

CUBAN GOVERNMENT DETAINS CRITIC

CUBA

Andrés Carrión Álvarez (m)

A government critic has been detained, apparently without charge, for more than a week for peacefully expressing his right to freedom of expression.

Andrés Carrión Álvarez was arrested in the city of Santiago de Cuba on 28 March where he was attending an open air mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI. Five minutes before the mass began in Antonio Maceo Square, he apparently shouted, “freedom” (libertad) and “down with communism” (abajo el comunismo).

He was removed by security personnel and was apparently arrested by officials from the Department of State Security. Local human rights organizations have been unable to confirm his whereabouts or whether he has been charged.

Amnesty International believes he may be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- * Calling on the authorities to reveal immediately the whereabouts of Andrés Carrión Álvarez, who was arrested on 28 March;
- * Urging them to release him immediately if he is detained, unless there is sufficient evidence to charge him with an internationally-recognizable criminal offence;
- * Urging them to cease immediately the harassment and intimidation of citizens who peacefully exercise their rights to freedom of expression and association.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 MAY 2012 TO: (Time difference = GMT - 5 hrs / BST - 6 hrs)

<p><u>Head of State and Government</u> Raúl Castro Ruz Presidente de la República de Cuba La Habana, Cuba Fax: 0053 7 83 33 085 (via Foreign Ministry) 001 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN) Email: cuba@un.int (c/o Cuban Mission to UN) Salutation: Your Excellency</p>	<p><u>Interior Minister</u> General Abelardo Coloma Ibarra Ministro del Interior y Prisiones Ministerio del Interior, Plaza de la Revolución, La Habana, Cuba Fax: 001 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN) Email: correominint@mn.mn.co.cu Salutation: Your Excellency</p>	<p>And copies to: <u>Attorney General</u> Dr. Darío Delgado Cura Fiscal General de la República, Fiscalía General de la República, Amistad 552, e/Monte y Estrella, Centro Habana La Habana, Cuba Salutation: Dear Attorney General</p>
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PLEASE SEND COPIES OF YOUR APPEAL TO

His Excellency Mr Rene Juan Mujica Cantelar
Embassy of the Republic of Cuba, 167 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6PA

Fax: 020 7836 2602 **E-Mail** embacuba@cubaldn.com

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Pope Benedict XVI visited Cuba from 28-30 March, and celebrated open air masses in the city of Santiago de Cuba and the capital, Havana, and held meetings with the leaders of the Cuban Catholic Church and the Cuban authorities. Government critics had hoped the Pope's visit might herald an opening on the part of the Cuban authorities, but instead they were subjected to further repression. Over 200 government critics were apparently detained during the Pope's visit, and many others held under house arrest, with the express purpose of preventing them from travelling to attend the masses and take part in protest activities. Those who were detained or placed under house arrest are all believed to have been released. Since just before the Pope arrived in Cuba, the mobile and landline connections belonging to government critics, human rights activists and independent journalists have been tampered with, preventing them from reporting on repression to audiences within Cuba and also to the outside world.

PLEASE CHECK WITH THE INDIVIDUALS AT RISK PROGRAMME AT AIUK BEFORE SENDING APPEALS AFTER 16 MAY 2012

Individuals at Risk Programme, Amnesty International UK, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA, 0207 033 1572, iar@amnesty.org.uk.