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Cuba arrests prominent opposition blogger ahead of controversial trial

The Cuban opposition blogger Yoani Sánchez was arrested along with her husband Reinaldo Escobar and a third person who was with them in the south-eastern Cuban town of Bayamo on Thursday evening.

Sánchez was due to cover this morning's opening of the trial of Spanish politician Ángel Francisco Carromero Barrios for Spanish newspaper El País.

Amnesty International also received information on the arrest of a small group of local activists from Bayamo in an apparent attempt to prevent any dissident activity during the trial.

Javier Zúñiga, Special Adviser to Amnesty International, said: "These apparently arbitrary arrests ahead of Ángel Carromero's trial mark the latest in a string of harassment that Yoani Sánchez and other dissidents have suffered at the hands of Cuban authorities.

"The authorities must immediately reveal the full details of everyone detained in Bayamo and either charge them with internationally recognizable criminal offences or set them free.

"Cuba's senseless restrictions on freedom of expression and independent media must come to an end."

Spanish politician Ángel Carromero is facing trial in Cuba after being charged with involuntary manslaughter for a car accident in July that resulted in the death of two Cuban opposition activists – Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas and Harold Cepero Escalante.

Further info: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/cuban-blogger-blocked-travelling-film-premiere-brazil-2012-02-06>