



CUBA

Release of Prisoners of Conscience

May 1991
AI Index: AMR 25/10/91
Distr: SC/CO

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Amnesty International has recently learned of the release of five prisoners of conscience on whose behalf the organization has been working since the time of their arrest.

1. **Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, Huber Jérez Mariño and Hiram Abí Cobas Núñez**

Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, President of the unofficial Comisión Cubana de Derechos Humanos y Reconciliación Nacional (CCDHRN), Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, was conditionally released from Agüica Prison on 5 May 1991, three months before his two-year sentence was due to expire. The terms of his release mean that his behaviour will be closely monitored by the authorities until 5 August when the sentence was due to end. His two co-defendants, who had been sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, had been released earlier: Huber Jérez Mariño, President of the Comité Martiano por los Derechos del Hombre (CMDH), Martí Committee for the Rights of Man, was released from Camagüey Provincial Prison (known as "Kilo 7") on 1 February 1991 upon expiry of his sentence. Hiram Abí Cobas Núñez, acting Secretary General of the Partido Pro Derechos Humanos en Cuba (PPDHC), Party for Human Rights in Cuba, at the time of his arrest, had been released early for medical reasons on 27 November 1990 to serve the remainder of his sentence at home. He is now living in the USA.

The three men had been arrested on 6 August 1989 and charged under article 115 of the Cuban Penal Code with "spreading false news with the aim of endangering the prestige or standing of the Cuban state" ("difundir noticias falsas con el propósito de poner en peligro el prestigio y el crédito del Estado Cubano"). The charges were brought as a result of interviews they gave to foreign press correspondents about the trial and treatment of Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez, a former army general, and others, who were executed in July 1989 after being found guilty by a Special Military Tribunal of high treason and offences related to drugs trafficking.

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2. Mario Jesús Fernández Mora and Edgardo Llompart Martín

Mario Jesús Fernández Mora and Edgardo Llompart Martín were unexpectedly released from Combinado del Este Prison in Havana on 19 March 1991. It is so far not clear why they were given such an early release although in the case of Edgardo Llompart, he had served half of his three-year sentence and was therefore eligible for conditional release. They had been arrested in September 1989, together with Esteban González González, Manuel Pozo Montero, Arturo Valentín Montané Ruiz, Manuel de la Caridad Regueiro Robaína and Isidro Daniel Ledesma Quijano, and brought to trial on 20 June 1990, accused of rebelión, rebellion (articles 98 and 99 of the Penal Code) in conjunction with otros actos contra la seguridad del Estado, other acts against State security (article 125). The charges were based on their alleged activities as members of the illegal opposition group called Movimiento Integracionista Democrático (MID), Movement for Democratic Integration, which had been set up by Esteban González González in early 1989 with the aim of seeking political reform by non-violent means. González was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, Mario Jesús Fernández Mora to six years, Manuel de la Caridad Regueiro Robaína and Manuel Pozo Montero to five years and Arturo Valentín Montané Ruiz and Edgardo Llompart Martín to three years. Isidro Ledesma Quijano was given a sentence of three years' restricted liberty (limitación de libertad) on grounds of ill health, which he is serving at home.

The remaining four MID prisoners have recently been moved around from prison to prison. In January 1991, Manuel Pozo Montero, Manuel de la Caridad Regueiro Robaína and Arturo Montané Ruiz participated in a protest involving about a dozen political prisoners in Combinado del Este Prison. The group refused to wear their prison uniforms in what is believed to have been an attempt to put pressure on the Cuba authorities to bring about peaceful political change and to respect human rights. On 14 January they and Esteban González González, who had not initially participated in the protest, were transferred to other prisons: Montané and Pozo to Cerámica Roja Prison in Camaguey, Regueiro to Combinado del Sur Prison in Matanzas, and González to Agüica Prison, also in Matanzas, where he too refused to wear the prison uniform. Montané and Pozo reportedly went on hunger strike while held in Cerámica Roja Prison for an unknown period. All four were eventually transferred back to Combinado del Este Prison apparently on condition that they stop their protest. However, Esteban González and Manuel Regueiro were subsequently transferred yet again, it is believed at their own request, to Guanajay Prison in Havana Province.

For further background on all of the above cases, see **Cuba: Political Imprisonment - A Summary of Recent Concerns**, AMR 25/20/89, December 1989 and **Cuba: The Human Rights Situation**, AMR 25/07/90, December 1990.

INTERNAL (for AI members only)

AI Index: AMR 25/10/91

Distr: SC/CO

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RELEASE OF PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Please ensure that all relevant people in the section have received copies for their attention, and that the document is centrally filed for future reference. In addition please undertake as many of the following recommended actions as possible.

1. The prisoners whose release is announced in the attached document have received widespread publicity through AI, all of them having been adopted as prisoners of conscience and most of them also having featured as Prisoners of the Month in the International Newsletter (Mario Jesús Fernández Mora and Edgardo Llompart Martín in the article focussing on Esteban González González in February 1991). In addition, Mario Jesús Fernández Mora and Edgardo Llompart

Martín are also referred to in the material relating to Esteban González González sent out for the 30th Anniversary Action - González is one of the featured cases. Please ensure that anyone who has been working on these cases in any way receives a copy of this document.

DISTRIBUTION BY THE IS

This document has been sent direct by the IS to: all sections, Cuba and Caribbean Coordination Groups and Caribbean RAN coordinators, as well as the adoption groups working on the cases concerned.