

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 25/10/95

Distrib: PG/SC

Date: 31 August 1995

MEDICAL CONCERN

**Dr Omar DEL POZO Marrero
CUBA**

Dr Omar del Pozo, a 46-year-old Cuban physician, is currently serving a 15-year prison sentence in Guanajuay prison, Cuba. Amnesty International believes that this sentence is solely the result of his political and human rights activities. Since his imprisonment, Dr del Pozo's health is reported to have seriously deteriorated.

Dr del Pozo was arrested and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in 1992 for "revealing state secrets". However, Amnesty International has seen no convincing evidence that Dr del Pozo had access to any legitimate "state secrets", and believes that his prosecution results from his political and human rights work. Amnesty International therefore considers Dr del Pozo a prisoner of conscience, and has been campaigning for his release since 1993.

While in prison Dr del Pozo has reportedly suffered harsh treatment and deteriorated physically. Until May 1995, he spent most of his time in Quivicán, a maximum security prison in Havana, where there are reports of poor food, excessive heat and unsanitary conditions. Dr del Pozo has gone on hunger strikes and has been placed in punishment cells at various times, on one occasion for four months, where he was not allowed any family visits, reading materials or exercise. Although he is six feet (1.85m) tall, he is now said to weigh a mere 90 pounds (40 kilos).

Dr del Pozo was one of 24 Cuban prisoners visited by a delegation organized by the French human rights group *France Libertés* in May 1995. Before the visit he was transferred from Quivicán prison to Combinado del Este where prison conditions are much better. He was examined there by a physician and found to be hypertense, to have undergone significant weight loss and to have an abscessed upper tooth. The delegation subsequently called for his release on medical grounds along with two others, Augustin Figueredo Figueredo and Pedro Antonio Castillo Ferrer, who have since been released. However, Dr del Pozo was moved to a military hospital on 1 June 1995 and reportedly did not receive any medication for his medical problems until 10 June.

At the beginning of July 1995 he was transferred to Guanajuay prison. According to Dr del Pozo's family, while in Guanajuay his physical condition has not improved and lesions have appeared on his face.

Amnesty International is urging the immediate and unconditional release of Dr del Pozo and, as long as he remains in prison, is requesting that he have access to whatever medical care he needs.

Background

Dr Omar del Pozo Marrero, president of the *Unión Cívica Nacional* (UCN: National Civic Union), a non-violent opposition group, was arrested on 19 April 1992 at his home in Havana. Two other people, Carmen Arias Iglesias, aged 27, and Victor Reinaldo Infante, were arrested at around the same time. All were initially held at the State Security headquarters at Villa Marista but no information was available concerning the charges to be brought against them until a few days before their trial took place on 1 August 1992. They were tried together with a member of the State Security police, Sub-Lieutenant JC Alvarez, in a military court. All were accused under article 95 of the Penal Code of revealing state security secrets.

The prosecution accused Alvarez of violating the standards of political and moral conduct expected of members of the Cuban military institutions by making contact with Victor Reinaldo Infante, whom he had known for several years, and expressing his disagreement with government policy toward opposition groups. Alvarez was then said to have been introduced through Infante to Dr del Pozo. The prosecution charged that Alvarez had revealed the identity to Dr del Pozo of the government agents who had infiltrated dissident groups. The prosecution alleged that this information put the lives of those government agents concerned in danger.

Dr del Pozo and Victor Reinaldo Infante were convicted under article 95 of the Penal Code and sentenced to 15 and 13 years' imprisonment respectively. Carmen Arias was convicted of being an accomplice to the actions of the two civilians and sentenced to nine years.

Amnesty International has requested further details of these cases from the Cuban Government. So far no response has been received. However, on the basis of the information available, the organization believes that the three civilians are prisoners of conscience. Political opposition groups inside Cuba have so far showed little sign of seriously resorting to violent methods to achieve their aims and the argument that by revealing the identity of the government infiltrators Alvarez was putting their lives in danger is questionable. The three civilians seem merely to have been recipients of information of legitimate interest to them, in that it directly affected the security of the members of their organizations.

ooOoo

Amnesty International published a report *Prisoners of conscience in need of medical attention* (AI Index: AMR 25/07/94) on 9 August 1994. This outlined the situation facing a number of prisoners of conscience in Cuba.

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 25/10/95

Distrib: PG/SC

To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Americas Regional Program
Date: 31 August 1995

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

Dr Omar del Pozo
CUBA

Keywords

Theme: POC

Profession/association: doctor

Summary

Dr Omar del Pozo, aged 46, was sentenced in 1992 to 15 years' imprisonment for "revealing state secrets". AI believes that his imprisonment results from his political and human rights activities and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release as a POC. Dr Pozo suffers from hypertension and is believed to have lost a significant amount of weight.

Recommended Actions

Letters from medical professionals, preferably written in Spanish or your own language, should be sent to the addresses below:

- urging that he be immediately and unconditionally released on the grounds that he is a prisoner of conscience;
- noting that the human rights delegation, led by the French human rights group *France Libertés*, which visited Cuban prisoners in May 1995, called for the release of Dr del Pozo on medical grounds;
 - expressing concern at his low body weight and reported medical problems;
 - urging that while in prison he have access to adequate medical care.

Addresses

Attorney General

Dr. Juan Escalona Reguera
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
San Rafael 3
La Habana
Cuba

Salutation: Señor Fiscal General

Telex: 511456 fjsge

Fax: +53 7 333164

Minister of Justice

Dr. Carlos Amat Forés
Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Calle O No. 216, 8vo piso
c/ 23 y Humboldt, Vedado
La Habana 4
Cuba

Salutation: Señor Ministro

Telex: 511331

*Copies to:**Minister of Foreign Affairs*

Sr. Roberto Robaina González
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Calzada No. 360
Vedado
La Habana,
Cuba

Salutation: Señor Ministro

Telex: 511122/511464/512950

Fax: +53 7 333085/335261

and to the nearest Cuban diplomatic representative