

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 25/18/96

29 March 1996

Further information (6) on UA 08/96 (AMR 25/01/96, 16 January 1996) and follow-up (AMR 25/02/96, 17 January; AMR 25/05/96, 20 February; AMR 25/06/96, 22 February; AMR 25/08/96, 23 February; AMR 25/11/96, 29 February) - Arbitrary Detention / Harassment

CUBADr Leonel MOREJON ALMAGRO, lawyer and national organizer of
Concilio Cubano

Lázaro GONZALEZ VALDES, deputy national organizer of *Concilio Cubano*

Rafael SOLANO, director of *Habana Press*, member group of *Concilio Cubano*

Eugenio RODRIGUEZ CHAPLE, president of the *Bloque Democrático*

José Martí, José Martí Democratic Block, member group of
Concilio Cubano

Dr Leonel Morejón Almagro and Lázaro González Valdés have been transferred to Valle Grande Prison and El Pitirre Prison respectively to serve their prison sentences. On 8 March 1996, following an appeal hearing, the latter's sentence of fourteen months' imprisonment was confirmed while Dr Morejón, who was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for "resistance", was given an additional nine-month prison sentence on a charge of "disrespect", making a total of fifteen months. In the case of Dr Morejón, the appeal had been requested by the prosecution, reportedly on the grounds that the six-month sentence imposed on him for "resistance", the maximum possible for that offence, was not sufficient punishment for him.

Rafael Solano and Eugenio Rodríguez Chaple both remain in detention at Villa Marista, the national headquarters of the Department of State Security in Havana. Rafael Solano is said to be under investigation on a charge of "*asociación para delinquir*", "associating with others to commit a crime", which carries a maximum sentence of three years' imprisonment, in connection with his activities as director of *Habana Press*, an independent press agency which is part of *Concilio Cubano*. He is permitted weekly visits of 15 to 20 minutes from his family but they can only talk to him in the presence of an official.

His lawyer, Dr José Angel Izquierdo, was able to talk to him for the first time on 22 March for about 15 minutes but it is understood that he has not yet been provided by the prosecution with details of the case against his client.

A request for bail was denied. Members of Rafael Solano's family have received several anonymous phone calls since he has been in detention, in which serious threats have reportedly been made against their own physical integrity as well as that of other leading members of *Habana Press*.

Eugenio Rodríguez Chaple is also said to be facing a charge of "associating with others to commit a crime" as well as one of "*peligrosidad*", "dangerousness", which carries a maximum sentence of four years' imprisonment. Eugenio Rodríguez had reportedly been arrested on or about 19 February during the government crackdown on the activities of *Concilio Cubano*. He was released on 25 February but re-arrested next day, reportedly after making a statement by telephone to contacts abroad about the shooting down by the Cuban Air Force of two civilian planes belonging to a Cuban exile group on 24 February. He is the president of the *Bloque Democrático José Martí*, José Martí Democratic Block, a political group which is part of *Concilio Cubano*. He and his family have been subjected to repeated harassment by the authorities during the past two years (see UA 57/94, AMR 25/03/94, 17 February - Fear for safety). His

wife, Lázara Portelles Herrera, is said to be facing a possible charge of "disrespect" ["desacato"] for protesting his arrest.

Amnesty International believes that Dr Leonel Morejón Almagro, Lázaro González Valdés, Rafael Solano and Eugenio Rodríguez Chaple are all prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or in your own language:

- urging the immediate and unconditional release of Dr Leonel Morejón Almagro, Lázaro González Valdés, Rafael Solano and Eugenio Rodríguez Chaple on the grounds that they are prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- expressing additional concern that rather than being released, Dr Morejón's sentence was in fact increased on appeal;
- urging that Rafael Solano and Eugenio Rodríguez Chaple be granted full judicial guarantees in accordance with international standards for a fair trial;
- expressing concern that members of Rafael Solano's family have received anonymous telephone calls in which serious threats have been made to their physical integrity and that of other leading members of *Habana Press* and urging the authorities to guarantee their safety.

APPEALS TO:

1) Attorney-General

Dr Juan Escalona Reguera
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
San Rafael 3, La Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Havana, Cuba
Telexes: 511456 fidge
Faxes: + 53 7 333164
Salutation: Sr Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

2) Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr Roberto Robaina González
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Calzada No. 360
Vedado, La Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores, Havana, Cuba
Telexes: 511122 / 512950
Faxes: + 53 7 333085 / + 53 7 335261
Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Department of State Security

Sr Director
Departamento de Seguridad del Estado
Villa Marista
La Víbora
La Habana, Cuba
Telegrams: Director, Villa Marista, Havana, Cuba
Salutation: Señor Director / Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

National Union of Jurists
Unión Nacional de Juristas de Cuba
Apartado 4161
La Habana 4, Cuba

Granma (daily newspaper)
Granma
Apdo 6260
La Habana, Cuba

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 10 May 1996.