

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 188/91 (AMR 25/12/91, 5 June 1991) and follow-up AMR 25/13/91 (13 June 1991) - Fair Trial

CUBA: Dr Julián ARAÑA ROSAINZ, neurologist, aged 35
 Dr Julio BIENTZ SAAB, neurosurgeon, aged 42
 (note correct spelling of first surname)

The trial of Dr Julián Araña Rosainz and Dr Julio Bientz Saab took place on 25 June 1991 at the Chamber of Crimes against State Security, **sala de delitos contra la seguridad del Estado**, of the Havana People's Provincial Court, **Tribunal Popular Provincial**. The two men, who both worked at the Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery (**Instituto de Neurología y Neurocirugía**) in Havana, were accused under article 107.1 of the Penal Code of plotting to assassinate President Fidel Castro by blowing him up with dynamite when he was due to visit the Institute in September 1990, as well as a lesser charge of "enemy propaganda" (**propaganda enemiga**). At the trial, the prosecution requested sentences of 18 years and 10 years respectively for Drs. Bientz and Araña. Dr Araña is said to have apologized for his alleged involvement and said that the plot was Dr Bientz' idea and that he (Araña) had never intended to go through with it. When they were eventually sentenced on 9 July 1991, Dr Bientz was given a sentence of twelve years' imprisonment and Dr Araña eight years. When handing down the sentences, the court reportedly took into account the fact that the two had not carried out their alleged plan but had only discussed preparations.

The two doctors had been arrested in October 1990 after reportedly being denounced by two men whom they had allegedly asked to help them with the plot, and were initially taken to the Department of State Security (**Departamento de Seguridad del Estado**) headquarters in Havana known as Villa Marista. They are now believed to be held in Combinado del Este Prison, also in Havana.

Amnesty International fears that they may not have received full judicial guarantees during the period of pre-trial detention and that, because of the political nature and seriousness of the charges against them, the possibility of receiving a fair hearing and a proper defence may have been severely limited.

Further information is being sought both into the circumstances of their arrest and the legal aspects of the case.

No further action by Urgent Action network participants is required at present. Thank you to all who sent appeals.