

URGENT ACTION

LADY IN WHITE RELEASED FROM CUBAN PRISON

On 5 October, Lady in White Niurka Luque Álvarez was released from prison in Cuba pending trial. Fellow Lady in White Sonia Garro Alfonso and her husband Ramón Alejandro Muñoz González still remain in detention without charge.

Lady in White **Niurka Luque Álvarez** was released pending trial on 5 October, having spent almost seven months in prison. She has been charged with “violence or intimidation” against a state official (“*atentado*”). She was arrested on 17 March, along with 17 other Ladies in White, while demonstrating peacefully to commemorate the anniversary of the 2003 crackdown on dissidents. The other 17 were released a few hours after Niurka Luque Álvarez.

On 18 March, Lady in White **Sonia Garro Alfonso** and her husband **Ramón Alejandro Muñoz González** were both arrested at home. Sonia Garro Alfonso continues to be held in Guatao women's prison on the outskirts of Havana; Ramón Alejandro Muñoz González is still being held in Havana's Combinado del Este prison. It is believed that neither has yet to be formally charged.

Niurka Luque Álvarez has not been given a date for her trial. On her release from prison, she was warned against participating in any activities with government critics. She suffers from epilepsy and did not receive any medical attention during her incarceration, and had to rely on family members and supporters for medication.

The charges against Niurka Luque Álvarez – and the continued incarceration of Sonia Garro Alfonso and Ramón Alejandro Muñoz González – appear to be politically motivated, and part of the Cuban authorities' ongoing campaign to intimidate and silence government critics.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to charge Sonia Garro Alfonso and Ramón Alejandro Muñoz González with internationally recognizable criminal offences or release them immediately;
- Asking them to ensure that anyone charged is given a fair trial in compliance with international standards;
- Urging them to cease immediately the harassment and intimidation of Ladies in White and other citizens who peacefully exercise their rights to freedom of expression and association.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 NOVEMBER 2012 TO:

Head of State and Government

Raúl Castro Ruz
 Presidente de la República de Cuba
 La Habana, Cuba
 Fax: +53 7 83 33 085 (via Foreign
 Ministry), +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban
 Mission to UN)
 Email: cuba@un.int (c/o Cuban Mission
 to UN)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Interior Minister

General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra
 Ministro del Interior y Prisiones
 Ministerio del Interior,
 Plaza de la Revolución,
 La Habana, Cuba
 Fax: +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban
 Mission to UN)
 Email: correominint@mn.mn.co.cu

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Attorney General

Dr. Darío Delgado Cura
 Fiscal General de la República,
 Fiscalía General de la República,
 Amistad 552, e/Monte y Estrella, Centro
 Habana
 La Habana, Cuba

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 215/12. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR25/018/2012/en>

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It is believed that the arrest of Niurka Luque Álvarez, Sonia Garro Alfonso and Ramón Alejandro Muñoz González was due to the visit of the Pope Benedict XVI to Cuba in March 2012 and their activism with the Ladies in White, and that it was intended to intimidate other government critics. Relatives have told Amnesty International that the authorities have accused Sonia Garro Alfonso of attempted murder and public disorder, but she and her husband have yet to be formally charged.

Pope Benedict XVI visited Cuba from 28–30 March 2012, and celebrated open air masses in the city of Santiago de Cuba and the capital, Havana, and held meetings with the leaders of the Cuban Catholic Church and the Cuban authorities. Government critics had hoped the Pope's visit might herald an opening on the part of the Cuban authorities, but instead they were subjected to further repression. Over 200 government critics were apparently detained during the Pope's visit, and many others held under house arrest, with the express purpose of preventing them from travelling to attend the masses and take part in protest activities.

On 17 March 2012, the Ladies in White commemorated the anniversary of the 2003 crackdown on dissidents. The 2003 crackdown saw the Cuban authorities arrest 75 people for their peaceful expression of critical opinions of the government. They were subjected to summary trials and were sentenced to prison terms of up to 28 years. Amnesty International declared the 75 convicted dissidents to be prisoners of conscience; the last prisoner was released in April 2011.

The Ladies in White were formed in 2003 as the group of female relatives of the 75 prisoners of conscience calling for their release. After the releases of the prisoners in 2011, the Ladies in White continued campaigning for the release of other political prisoners and for the lifting of restrictions on fundamental civil and political freedoms in Cuba. Members of the organization have been repeatedly prevented from meeting for any purpose, including attendance at mass on Sundays.

Name: Niurka Luque Álvarez (f), Sonia Garro Alfonso (f), Ramón Alejandro Muñoz González (m)

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 215/12 Index: AMR 25/024/2012 Issue Date: 11 October 2012