

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Media Advisory

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## **Cuba: Some improvements, but human rights violations continue**

Amnesty International today released a report reviewing the human rights situation in the country, where a number of fundamental rights continue to be denied against the backdrop of the United States' economic embargo.

After the release of dissident Vladimiro Roca on 5 May, Amnesty International reports that there are currently six "prisoners of conscience" in Cuba, imprisoned solely for the non-violent expression of their beliefs.

"Although the number of 'prisoners of conscience' has decreased significantly from past years, dissidents are still being targeted both by state officials and government supporters," Amnesty International said.

The organization continues to record a shift from long term prison sentences to other forms of punishment and harassment including: short term detentions; interrogations; summonses; official warnings; threats; intimidation; eviction; loss of employment; restrictions on travel; house searches; house arrests; telephone bugging; and physical and verbal acts of abuse.

"This harassment is used not just against specific individuals known for their dissident activities, but to suppress larger protests and pro-change movements," Amnesty International said.

An unofficial moratorium has been declared on executions. Although this is a welcome step, legislation allowing the use of the death penalty is still in place and some 50 people are still on death row. Amnesty International has received reports that death row prisoners have at times been subjected to poor conditions amounting to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

"It is high time the government of Cuba stopped stifling non-violent dissent," Amnesty International said, asking for all "prisoners of conscience" to be released, for the laws that allowed their detention to be amended and for all forms of harassment of political dissidents and human rights activists to cease.

"At a time when more and more countries around the world are turning their back on the

death penalty, we welcome the *de facto* moratorium on executions and urge the Cuban authorities to go one step further, by abolishing this cruel and irrevocable form of punishment and commuting all existing death sentences to prison terms," the organization added.

**\*\* The report: Cuba: the situation of human rights will be available on the web at:  
<http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/AMR250022002>**

Public Document

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