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Cuba: New leadership must take opportunity and introduce reforms

In reaction to Fidel Castro's announcement that he will not return to the presidency, Amnesty International said: "The new Cuban leadership must take advantage of this change to introduce much needed reforms to guarantee the protection of human rights."

"Reform in Cuba must start with the unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience, the judicial review of all sentences passed after unfair trials, the abolition of the death penalty and the introduction of measures to ensure respect of fundamental freedoms and the independence of the judiciary," said Javier Zuñiga, Special Advisor at Amnesty International.

Amnesty International calls on the new Cuban government to allow UN human rights bodies and independent human rights organizations to visit the country.

The organization also urged the international community and in particular the US, to abolish policies and practices that impinge on the human rights of Cubans, such as the US embargo.