaza de la Revolución, La Habana, Cuba

Fax: + 53 7 8301 566

Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

**COPIES 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 26 January 2007.

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