

URGENT ACTION

[Amnesty International Caribbean/Caribe/Caraïbes](#)

POLITICAL DISSIDENT MUST BE RELEASED

Ciro Alexis Casanova Pérez has been detained in Cuba since June 2014. He was sentenced in December 2014 to one year's imprisonment for "public disorder". Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

On 5 June 2014, **Ciro Alexis Casanova Pérez**, a political dissident and activist who is a member of various independent organizations in Cuba, organized and participated in a demonstration in the streets of Placetas, Santa Clara Province, in central Cuba. He displayed a banner which stated "Student Revolutionary Directorate" (Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil, DRE) and shouted slogans against the government such as "Down with the revolution!" (Abajo la Revolución); "Down with Fidel, down with Raúl Castro!" (Abajo Fidel, abajo Raúl).

Ciro Alexis Casanova Pérez was arrested and subsequently released on the same day, however on 12 June 2014, the District Attorney of Villa Clara placed him under house arrest on accusations of "public disorder." On 15 June, in order to visit his father on Father's Day, **Ciro Alexis Casanova Pérez** called the local police station to request temporary permission to leave his house. Although the officer in charge gave him verbal authorization, **Ciro Alexis Casanova Pérez** was arrested by a police patrol while on his way to his father's house.

In September 2014, the Attorney General's office charged him with "public disorder", (desorden público) "public disorder of a continuous nature", (desordenes publicos de carácter continuado) and "disrespect" (desacato), and demanded he be given four years' imprisonment. **Ciro Alexis Pérez Casanova** was tried in November 2014 at the Popular Municipal Court of Placetas which convicted and sentenced him on 30 December to one year's imprisonment. The Court rejected the accusations of "disrespect" and of "public disorder of a continuous nature", and only found **Ciro Alexis Casanova Pérez** guilty of "public disorder". He has been serving his sentence at El Pendiente prison until he was moved to Manaca prison in February 2015. Both are situated in Villa Clara province. Amnesty International considers this sentence to be politically motivated, relating to his peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression, and that it is intended to send a message of intimidation to other government critics.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

Calling on the authorities to release **Ciro Alexis Casanova Pérez** immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;

Calling on them to repeal all legislation which unduly limits freedom of expression, assembly and association;

Urging them to ensure that, pending his release, he is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated; that he is granted regular access to family and lawyers of his choosing; and provided with any medical care which he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 MAY 2015 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@un.int (c/o Cuban Mission to UN)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

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

And copies to:

Minister of Interior

General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra

Ministro del Interior y Prisiones

Ministerio del Interior

Plaza de la Revolución

La Habana, Cuba



Fax: +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)

Email: correominint@mn.mn.co.cu

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The right to a fair trial in Cuba is affected, especially in trials with political connotations, as courts and prosecutors are under government control. Cuba's National Assembly elects the President, Vice-President and the other judges of the Peoples' Supreme Court, as well as the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General. In addition, all courts are subordinate to the National Assembly and the Council of State, raising concerns over internationally recognized standards for fair trial and the right to trial by an independent and impartial tribunal.

The Cuban Criminal Code criminalizes a broad range of activities under the provisions dealing with public order (Title IV). Some Title IV provisions are worded and interpreted by the courts in ways that allow the imposition of unnecessary restrictions on freedom of expression. The Criminal Code gives a very broad interpretation of public order, allowing the authorities to invoke this provision to arbitrarily restrict freedom of expression in both public and private spaces.

Article 200 states: “Any person who, without justifiable cause raises the alarm or makes threats against the general public in public places or at shows or large meetings, shall be subject to between three months and a year’s imprisonment or a fine... or both (El que, en lugares públicos, espectáculos o reuniones numerosas, dé gritos de alarma, profiera amenazas de un peligro común o realice cualquier otro acto con el propósito de provocar pánico o tumulto, incurre en sanción de privación de libertad de tres meses a un año o multa de cien a trescientas cuotas o ambas).

Public disorder charges are commonly used to punish the exercise of freedom of expression and criticism of the authorities. Under international human rights law, governments must justify measures that limit the right to freedom of expression.

In December 2014 the United States of America and Cuba announced the decision to “normalize” their diplomatic relations and since then, representatives of both governments have held a number a bilateral negotiations in Cuba and the USA. On 31 March 2015 delegations met in Washington DC, “to discuss the methodology, topics, and structure of a future human rights dialogue” according to the US Department of State. It follows the release in January 2015 of more than 50 political prisoners in Cuba including five men considered by Amnesty International to be prisoners of conscience.