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@Arrest of Domiciano Torres Roca

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Amnesty International has received reports that teacher and political activist Domiciano Torres Roca was arrested on the evening of 13 August 1993 in Havana. According to one report, a man in civilian clothes stopped him and asked him for his identity card. He was then grabbed by four uniformed police, two of whom held him while the other two punched him in the stomach and the mouth. He was taken to a police station in El Cotorro, a suburb of Havana. Next day, he was taken to his home where police carried out a search and took away numerous documents described by the authorities as "enemy propaganda". He was then taken to the headquarters of the **Departamento de Seguridad del Estado (DSE)**, Department of State Security, at Villa Marista where he is still believed to be held. His relatives have reportedly been informed that he will soon be transferred to Valle Grande Prison or Combinado del Este Prison to await trial on a charge of "enemy propaganda" (article 103 of the Cuban Penal Code). He has almost certainly had no access to a lawyer. In political cases lawyers normally only have contact with the defendant shortly before the trial hearing which frequently takes place several months after arrest.

Domiciano Torres is 43 years old and a teacher of architecture. In August 1992 he and several other teachers at the Armando Mestre Technological School in Guanabacoa were reportedly sacked from their jobs because they had criticized the government. He is also Vice-President of the unofficial **Partido Cívico Democrático**, Civic Democratic Party. Shortly before his arrest, he had informed contacts abroad that he and other members of the group had received warnings from State Security officials about their activities. Some said they were being put under pressure to leave the country. Torres said that he was being persecuted and threatened by the State Security police because of

the reports about human rights violations he was communicating by telephone to contacts abroad.

As far as Amnesty International is aware, Domiciano Torres Roca has neither used nor advocated violence. The organization therefore believes that he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely because of his attempts to peacefully exercise his rights to freedom of expression and association, and is urging his immediate and unconditional release.

Numerous members of unofficial political and human rights groups have been arrested and imprisoned in Cuba over the past three years. Although some were released without charge after a few hours or days, many others were brought to trial on charges such as illegal association, clandestine printing, disrespect, enemy propaganda and rebellion. In the case of the latter two charges, several prisoners are serving sentences of between ten and thirteen years. The majority of those imprisoned on such charges, thought to number several hundred, are believed to be prisoners of conscience.

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