

# URGENT ACTION

## URBAN ARTIST AT RISK IN CUBA

**After being arbitrarily detained on 17 August, Yulier Perez, a graffiti artist known for painting dilapidated walls in Havana, is at risk of being imprisoned again, after months of intimidation and harassment from authorities.**

State officials arbitrarily detained **Yulier Rodriguez Perez**, or Yulier P., known for his art work on the ruined walls of Havana, the capital, on 17 August in Central Havana. He told Amnesty International that he was released on the evening of 18 August on the condition that he remove all his artwork from the walls of Havana by 25 August.

Amnesty International has followed the case of Yulier Perez since early 2017, when he told the organization he had been forced out of his art studio. His international profile has increasingly grown. In 2016, he told newspaper *14 y medio*, "My pictures are like fables, a portrait of people's experiences... They are like souls, because at some point we stop being people and now we are souls in a purgatory called Cuba." In April 2017, police summoned and questioned him about his interviews with the international press and his opinions about his art. Yulier Perez said that state security officials threatened to charge him with "dangerousness" (*peligrosidad*), or a range of other provisions of the Penal Code. In July, Yulier Perez travelled to the USA to participate in an art exhibition. On his return, police summoned him again. Subsequently, he hand-delivered letters to the Minister of Culture and Minister of External Relations, asking for their intervention in the frequent police harassment.

Decree No. 272 (20 February 2001) establishes administrative penalties for infringements on public adornments and monuments, and establishes that any alteration of walls or external parts of buildings is a fineable offence. Such an offence is not contemplated in the Penal Code. Yulier Perez is at risk of being criminally charged with "dangerousness" solely for the exercise of his right to freedom of expression. Cuban authorities have frequently used this vague and overly broad provision against human rights defenders and any others who appear to contradict the "norms of socialist morals". Provisions foreseeing the punishment of individuals not because of their actions or attitudes, but because of the likelihood of potential, future and uncertain actions breach the principle of legality.

### **Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:**

- Urging the Cuban authorities to ensure that law enforcement officials do not arbitrarily detain Yulier Rodriguez Perez as an attempt to restrict the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to make sure that free artistic expression is adequately protected, and to repeal all legislation which unduly limits the right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to amend provisions of the Penal Code, such as the provision on "peligrosidad", that are so vague that they lend themselves to abuse by state officials to restrict freedom of expression.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 OCTOBER 2017 TO:**

#### President of the Republic

Raúl Castro Ruz  
 Presidente de la República de Cuba  
 La Habana, Cuba  
 Fax: +41 22 758 9431 (Cuba Office in Geneva); +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)  
 Email: cuba\_onu@cubanmission.com (via Cuban mission to UN)  
 Twitter: @RaulCastroR  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Attorney General

Dr. Dario Delgado Cura  
 Fiscal General de la República  
 Fiscalía General de la República  
 Amistad 552, e/ Monte y Estrella  
 Centro Habana, La Habana, Cuba  
 Email: relaciones@fgr.cu  
 Twitter: @FGR\_Cuba  
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/  
 Estimado Fiscal General**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** Her Excellency **Teresita Vicente**, Embassy of the Republic of Cuba, 167 High Holborn WC1 6PA, 020 7240 2488, Fax 020 7836 2602, secembajador@uk.embacuba.cu, www.cubadiplomacia.cu  
**Salutation: Your Excellency** Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
 INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has documented harassment, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests of artists in Cuba for decades. In the late 1980s, members of artistic organizations were detained in their homes and charged with “illegal association”.

Cuban authorities have previously arbitrarily detained graffiti artists for exercising their right to freedom of expression. In 2015, Danilo Maldonado Machado (also known as ‘El Sexto’) spent almost 10 months in prison without trial following accusations of “aggravated contempt” after being arrested on 25 December 2014 for transporting two pigs with the names “Raúl” and “Fidel” painted on them, which he intended to release in an art show in Havana’s Central Park. He was never formally charged nor brought before a court during the almost 10 months he spent in detention. Danilo Maldonado Machado was again arrested at his home in Havana the morning of 26 November 2016, hours after the announcement of Fidel Castro’s death. That same day, Cuba-based newspaper *14 y medio* reported that he had graffitied the words “He’s gone” (*Se fue*) on a wall in Havana. He was detained for almost two months, according to his family, without formal charges.

Article 75.1 of the Penal Code provides that any police officer can issue a warning (*acta de advertencia*) for “dangerousness”. A warning can also be issued for associating with a “dangerous person.” Municipal tribunals have the authority to declare someone to be in a dangerous pre-criminal state. They can do so summarily within pre-set timeframes which are so short – less than 11 days from charge to sentence – that they effectively “deprive the accused of the possibility of mounting an adequate legal defence”.

Security measures are imposed on those found to have a “dangerous disposition” by a municipal tribunal. These measures may include therapy, police surveillance or “re-education”. The latter may consist of internment in a specialized work or study establishment for a period of between one and four years. In most cases, internment is changed to imprisonment, even though in the Penal Code “dangerousness” is not punishable by imprisonment.

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