

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 25/011/2002

Distrib: PG / SC

To: Health professionals
From: Medical office / Americas Program
Date: 2 December 2002

MEDICAL ACTION

Ill-health of Cecilio Reinoso Sánchez and Carlos Oquendo Rodríguez Cuba

Key words ill-health / ill-treatment

Amnesty International's concerns

Amnesty International is concerned for the health of prisoners Cecilio Reinoso Sánchez and Carlos Oquendo Rodríguez, both held in Combinado del Este prison in La Habana. Amnesty International considers Carlos Oquendo to be a prisoner of conscience.¹ [The two cases are not related].

Case 1 Cecilio Reinoso Sánchez

Cecilio Reinoso Sánchez (63) reportedly suffers from a number of illnesses, including arthritis, prostatic hyperplasia, chronic bronchitis and glaucoma, which is said to put him at risk of losing his sight.

Cecilio Reinoso Sánchez had reportedly been living in the United States of America for seven years, but returned to Cuba on 9 January 1996 following the death of his mother. He was arrested on 12 January and sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment for "terrorism".

Case 2 Carlos Oquendo Rodríguez

Amnesty International is also concerned for the health of Carlos Oquendo Rodríguez, who according to the information received is suffering serious chest pain. This has reportedly been attributed to a tumour. Amnesty International has no further details on his health.

Carlos Oquendo Rodríguez, along with two other well-known activists, José Aguilar Hernández and Yosvany Aguilar Camejo, was reportedly detained by police in the vicinity of the Mexican embassy on 28 February 2002. On the night of 27 February, a group of 21 Cuban

¹ A prisoner of conscience is a person detained solely for his or her conscientiously held beliefs or the exercise of fundamental freedoms, who has not used or advocated violence.

men drove a commandeered public bus through the perimeter gate and into the compound of the Mexican Embassy in Havana in an apparent attempt to leave Cuba. The incident set off a chain of arrests of numerous known dissidents. Though the three men have been held for over nine months, they have yet to be formally charged. Carlos Oquendo Rodríguez is the president of the *Movimiento Opositor 13 de Julio*, 13 July Opposition Movement, and has been imprisoned on several occasions.

Amnesty International raised concerns for the three men in the public document *The situation of human rights in Cuba* (AMR 25/002/2002) May 2002 and in three open letters to the Cuban government in March (TG AMR 25/02/03), May (TG AMR 25/02/04) and July 2002 (TG AMR 25/02/09). The organization inquired for details of any investigation into their detention, but so far no information has been received.

Recommended actions

Please write letters to the Cuban authorities in Spanish or English:

- introducing yourself as a member of Amnesty International's health professional network;
- expressing concern about reports received on the current state of health of Cecilio Reinoso Sánchez and Carlos Oquendo Rodríguez, held in in Combinado del Este prison in La Habana;
- seeking information on the prisoners' current state of health and asking for details of medical treatment they are receiving;
- urging that they be transferred to hospital if their conditions require medical treatment that they cannot get inside the prison;
- stating that you recognize that economic factors, including the US trade embargo, may affect standards of nutrition and medical care in prisons, but that conditions of detention should conform to internationally recognized minimum standards, such as those outlined in the UN *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* and the UN *Body of Principles for the Protection of all Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment*;
- requesting information regarding the conditions in Combinado del Este Prison;

Please add a further recommendation concerning the case of Carlos Oquendo Rodríguez:

- urging the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release him on the grounds that he is a prison of conscience imprisoned solely for the non-violent expression of his right to freedom of expression and association.

Addresses

Head of State and Government

Dr Fidel Castro Ruz
Presidente de los Consejos de Estados y de Ministros
La Habana, Cuba
Fax: via Ministry of Foreign Affairs: + 53 7 333 460
Salutation: Su Excelencia/ Your Excellency

Attorney-General

Dr Juan Escalona Reguera
Fiscal General de la República,
Fiscalía General de la República
San Rafael 3
La Habana, Cuba
Fax: + 53 7 669 485
Salutation: Señor Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sr Felipe Pérez Roque
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Calzada No. 360
Vedado, La Habana, Cuba
Fax: + 53 7 333 460
Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

Interior Secretary
General Abelardo Coloma Ibarra
Ministerial del Interior y Prisons
Ministerial del Interior
Plaza de la Revolución
La Habana, Cuba
Fax: + 53 7 8301 566
Salutation: Señor Ministro, Dear Minister

Responsible for all « counter-revolutionary » prisoners
Coronel Nelson de Armas
Jefe de Atención a los Presos Contrarrevolucionarios
Prisión del Combinado del Este
Kilómetro 13 1/2
Carretera Monumental
Habana del Este
Provincia de la Habana, Cuba
Salutation: Señor Coronel

Copies

Please send copies of your letter to diplomatic representatives of Cuba accredited to your country.

Monitoring of action

If you have access to e-mail you can help our attempt to monitor letter-writing actions. If you write one, two, three or more letters, please send us an e-mail and let us know. Please write in the subject line of your e-mail the index number of the action and the number of letters you write

e.g. AMR 25/011/2002 - 3

Please send your message to medical@amnesty.org Thank you.