

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 83/96

Death Penalty

31 May 1996

CUBAManuel RAMIREZ LARDUET

Nelson DOUFORNEAUX SOLLET

Amnesty International fears that Manuel Ramirez Larduet and Nelson Doufourneaux Sollet, arrested in separate cases in 1994, may be facing imminent execution.

Manuel Ramirez Larduet was arrested in 1994 and accused of "*violación de una menor y abusos lascivos contra otra*", raping a (female) minor and committing lewd acts against another. He was sentenced to death in the first instance by the People's Provincial Court for the City of Santiago de Cuba. The death sentence was ratified in 1995 by the People's Supreme Court.

Nelson Doufourneaux Sollet was arrested in March 1994 and accused of killing a 20-year-old musician in order to rob him. He was sentenced to death in the first instance by the People's Provincial Court for the City of Santiago de Cuba and his sentence has also been ratified by the People's Supreme Court.

Both men's cases are currently awaiting the decision of the Cuban Council of State, which will decide whether the executions, which are by firing squad, should go ahead or whether the death sentences should be commuted. The time lapse between the decision of the Council of State and execution is likely to be only a matter of hours or days.

Both men are currently being held in the maximum security area of Boniato prison, known as "Boniatico", in Santiago de Cuba.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and of the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Concern about the death penalty in Cuba is exacerbated by the inadequacy, in practice, of full judicial guarantees, particularly the right to defence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cuba maintains the death penalty for a large number of offences. In recent years there has appeared to be a reduction in the number of executions carried out. Amnesty International is aware of 12 executions that have taken place since 1988, although death sentences are known to have been passed in a number of other cases. Given the limitations on the reporting of human rights issues in Cuba and since the authorities do not make statistics on such matters public, it is possible that other executions may have been carried out. The last executions known to have taken place were those of two men found guilty of murder, Armando Grinan Bell and Mario Magdaleno Pedrozo Cosme, on 4 May 1995.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment;
- expressing concern at the death sentences against Manuel Ramirez Larduet and Nelson Doufourneaux Sollet, and urging that their death sentences be commuted;

- expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crime and their families, but pointing out that the death penalty has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments, and is brutalizing to all involved in its application.

APPEALS TO:

1) President

Dr Fidel Castro Ruz
Presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros
La Habana, Cuba

Telegrams: Presidente Castro, Havana, Cuba

Telexes: 511122 / 511464 /512950

Faxes: + 53 7 333 085 / + 53 7 335 261 [These telex and fax numbers are for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - please ask them to forward your message to the President]

Salutation: Señor Presidente / Dear President

2) Attorney General

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

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Havana, Cuba

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Faxes: + 53 7 333164

Salutation: Sr Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

3) Minister of Foreign Affairs

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

Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores, Havana, Cuba

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Salutation: Sr Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

National Union of Jurists

Dra Zenaida Osorio Vizcaina
Presidente

Unión Nacional de Juristas de Cuba Boniato

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Apartado 4161

La Habana 4, Cuba

Director of Boniato Prison

Tte. Coronel Israel Cobas Duzú

Director de la Prisión de

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Apartado 5007

Puerto Boniato

Santiago de Cuba, Cuba

Granma (daily newspaper)

Granma, Apdo 6260, La Habana, 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 1 July 1996.