

Open Letter to President Barack Obama on Rene Gonzalez and the Cuban Five

(ESPAÑOL VERSO)

We, participants in the 1er. Foro *Nuestra América "Realidad, Identidad, Cultura*, Ottawa, Canada, held today, October 8, 2011 take notice of the following facts:

The Cuban Five, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and Rene González, were arrested in 1998 in Miami, Florida. They were infiltrating terrorist groups there who had wrecked havoc against the Cuban people for many decades. The sole purpose of the five Cubans was to expose the terrorist activities to the American authorities in order to stop the murder and destruction against Cubans and Cuban property. The goal of the Cubans was also to contribute towards ending the danger to American lives because of the extremist and reckless activities carried out by the terrorists from their base in the south of Florida.

Instead of arresting the terrorists, the five Cubans were arrested by the American authorities and denied a fair trial. They were tried in Miami as a hotbed of anti-Castro activities, despite the legal and normal objections of their lawyers to move the trial to another city in Florida. It has come to light that a fair trial was further hampered by the fact that journalists were paid by US governmental organizations to whip up prejudices and false information among the jury and the population of Miami. The Cuba Five were sentenced to long prison terms of up to double life sentences plus fifteen years.

Despite all the legal challenges and international demands for their release from parliamentarians, international human rights organizations, Nobel Peace Prize winners and other personalities, the US authorities have kept them in prison all this time. They are in the worst conditions, spending a great deal of time in solitary confinement. Two of them have been denied the right of family visits while for the other three, this is kept to the strict minimum.

Rene González was released from prison on October 7 after having completed his full sentence. He is unjustly obliged to stay in the United States for three more years under a regime of "supervised probation", rather than returning to his family in Cuba. Moreover, he must spend this time in Miami, the most dangerous place for Cubans such as Rene.

He has been released only two days ago and people around the world are concerned about his physical safety. One could imagine how his family feels at this time.

Thus we demand that President Obama uses his constitutional prerogatives to release Rene to Cuba right now and immediately free the other four Cubans.

We also demand that the US respects the request from Venezuela for the extradition of well-known and confessed terrorist Luis Posada Carriles from Miami to Venezuela in order to stand trial there for his crimes.

Presented to the Foro by Arnold August, member of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five and the Comité Fabio Di Celmo pour les Cinq of the Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba.

