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CUBA: TWO LEADERS OF CONCILIO CUBANO JAILED

The Cuban Government should immediately release Lázaro González Valdés and Dr Leonel Morejón Almagro, leaders of the non-governmental coalition, *Concilio Cubano*, Amnesty International said today.

Lázaro González Valdés was sentenced to 14 months' imprisonment after being convicted of "disrespect" and "disobedience" at his trial yesterday in a municipal court in Havana. Dr Leonel Morejón Almagro was sentenced to six months' imprisonment at his trial today on similar charges.

"It is appalling that Lázaro González Valdés and Dr Leonel Morejón Almagro are detained solely because of their peaceful activities with *Concilio Cubano*," Amnesty International said. "They are prisoners of conscience and should be released immediately."

"The insubstantial nature of the charges would seem to indicate that the Cuban authorities are desperate to stifle peaceful dissent."

The charge of "disrespect" is believed to have been based on the fact that they refused to stop their activities with *Concilio Cubano* after receiving three official warnings from the police to do so.

In the case of Lázaro González Valdés, the charge of "disobedience" is reportedly based on allegations that the family took some time to open the door when police went to arrest him.

The defence lawyer in both cases, Dr José Angel Izquierdo González, was reportedly informed of the substance of the charges against Lázaro González Valdés only an hour or so before the three-hour trial started and he was only able to speak directly to his client minutes beforehand.

Lázaro González Valdés is one of the four deputy national organizers of *Concilio Cubano* and the president of the unofficial *Partido Pro Derechos Humanos en Cuba (PPDHC)*, Party for Human Rights in Cuba, one of more than 100 unofficial groups which belong to the coalition. Dr Leonel Morejón Almagro, who is also a lawyer and the president of Naturpaz, an unofficial environmental group, is the national organizer of *Concilio Cubano*.

Deputy national organizer of *Concilio Cubano*, Mercedes Parada Antúnez, who had been taken to hospital under police guard following her arrest on 15 February, has reportedly been transferred to a detention centre. Reinaldo Cosano Alén, also a deputy national organizer of the coalition group, is also still reported to be in detention following his arrest on 21 February.

Dr René Gómez Manzano, one of the founders of *Concilio Cubano* and the president of an unofficial lawyers' group called *Corriente Agramontista*, Agramontist Current, has also been in detention since 17 February. It is feared that charges are to be brought against all three.

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For further background, see News Service 31/96 and 34/96.