

URGENT ACTION

OPPOSITION LEADER RELEASED FROM PRISON

After being in detention since October 2019, José Daniel Ferrer García was sent to house arrest in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, on April 2020, after a trial where he was convicted and sentenced to four and a half years. Although no independent monitoring or international press was allowed during his trial, in a country where irregularities in due process of law in cases related to freedom of expression have been documented for decades, he is now back with his family. We will continue to monitor his case.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

On 1 October 2019, Cuban authorities detained José Daniel Ferrer García, leader of the unofficial political opposition group “Patriotic Union of Cuba” (Unión Patriótica de Cuba - UNPACU) in Santiago de Cuba. He was held incommunicado for 72 hours and remained in detention without charges for at least 30 days, according to information available to Amnesty International.

In late November 2019, Amnesty International received a document, apparently issued by the Provincial Prosecutor of Santiago de Cuba, dated 7 October 2019, stating that José Daniel Ferrer García had been charged with the offence of “injuries” (lesiones) and placed in preventive detention as a precautionary measure. This document was given to his family more than 30 days after his detention, according to their reports. Amnesty International sent an open letter to the president of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel, reiterating our request to visit Cuba and monitor *in situ* his forthcoming trial. The Cuban government never replied to our request.

In 20 February 2020, his family declared receiving information that José Daniel Ferrer García had been scheduled for trial for February 26, 2020. His family also reported that two defense witnesses were allegedly harassed by security agents, days before the trial. Amnesty International has documented for decades government control over the judiciary.

After a trial tainted by irregularities, Ferrer García was sentenced to 4 and a half years of house arrest on April 2020. The Cuban authorities prevented the press, the European Union and Amnesty International from monitoring his trial on 26 February. On the day of his trial, Cuba’s Ministry of Justice tweeted that José Daniel Ferrer would get a fair trial, but in the same tweet called him “a common criminal”, in violation of his right to the presumption of innocence.

Although it was good news that José Daniel Ferrer García was finally able to go home, instead of remaining in prison, where he would be at greater risk of COVID-19, his conviction and sentencing is still shameful. We will continue to monitor his case.

After his release, José Daniel Ferrer García deeply thanked Amnesty International for all the support and hard work on his behalf and reconfirmed his commitment to continue his efforts despite the sentencing.

NAME AND PRONOUN: José Daniel Ferrer García (he/his)

THIS IS THE FOURTH AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 134/19

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr25/1869/2020/en/>