# URGENT ACTION

## RELEASE YORUBA PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

**Afro Cuban activists and Yoruba religious leaders Loreto Hernández García and Donaida Pérez Paseiro remain arbitrarily imprisoned for peacefully protesting on July 11, 2021. In early October 2026, Donaida reported serious illness, inadequate medication and food, and pressure by the authorities to go into exile. They must be immediately and unconditionally released and receive adequate healthcare.**

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- Click here to report your action(s) on ***Second UA 61.23***. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

**Note: USPS does not deliver mail to Cuba. Send postage to domestic embassy instead**

***Send a copy of your letter to the address below***

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

**CC: Cuban Embassy in the United States**
**Ambassador Lianys Torres Rivera**
2630 16th Street, NW,
Washington DC 20009
Email: secretaria@usadc.embacuba.cu
Twitter/X: @lianystr

Dear President Díaz-Canel,

I call for the immediate and unconditional release of **Loreto Hernández García** and **Donaida Pérez Paseiro**, both afro Cuban activists, and leaders of the Yoruba religion in Cuba.

Loreto Hernández García and Donaida Pérez Paseiro were sentenced to 7 and 8 years in prison, respectively, following their peaceful participation in demonstrations on July 11, 2021. They were convicted of “contempt” and “public disorder”, and in the case of Donaida, “assaulting” a state official.

The activists and religious leaders were imprisoned following an unfair trial, lacking in evidence, and sentenced in a judgement which repeatedly refers to the protesters’ political opposition to the government, which should have no bearing in a criminal case. The charges against them should never have been brought.

In an audio message shared with Amnesty International by a family member, Donaida reports that she and Loreto are seriously ill and lack adequate medication, medical care, and food in prison. She also reports that State Security officers have been pressuring them to leave Cuba. Donaida further describes the serious impact of their continued imprisonment on their family’s physical and mental health, including that of their children.

I urge you to release Loreto Hernández García and Donaida Pérez Paseiro immediately and unconditionally, receive adequate healthcare, and ensure redress for human rights violations, including racial and religious discrimination.

Sincerely,

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Many Cubans have been charged, put on trial, or given harsh sentences for peacefully participating in protests in July 2021 in largely unfair and opaque proceedings mostly held behind closed doors.

Among those imprisoned are spouses **Donaida Pérez Paseiro**, afro Cuban activist, priest, and President of the Free Yoruba Association of Cuba ("Yorubas Libres de Cuba"), and **Loreto Hernández García**, afro Cuban activist, priest, and Vice-President of the Free Yoruba Association of Cuba. The Yoruba religion is an African diaspora religion. Donaida states that they are held in the women's and men's prisons in Santa Clara, respectively.

On July 15, 2021, police officers arrested Loreto Hernández García. His family maintains that authorities have placed him several times in solitary confinement, sometimes lasting 15 days, sometimes more. In February 2022, the Popular Municipal Court of Santa Clara ("Tribunal Municipal Popular de Santa Clara") sentenced him to seven years in prison for "public disorder" and "contempt." Donaida Pérez Paseiro was detained just a day after Loreto Hernández García. In February 2022, the Popular Municipal Court of Santa Clara sentenced her to eight years in prison for "public disorder", "contempt", and "assault" ("atentado") against an official. These charges are frequently used in Cuba to limit the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Both afro Cuban activists were tried along with 14 other protesters in an unfair trial. The judgement repeatedly refers to the protesters' political opposition to the government in a discriminatory and stigmatizing manner. Likewise, the judgment makes it clear that the defendants' alleged role as leaders of the anti-government protests has been considered an element of criminal responsibility. The judges appear to have relied almost exclusively on witness statements from law enforcement officials, a common occurrence in Cuba, without any evidence corroborating them.

On February 9, 2026, Amnesty International reported that Loreto Hernández García's serious chronic illnesses had progressively worsened in prison. Despite prison doctors confirming the seriousness of his condition, the authorities continued to delay procedures for his release on health grounds. Amnesty International also reported that Donaida Pérez Paseiro suffered chronic bone pain without adequate medical care and faced unjustified restrictions on contact with her children. In its 2025/26 annual report, published in 2026, Amnesty International reported that Donaida's conditional release, granted in January 2025, had subsequently been revoked in retaliation for her continued political activism and human rights work.

In an audio shared with Amnesty International by a family member, Donaida reports that both spouses are seriously ill, lack adequate healthcare, medication and food, and face pressure from State Security officers to leave Cuba.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET**: Spanish, English, or your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL**: February, 28, 2027

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN**: Donaida Pérez Paseiro (she), Loreto Hernández García (he)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA**: https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-release-yoruba-prisoners-of-conscience-cuba-61-23/