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First UA: 47/25 Index: AMR 25/9327/2025 Cuba of May 8, 2025

CUBA PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE RE-IMPRISONED ARBITRARILY

On April 29, 2025, Cuban opposition leaders and prisoners of conscience José Daniel Ferrer and Félix Navarro were sent back to prison under unclear and arbitrary circumstances. Both had been conditionally released in January 2025, following negotiations involving the Vatican and the United States government. José Daniel Ferrer has since become a victim of enforced disappearance and remains incommunicado, with no access to his family or legal counsel.

We call on Cuban authorities to immediately and unconditionally release both men and to stop using conditional releases as a tool to silence dissent and restrict freedom of expression.

Write to the President of Cuba urging him to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release José Daniel Ferrer and Félix Navarro
- Put an end to the misuse of conditional release as a tool to control freedom of expression.

Write to:

Miguel Díaz-Canel
President of Cuba
Hidalgo Esq. 6, Plaza de La Revolución
CP 10400, La Habana, Cuba
Email: despacho@presidencia.gob.cu
Salutation: Dear President Díaz-Canel

And copy:

His Excellency Rodrigo Malmierca Diaz
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Cuba
388 Main Street
Ottawa, ON K1S 1E3
Tel: (613) 563-0141 Fax: (613) 563-0068
Email: embacuba@embacubacanada.net

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On January 14, 2025, Cuban authorities announced the release of 553 people, claiming it was “in the spirit of the Jubilee Year” after discussions with Pope Francis. At the same time, the U.S. government said it would remove Cuba from its list of state sponsors of terrorism.

While officials denied that the two actions were connected, civil society groups confirmed that many of those released had been detained for participating in the July 11, 2021 protests. The release process

lacked transparency. Families and victims were excluded, and many people were released under strict conditions with no legal protections or explanations.

José Daniel Ferrer and Félix Navarro—well-known opposition leaders and prisoners of conscience—were re-arrested on April 29, 2025. Authorities offered no clear reasons and denied them access to lawyers and family. Both had been released just a few months earlier under a conditional regime, reportedly tied to talks between the Vatican and the U.S. Their release was imposed without their consent and did not include legal guarantees.

As of May 6, José Daniel Ferrer remains a victim of enforced disappearance. His family has heard unofficial reports that he is being held at Mar Verde prison, but they have received no official confirmation. They have not had any contact with him and are deeply worried about his health and safety. His wife was denied visitation twice, and his family fears he is being held in incommunicado detention.

Prolonged isolation or solitary confinement can have serious health impacts and should only be used in rare, exceptional cases. Denying communication with the outside world raises serious human rights concerns.

Ferrer, leader of the unofficial group UNPACU, was first arrested in July 2021 for trying to join nationwide protests. He was charged with “public disorder” but never brought to trial. His house arrest was revoked, and he has since faced constant harassment and health issues in detention.

Navarro, now 71, founded the “Pedro Luis Boitel” Party for Democracy. He has spent more than 30 years promoting peaceful political change. He was arrested in July 2021 while advocating for other detained activists and later sentenced to nine years in prison. He has chronic health conditions and has not received proper medical care.

Since their initial release, both men have faced repeated threats, arrests, and harassment—simply for speaking out, defending human rights, and doing humanitarian work.

Amnesty International has condemned the Cuban government’s use of conditional releases as a tool of control. The lack of transparency, legal clarity, and safeguards puts activists at constant risk. We are calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all people imprisoned in Cuba simply for peacefully exercising their rights.

Please take action as soon as possible until August 8, 2025. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.