

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 73/97

Arbitrary arrest/Legal concern/
prisoner of conscience (POC), possible POCs 22 May 1997

CUBAAna María AGRAMONTE CRESPO

Alberto PERERA MARTÍNEZ

Jesús PÉREZ GÓMEZ

Lorenzo PESCOSO LEÓN

Aguileo CANCIO CHONG

Amnesty International is seeking the immediate and unconditional release of prisoner of conscience Ana María Agramonte Crespo and is concerned about the legal situation of Alberto Perera Martínez, Jesús Pérez Gómez, Lorenzo Pescoso León and Aguileo Cancio Chong, all of whom were arrested in Havana on 1 May 1997. On that day, which is a national holiday in Cuba to celebrate Labour Day, about a dozen political activists were reportedly detained. All but the five named above are believed to have been released.

Ana María Agramonte Crespo, President of the *Movimiento Acción Nacionalista*, Nationalist Action Movement, was tried on 16 May 1997 at the *Tribunal Municipal del distrito "Diez de Octubre"*, Municipal Tribunal of the 10th of October district, in Havana. She was convicted on charges of "disrespect" and "resisting authority" and sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. She reportedly had no legal representation at the trial. She has been detained for short periods on several occasions over the past eighteen months and frequently threatened with imprisonment because of her political activities. Amnesty International believes that she is a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising her rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

The other four detainees, who were arrested by State Security officials after searches of their homes, reportedly carried out without search warrants, are: Alberto Perera Martínez and Jesús Pérez Gómez of the *Comité Paz, Progreso y Libertad*, Committee of Peace, Progress and Liberty; Lorenzo Pescoso León of the *Partido Pro Derechos Humanos en Cuba*, Party for Human Rights in Cuba; and Aguileo Cancio Chong, of the *Partido Acción Nacionalista*, Nationalist Action Party. The authorities have not revealed the reasons for their detention though some unconfirmed reports indicate that the authorities have implicated them in acts of sabotage. The four are being held in the State Security headquarters in Havana known as Villa Marista. They are believed not to have had access to a lawyer and it is feared that if brought to trial, they will not be granted full judicial guarantees in accordance with international standards. All of the detainees are known political activists belonging to organizations that are members of *Concilio Cubano*, Cuban Concilium, a coalition made up of over 100 unofficial groups, including human rights groups, independent professional associations and political parties. Amnesty International fears that the real reason for their detention may be their peaceful political activities and is thus concerned that they too may be prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty International is calling on the Cuban authorities to clarify the reasons for their detention and to guarantee that they be granted full judicial guarantees, including access to lawyers of their choice, and that unless charged with a recognizable criminal offence, they be immediately and unconditionally released.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since its formation in October 1995, members of the *Concilio Cubano* have been subjected to persistent harassment. Meetings have been banned or disrupted by the authorities to prevent the organization from carrying out its activities. Many have been detained for short periods and threatened with imprisonment if they do not cease their activities or leave the country. Others have been tried and sentenced and have become prisoners of conscience. The authorities have also attempted, so far unsuccessfully, to discredit *Concilio Cubano* by linking it to exile groups who advocate the violent overthrow of the government.

For further information, see *Cuba: Government Crackdown on Dissent*, AMR 25/14/96, April 1996 and *Cuba: Dissidents Imprisoned or Forced into Exile*, AMR 25/29/96, July 1996.

Aguileo Cancio Chong has been detained on three previous occasions since July 1996, most recently on 3 March 1997. On that occasion he was held in detention for 19 days before being released without charge. Alberto Perera Martínez has also been arrested on several other occasions over the past year. In February 1996, during a major clampdown on *Concilio Cubano* activists, he was fined 500 Cuban pesos after being convicted on a charge of "disrespect".

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports of the arrests of Ana María Agramonte Crespo, Alberto Perera Martínez, Jesús Pérez Gómez, Lorenzo Pescoso León and Aguileo Cancio Chong, all members of *Concilio Cubano*;
- urging that Ana María Agramonte Crespo be immediately and unconditionally released, on the grounds that she is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising her rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- urging that the reasons for the arrest of Alberto Perera Martínez, Jesús Pérez Gómez, Lorenzo Pescoso León and Aguileo Cancio Chong be immediately clarified and that they be immediately released unless charged with a recognizable criminal offence;
- urging that as long as they are in detention, they be provided with full judicial guarantees, including immediate access to a lawyer of their choice.

APPEALS TO:

1) Attorney-General

Dr Juan Escalona Reguera
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
San Rafael 3, La Habana, Cuba

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Havana, Cuba

Telex: 511456 fisge

Salutation: Sr Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

2) Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr Roberto Robaina González
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Calzada No. 360
Vedado, La Habana, Cuba

Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores, Havana, Cuba

Telex: 511122 / 511464 / 512950

Fax: + 53 7 333085 / + 53 7 335261

Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of the Interior

General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra
Ministro de Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Plaza de la Revolución
La Habana, Cuba

Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Havana, Cuba

Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

4) Department of State Security

Sr Director
Departamento de Seguridad del Estado
Villa Marista
La Víbora
La Habana, Cuba

Telegrams: Director, Villa Marista, Havana, Cuba

Salutation: Señor Director / Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

National Union of Jurists
Unión Nacional de Juristas
Apartado 4161
La Habana 4, Cuba

Editor of Granma (daily newspaper)

Sr Jacinto Granda de Laserna
Granma
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La Habana, Cuba

and to diplomatic representatives of Cuba accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 June 1997.