

Mr. Barack Obama,  
President of the United States of America  
The White House,  
Washington, DC

October 6, 2010

Re: Cuban Five

Dear President Obama,

We, the undersigned citizens of the Caribbean are writing to appeal to you to exercise the powers of your office to effect the immediate and unconditional release of five Cuban nationals unjustly incarcerated in the United States-- Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, René González Schweret, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez and Fernando González Llort.

The five were arrested in 1998 and tried in Miami. Their mission was to infiltrate and monitor the activities of violent groups of Cuban exile in order to report their planned threats back to Cuba. The information gathered by these men regarding acts of terrorism against Cuba being planned by these groups was given to the FBI right before their detention. But instead of arresting those who were planning violent acts against Cuba, the FBI arrested these five Cuban men.

On August 2005, the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit three-judge panel unanimously overturned all the Five's convictions and ordered a new trial. But after former US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' direct intervention on the government's behalf, the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit full panel set aside the 3-judge panel opinion and confirmed the Five's Convictions.

Their prison sentences have already been declared illegal by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations. For almost ten years these five men have been held in maximum security prisons; they have been held incommunicado in isolated cells for long periods of time and two of them have been denied the right to receive the visit of their wives.

Again, and for the third time, on August 20, 2007, oral arguments took place in the Atlanta 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. This has been a very long process and in the mean time, children are growing without their parents, wives without their husbands and mothers without their sons. More and more people around the world and here in the United States are becoming aware of this case and are supporting their release.

In June 2008, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the sentences for Gerardo Hernandez and Rene Gonzalez, and sent the cases of Fernando Gonzalez, Ramon Labañino and Antonio Guerrero back to the Miami Court for re-sentencing.

On January 30, 2009, the legal team filed a petition to the U.S. Supreme Court to consider reviewing the case.

President Obama, your election to the highest office in the United States excited great hopes in our region for a new era in the relations between your country and the rest of the world. We sincerely hope that you, as U.S. President, will see fit to immediately intervene and release the Cuban Five, to end this injustice and restore faith in the judicial system of your country. We need to believe that the fight against terrorism means just that and not incarcerating those who fight against it. These five Cuban men deserve to be allowed to return to their families and continue to be productive members of society.

Yours sincerely,

Norman Girvan, Professor, University of the West Indies

Senator David Abdulah, President, Federation of Independent Trade Unions and NGOs (FITUN)

Ancel Roget, President General, Oilfields Workers' Trade Union

Joseph Remy, President, Communications Workers' Union

Shridath Ramphal, Chancellor Emeritus, University of the West Indies

Alissa Trotz, Associate Professor, University of Toronto

Havelock Brewster, Hon. Professor, University of the West Indies.

Richard Crawford, Jamaicans United for Sustainable Development

Mervyn Claxton, retired international civil servant

Raffique Shah, journalist, Trinidad & Tobago.