

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of ill-treatment/Legal concern

18 December 1992

CUBA: Gustavo ARCOS BERGNES, Secretary-General of the
Cuban Committee for Human Rights
Francisco CHAVIANO GONZALEZ, President of the
Consejo Nacional por los Derechos Civiles en Cuba,
National Council for Civil Rights in Cuba
René DEL POZO POZO, spokesperson for the Comisión
Cubana de Derechos Humanos y Reconciliación Nacional, Cuban
Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation
Angela HERRERA (female), President of the Coalición
Democrática Cubana, Cuban Democratic Coalition
Alvaro PRENDES, leading member of the Corriente
Socialista Demócrata Cubana, Cuban Democratic Socialist
Current
Vladimiro ROCA, leading member of the Cuban
Democratic Socialist Current
Paula VALIENTE (female), President of the Asociación
Madres por la Dignidad, Association of Mothers for Dignity

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical integrity of several members of unofficial political and human rights groups. As of 16 December 1992, the homes of Gustavo Arcos Bergnes, Francisco Chaviano González, Angela Herrera, Alvaro Prendes and Vladimiro Roca were said to be under siege by large pro-government mobs, many of whom are believed to belong to the so-called Destacamentos Populares de Respuesta Rápida, People's Rapid Response Detachments (commonly known as Rapid Response Brigades), acting in coordination with the security forces and Communist Party officials. Another activist, Paula Valiente, was reportedly arrested on 16 December 1992 when she attempted to visit Angela Herrera. It is not yet clear where she is being held. Paula Valiente and her husband had been visited by state security officials and members of Rapid Response Brigades a few hours earlier and warned to stop their activities. René del Pozo Pozo, a leading member of another group, is staying at the home of Alvaro Prendes after having to flee his own home which was also at one point under siege. In the case of Vladimiro Roca and Alvaro Prendes, water, gas and electricity supplies are said to have been cut off.

The siege of the home of Gustavo Arcos Bergnes began on 10 December. Crowds are believed to have gone to the other houses over the weekend. None of the occupants have been able to leave their homes since then. Given the current food shortages in Cuba, it is unlikely that any of them would have substantial food supplies in the house. It is feared that the authorities are trying to put pressure on those trapped inside their homes to give up their activities. All are members of different dissident groups, none of whom, to Amnesty International's knowledge, has advocated violence. There have been many incidents over the past year or so involving members of the Rapid Response Brigades in which those under attack have been verbally and physically

assaulted and, instead of being protected by the authorities, have themselves ended up under arrest. The declared aim of the brigades is "to defend the country, the Revolution and socialism in all circumstances, by confronting and liquidating any sign of counter-revolution or crime" [*"defender la Patria, la Revolución y el Socialismo en cualesquiera circunstancias, enfrentando y liquidando toda manifestación contrarrevolucionaria o delictiva que se produzca"*].

On 10 December 1992 (the 44th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), two other prominent dissidents were arrested and are still in detention

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(see UA 392/92, AMR 25/30/92, 14 December 1992). Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, President of the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, was detained by state security agents at the home of a friend and severely beaten. He was taken to hospital and later transferred to the headquarters of the Departamento Técnico de Investigaciones (DTI), the police Technical Investigations Department.

The authorities acknowledged they were holding him for investigation for allegedly "disturbing public order". Rodolfo González, a member of the executive of Cuban Committee for Human Rights, was arrested the same day and is believed to be held at the state security headquarters. There has so far been no official statement about the reasons for his arrest.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes and airmail letters either in Spanish, English or in your own language:

- expressing concern for the physical safety of Gustavo Arcos Bergnes, Francisco Chaviano González, René del Pozo Pozo, Angela Herrera, Alvaro Prendes and Vladimiro Roca, who have reportedly been confined in their homes for several days by pro-government crowds acting with the apparent support of the security forces;
- requesting the authorities to immediately take steps to protect those concerned and to disperse the crowds;
- requesting the authorities to allow those under attack to carry on their legitimate activities in peace and to exercise their rights to freedom of movement;
- urging the immediate and unconditional release of Paula Valiente on the grounds that she is a prisoner of conscience and requesting that her physical integrity be guaranteed while in detention.

APPEALS TO

1) President

Su Excelencia Dr Fidel Castro Ruz
Presidente del Consejo de Estado
Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba

**Telegrams: Presidente Castro, Havana,
Cuba**

**Telexes: 511151 (Ministry of the
Armed Forces)**

Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones

Exteriores, Havana, Cuba

Telexes: 5111464 / 512950

Faxes: + 53 333085 / + 53 335261

**Salutation: Su Excelencia /
Your Excellency**

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Your Excellency**

2) Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Calzada No. 360
Vedado
Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba

3) Attorney-General

Dr Ramón de la Cruz Ochoa
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
San Rafael 3
Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Havana, Cuba
Telexes: 511456 FISGE

Salutation: Señor Fiscal General /
Dear Attorney General

4) Minister of Justice

Dr Carlos Amat Forés
Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Calle O, No. 216, 8vo piso
e/ 23 y Humboldt, Vedado
Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Havana,
Cuba
Telexes: 511331 MINJU

Salutation: Señor Ministro /
Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Newspaper:

Granma
Apartado 6260
Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba

Coordinating Body of Human Rights

Organizations in Cuba:
CODEHU
1040 S.W. 47 Ave
Miami, FL 33135, USA

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 29 January 1992.