

EXTERNAL

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Date: 13 November 1990

MEDICAL CONCERN

Dr Samuel MARTINEZ LARA
CUBA

Amnesty International is concerned by the continued detention of Dr Alfredo Samuel Martínez Lara who has been held without charge or trial and without access to a defence lawyer since his arrest on 10 March 1990. He is held at the State Security Headquarters in Havana. Dr Martínez, a 38-year-old psychiatrist, is a prominent member of a banned political opposition grouping, and has been arrested on a number of previous occasions. Between April 1982 and April 1985 he was imprisoned on charges of attempting to leave the country illegally. Upon release he tried unsuccessfully to obtain official permission to leave the country and in September 1986 was re-arrested and held for four and a half months before being released without charge in February 1987. It is believed that this arrest was connected with his membership of the Cuban Committee for Human Rights, *Comité Cubano pro Derechos Humanos (CCPDH)*. In 1988 he joined the Party for Human Rights in Cuba, *Partido pro Derechos Humanos de Cuba (PPDH)*. (Both the CCPDH and the PPDH are considered illegal by the Cuban authorities.) When the Secretary-General of the PPDH, Tania Díaz, was arrested in November 1988, Dr Martínez became its acting Secretary-General.

In April 1989 Dr Martínez and several other members of the PPDH were arrested after Dr Martínez announced that the party intended to hold a "popular peaceful" demonstration outside the Soviet embassy at the time of a programmed visit from Premier Mikhail Gorbachev. Dr Martínez was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for illegal association, demonstration and meeting. He was due for release in December 1989 but received an extended sentence following an incident in the prison. He remained in prison until his unexpected release on 27 February 1989; the release was apparently conditional. Eleven days later, he was again arrested.

Dr Martínez' most recent arrest took place shortly after a meeting of leaders of several human rights groups held on 5 March 1990 at the home of a leader of one of the groups. The meeting was disrupted after large crowds of civilians attacked the house over a period of several hours while members of the Cuban security forces stood by. Four days later, on 10 March 1990, Dr Martínez and eight other members of the PPDH were arrested. All were released in September this year with the exception of Dr Martínez who remains in State Security Headquarters. Some reports state that the justification for his re-arrest and continued detention is that he broke the conditions of his earlier release. Other reports suggest that he may be facing charges related to supposed connections with a group of 11 young people accused of membership of the Youth Association for Human Rights, *Asociación Juvenil pro Derechos Humanos*, a group which the Cuban authorities allege is the armed wing of the PPDH. The 11 were arrested in early 1990, accused of membership of this group and convicted of terrorism, rebellion, other acts against state security, illegal possession of arms and explosives and attempting to leave the country illegally, charges which they reportedly deny. Their sentences ranged from 15 years' imprisonment to three years' house arrest.

During his last period of imprisonment Dr Martínez was adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International. The organization is currently investigating the background to his present detention and is requesting information from the Cuban authorities on the legal basis for his detention. Amnesty International is particularly concerned that he has now been held for eight months without access to a defence lawyer and apparently without formal charge. There are additionally other aspects of his conditions of detention which give rise to concern. He is permitted one 10-minute visit weekly from relatives, but is said to be prevented from discussing the reasons for his detention during this visit. Recent reports suggest that he is held in a cell alone without provision for exercise or access to reading material. Furthermore, he is said to be subjected to repeated sessions of questioning, creating considerable pressure on him.

In July 1990, while still imprisoned, Tania Díaz, the then Secretary-General of the PPDHC appeared on television together with another imprisoned PPDHC member and three ex-prisoners. They made a statement to the effect that Cuban human rights groups were being used and manipulated by foreign governments to further their own aims. Two months after the televised interview they and the six other PPDHC members arrested in March were released pending trial. [Do we include anything here or not about what Tania Díaz said after her release??]

Shortly after the arrest of Dr Martínez and other PPDHC members, a senior Cuban judicial official told the news agency *Prensa Latina* that the nine were being formally accused of serving the interests of the United States by trying to change Cuba's socialist government and constitution. No formal charges however have been brought so far.

Amnesty International is urging the Cuban authorities to state clearly the reasons for Dr Martínez' arrest and is urging that if he is not brought promptly and fairly to trial on recognizably criminal charges, he be released from prison. He is said to be suffering as a result of the continued questioning and his isolation. In August this year he is known to have been transferred to a civilian hospital for a week, although the reasons are not known. He is believed to have had respiratory problems in the past.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Americas
Date: 13 November 1990

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Dr Alfredo Samuel MARTÍNEZ LARA
CUBA**

KEYWORDS

Theme: detention without charge or trial

Profession/association: psychiatrist

SUMMARY

Dr Alfredo Samuel Martínez Lara, a 38-year-old psychiatrist, was re-arrested on 10 March 1990 after he had been released, apparently conditionally, less than two weeks previously. Since 1982 he has spent long periods in prison. He was first arrested for attempting to leave the country illegally in 1982 and imprisoned until April 1985. He was re-arrested in 1986 and held for four and a half months without charge. Following this release he joined the Party for Human Rights in Cuba, *Partido Pro Derechos Humanos de Cuba (PPDH)* and was arrested in March 1989 together with other PPDH members. He was released on 27 February 1990, but eleven days later he and other PPDH members were arrested. Although the others were released in September this year he remains in State Security custody without access to a defence lawyer and apparently without formal charge.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Letters (preferably express) and telexes are requested from medical professionals, in Spanish where possible, English or your own language. Letters should:

- express concern at the long-term detention without charge or trial of Dr Alfredo Samuel Martínez Lara and at reports that he is being subjected to considerable pressure and repeated questioning at State Security Headquarters;
- further express concern that he is said to have no access to a defence lawyer;
- ask the reasons for his continued detention;
- urge that if he is not to be charged and brought to trial with full guarantees that he receive a fair trial, he be promptly released from prison;
- seek information on Dr Martínez' current state of health and well-being.

ADDRESSES [see over]

ADDRESSES**Minister of Justice:**

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*CODEHU = Coordinadora de Organizaciones de los Derechos Humanos en Cuba, of which the PPDHC is a member.