

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS UNDER THREAT

Members of Cubalex, a Havana-based organization of human rights lawyers, have been subjected to months of harassment and intimidation by the Cuban authorities for their work.

Progressively since September, Cuban authorities have intimidated members of **Cubalex** (Legal Information Center), a non-government organization, not recognized by the Cuban authorities, which provides free legal and human rights advice in Havana, the capital.

On 23 September, according to its Director, Laritza Diversent, authorities searched Cubalex's centre of operation without warrant, confiscated a number of laptops and documents, and forced at least one woman to undress. The provincial prosecutor in Havana provided notice to Cubalex that it was under a tax investigation.

According to Cubalex, since then, state prosecutors have summoned at least two members of the organization for questioning. Cubalex stated that the interviews, which reportedly lasted up to one hour and 45 minutes, were filmed, leading members to believe that the authorities were seeking information to criminalize activities of the organization. According to Cubalex, authorities have also questioned people who received advice and information from their centre.

Cubalex's Director reported that she has been stopped and questioned a number of times at the airport during her recent trips. She believes her home, which provides a base for Cubalex's activities, is under surveillance. One of Cubalex's members, Julio Ferrer Tamayo, reported being strip searched and detained during the search of Cubalex on 23 September and remains in custody.

Please write immediately in English or Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the Cuban authorities to allow members of Cubalex and all other human rights lawyers and activists to operate freely without harassment and intimidation;
- Urging them to ensure that the criminal justice system or civil litigation is not misused to target or harass human rights defenders;
- Calling on them to ensure a safe and enabling environment in which it is possible to defend and promote human rights without fear of punishment, reprisal or intimidation.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 DECEMBER 2016 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)

Twitter: @RaulCastroR

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

Twitter: @FGR_Cuba

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/

Señor Fiscal General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Her Excellency 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.cubadiplomatica.cu

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 13 October, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression issued a press release expressing concern at retaliation actions of the Cuban state against Cubalex, an organization dedicated to defending freedom of expression.

In 2015, a number of articles appeared on pro-government blogs which appeared to defame Laritza Diversent, Director of Cubalex.

Cubalex members were the subject of precautionary measures issued by the IACHR in April 2015. The IACHR asked that the Cuban authorities take measures to safeguard the lives of Cubalex members and ensure their humane treatment. Human rights NGOs are currently unable to legally register in Cuba and it is customary for them to operate from the homes of their members or directors.

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