

URGENT ACTION

FAMILY OF PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE DENIED VISITS

Cuban authorities have suspended family visiting rights of human rights defender, Dr Eduardo Cardet, for six months as punishment for his family's activism on his case, according to his wife. He is a prisoner of conscience who must be released immediately and unconditionally.

On 26 May 2018, the head of the Cuba SI prison in Holguín, Cuba, informed the family of **Dr Eduardo Cardet Concepción** that his rights to family visits have been suspended for six months on account of the complaints that his family have made to the international press and other human rights mechanisms.

Yaimaris Vecino, his wife, told Amnesty International that when she and her children and Eduardo's mother tried to visit Eduardo they could not see him. Authorities verbally informed the family that Eduardo's visiting rights had been suspended. According to her, Eduardo is also typically allowed to make calls to his family each Tuesday. On Tuesday 5 June, he did not call, suggesting he was also denied access to his regular phone call.

Eduardo is the leader of the pro-democracy movement Christian Liberation Movement (Movimiento Cristiano Liberación, MCL). He has been imprisoned in Holguín since his arrest on 30 November 2016, five days after the death of the former leader of Cuba, Fidel Castro. Prior to his arrest, Eduardo Cardet gave a number of interviews published in international media in which he was critical of the Cuban government.

Under international law, prisoners have the right to communicate with the outside world, in particular to receive visits from their families and lawyers, and to access adequate health care. Any restriction on this right, must be necessary and proportionate to achieve its aim, or may amount to an infringement of the right to private and family life. Such rights are fundamental safeguards against other human rights violations, including torture or other ill-treatment.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to release human rights defender Dr Eduardo Cardet immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure that access to his family is immediately reinstated and that he is allowed regular contact with his family and the outside world, as well as access to lawyers and medical care of his choosing.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 JULY TO:

President of the Republic

Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez
 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, New York)
 Email: cuba_onu@cubamission.com (c/o Cuban Mission to UN)

Salutation: Your Excellency / Su Excelencia

Ministry of Interior

Vicealmirante Julio César Gandarilla Bermejo
 Ministro del Interior
 Ministerio del Interior, Plaza de la Revolución. La Habana, Cuba.
 Fax: + 53 7 855 6621 + 53 7 8301 566 (or +1 212 779 1697 - via Cuban Mission to UN)

Email: correominint@mn.mn.co.cu
Salutation: Dear Minister / Señor Ministro.

And copies to:

Movimiento Cristiano de Liberación (MCL)

Email: info@oswaldopaya.org

Twitter: @oswaldopaya

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

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fourth update of UA 32/17. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr25/7759/2018/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to five witnesses who spoke to Amnesty International by telephone on the condition of anonymity, Eduardo Cardet was pushed off his bicycle and violently detained in the early evening of 30 November 2016 by at least four plain clothed and one uniformed police officer as he returned home after visiting his mother. According to his wife, who witnessed her husband's detention with their two children, Eduardo Cardet is charged with attacking an official of the state (*atentado*). This offence is covered under Article 142.1 of the Criminal Code. One officer is alleging that Eduardo Cardet pushed him during his arrest. All witnesses who spoke with Amnesty International counter this allegation, and state that Eduardo Cardet was quickly and violently restrained by plain clothed officials, placed in handcuffs, and beaten, and had no opportunity for self-defence. The witnesses believe that Eduardo Cardet was arrested for his beliefs and ideas. Amnesty International was able to review a copy of the sentence at appeal emitted by the provincial court of Holguin. The sentence makes no mention of the original grounds for the arrest, suggesting the arrest was arbitrary. On 17 May, the Popular Provincial Court of Holguín (Tribunal Provincial Popular de Holguín) ratified in appeal the judgement handed down on 20 March sentencing Dr Eduardo Cardet Concepción to three years in prison.

The Christian Liberation Movement (Movimiento Cristiano Liberación, MCL) is a prominent actor in the pro-democracy movement in Cuba. According to its website, it is a movement for peaceful and democratic change and respect for human dignity. It was founded in 1988 by Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, who became a visible figure of the Cuban political opposition, and four other activists. Amnesty International has documented harassment and intimidation of members of the MCL for decades. In 1991, after Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas presented a petition calling for a national referendum relating to constitutional reform, he had his home destroyed by over 200 people, said to be members of a Rapid Response Brigade. After Oswaldo Payá announced his intention to put himself forward as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly for the municipality of Cerro, Havana, members of his organization were reportedly subjected to frequent questioning and short-term detention.

In an interview published on 16 September 2016 by ABC International, Eduardo Cardet stated: "Political activities are passed off as criminal offences such as inciting public scandal, contempt of or offences against the authorities, and the political police use these classifications to lock up dissidents" (*Se disfraza la actividad política con hechos delictivos comunes, por ejemplo, escándalo público, desacato, atentado, figuras que utiliza la policía política para encarcelar a los disidentes*).

Cuba is closed to Amnesty International and nearly all independent international human rights monitors.

Name: Dr Eduardo Cardet Concepción

Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 32/17 Index: AMR 25/8537/2018 Issue Date: 07 June 2018