

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.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- 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.

Contact these officials by 30 December 2016:

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

Ambassador Jose Cabanas

Embassy of Cuba
 2630 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009
 Tel: (202) 797 8518 | Fax: (202) 797 0606
 Email: recepcion@sicuw.org
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

Here's why it is so important to report your actions: we record the number of actions taken on each case and use that information in our advocacy. **Either email uan@aiusa.org with "UA 261/16" in the subject line or [click this link](#).**

**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.

Name: Members of Cubalex

Gender m/f: all

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