

URGENT ACTION

PARENTS OF DEAD CUBAN ACTIVIST HARASSED

On 18 February Reina Luisa Tamayo, and her husband José Ortiz, were arrested and detained for 12 hours by state security agents. Reina Tamayo is the mother of Cuban prisoner of conscience Orlando Zapata who died last year, having spent several weeks on hunger strike whilst in prison. Amnesty International believes that their detention is an attempt to prevent them from undertaking any activities in memory of Orlando Zapata on the first anniversary of his death on 23 February.

Reina Luisa Tamayo reported that she and her husband left their house in Banes, Cuba, with Daniel Mesa, a human rights activist, when around 15 state security agents surrounded them. Reina Tamayo shouted at them "Zapata lives! The Cuban people are dying and will soon take the street". In response, state security agents pushed them to try and force them into their van. Reina Tamayo and the two men refused unsuccessfully to go with them. During the struggle, José Ortiz was reportedly hit in the face by the agents.

Reina Luisa Tamayo was taken to a room in a state security building where she remained for 12 hours with two female agents and without knowing the whereabouts of her husband or Daniel Mesa, who had also been detained. All three were not allowed to drink water or eat during the 12 hours of detention. Reina and José were released after 12 hours but Daniel remained in detention for a further two days. Since Reina Luisa Tamayo's release, between 8 and 12 State Security officials have surrounded her house to prevent visitors.

Amnesty International is concerned that Reina Luisa Tamayo and her relatives are facing difficulties and harassments while preparing to commemorate the first anniversary of the death of Orlando Zapata on Wednesday 23 February. Since his death his mother has been repeatedly harassed and intimidated when commemorating her son's death. Recently she has decided to go with her family into exile in the USA to escape the repression they are suffering. Reina Luisa Tamayo has informed Amnesty International that the US authorities granted to her and 12 persons of her family a visa and all the documents for the travel. They are now waiting to receive a passport and the authorizations from the Cuban authorities to leave the country.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to ensure an immediate halt to the harassment and intimidation of Reina Luisa Tamayo by government agents, and that of the relatives and friends and any other citizens who seek to peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association;
- Calling on the authorities to permit Reina Luisa Tamayo and others to go to the cemetery where Orlando Zapata is buried and peacefully commemorate the anniversary of her son's death;
- Calling on the authorities to allow Reina Luisa Tamayo and her relatives to leave the country, granting them the passport, exit permit and other documents needed to travel outside the country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 APRIL 2011 TO:

Head of State and Government

Raúl Castro Ruz Presidente

La Habana, Cuba

Fax: +53 7 8333085 (via Foreign

Ministry); +1 2127791697 (via Cuban

Mission to UN)

Email: cuba@un.int (c/o Cuban

Mission to UN)

Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

Interior Minister

General Abelardo Coloma Ibarra

Ministro del Interior y Prisiones

Ministerio del Interior, Plaza de la

Revolución, La Habana, Cuba

Fax: +53 7 8333085 (via Ministry of

Foreign Affairs)

+1 2127791697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)

Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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MOTHER OF DEAD CUBAN ACTIVIST HARASSED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Reina Luisa Tamayo is one of the Damas de Blanco (Ladies in White), a group of women relatives and friends of prisoners detained during a major crackdown on government critics in March 2003. In 2003, over several days, the Cuban authorities arrested 75 men and women for their peaceful expression of critical opinions of the government. They were subjected to summary trials, instead of full trials, and were sentenced to long prison terms of up to 28 years. Amnesty International declared the 75 convicted dissidents to be prisoners of conscience. 6 of them remain in prison.

Damas de Blanco organizes peaceful weekly marches in Havana where they distribute flowers and call for the release of their relatives and friends. In March 2010 Damas de Blanco organized a daily march for a week to mark the seventh anniversary of the arrest of their relatives. On 17 of March 2010, their march was forcibly broken up by Cuban police, who briefly detained several women. Some of the women claimed that they were beaten by the police.

Reina Luisa Tamayo is the mother of **Orlando Zapata Tamayo**, a prisoner of conscience who died on 23 February 2010, having spent several weeks on hunger strike whilst in prison. Since her son's death, Reina Luisa Tamayo has organized weekly marches on Sundays in the town of Barnes, Holguin Province, Cuba, to honour her son's memory. Relatives and friends accompany Reina Luisa Tamayo on these weekly marches from her home to attend mass at the Nuestra Señora de la Caridad Church, in Barnes and from there to the cemetery where Orlando Zapata Tamayo is buried.

On August 2010 Amnesty International already called on the Cuban authorities to stop harassment on Reina Luisa Tamayo, her friends and relatives, and her right to celebrate peacefully the death of her son, along with any other Cuban citizen who seek to peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association.

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