

RAN #7 February 22, 2008

CUBA: Three journalists released from prison and flown to Spain; 21 others still detained.

BACKGROUND: Journalists **Alejandro González Raga** and **José Gabriel Ramón Castillo**, and librarian **Omar Pernet Hernández** were released on February 16, 2008, and sent to Spain, accompanied by their families. The three men were arrested and sentenced in the crackdown on alleged dissidents that began on March 18, 2003, with 21 other writers, journalists and librarians, part of the so-called "Group of 75." All were serving sentences of 14, 20 and 25 years respectively. The reasons for their release are unknown, even to the three men. Neither is there any indication that the announcement of Fidel Castro's retirement from office is linked to these releases. However 21 other writers, journalists and librarians remain detained under Article 91 of the Penal Code and Law 88 and in violation of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

APPEAL LETTER

February 22, 2008

Raúl Castro Ruz
Presidente
La Habana, Cuba
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Your Excellency:

I wish to add my name to this appeal from PEN Canada, the Canadian branch of the international writers' organization International PEN, with 145 centres in 104 countries worldwide.

I join my writer colleagues in welcoming the release earlier this month of journalists Alejandro González Raga and José Gabriel Ramón Castillo, and librarian Omar Pernet Hernández.

However, we remain distressed by the fact that 21 other writers, journalists and librarians remain in prison, detained under Article 91 of the Penal Code and Law 88 and in violation of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

There are serious concerns for the health of many of these prisoners. They are being detained in direct contravention of their internationally recognized right to freedom of expression.

We urgently request your immediate attention to this ongoing and distressing violation of human rights in your country.

Sincerely,

[your name and address]

Please send copies of your letter to the following Cuban officials:

Attorney-General
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Fiscal General de la República

Fiscalía General de la República
San Rafael 3
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Salutation: Señor Fiscal General/ Dear Attorney General

Minister of Foreign Affairs
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Please send copies of your letter to Canadian officials:

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