

Angel Santiesteban Prats: General Chronology of an Outrage

By Amir Valle

Part 1

The renowned Cuban writer Ángel Santiesteban Prats has been sentenced to five years imprisonment for writing against the Cuban dictatorship from his blog “The Children Nobody wanted”. The news now travels the world.

As part of the strategy of overwhelming repression practiced by the Cuban political police since the arrival of Raul Castro to power, they are trying to criminalize the opponent accusing him of crimes that the defense has proven he did not commit.

The most notorious and shameful of this injustice is the interference of the political police at the procedural and judicial level, proving once again that the Cuban leaders operate as dictators imposing their political designs on all branches of society. The numerous violations in the case against Angel Santiesteban Prats clearly demonstrate that in Cuba for 54 years there has been no separation of powers, necessary in any truly democratic society.

Unjustly condemned, Angel Santiesteban demands a new trial, with respect for all legal guarantees and without the interference of the Cuban political police, as occurred in the trial that resulted in his current sentence.

1. The preparation of the outrage

One

Ángel Santiesteban is a writer who, as of 2006, was cited by the official Cuban culture as “one of the great storytellers emerged in the revolutionary period.” Two of his books: *South: Latitude 13* (on the war in Angola) and *Blessed Are Those Who Mourn* are considered classics of the short story in Cuba. But because of the critical content of his books of stories, each publication of his books was made possible after many struggles against censorship and the books were never promoted outside the island.

Two

Disillusioned by the plight of his people, after a trip to the Dominican Republic where his friend the writer Camilo Venegas explained to him what a blog is, he decided to write his own blog and in 2008 created “The Children Nobody Wanted” which offers a very critical vision of the national disaster to which the Cuban government has condemned our island. He requested that his blog be hosted by the Cuban Book Institute and was denied, so he posted it on the site, “Encuentro on the Red,” belonging to the Cultural Encounter Association of Cuban Culture.

Three

Many intellectuals in the service of the dictatorship tried to convince him to abandon his criticism. He also received political pressure from the police to stop writing. The Ministry of Culture decreed a complete silent censorship against his writing and intellectual work. He began to denounce these pressures in his blog.

Four

He was beaten in the streets of Havana by fake criminals. There is evidence that they were agents of the political police. One piece of evidence: as one of the alleged “criminals” beat him, he told him this was what he got for being a counterrevolutionary. Other evidence: in response to a critical post against the official propaganda manipulation of the “Reasons of Cuba” TV program, on March 21, 2011, that same program referred to his blog declaring him to be an “Enemy of the Revolution.”

Five

As has been shown by the independent lawyers defending him, a sustained campaign of

criminalization began against him, trying to crush his prestige, accusing him of crimes he did not commit. The initial request from the prosecution for a sentence against him asked for 54 years, as if he were accused of genocide. One by one the defense shot down all the fabricated evidence and the most serious charges are dismissed, and the sentence request was reduced to just 15 years. Authorities expanded the process, hiding his file, which, as later demonstrated, was in the hands of an officer of the State Security. After three years, he was finally brought to public trial and the process concluded with his being sentenced.

Six

In November 2012, while accompanying other opponents at a police station in Havana, demanding the release of an opposition lawyer detained without charges, he was arrested, severely beaten and threatened with death: A political police officer named Camilo put a gun to his head and threatened to kill him. He then told him that he wouldn't do it there, when he was in public, they would make his death look like an accident. He also told him, "Isn't the five years in prison we're going to give you enough for you?" when the court had not yet ruled.

Seven

On November 26, 2012, he wrote an open letter to President-dictator Raul Castro, accusing him of all the repression to which they were subjecting him and other opponents. He also denounced, in a video, that the political police were threatening to kill him.

Eight

Days after this letter, the decision of the Court in the trial against him was communicated to him: he was sentenced to five years in prison when the "invented crime" only deserved a fine, the only evidence being the report of an expert calligrapher who assured he was guilty because of the "slant" and "suspicious size" of his handwriting. Although the lawyer proved the falsity of other evidence, several irregularities that in fact invalidated the trial, and presented evidence that invalidates the calligraphic "proof", he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

Nine

He appealed to the Supreme Court, the highest body of Justice in the country. Without taking into account that his lawyers showed numerous irregularities that invalidate the criminal process, this Court upheld the sentence of five years imprisonment for "housebreaking and aggression."

Ten

On February 28 he is locked in the Cuban prison of Valle Grande, as has been denounced in numerous well-known reports internationally, where they violate the human rights of most prisoners. Days later he was transferred to the "La Lima" internment camp, outside of Guanabacoa, an installation for prisoners convicted of minor offenses.

Part Two

II. The Judicial Web of Outrage

False Evidence

On July 29, 2009, Angel Santiesteban was detained, accused of having raped his ex-wife, Kenie Rodriguez, from whom he'd been separated for 4 years and who lives with an employee of the Ministry of the Interior. It's been shown that Angel was not there and she refused the medical tests necessary to validate her claim.

A new claim by the ex-wife, Kenia Rodriguez: she accused his this time of stealing the family jewels. But she refused to point out the jewels in photos and the claim had no effect.

Another new claim by the ex-wife, Kenia Rodriguez: this time for stealing money of various denominations. Angel Santiesteban showed that he still had not been in the place of these events. She offered no proof and the claim was dismissed.

A month later Angel Santeiesteban is in a nearby place (60 yards) where he runs into his ex-wife

Kenia Rodriguez; he is accused of harassment, but this time the claim is not accepted.

Fifteen days later, there is a short-circuit in an electrical system in disrepair about which her neighbors had warned Kenya Rodriguez's, causing a fire in the house at a time when she was not inside. However, she filed a complaint against Angel Santiesteban for attempted murder. Angel freely proved that he was not there, but the next day they summoned him and imposed a fine of 1500 pesos. They told him that he could not travel in the coming days to the Festival of the Word, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to which had been invited.

Days late they assigned a new police investigator, who reactivated and placed in a new file all of the false charges, previously discarded. The established sentences for the alleged crimes totaled 54 years.

Judicial Irregularities

They present a single witness, who during the confrontation starts screaming at them not to force him to testify against Ángel Santiesteban. Leaving the police confrontation, the witness visits Angel's house and explains in front of neighbors that he was forced to testify against him. His words are recorded on a video. On learning that Ángel Santiesteban's defense had the recording of the false "witness", they removed him from the case.

The case file does not appear in any of the places where it should be, according to the law. Finally, they acknowledged that it had been sent to an official named Ribiero, in Villa Marista, the central prison of State Security (Cuba's political police).

Between September and October 2011, the defense attorney claims that he was pressured and harassed for defending Angel. Angel is forced to hire a new lawyer: Miguel Medina Iturria, who can prove the falsity of the most serious charges, so the charges are removed from the indictment. The Prosecutor now requests 15 years instead of the previous 54.

After three years of waiting, in October 2012, the trial is held. The defense attorney shows the inconsistency of the few pieces of evidence presented, including the report of a Calligraphic Expert Perito that Angel's guilt is based on the fact that he writes with "some" slant, and makes the letters "very suspicious in size." Nevertheless, Angel Santiesteban is condemned to five years in prison when, as also demonstrated by the defense, if the crime had been proved a fine as punishment enough, according to current legislation, giving weight "to the social and citizen merits of the defendant's behavior."

III. – Embarrassing evidence of the Infamy

Since the beginning of the dirty campaign to make the Cuban writer Angel Santiesteban Prats into a criminal, numerous sites on the internet have said that the trial for alleged common crimes against this recognized figure from Cuban letters was an unfair trial, rigged and full of irregularities, and is an attempt to throw a cloak of silence about the true reason for the retaliation of the Cuban political police: the strong criticism against Raul Castro's regime and totalitarianism published by Angel in the blog "The Children Nobody Wanted."

We have enumerated here the most scandalous violations, among many others, demonstrated by the defense attorney, Miguel Iturria Medina, during the trial and in the appeal against the verdict of the Havana Provincial People's Criminal Court.

1 – After the police dismissed for months, as unfounded, the accusations presented against Angel Santiesteban by his ex-wife Kenia Rodriguez, a new investigator was assigned who revived all these false accusations and opened a new file with them.

2 – The accusation presented a false witness: Alex Quintana Quindelan, who later, in a confession recorded by the defense (you can see it on Youtube), demonstrated the falsity of the crimes Angel Santiesteban was accused of and that Angel Santiesteban's accuser lied under the direction of Kenia Rodriguez, who promised to repay him with personal goods.

3 – The file, which according the Law should remain exclusively in offices of the police and judicial authorities, was lost for months and was rescued by the defense from the hands of the political police at Villa Marista, an institution of State Security.

4. – The incriminating evidence of the alleged rape and aggressions that Ángel Santiesteban perpetrated against his former wife were shown to be lies during the trial with numerous medical and legal evidence, demonstrating Kenia Rodríguez’s strong interest in damaging at any cost the moral and social integrity of Angel.

5. – The evidence of the accusation of the supposed aggressive attitude of Ángel Santiesteban against his former wife psychologically affected their son: Ángel Santiesteban Eduardo Rodríguez, whose testimony was disproved by the child’s teacher, Yahima Lahera Chamizo, who told the defense attorney that the boy had confessed to being pressured by mother to testify against his father, and even the child’s own later statements. Neither of these statements was taken into account by the Court.

5. – During the arrest of Ángel Santiesteban, in November 2012, for accompanying other opponents to a police station in Havana, demanding the release of an opposition lawyer detained without charges, “Camilo,” an agent of the political police, after making death threats with a gun, said, “is the five years in prison, we are going to give you not enough?” What is “odd” about this statement is that it was made the day before the Court of Justice delivered its judgment.

6. – The five-year sentence applied in this case is excessive and does not correspond to the provisions of law for the offense for which he is convicted: “of three months to one year in prison or a fine of one hundred to three hundred shares*.” In this sense, the defense argues that it has also violated the provisions of the Governing Council of the People’s Supreme Court in its Instruction No. 175 dated July 21, 2004, which guides the courts when possible penalties do not exceed five years’ imprisonment, assessing the substitution of such penalty by other measures established by law, preferably those that do not involve incarceration.

Finally, as has been said on many websites where this injustice is denounced, it involved violations sufficient to invalidate the entire process against Ángel Santiesteban Prats.

**Translator’s note: With regards to fines, “shares” are established in Cuban law, the value of which may change with time. Thus, the law itself does not need to be changed in response to changing values of money, so a “share” could be any amount.*

<http://hijosnadieng.wordpress.com/2013/03/10/angel-santiesteban-prats-general-chronology-of-an-outrage-amir-valle/>

<http://hijosnadieng.wordpress.com/2013/03/11/angel-santiesteban-general-chronology-of-an-outrage-ii-amir-valle/>

The Metamorphosis of a Butterfly into a Worm as Staged in the Court Theater of the Castros

Posted on [January 27, 2013](#)

Intellectual Repression in Cuba

How to Convert the Writer Ángel Santiesteban from Butterfly to Worm
by Amir Valle

In Number 3 of this magazine, in my personal column, I wrote about an issue I was very curious about then: how the political regime that prevails in Cuba changed the “category” of intellectuals, and changed them from “the great glories of letters” to “the mediocre chattering class,” as if the bad idea occurred to them to have opinions or thoughts different from “the established” by the “moral” imposed by the rulers.

He said then: “All the roads, as a certain phrase said, lead to the Cuban Revolution (and in the area of its influence in the process of this metamorphosis we could talk about the step from worm to butterfly, or vice versa, it will depend on how the little creature behaves with respect to this supposedly most significant environment in human history which is a Revolution).

Under this influence, in recent decades, we witnessed a group of metamorphoses, each more astonishing than the last: the butterfly Raúl Rivero turned into a drunk worm who couldn’t write “even a single line of good poetry” according to the Minister’s words.

The worm Lino Novás Calvo went back to being a brilliant butterfly (someone who returned to the island dried out and pinned to a board after his death). The butterfly Jesus Diaz transformed into the most horrible worm Cuban eyes had ever seen, before whose death the joy shattered (again, according to the Minister, I’m a witness).

The worm Edmundo Desnoes was deranged into a butterfly who wanted to nostalgically pose his colorful old skeleton in the rickety skeleton of the Revolution.

The butter Manuel Díaz Martínez turned into a caterpillar “full of anger and frustration,” according to a writer and ex-president of the Cuban Book Institute. “The detestable worm” Virgilio Piñera reemerged as graceful moth that can be exposed internationally, and proudly (!) mind you (!) among the laurels of revolutionary literature.

The list is rather long. So complex, it would break the head of the most enlightened experts on metamorphosis. And curiously (something that would give many scientists a lot to think about) where usually the conversion of worms to butterflies is increasingly rare and the transformation of butterflies to worms is ever more common.”

Right now, what they call “government” in Havana has decided to convert, again, a famous writer into a “vile worm working in service to the Empire.”

Ángel Santiesteban, a writer who was cited by the officialdom of Cuban culture as “one of the great storytellers who emerged in the Revolutionary period,” is now the latest victim of this Kafkaesque metamorphosis (as we know, typical in the socialist regimes which have hitherto existed in this Blue Planet) that tries to forget his intellectual trajectory, unjustly accusing him of invented crimes so as to sentence him to 15 years in prison and attempt to silence his voice.

A voice is heard with great interest in much of the world since he decided to assume the act of writing freely and began to publish in his blog, *The Children Nobody Wanted*, a very critical view of the national disaster to which our politicians have condemned our island.

The prosecutor called in his lawyer and told him the request for sentence: 54 years to be reduced to a term of 15 years served concurrently. And they used a spiteful ex-wife, a witness with mental

disorders, who even confessed on a video recorded by the writer that the government had bribed her to testify.

The greatest “sin” of Ángel Santiesteban, it’s obvious, is not having said what he thinks about the disaster invented by Fidel Castro and now prolonged by his brother Raul. The “sin” is to have launched himself against the institution that keeps Cuban dictators in power: State Security.

Others have taken on the same cross, but only when they have left behind the bars of the island prison that is Cuba today. But Ángel Santiesteban has done it from within the Island, face to face, and has started by something many of us Cuban writers experienced first hand: how police tried to convert us into political informers on our own colleagues, brothers and comrades of letters and culture.

So we decided to bring this denunciation to these pages, which has been published by various media recently, especially thanking the contributions of Isbel Alba, Rodrigo Kuang, Cubancuentro, Café Fuerte and Diario de Cuba.

It is one of the most direct ways we have found to bring the truth to our readers: intellectuals, academics, writers, journalists and researchers of culture.

Published by [Otro Lunes](#)

January 27 2013

Action of the International Pen Club for Calixto Martínez, Antonio Torres and Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [February 25, 2013](#)

CUBA: Two journalists jailed, one writer sentenced to five years in prison

The Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) of PEN International protests a renewed wave of repression and harassment against journalists and writers in Cuba, including the imprisonment of two journalists and the conviction of a writer. Independent journalist Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias has been detained pending trial since September 2012 on charges of “disrespect” against the head of state, while state journalist José Antonio Torres is reportedly serving a 14-year sentence for espionage; both were jailed after reporting on sensitive subjects. Writer and blogger Ángel Santiesteban Prats has been sentenced to five years in prison for alleged trespassing and assault on the basis of an apparently flawed trial. The WiPC calls for Martínez Arias’ immediate and unconditional release. It also calls on the Cuban authorities to provide assurances that Torres’ and Santiesteban’s sentences are not related to their reporting, and to make public details of their trials.

Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias, journalist for the independent news agency Hablemos Press, was arrested by the Cuban Revolutionary Police at José Martí International airport on 16 September 2012. He had been investigating allegations that medicine provided by the World Health Organisation to fight the cholera outbreak, which began in mid-2012, was being kept at the airport instead of being distributed, as the Cuban government was trying to downplay the seriousness of the outbreak. He was taken to a police station near the airport where he was put in a cell. When he complained about his detention, he was allegedly beaten and pepper-sprayed in the eyes and called out “Down with Raúl, down with Fidel” (“*Abajo Raúl, abajo Fidel*”). He was held at the police station for 10 days before being transferred to Valle Grande prison until 10 November 2012, when he was transferred to Combinado del Este prison, where he remains.

Although Martínez Arias has not been informed of any official charges against him, he is reportedly being accused of “disrespect” (*desacato*) towards President Raúl Castro and former president Fidel Castro, which carries a maximum penalty of three years’ imprisonment. His lawyer has not been allowed access to his case file.

There are concerns for Martínez Arias’ welfare in prison. In September 2012 he was reportedly transferred to hospital for treatment for blows received to the left eye. In November-December 2012, he carried out a 33-day hunger strike in protest against at prison conditions. On 12 December 2012 he was placed in solitary confinement after calling Hablemos Press and informing them of the poor conditions inside the prison, in defiance of an order by prison authorities forbidding him to use the telephone. In early January 2013 Martínez Arias reported that he was running a fever but had been denied medical attention.

Prior to his detention, Martínez Arias was arrested several times in May and June 2012. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Also imprisoned is José Antonio Torres, former correspondent for the government newspaper *Granma*. Torres was arrested in February 2011 after writing articles about the mismanagement of an aqueduct project in Santiago de Cuba and the installation of fibre-optic cable between Venezuela and Cuba. Torres’ 5,000-word article on the mismanagement of the aqueduct project, published in July 2010, was reportedly praised by President Raúl Castro, who wrote in *Granma* that “this is the spirit that should characterise the (Communist) Party press: transparent, critical and self-critical.” His report on the fibre-optic cable was published four months later. Torres noted in neutral terms that the Vice President Ramiro Valdés was responsible for supervising both projects.

Three months later Torres was arrested and in mid-June 2012, following a closed trial, he was

convicted of espionage and sentenced to 14 years in prison and the withdrawal of his university degree in journalism. He has reportedly appealed against his conviction, but fears that his sentence could be increased as a result. Cuba's state-run media has made only a few brief references to Torres' case and little is known about the espionage charge, although there are rumours that he may have offered or given confidential information to the US diplomatic mission in Havana.

Meanwhile, Ángel Santiesteban Prats, award-winning writer and author of the blog 'The Children Nobody Wanted' (*Los Hijos que Nadie Quiso*), is awaiting imprisonment after being sentenced to five years in prison for alleged assault and trespassing. The case dates back to 2009, when a number of charges were filed against him, including charges of a hit and run and aggravated robbery. He was eventually found guilty of having broken into his ex-wife's house and physically assaulted her; all of the other charges were dropped. His sentence was handed down on 8 December 2012 and confirmed on appeal by the Supreme Court on 28 January.

Santiesteban maintains that the charges are fabricated and politically motivated, retribution for his blog which is critical of the Cuban situation and government. He also claims that he was informed of what the outcome of the trial would be on 8 November 2012, one month before the sentencing took place, when he was arrested along with 15 others following the detention of lawyer Yaremis Flores Julián, and then beaten.

Details of the case against Santiesteban have not been made public in state media. However, according to the appeal lodged by his lawyer, there were a number of irregularities in the trial and sentencing. The plaintiff is said to have changed her statement four times and overall her testimony was inconsistent with the crimes of which Santiesteban was eventually found guilty. A supposed eyewitness for the plaintiff allegedly later confessed in a home video that he had been pressured and bribed by the plaintiff to lie, but this was reportedly discarded by the court. A number of important witnesses in Santiesteban's defence are said to have been overlooked, including three individuals who testified that he was not at the scene at the time that the crimes are alleged to have taken place, and the headmistress at his son's school, who stated that the boy had confessed to her that his mother had forced him to make statements incriminating his father. The two-year sentence for trespassing is reportedly a year above the maximum one year penalty for such an offence.

Santiesteban is a member of the official Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba – UNEAC). He has won a number of awards, including the Juan Rudolfo Prize from Radio France International (1989), National Prize from UNEAC (1995), Cesar Galeano award (1999), Alejo Carpentier Prize from the Cuban Book Institute for his short story collection *Los hijos que nadie quiso* (2001) and the Casa de las Américas Prize for his book *Dichosos los que lloran* (2006).

Please send appeals:

- Protesting the imprisonment of Hablemos Press journalist Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias in violation of his right to freedom of expression, guaranteed by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Cuba signed in 2008;
- Calling for Martínez Arias to be released immediately and unconditionally;
- Expressing concern that the trials of former *Granma* correspondent José Antonio Torres and writer and blogger Ángel Santiesteban Prats apparently failed to meet international human rights standards for fair trials, outlined in Article 14 of the ICCPR;
- Calling on the Cuban authorities to provide assurances that Torres' and Santiesteban's sentences are not related to their reporting, and to make public details of their trials;
- Urging the Cuban authorities to remove unlawful restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly in Cuba.

Appeals to:

Head of State and Government

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)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

Dr. Darío Delgado Cura

Fiscal General de la República

Fiscalía General de la República

Amistad 552, e/Monte y Estrella, Centro Habana, La Habana, Cuba

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Interior Minister

General Abelardo Coloma Ibarra

Ministro del Interior y Prisiones

Ministerio del Interior, Plaza de la Revolución, La Habana, Cuba

Fax: +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)

Email: correominint@mn.mn.co.cu

Salutation: Your Excellency

Please send also appeals to diplomatic representatives of Cuba in your country.

****Please send appeals immediately. Check with the WiPC if sending appeals after 20 April 2013****

For further details contact Tamsin Mitchell at the Writers in Prison Committee London Office: PEN International, Brownlow House, 50/51 High Holborn, London WC1V 6ER UK, United Kingdom

Tel: + 44 (0) 20 7405 0338 Fax: + 44 (0) 20 7405 0339 e-mail: tamsin.mitchell@pen-international.org

Published by [Pen Deutschland](#)

February 24 2013

Rencontre

Nous vous invitons à une rencontre conviviale avec Jacques AUBERGY et Rasky BELDJOUDI, le samedi 12 avril à 17H00 à la Maison Pour Tous de la Belle de Mai.

Jacques AUBERGY est traducteur, libraire et éditeur. Sa maison d'édition L'Atinoir publie des auteurs de romans noirs et des écrivains d'Amérique latine.

Il nous parlera de ses métiers, du choix de ses livres, et nous fera connaître intimement et avec passion quelques merveilles de la littérature d'Amérique latine choisies par lui.

Il présentera également le livre « Laura à La Havane », un recueil de dix nouvelles d'Ángel Santiesteban Prats et publié par L'Atinoir.

Ángel Santiesteban Prats est un des plus grands auteurs cubains, actuellement en prison après avoir critiqué ouvertement le système de son pays. Son emprisonnement a généré un fort soutien de « Reporters sans frontières » et de la communauté des blogueurs dans le monde.

Un livre passionnant

« Le Onzième Commandement » est un livre de Rasky BELDJOUDI, habitant de la Belle de Mai.

Le nom de **Rasky BELDJOUDI** ne vous dira sûrement rien de particulier. Vous ne l'avez jamais remarqué bien qu'il soit fort probable que vous l'ayez déjà croisé sur la place Caffo ou qu'il se soit peut-être, un jour, assis à côté de vous dans le bus 32.

Et pourtant, Rasky est imposant, musclé, et son accent belge au rythme kabyle ne laisse personne indifférent. Depuis son enfance, Rasky a accumulé les difficultés. D'échecs scolaires en emplois précaires, il connut des années de galère et l'enfer des drogues.

Malgré un chemin accidenté et un vécu parfois peu glorieux, il a réussi à s'élever au-delà des circonstances de la vie, et vient de publier « Le Onzième Commandement » : un livre autobiographique passionnant, écrit avec un style remarquable, chargé d'humanité, et incroyablement touchant.

Nicolás ROMAN BORRE

Samedi 12 avril à 17H00

Maison Pour Tous de la Belle de Mai

6 Bd Boyer – 13003 MARSEILLE

Entrée libre/Événement organisé par Brouettes & Compagnie, l'association CIN-CO et la Maison Pour Tous de la Belle de Mai

URGENT: Reporters Without Borders Ask for Immediate Release of Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [April 29, 2013](#)

Call for the release of the blogger Angel Santiesteban-Prats, imprisoned two months ago.

Reporters Without Borders calls on the Cuban authorities to release Ángel Santiesteban-Prats, writer and author of the blog *The Children Nobody Wanted*, who was imprisoned on February 28, 2013, as soon as possible. The prisoner, currently on hunger strike, was placed in solitary confinement when he was transferred to [another] prison in early April.

“The same day that the authorities agreed to release the dissident journalist Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias, Angel Santiesteban-Prats was transferred to Prison 1850 and placed under a maximum severity. This detention is both absurd and cruel. The authorities, who believe that this will set an example, can never prevent pluralistic expression among the population. Ángel Santiesteban-Prats should be released without delay,” said Reporters Without Borders, which continues to encourage the blogger to end his hunger strike.

“The Cuban government, which in January 2013 assumed the presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), fails to meet its international commitments on matters of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Member countries of CELAC should remind it of this requirement,” the organization added.

The blogger, who was transferred on 9 April to Prison 1850 in San Miguel del Padron (Havana), began a hunger strike shortly after he arrived at the prison, before they put him in an isolation cell, without light or water. He is only allowed to talk on the phone a few minutes a day. On April 22 Angel Santiesteban-Prats reported that he was assaulted by prison guards. Immobilized he was forced to swallow a stinking liquid that made him sick.

Ángel Santiesteban-Prats was sentenced to five years in prison on December 8, 2012, officially for “violation of domicile and injury” following an expedited process. The writer, who has won several major literary awards, had been arrested several times before this final instance, because of his political stance. They redoubled their efforts to harass him since he created his blog, independent and critical of the government.

In addition to Ángel Santiesteban-Prats, there is another “information action” imprisoned in Cuba and that is it is Luis Antonio Torres, an employee of the newspaper *Granma*, who was arrested in 2011 and sentenced in July to fourteen years in prison for “espionage,” a crime he never committed. Reporters Without Borders is also calling for his swift release.

From [Reporters Without Borders](#)

PEN Writers in Prison Ask for a Review of Angel Santiesteban's Trial

Posted on [May 18, 2013](#)

The German PEN Center for *Writers in Prison* has pronounced its satisfaction with the release of Calixto Martínez Arias but is now asking for a review of the trials of Jose Antonio Torres, journalist, and of writer and blogger Angel Santiesteban Prats. We call on the authorities to provide legal guarantees that have not been respected and this is why the sentences are not related to the crimes they are accused of. We also call for the evidence to be proceedings be made public.

Posted on 13 April 2013 by Writers in Prison

Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias

[The following is in English in the original]

The Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) of PEN International welcomes the 9 April 2013 release of the independent journalist Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias, who had been detained without charge since September 2012. However, PEN notes that two other writers remain imprisoned in the country – state journalist José Antonio Torres and author and blogger Ángel Santiesteban Prats – and continues to call on the authorities to provide assurances that their sentences are not related to their reporting, and to make public details of their trials.

Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias, journalist for the independent news agency Hablemos Press, was released from prison on 9 April 2013, after being detained without charge for almost seven months. Arrested on 16 September 2012 after covering a cholera outbreak which the Cuban authorities had reportedly been trying to downplay, he faced a sentence of up to three years in prison for ‘disrespect’ towards the head of state under Article 144 of the Cuban Criminal Code. The charges were never officially confirmed, his lawyer was not allowed access to his case file and he was never put on trial.

Martínez’ release eventually came amid growing pressure from Cuban civil society and international organisations and the day after he began his third hunger strike. He had called off his previous hunger strike on 28 March after the authorities indicated that he would be moved from Combinado del Este prison to Valle Grande prison and subsequently released. However, although Martínez was transferred he was not freed. As a result, he resumed his hunger strike on 8 April. A number of his colleagues and fellow dissidents joined the hunger strike, including Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez, director of Hablemos Press, which had launched a campaign on social media to push for Martínez’ release.

According to colleagues at Hablemos Press, Martínez has lost two teeth and has cuts on his lips and tongue. Previous reports indicate that he suffered ill treatment in prison, including assault, a ban on using the telephone, being placed in solitary confinement and denied medical attention.

Two other writers remain in Cuban prisons: José Antonio Torres, former correspondent for the government newspaper Granma, and Ángel Santiesteban Prats, award-winning writer and author of the blog ‘The Children Who Nobody Loved’ (‘Los Hijos que Nadie Quiso’). Little is known about the trial of either writer.

Torres, who has been detained since February 2011, is serving a 14-year prison sentence for alleged espionage. His arrest followed the publication of articles in 2010 detailing the mismanagement of an aqueduct project and the installation of fibre-optic cable between Venezuela and Cuba, in which Vice President Ramiro Valdés was named as responsible for supervising both projects. Torres was convicted in mid-June 2012 following a closed trial. Cuba’s state-run media has made only a few brief references to Torres’ case and little is known about the espionage charge, although there are rumours that he may have offered or given confidential information to the US diplomatic mission in

Havana.

Santiesteban was imprisoned on 28 February 2013 after being sentenced to five years in prison for alleged assault and trespassing in a case involving his ex-wife. The writer maintains that the charges are fabricated and politically motivated, retribution for his blog which is critical of the Cuban situation and government. He also claims that he was informed of what the outcome of the trial would be on 8 November 2012, one month before the sentencing took place. Details of the case against Santiesteban have not been made public in state media, but according to the appeal lodged by his lawyer there were a number of serious irregularities in the trial and sentencing.

PEN holds no position on Santiesteban's guilt or innocence. However, it is concerned that his trial appears to have fallen short of international human rights standards.

A post on Santiesteban's blog dated 9 April 2013 said that the writer had taken from La Lima prison to an unknown destination, and suggested that the reason for his removal was that the 'Human Rights Commission' (possibly the Comisión Cubana de Derechos Humanos) had been due to visit the prison that day. Santiesteban had previously reported in a statement published on his blog on 5 April that he had been told that he would be taken to the Salvador Allende military hospital for a check-up in relation to suspected skin cancer. He said that he would refuse to go as it was a military hospital.

For further details on Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias, José Antonio Torres and Ángel Santiesteban Prats, see previous alert.

Please send appeals:

Welcoming the release of Hablemos Press journalist Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias on 9 April 2013;

Noting, however, that two other writers remain in prison in Cuba, former Granma correspondent José Antonio Torres and writer and blogger Ángel Santiesteban Prats, and that their trials apparently failed to meet international human rights standards for fair trials, outlined in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

Calling on the Cuban authorities to provide assurances that Torres' and Santiesteban's sentences are not related to their reporting, and to make public details of their trials;

Urging the Cuban authorities to remove unlawful restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly in Cuba.

Appeals to:

Head of State and Government

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)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

Dr. Darío Delgado Cura

Fiscal General de la República

Fiscalía General de la República

Amistad 552, e/Monte y Estrella, Centro Habana, La Habana, Cuba

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Interior Minister

General Abelardo Coloma Ibarra
Ministro del Interior y Prisiones
Ministerio del Interior, Plaza de la Revolución, La Habana, Cuba
Fax: +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)
Email: correominint@mn.mn.co.cu
Salutation: Your Excellency

Please send also appeals to diplomatic representatives of Cuba in your country.

Please send appeals immediately. Check with the WiPC if sending appeals after 11 June 2013

Published by [PEN Zentrum Deutschland](#)

Paris, June 4: Tribute to Imprisoned Writers

Écrivains empêchés / Écrivains dépêchés

Résistance, lire et dire en tout lieu

Editor's note: This post is in French and is only partially translated here.

Text of notice:

In solidarity with the imprisoned Chinese writer Li Bifeng, the International Literary Festival of Berlin is calling on intellectuals and artists, schools and universities, media, theaters and other cultural institutions around the world to organize readings, June 4, 2013, on the occasion the sad anniversary of the crackdown in Tiananmen Square, and within the framework of the World Wide Reading Day on the theme of resistance.

In response to this appeal, the House of Writers and Literature, Biennial of Poets in Val de Marne, the French Pen Club, the Wandering Word and Poetry Market invited writers and poets living in France to support a writer or a poet “gagged in their own country,” by reading their texts.

Performance by Armand Gatti, Serge Pey and Chiara Mulas followed by readings:

Tahar Bekri (Tunisia) for Mohamed Ibn Dhib (Qatar)

Yves Boudier (France) for Li Bifeng (China)

Francis Combes for Mumia Abu Jamal (United States)

Jean-Luc Despax (France) for Angye Gaona (Colombia)

Marc Delouze (France) for Gao Xingjian (China)

Jacques Demarcq for Trung Nguyen Van Tuc and Phan Ngoc Tuan (all three of Vietnam)

Jean Pierre Faye (France) to Melissa Patiño Hinostroza (Peru)

Irene Gayraud (France) for Angel Santiesteban Prats (Cuba)

Jabbar Hussin (Iraq) for Bei Dao (China)

Werner Lambersy (Belgium) for Parviz Khazraï (Iran)

Mazen Maarouf (Palestine) for Rasha Awad, Haidar al-Mukashfi, Nur al-Ahmad al-Nur (all three of Sudan)

Jean-Baptiste Para (France) for Alireza Roshan (Iran)

Anne-Marie Garat (France) will also join the party.

[Angel Sebastian-Prats is included in the tribute]

“Among the readings that will be held, one will be for Ángel Santiesteban-Prats, unjustly imprisoned in Cuba by the Castro dictatorship, for the simple “crime” of expressing himself freely in his blog.

His story, *The Moon, A Death and a Piece of Bread*, will be read by the French poet and writer [Irène Gayraud](#).

Angel Santiesteban Prats

Angel Santiesteban-Prats, écrivain et auteur du blog *Los hijos que nadie quiso*, emprisonné depuis le 28 février 2013. Actuellement en grève de la faim, le prisonnier a été placé en cellule d'isolement à l'issue d'un transfert, au début de ce mois.

“Le jour même où les autorités accédaient à la demande de libération du journaliste dissident Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias, Angel Santiesteban a été transféré à la prison 1850 et soumis à un

régime de sévérité maximum. Cette détention est à la fois absurde et cruelle. Croyant faire un exemple, les autorités ne pourront jamais empêcher l'expression pluraliste au sein de la population. Angel Santiesteban-Prats doit être libéré sans délai", a déclaré Reporters sans frontières, qui n'en appelle pas moins le blogueur à cesser sa grève de la faim.

Transféré le 9 avril dernier à la prison 1850 de San Miguel del Padrón (La Havane), le blogueur a entamé une grève de la faim peu de temps après son arrivée, avant d'être placé à l'isolement dans une cellule, sans lumière ni eau. Seulement autorisé à parler quelques minutes par jour au téléphone, il a dénoncé, le 22 avril, avoir été violenté par les gardiens de sa prison. Le tenant immobile, ceux-ci l'ont forcé à ingurgiter avaler un liquide pestilentiel qui l'a rendu malade.

Angel Santiesteban-Prats a été condamné à cinq ans de prison, le 8 décembre 2012, officiellement pour "violation de domicile et lésions", à l'issue d'un procès expéditif. Lauréat de plusieurs prix littéraires majeurs, il avait été arrêté à plusieurs reprises avant sa comparution, en raison de ses parti-pris politiques. Les persécutions à son encontre avaient redoublé depuis la création de son blog, indépendant et critique envers le gouvernement.

<http://poesie.evous.fr/mardi-4-juin-2013-Ecrivains.html>

Exclusive Premiere: Angel Santiesteban-Prats

International Franz Kafka Novels of the Drawer

Prize Winner

Posted on [October 8, 2013](#)

The justice and liberty that the dictator Raúl Castro Ruz snatched from our dear Ángel Santiesteban-Prats, couldn't stop him continuing to be a great man who is adored by his true friends, not abandoned for a moment, not him, the brilliant writer, prize winner within and beyond the island, to the pain and envy of many colleagues who, having been his friends turned against him when so ordered to and all that just for the crumbs of stale bread and some false professional recognitions.

Today, all these UNEAC colleagues, especially those eight brazen writers, who are signatories against gender violence, which used to Angel as the emblem of an abusive violent man, who celebrate every day the brutal repression against the Ladies in White, and are silent this week – sure why not – about the brutal beating of the actress Ana Luisa Rubio by dictator Castro's political police disguised as “neighbors”. Today, them, all of them and the dictator of course, will receive the news with deep anger which will delight the majority, that is to say, all the good people who love freedom, justice, democracy, human rights, art, literature:

Ángel Santiesteban-Prats has just won the International Franz Kafka prize which convened in the Czech Republic.

Tomorrow, Friday, at 7.30pm, in the Cervantes Institute of Berlin, three Cuban writers: José Manuel Prieto, Jorge Luis Arzola and Amir Valle, moderated by the German editor Michi Strausfeld, will speak about such important themes as liberty and creation in Cuba.

Starting from the injustice perpetrated against Ángel Santiesteban Prats, who is currently serving a prison sentence on the island where he was wrongfully convicted in a trial which was rigged to prevent further denouncing the plight of Cubans in his blog “The Children Nobody Wanted”, the writers will also speak about other developments of intellectual repression.

And as a novelty, they will present the novel “The Summer When God Was Sleeping”. A novel which deals with the theme of the boat people with which Ángel Santiesteban was the winner of the International Franz Kafka Novels from the Drawer Prize, which convened in the Czech Republic.

Hopefully, all those who are in Berlin can join us!!!

Amir Valle, writer and journalist, literary agent of Ángel Santiesteban-Prats

The Editor

Translated by Shane J. Cassidy

Angel Santiesteban Attends the Berlin International Literature Festival

Posted on [October 13, 2013](#)

Ángel remains imprisoned in Cuba, make no mistake about it. He continues to hope that his case will be reviewed. However his jailers could not prevent his presence crossing the Atlantic in order to walk freely through the streets, squares, parks and cultural institutions of Berlin.

This Friday the 13th, a date which many consider to be a bad omen, Berlin played host to a true act of literary justice. To the intention of the dictatorship to silence the voice of Cuban writer Ángel Santiesteban, the dictatorship received a devastating response: from Thursday afternoon and all day Friday, in different cultural centers of the city where activities were carried out as part of the International Festival of Literature, hundreds of copies of the document, “Short history of injustice”, were distributed, where it explains Ángel’s case to the invited writers, the international media and to the thousands and thousands of Germans and foreigners who attended what is considered the most important Literary Festival in recent years.

Thus at 7.30 pm, the main room of the Cervantes Institute was packed with the general public, most of whom were German although the presence of numerous Latin Americans was also noted, all interested in knowing the version of the events which would be offered by the Cuban writers José Manuel Prieto, Jorge Luis Arzola and Amir Valle, moderated by the prestigious German editor Michi Strausfeld.

The short introductory words of the Spaniard Francesc Puértolas, Head of Cultural Activities at the Cervantes Institute, made clear reference to the position of this institution to be a plural space where freedom of opinion is respected, regardless of the ideology that that opinion represented.

His words were a very brief response to another disrespectful Cuban government maneuver, through the “useful idiots” who are used outside Cuba to try to stop the campaigns denouncing the rottenness of the dictatorship. In this case, the German foundation “*Netzwerk Cuba*“, which brings together various associations which support the Cuban dictators, wrote an open letter in which it accused the Cervantes Institute of hosting a promotion of culture which was biased in favor of those who were serving the United States in their attacks on Cuba. In one of the paragraphs in the document, where a few historical truths are mixed with a lot of lies, they resorted to the hackneyed accusation that figures like Yoani Sánchez and Amir Valle were following agendas which had been formulated by the U.S. government in their plans against the island.

After the editor Michi Strausfeld explained to those present the personal and professional reasons why she had decided to get involved in the defense of Angel, she gave the floor to the writer Amir Valle to explain, in detail, the infamous trial for which Angel is now jailed. Valle began by apologizing to the Cervantes Institute on behalf of himself and his colleagues, because he considered the unfair letter of “*Netzwerk Cuba*” as offensive and disrespectful; a letter which was blatantly lying by stating that the Institute offered a partial image in favor of the enemies of the “Cuban Revolution” because earlier this year it served as a venue to meet in Berlin with the blogger Yoani Sánchez and now they hosted activity to talk about violations against freedom of expression in Cuba.

Valle said that this accusation was contradicted by the simple fact that the Cervantes Institute, on numerous occasions, had hosted Cuban writers and intellectuals who had spoken in favour of the regime, among whom he mentioned the president of UNEAC (Cuban Writers and Artist Union), Miguel Barnet and the recent Cuban National Literature Prize winner, Leonardo Padura. In the heated discussions in the audience at the end of the activity, those present would learn that among others, Cuban writer Nancy Morejon, filmmaker Fernando Perez and artist Arturo Montoto, who have all been praised by the regime, just to mention some of the prominent guests, had been at the

Cervantes Institute in recent times.

Afterwards, Valle commented that he was there as a colleague, brother and legal and literary representative of Ángel and, step by step, he described the infernal trap in which the political police hounded the writer after which he decided to go public with his criticism of the system prevailing in Cuba through his blog “The Children Nobody Wanted,” and he reminded those present that the document circulated at the Festival could interest them in discovering all the evidence of the wicked deed.

Michi Strausfeld later read fragments of a letter sent from Cuba by Ángel and gave the floor to the writer Jorge Luis Arzola, who recounted his personal experience with the Cuban political police and he referenced cases similar to Ángel’s, although much less traumatic, such as what happened to the narrator and poet Francis Sánchez when he also decided to open his own blog, receiving so much pressure and threats against him personally and his family that he decided to give up.

Once again, Michi Strausfeld read another letter which allowed the public to know what a day in the life of Ángel as a prisoner of the regime was like. The images described by Ángel, with the same naturalness and visual power which is present in his stories, touched all that were present as they informed Strausfeld, Prieto, Arzola and Valle of such at the end of the activity.

José Manuel Prieto later offered his personal vision of his experience as a writer who can travel to the island (something which neither Arzola nor Valle can do, because the regime has already prohibited their entry) and he concentrated his exhibition on the slow changes which were occurring in the aforementioned rigid and monolithic social and governmental structure, among which, the permissibility which the government was demonstrating towards the emergence of alternative spaces for citizen reflection was unthinkable in years gone by and it also ruled in favour of Ángel’s case being reviewed with true justice.

To close the evenings events, Valle presented a beautiful edition of the book “The Summer When God Was Sleeping”, with which Ángel Santiesteban recently won the Franz Kafka Novel Competition. Valle, to clarify for those who see any project to support those who oppose the regime as CIA-funded, stressed that this was purely a literary award, organized by an information platform (inCUBAator) that is supported by the Czech NGO ‘Libri Prohibiti’, a civic organization that, among other merits of cultural work, has the largest [Samizdat](#) library in Europe.

The interest aroused in the audience only further manifested itself just as the activity came to an end: many people approached the writers to ask more about the specific case of Ángel and about the situation of freedom of expression in Cuba. “One of the participants approached me with a group of documents we distributed, about twenty of them, and asked me to sign them and told me: ‘I will pass these out to several of my colleagues that go to Cuba on vacation and always come telling me about how beautiful the beaches are. I want them to know that there is a much tougher life away from the beach, the sun and Cuban rum’”, Valle recounted to a journalist. Another German, a well-known bookseller, approached the writers and told them “When we were listening to you speak, we commented amongst ourselves that we felt that Mr Santiesteban was up there sitting next to those were at the activity.”

Thus it was like this that Ángel Santiesteban was there, to infuriate his jailers, smiling, with that tranquility of someone who knows that they walk the right path: one of dignity and the defence of his thoughts. Later, while shadows fell over Berlin and the city started its fabulous cultural and social nightlife, he decided take a walk through the streets and walked talking, laughing, remembering the days when they were young and happy and naive, hugging his friends, then and always: Amir Valle and Jorge Luis Arzola. Michi Strausfeld was also laughing at seeing them together, another time, after almost ten years since their last meeting in Cuba.

The Editor

Translated by Shane J. Cassidy

Canadian Intellectuals for Freedom of Expression Honor Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [January 9, 2014](#)

They were ten writers in Quebec who supported ten writers imprisoned and persecuted in their countries and they expressed their solidarity during the 14th edition of the event “Books like air” that is celebrated in the “Montreal Salon of the Book” November 20-25, 2013.

Amnesty International, Pen International of Quebec, and the Quebec Writers Union (UNEQ) joined their voices to denounce those abuses and to commemorate the International Day of Imprisoned Writers, held annually November 15.

The ten imprisoned writer so honored and the ten Canadian writers who represented them were:

Marie-Célie Agnant avec [Dieudonné Enoh Meyomesse](#) (CAMEROUN)

Germaine Beaulieu avec [Li Bifeng](#) (CHINE)

Jean-Paul Daoust avec [Jabeur Mejri](#) (TUNISIE)

Jean-Pierre Davidts avec [Raif Badawi](#) (ARABIE SAOUDITE)

Gaétane Dufour avec Angel Santiesteban-Prats (CUBA)

Karoline Georges avec [Dolma Kyab](#) (TIBET)

Pierre Ouellet avec [Akram Aylisli](#) (AZERBAÏDJAN) Invité d’honneur du Salon du livre de Montréal et porte-parole de Livres comme l’Air

André Roy avec [Somyot Prueksakasemsuk](#) (THAÏLANDE)

Neil Smith avec [Vo Minh Tri](#) et [Tran Vu Anh Binh](#) (VIETNAM)

Kim Thuy avec [Mohammed Al Ajami](#) (QATAR)

Here you can see the complete event: <http://youtu.be/QbLoDv3IAiQ>

[Communiqué, version PDF](#)

<http://www.uneq.qc.ca/nouvelles-communiques/des-livres-porteurs-d-espoir-et-de-liberte/>

“Monsieur Santiesteban-Prats

L'événement « Livres comme l'Air » me fournit non seulement l'opportunité, mais également la chance de vous offrir ce livre dont l'intérêt est sa teneur descriptive de l'avènement de l'art renouvelé en architecture des églises occidentales entre les années 1850 et 1950. Vous découvrirez que ce renouveau, si impératif qu'il était, avait nécessité une lutte incessante de la part d'architectes engagés.

À votre tour, vous êtes protagoniste d'un combat engagé. Un combat affreusement plus meurtrissant... Un combat pour la liberté de parole, la liberté de dénoncer l'injustice... La liberté fondamentale de vivre sa vie en société malgré des différences idéologiques.

Je ne peux souhaiter rien d'autre que de vous voir recouvrer votre liberté physique d'abord, et que votre souffrance touche, impressionne et change le cœur et l'intelligence des tenants du pouvoir despote, à Cuba, et à travers le monde entier; il va sans dire.

Que l'espoir vous soutienne !

Gaétane Dufour”

Reporters Without Borders: We urge the Cuban authorities to drop all charges against Angel Santiesteban Prats and release him at once

Posted on [March 1, 2014](#)

The blogger Angel Santiesteban Prats now has completed one year in prison.

It's been one year today since Ángel Santiesteban Prats was detained in prison. The writer and netizen is the author of an informative blog, *The Children Nobody Wanted*, created in 2008, known for its open criticism of the government. On December 8, 2012, after an arbitrary and hasty trial, the Prosecutor declared Angel Santiesteban Prats guilty of the charges against him. Officially, he was condemned to five years in prison for "home violation and injuries," in spite of the fact that no tangible proof existed. Thus, the blogger was transferred April 9, 2013 to Prison 1850 in San Miguel del Padrón (Havana), where on repeated occasions he suffered mistreatment and torture.

On February 18, 2014, Reporters without Borders learned that the National Association of Law Offices (ONBC) suspended his lawyer, Amelia Rodríguez Cala, so that she cannot practice in the courts for a period of six months. This considerably affects her efforts to have the journalist released. The lawyer is also in charge of the defense of two other dissidents, the musician Gorcki Aguila, and Sonia Garro, a member of the Ladies in White, a peaceful protest movement made up of the wives and family members of the political prisoners, which in 2005 received the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Conscience.

"A year ago Reporters without Borders denounced these cruel and draconian practices. We urge the Cuban authorities to drop all charges against Ángel Santiesteban Prats and request that the journalist be released immediately," said Lucie Morillon, Director of Investigations of the organization.

"The intimidation to which journalists are constantly subjected in Cuba is extremely worrying. Cuba occupies last place in the Americas in the World Classification of Freedom of the Press in 2014. It's in place 170, out of 180 countries," Lucie Morillon explained.

Although Ángel Santiesteban Prats is the only blogger currently serving a sentence in prison, the authorities continue harassing all the journalists who contradict the official propaganda. The correspondents from independent Cuban websites like *Hablemos Press* are frequently detained arbitrarily. Hours later they are freed. Other victims of this method are the journalist William Cacer Diaz, on February 14, as well as at least six other news providers: Magaly Novis Otero, Pablo Morales Marchán, Ignacio Luis González Vidal, Denis Noa Martínez and Tamara Rodríguez Quesada, in January 2014.

Ángel Santiesteban-Prats, who today sent an open letter to Raúl Castro, is listed in the Barometer of Press Freedom, as is José Antonio Torres, a correspondent in Santiago de Cuba for the official daily, *Granma*, imprisoned since May 1, 2011.

Published in [Reporteros sin Fronteras](#) (Reporters without Borders) *Translated by Regina Anavy*

Angel Santiesteban Among the 100 Information Heroes of Reporters without Borders

Posted on [May 1, 2014](#)

Angel Santiesteban's struggle is not in vain.

The more the dictatorship tried to silence him by shutting him away in its miserable concentration camps, his strengths only continued to grow, so that now he is not alone in being recognized for his excellent literary work. The dictatorship established him in world history as one of the umpteen heroes who, like he, set themselves as a model, each minute, each second, in order to fulfill their sacred duty to defend liberty and the rights of all.

When an organization of the caliber of Reporters Without Borders, which doesn't back down one second in its work of protecting those people—famous or unknown, be they journalists by profession or not—who day by day contribute to illuminating the world and giving an account of reality in all its forms, includes Angel on the list of the “100 Heroes” who put their ideals “at the service of the common good” and set the example of courage, then the ruinous intents of all those who tried to convert him into a delinquent “home invader and woman beater” dissolve into nothing, from the dictator Raul Castro through his political police and his “justice,” up to those tiresome colleagues and former “friends,” members of UNEAC (Cuban Writers and Artists Union), and the rest of the fauna out there who swarm to put Angel's reputation on trial.

What an immense honor to be part of that list of “100 Information Heroes”! How different it is from that list of “[the five assassins](#)”!

The writer already had reached international dimension with his award-winning work; now, thanks to the dictatorship, he has attained also the status of defender of liberty, democracy and human rights.

From my humble place as the editor of the blog, happy to return to Angel the voice that they try to stop by imprisoning him, enabling all his posts and denunciations to be published and spread around the entire world, I can do no less than thank immensely Reporters Without Borders for their invaluable support and solidarity that shows every day they support Angel; and Dictator Raul Castro, since without his intervention, none of this would have been possible.

Proudly,

The Editor

Reporters without Borders publishes the list of the “100 Information Heroes.”

Published Tuesday, April 29, 2014.

On the occasion of the World Day of Freedom of the Press 2014, Reporters Without Borders publishes for the first time a list of “100 information heroes.”

Gifted with exemplary courage, these “100 heroes” contribute by their struggle or their work to promoting the freedom, as stated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of “investigating and receiving information and opinions, and disseminating them without limitation of borders, by any medium of expression.” The “100 heroes” put their ideal “at the service of the common good,” and thereby have set an example of courage.

“World Press Freedom Day—whose creation was promoted by Reporters Without Borders—should be the occasion to recognize the courage of these journalists and bloggers who, by their vocation, every day risk their security and on occasion their lives,” said Christophe Deloire, Secretary General of Reporters without Borders. “The ‘Heroes of Information’ are a source of inspiration for

all the women and men who aspire to freedom. Without their determination and that of all similar people, it simply would not be possible to expand the area of freedom,” he added.

The list of Reporters Without Borders—which naturally is not exhaustive—is a recognition and homage not only to the 100 persons cited, famous or unknown, but also to all the journalists—be they journalists by profession or not—who day by day contribute to illuminating the world and giving an account of reality in all its forms. This initiative has the object of demonstrating that the struggle to defend and promote freedom of information gives intense support to the victims of aggression, but also serves to erect figures who can serve as models.

The list of the “100 Information Heroes” includes women and men of all ages (from 25 to 75 years old) and all nationalities (65 countries). The youngest, Oudom Tat, is Cambodian; the oldest, Muhammed Ziauddin, Pakistani. Iran, Russia, China, Eritrea, Azerbaijan, Mexico and Vietnam are represented by at least three heroes for each one. On the list of the 100 appear such different personalities as Anabel Hernandez, author of a best-seller about the collusion of Mexican politicians with organized crime; Ismail Saymaz, a Turkish journalist who has faced some 20 lawsuits for his reporting; Hassan Ruvakuki, imprisoned for 15 months in Burundi for having reported on rebel movements, and Gerard Ryle, director of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, who contributed to the development of global journalistic investigations.

Some journalists perform their work in democratic countries. This is the case with Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras, Americans who reveal the massive surveillance of the American and British intelligence services. Others exercise their profession in more authoritarian regimes, like the Iranian journalist Jila Bani Yaghoob. Not all are journalists by profession. The Vietnamese citizen journalist Le Ngoc Thanh also is a Catholic priest. Many of them, like the Italian journalist who specializes in organized crime, Lirio Abbate, has made corruption and criminality in his country his battle horse. That’s the case of Peter John Jaban, a radio operator in Malaysia, who during a long period lived exiled in London; of Serhiy Lechtchenko, a Ukrainian investigative journalist, and of the Bulgarian, Assen Yordanov, who often receive death threats. Among those portraits, Reporters without Borders also included activists like Maria Pia Matta, who from the World Association of Community Radio defended for close to ten years the freedom of expression for community radio in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Courage is the common denominator of all these personalities. In Uzbekistan, the authorities didn’t have any doubts about torturing Muhammad Bekjanov to obtain his confessions; the journalist is detained for 15 years. He isn’t receiving medical attention despite suffering from tuberculosis. Eritrea found itself in last place on the World Classification of Press Freedom 2014 of Reporters without Borders; it’s the seventh time it occupies this position. In this country, Dawit Isaac has been in the dungeons of the dictator Isaias Afewerki for 13 years. Mazen Darwish, founder of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression, who received the Prize for Press Freedom 2012 (“Journalist of the Year”) from Reporters without Borders, finds himself imprisoned for more than two years by the regime of Bachar el-Assad.

Translated by Regina Anavy

New Prize for Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [May 28, 2014](#)

Miami: Presentation of Ángel Santiesteban's novel also includes a tribute to him

Bacardi House, Rosa Blanca Institute, Chef Paella, Connect Cuba, Neo Club Editiones, Green Designs and Alexandria Library welcome to the presentation held on Tuesday, 3 June at 6 pm, of the book by Ángel Santiesteban-Prats called *The Summer God Slept* awarded the 2013 Franz Kafka Novels From the Drawer Prize.

The novel will be presented by the writers Carlos Alberto Montaner and Antonio Correa Iglesias in the Bacardi House in 1531 Brescia Avenue, Coral Gables (Miami Fl 33124). At the event, the journalist and presenter Karen Caballero will deliver a monetary prize, provided by the second edition of the culture project JOVENAJE, to Ángel Santiesteban's sister María de los Ángeles Santiesteban who will receive the prize on behalf of her brother.

Between 6 pm and 7 pm the organizers will offer refreshments and tapas. Following this, at 7 pm, the presentation of the novel and activities of JOVENAJE will take place.

JOVENAJE is an independent itinerant event dedicated to paying homage to working writers, cultural promoters and artists. Ángel Santiesteban, dissident writer whose work has been acknowledged for its significance at the national as well as international level, was imprisoned a year ago in Cuba and has been sentenced to five years in a rigged trial. Reporters without Borders included him to the list of 100 Information Heroes.

In Cuba, where the separation of public powers doesn't exist, judicial structures are only a mere appendix of the political power. In the last years, the Cuban government has resorted to creating false but well-known cases in order to increase the number of political prisoners on the Island without the risk of facing international campaigns for amnesty or unfavorable states of opinions. Santiesteban-Prats is one of the major victims of this new kind of repression.

Carlos Alberto Montaner: Someday God Will Awaken / Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [June 9, 2014](#)

I thank Neo Club Editions, Armando Anel and Idabell, his wife; Barcardi House of the University of Miami and the Institute of Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, and the Alexandria Library for the opportunity to present this excellent novel by Angel Santiesteban Prats, *The Summer that God Slept*, winner of the Franz Kafka literary prize, Novels Genre 2013.

I want to especially mention the writer Amir Valle who, at the time, called to my attention Santiesteban's human and professional quality revealing to me an exceptional writer. Amir's devotion to Santiesteban and his generous solidarity is good proof that communism has not been able to destroy the ties of friendship, although it has tried to control the emotional life of Cubans.

Repression as general punishment and intimidation

Santiesteban is a magnificent Cuban narrator, born in 1966. He was incarcerated by the dictatorship and condemned to five years in prison, supposedly for a crime of domestic violence that was never proved. In reality, what they punished were his criticisms of the system and his confrontation with the regime. The accusation was only the formal alibi to hide political repression.

Naturally, the Cuban regime hides its repressive hand behind the supposed independence of a judicial power that in Cuba is only another feared expression of the apparatus of terror.

If the Castro regime, really, felt that it should pursue those guilty of great atrocities, and if it did not use the tribunals selectively in order to harass its adversaries, it would have severely punished commander Universo Sanchez when he shot to death an inconvenient neighbor. Or it would have initiated a responsible investigation into the assassination of dozens of innocents on the tug boat *March 13th*. Or it would have delved seriously into the accusation made by Angel Carromero about the probable execution of Oswaldo Paya and Harold Cepero in July 2012, to mention only three cases among the hundreds of unpunished crimes and abuses that Cubans have had to endure.

I have seen, lived and suffered enough to know that the dictatorship invariably lies about the nature of its adversaries. It accuses them of being terrorists, CIA agents, alcoholics, traitors, or, as in this case, even of domestic violence, in order not to have to assume an unpleasant truth: they use defamation, acts of repudiation, beatings, jail and, sometimes, the firing squad, to reign in critical people who have the audacity of saying what they think.

At the same time, those maltreated by word or deed sow terror with the objective of making an example that will not be spread. It is preventive punishment. They strike so that others will lower their heads.

Repression in Cuba, well, it has two clear purposes that Lenin was already recommending at the beginning of the Bolshevik revolution: punish those guilty of deviating from the official line and intimidate the rest of the population. They are, of course, the same mafia methods converted into government measures.

That process of destruction of the reputation of the dissident or of the simply *disaffected*, especially if dealing with a famed intellectual, is always the prelude to jail or physical aggression. It begins with the insult and evolves into a savage kicking, ostensible and public, aimed at "giving him a lesson" so that he does not dare to contradict the sacred gospels of the tribe of thugs who occupy power.

Angel Santiesteban has gone through all this. They have beaten him, defamed him, they have tried futilely to silence him, but what they have managed is to convert his case into what is called "a cause celebre" that has awakened the attention of half the world.

Something similar to what, in the past, happened to Heberto Padilla, Jose Mario, Armando Valladares, Jorge Valls, Angel Cuadra, Reinaldo Arenas, Rene Ariza, Hector Santiago, Maria Elena Cruz Varela, Juan Manuel Cao, or Raul Rivero, and to so many other writers and artists who suffered various forms of the same ordeal.

The novel and the escape

The Summer That God Slept tells of the flight of a group of Cubans on board a raft. The narrator relates, almost always in the first person, the ups and downs of the trip, and describes the characters who accompany him from the time they embark on the Cuban coast, full of dreams, until they return to the island, on board a ship of the US Navy which takes them to the Guantanamo camps where an uncertain destiny awaits them.

In this case, the eventful journey is less important than the author's disquisitions on Cuban history and the failed communist government. It is interesting to note a frequent presence in the novelist's reflections: Jose Marti. Santiesteban, like so many Cubans, rightly, venerates Marti and uses his life and work as ideal and measure by which to judge what is happening on the Island.

The story is strong and dramatic for two reasons. The first, because thousands of Cubans have died of drowning or being devoured by sharks and barracudas in the seas near Cuba trying to escape from the communist system. That is to say, Santiesteban, in his fiction, which has so much of reality, gives a powerful voice to those thousand of victims. His novel, although the author has not proposed it, has a very important historical component.

How many Cubans have died in the attempt? They are dozens of thousands. It is not known exactly, but they are many. Some speak of 75,000, others double that. Without doubt, many more than those who have died in combat in all the wars fought on the Island since Columbus set foot at the end of the 15th century. And if they are not more, it is because Jose Basulto conceived and put in the air Brothers to the Rescue in order to help the rafters, until the dictatorship destroyed two of the unarmed airplanes that flew above international waters, killing four people who were just trying to help their fellow countrymen in danger of death.

The second reason that this novel is of notable importance is the theme of the relentless exodus of Cubans. Why or rather from what do they flee, if since the 18th, 19th and very particularly the 20th centuries, until the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959, the Island had been a net receiver of hundreds of thousand of immigrants, to the point of being the American nation that received the most foreigners in relation to its population? (More, proportionally, than Argentina and the United States).

They flee the lack of freedom, translated into lack of opportunity. Successive generations of Cuban residents always perceived the promising experience of living better than their parents and grandparents, something that they routinely achieved.

Until the *Comandantes* arrived, mandated that the dreams of prosperity stop and imposed on Cubans a system of government that impedes the creation of wealth, is incapable of maintaining infrastructure, and destroys accumulated fiscal capital, as is observed in those cities devastated by the unmitigated stupidity of Castro-ism.

When you are born in Cuba, you *know* that, as much as you may study or try, you will not be able to improve your quality of life because the system prevents it. That is why Cuba is the only country in the world from which engineers, doctors, writers and all those who yearn to do something constructive with their lives and undertake a lucrative activity to achieve their own well being and that of their families escape on rafts, risking death.

They flee also the lying and tiresome discourse that tries to justify more than half a century of social failures with heroic references to violent activities that lost all connection with the young generation.

What the hell does the remote battle of Uvero — a shootout elevated to the category of epic combat

— or Che's disastrous adventure in Bolivia mean for some young kids who want to have fun and normal lives that permit them to spread their wings and pursue their individual dreams?

And when they achieve it, when finally, they have managed to emigrate, they experience another facet of the horror: The State, that rancorous communist dictatorship bent on harming those who have fled and harassing and mortifying those who have stayed, denies them access to the academic titles that they legitimately acquired, sells them documents at exorbitant prices, describes them as scum or worms, treats them as enemies, and intends that the host country keep them in a legal limbo so that they cannot make their way.

While the rest of the nations of Latin America ask the United States to protect their undocumented citizens with such legal measures as the Law of Adjustment that protects Cubans when they touch US soil, the miserable State forged by the Castros tries to repeal such legislation. Not satisfied with the damage inflicted on Cubans when they live on the Island, it tries to prolong their suffering in exile, creating for them difficulties so that they cannot adequately develop.

Nothing of what is said here is different from what is quietly muttered by Cuban intellectuals who have not been able to or desired to seek exile, including many of those miserable ones who sign letters in UNEAC to support the tyranny or to applaud executions, pressured by the political police.

That's why a voice like that of Angel Santiesteban Prats is so uncomfortable. Each time that a writer on the Island — and I think of Padilla, Maria Elena Cruz Varela, Antonio Jose Ponte, Raul Rivero, Yoani Sanchez, Ivan Garcia, and so many others — dares to describe reality without fear or swallowing the fear, their cowardly colleagues are victims of the disagreeable phenomenon of moral dissonance. They think one thing but say another, while they applaud what, really, deep in their hearts, repels them. The regime has managed to domesticate them, they know it, and they live with that annoying imprint that shackles always leave.

In the end, it must be very sad to live always masked officiating in the temple of the double standard. Angel Santiesteban Prats freed himself from that ignominy and wrote, in order to test it, a splendid book. Someday God will awaken, and he will come out of his cell. Thousands of readers await him thankful to give him the embrace that he deserves.

Published in NeoClubPress.

S.O.S. Imminent Transfer: Am I more dangerous than the murderers? / Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [July 24, 2014](#)

In the most total secrecy, State Security is preparing my transfer to a military unit of border guards.

In the last few days, a rumor started that now has become plausible, inasmuch as the prison authorities are waiting for my transfer in order to bring me to a Minister or a Vice-Minister of Construction who keeps convicts for “diversion of resources,” and in no way can they clash with me, fearing that I will get information from them and later divulge it in my blog.

After a prisoner escaped and managed to reach Miami, State Security ordered that the surveillance on me be strengthened, so they set up a 24-hour command post and kept every movement that I make inside the settlement under supervision.

A few minutes ago, they just ordered a welding of some bars to secure the place where they’re taking me, and the bars have to be placed in the frontier-guard unit before morning.

Evidently, they will keep me more guarded and isolated there. Another chapter begins in this journey of injustice, for my dangerous crime of thinking differently.

I reaffirm that I am stronger than the first day of imprisonment. It’s an honor that they commit these extremes against me — for exercising the craft of thinking and expressing my opposition to the dictatorial regime that has suppressed our country for more than a half-century — while they accept murderers, drug traffickers and rapists, whom they barely harass or watch, like they do in my case.

Long live Cuba, and let it be free.

Ángel Santiesteban-Prats

Lawton Prison Settlement, July 2014.

Extremely Urgent: Angel Santiesteban Remains Missing

Posted on July 24, 2014

Angel's whereabouts remain unknown; the authorities have not mentioned his transfer, and when his son, a minor, Eduardo Santiesteban calls the prison to obtain information they tell him that Angel "escaped."

We demand the immediate appearance of Angel in perfect condition, the restoration of ALL of his rights, a review of his trial with all of the guarantees denied until now, and we hold Raul Castro Ruz fully responsible for Angel and his son Eduardo's safety. We remind you that there are NO possible "accidents" and that everyone's eyes are upon you and Angel. There is NO place for more impunity.

We will not stop denouncing what you have done and continue to do against this acclaimed writer, and we demand justice and his release.

The Editor

Angel Santiesteban is a peaceful activist who has not committed any crimes for which the Cuban political police are now condemning him.

A video in Spanish with a telephone interview of Angel's son and others [is available here](#).

Translated by: Marlena Papavaritis

24 July 2014

Completely dismantled, the farce against Angel Santiesteban continues in an unknown location

Posted on [July 25, 2014](#)

Angel continues being held in an unknown location, transferred illegally and without being able to communicate to his family, a few days after his son, Eduardo Angel Santiesteban Rodriguez, told the truth about what happened when he was only a child. He now is a 16-year-old adolescent.

Forced and manipulated by his mother — Kenia Diley Rodriguez — and Castro's State Security, he has told now that the objective was to harm his father and declare against him. He said that he never saw anything of what his mother said Angel had done to her, and that everything is a plot in order to punish Angel for his dissidence, and that his mother, for motives of "love," collaborated with the Regime to lie.

It's important to clarify that the ex-partner was the one who abandoned Angel and the two-and-a-half-year-old boy, a little before she started to make up false accusations against him.

She abandoned him after deceiving him with a lover who had made promises to her that later he didn't keep, and she, disenchanted with that lover, decided to try to win him back, something she couldn't do, because he had already formed a stable partnership with a very well-known and beautiful Cuban actress. Kenia, disgusted and jealous, formed a new partnership with an agent of the political police, and from that moment the false accusations rained down.

Here I present a letter that Kenia Diley Rodriguez wrote to a girlfriend explaining all this; the letter, like many more other proofs of Angel's innocence, is found in the court file, which has been available in complete form in this same blog for almost two years.

Let's demand Angel's immediate appearance, and let's make Raul Castro responsible for Angel's life and integrity, as well as that of his son, Eduardo Angel.

The Editor

Leopoldo Lopez and Angel Santiesteban: Two Lives and One Destiny

Posted on [July 27, 2014](#)

If we paused to observe Leopoldo Lopez and Angel Santiesteban-Prats for one moment, we see two very different physical types. One is very slim, the other sturdy. One is a lawyer, the other a writer. One is Venezuelan, the other Cuban; both are the father of a girl and a boy. Both share the same gift: a great charisma accompanied by enormous generosity, and a desire to change the difficult reality of their countries: Leopoldo, from his active political participation, and Angel, through his civic opinion passed through his books and writings, with the cutting edge of the truthful word.

Beyond the similarities and differences, they appear to be cut from the same cloth. It is hard to find such men with such composure to dare tell two dictators — Cuban and Venezuelan — calling things clearly by their name and speaking directly, without euphemisms. Angel and Leopoldo did this and they continue to do it. For this reason, they both also share the terrible situation of being political prisoners of these two regimes brought together by the greed and evil of their rulers.

This week, Leopoldo has been a victim of a “violent requisition,” the same way that Daniel Ceballos and Enzo Scarano, opposition mayors dismissed and imprisoned for designs of political power, using an “armed wing”: a justice that is corrupt and sold.

When we read the news about what is going on in Venezuela, we have to assure ourselves that we are reading news about Venezuela because, really, it appears copied from the news that independent journalists bring us in Cuba.

This week, Angel Santiesteban has been transferred in an illegal manner from the prison he had been in, a military facility in Lawton, Havana. Today is the sixth day of anguish and desperation without having received any news. This week we have also heard about how violence against those in the Venezuelan opposition is intensifying and how, not being satisfied with locking them up, the authorities enjoy punishing them with the same sadism of the Castro regime.

Angel already expressed his solidarity with Leopoldo Lopez in an open letter; today, Angel's whereabouts remain unknown and isolated, probably tortured, and is oblivious to what is happening right now with Leopoldo. However, knowing full well Angel's sentiments, from here we send all his solidarity in his name and in my own name, because I know that in the difficult moment he is going through, this is what he would have written in a new post.

And of course, our deepest affection to Lilian Tintori and her children. She, like the dignified Ladies in White of Cuba, exalts the word love.

I share here the brave letter that Leopoldo sent to his compatriots. In this letter one can see how — same as in the case of Angel — Maduro's regime actually ends up strengthening Leopoldo. Without a doubt, as long as men like this exist, the liberty and peace of Venezuela and Cuba will arrive soon.

The Editor

Letter from Leopoldo Lopez Mendoza: I Accuse the Venezuelan Dictatorship

I have been politically persecuted under the “Chavista” regime for more than ten years. There have been more than 20 proceedings, political trials, homicide attempts dully reported and never resolved, moral assassination on behalf of the means of communication of the State and two political disqualifications, despite obtaining a favorable sentencing from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for the violation of my rights and in defense of my political participation.

For over a year, beginning in January of 2013, Nicolas Maduro publicly expressed, on national radio and television channels, his desire to put me in prison for the opinions issued against his government. It was in this context of permanent persecution and explicit threats made by Maduro

that an order for my arrest was made on February 12 of this year.

I am in prison for denouncing the Venezuelan state as corrupt, inefficient, repressive, and anti-democratic. I am in prison for denouncing in a loud voice that in Venezuela there is no democracy, that public authority has been kidnapped by a corrupt elite, inefficient and anti-democratic, responsible for the serious social, economic, and political crisis that all Venezuelans suffer from today.

I am in prison for having denounced that in Venezuela we live in a dictatorship.

I am in prison for having proposed a profound change that can occur by replacing those that are in charge of all public authorities. I am in prison for having solicited the resignation or replacement of Nicolas Maduro as President of Venezuela through constitutional means.

I am in prison for having made a call to the Venezuelan people to go out to the streets to protest, making use of our historic and constitutional right of protest, until obtaining a political change that would guarantee peace, well-being, and progress for all Venezuelans.

I am in prison for having put forth ideas, opinions, and proposals that today a majority of Venezuelans share, who since their indignation have asked for a profound change that will set the nation on the right path.

I am physically in prison, they keep me isolated and with severe restrictions on visitors, but now or never will they be able to imprison my absolute conviction that we have the right and the duty to struggle to obtain democracy and liberty for Venezuela.

Thank God that I am not alone in these ideas, we are millions, we are in the majority, those of us who are willing to struggle for a change toward democracy. They might be able to imprison me and thousands more but will never be able to imprison the spirit of struggle that, with the young people at the vanguard, today runs through the streets of the towns, neighborhoods, and cities throughout the country.

Venezuela has already decided to change, therefore, my imprisonment and that of others is nothing but the face of a dictatorship that daily becomes weaker and weaker and has less popular support, that intends to stay in power by repressing, silencing critical voices, and criminalizing protest.

The accusation against me, based off of several speeches that I made between January 23 and February 12, has as its best defense the very speeches, read or seen from beginning to end, without edit or any form of manipulation. In these speeches, based on a critical analysis of the present crisis, I proposed a way out, a definitive political change, activated from the streets with nonviolent actions and embodied by a popular call to one of the four alternatives that the Constitution offers to bring about a change of government.

On January 23 we made a call to awaken our conscience, to lift the optimistic spirit of the Venezuelan people, convinced that we can have a better Venezuela. A call to go out to the streets made on the anniversary of January 23, 1958, celebrated by the government and the opposition, is the date on which the Venezuelan people rose up against the dictatorship of Marcos Perez Jimenez.

On that day we had the celebration, February 2, of Popular Assemblies throughout Venezuela to discuss all of our options for overcoming the social, economic, and political crisis that we are now in.

On February 2, hundreds of gatherings were held throughout Venezuela, some big, some small, some in plazas, others in houses or on the streets. At these gatherings, many different organizations, people, and parties with different proposals participated.

The conclusion was to commit to peaceful protests out on the streets for a better country, choosing February 12 as the date on which we would organize our first protest.

In that opportunity I said: "These struggles, sisters, brothers, have to have a clear direction and

methodology based on nonviolence. Nonviolence has been the most effective method of struggle that oppressed peoples have created. Nonviolence does not mean passivity, nonviolence does not mean to hang one's head low, nonviolence does not mean retreat. Nonviolence is to not have fear, it means to challenge, nonviolence means to be out on the streets, nonviolence means having a state of conscience where we do not allow manipulation.”

On February 12, as we had summoned, thousands of people came out to the streets in all of Venezuela. In Caracas, the protest began in Plaza Venezuela. From there we marched toward the headquarters of the Public Prosecutor's office, just as we had notified the authorities. There we protested, in peace and without violence, for more than two hours, and we then left in peace. The violent acts occurred after our departure and in those, Nicolas Maduro's government is to be held accountable.

Certainly, what calls the most attention with respect to the narrative of the facts by the government in its indictment against me is that they completely omit the most relevant act that occurred on that day: the murder of two Venezuelan citizens, Juan Montoya and Bassil Da Costa, executed by officials of the political police of the government. The government also remains silent about the fact that since that day, 42 Venezuelans have been murdered in the street protests, that thousands have been detained and subject to trial, and that more than one hundred are still deprived of their liberty for exercising their constitutional right to protest.

In my case, I have nothing that I have to rectify in word or deed. If it is a crime to denounce corruption, inefficiency, the loss of liberties and the anti-democratic calling of those who govern, I assume my responsibility. I further declare myself responsible for having summoned the protests in the streets with the intention of going out to conquer democracy and liberty for all Venezuelans.

I am innocent from the charges that they level against me, but I do not expect anything from a justice system composed of courts, a Public Prosecutor, and an Ombudsman highly corrupted, hijacked, and manipulated by the government of Nicolas Maduro. I am, along with hundreds of companions, a political prisoner, a prisoner of conscience.

Leopoldo Lopez Mendoza, Ramo Verde Prison. Los Teques, Venezuela

For complete information about repression in Venezuela: <http://www.accionporlalibertad.com>

[Please sign](#) so that Amnesty International declares the Cuban dissident Angel Santiesteban a prisoner of conscience.

26 July 2014

S.O.S.: Angel Santiesteban Transferred and His Whereabouts Unknown

Posted on [August 1, 2014](#)

Since yesterday, July 21, Angel Santiesteban Prats is in an unknown location. I will now relate the events that preceded this new arbitrariness on the part of Cuban State Security.

Joining him in his helplessness is his younger son, Eduardo Angel Santiesteban Rodriguez, 16 years old, the son of Angel and the woman who plotted against him with State Security in order to incarcerate him.

The youth — once old enough to escape from the clutches of his mother — asked to tell the truth about what had happened and how he was manipulated by her and by the Castro regime State Security to testify against his father. [Here is the link to his statements.](#)

Obviously, we are very worried about the fate that may await the boy, for we already know through Angel's own experience that no apologies are made for harassing and incarcerating minors. In fact, Angel learned the drama of prison at 17 when he was jailed for saying goodbye to his three older brothers who were planning to leave the Island on a boat. The escape was thwarted, the three "deserters" were captured, along with the youngest (Angel) for "harboring" them. After a year and a half of incarceration, he was freed because saying goodbye to his brothers was deemed "not a crime."

But no one gave him back the lost time and the hard experience he lived through, which — justifiably — became prime material for his prizewinning literature widely regarded for its unflinching realism and strong condemnation of the penitentiary system, among other condemnations. Angel has already well-explained how the Regime endured this literature without taking much action, awaiting the opportunity to attack him directly, which happened in 2008 by opening the blog and publicizing everything that was of the public domain.

Now the son, Eduardo Angel Santiesteban Rodriguez, worthy seed of a valiant one such as Angel, runs grave risk of going through what his father did, or even worse. Eduardo Angel already has told what State Security did in collusion with his mother, Kenia Rodriguez Diley.

With regard to Angel's own situation, the Regime continues to punish him for his upright position against it, and does not back down in its efforts to complicate all the judicial interventions to which he has a right by law. The objective is to eventually water down his claims because they do NOT have any argument that can sustain all the false accusations hanging over him, now that his own son told the truth, unmasking the dictatorship's judicial farce.

Angel declared on the blog:

"My family has just, coincidentally, found out that the Review Department has sent a letter to my lawyer Lourdes Arzua, who substitutes for Amelia Rodriguez, who was cut from service for six months, where they informed her that I have asked not to have legal representation, which is completely false. I suppose that the "misunderstanding" is due to my call to that Department, in order to find out if the file had arrived in their hands, after the tribunal denied the number and my name matched. My lawyer appeared in order to clarify that the number and my name were correct. Although it appeared a joke, because that number — 444 — was that of a police serial that in 2012 was shown on Cuban television. I suppose it has to do with some joke that the bosses played with my case.

I was assisted in the call by Chief Oslaydi, who has just been ousted, perhaps for assuring me that she "would correct it and that she would pass the verdict to the Ministry of Justice, which was who, definitively, would determine what measure to take in my case." The last time that I spoke with her, her affable and polite manner had changed. Her behavior was coarse. I supposed that she had

already been visited by State Security officials, and they dictated to her what to write in my case, just as they did with the tribunal that “judged” me, then on Appeal and now on Review.

I always say, I am not naive, that the procedures to restore justice in my case are not for the government to straighten out, because they have never done it, they have never recognized an error; the “Revolution” is not mistaken, thus, its governors are perfect; complaints are made in order to continue sliming people and one day the truth may be known. Justice demands it because that is our reason for being, what has us jailed, therefore, we must continue forcing them to grow their institutional evil, which they do by refusing to accept the truth as justice.

For my file to arrive at the Review Department more than a year has passed, when normally, and according to their laws, it should take no more than three months to issue an answer. Once they had to accept the Review, six months from the filing, they invalidated my lawyer Amelia Rodriguez; now they send a letter to the office in a new effort to invalidate my representative and, as in the “trial,” leave me once more “legally defenseless,” as attorney Miguel Iturria, who was my defender then, recognized.

In recent days my lawyer inquired about the course of the file, and they informed her that a document “of the cause” is missing, which the tribunal must present; which contradicts what the ex-chief told me, that the file had already been delivered to a specialist who was working on his exhausting review.

All this foolishness by State Security, I feel it like the kicking of the hanged man. If they thought that once I was incarcerated they were going to sap my strength, I cannot think anything other than that they calculated this as if they themselves were in my place, but in my case, my strength to fight for the liberty of my country has increased.”

The day after denouncing this new judicial hoax, he declared:

In the most extreme example of “the secretiveness of the State,” State Security is preparing my transfer to a border patrol unit.”

For days now a rumor has been circulating that is now taken as fact, given that the prison authorities await my transfer to be completed so that they can transport a Minister and a Vice-Minister of Construction who are serving sentences for “diversion of resources”. There is no way that officials will allow these prisoners to coincide with me, fearing that I will obtain information from them and later divulge it on my blog.

Following the escape of a prisoner and his arrival on the coast of Miami, State Security ordered a reinforcement of the surveillance being conducted on me. They established a 24-hour command post and they’re watching every move I make within the settlement.

A few minutes ago, they just ordered some bars to be soldered to secure the place where they will take me, and they said these had to be in place before tomorrow at the aforementioned border patrol unit.

Evidently, they will keep me there more watched and isolated. Thus begins another chapter in this journey of injustice, all for my my dangerous crime of thinking differently.

I reaffirm that I have more strength than on the first day of my incarceration. It is an honor that they commit these extreme acts against me, for exercising the faculty of thinking and expressing my opposition to the dictatorial regime that has been subjugating our country for more than half a century. Meanwhile, they tolerate murderers, drug traffickers and rapists, barely even harassing or watching them, as they do in my case.

Long live live Cuba, and may She Live Free.

Sunday, June 20, 2014. Lawton Prison Settlement, 10:30pm.

The rumor became a reality

Ángel was transported yesterday, illegally, without his next of kin being notified nor him being permitted to make a telephone call. Since then, he has been held at an unknown location.

The recent confession by Ángel's son regarding his father's innocence, and the fact that just a year ago (2 August, 2013), Ángel was transported illegally and arbitrarily, without his family knowing, to the settlement where he currently resides — and that he was held for four days at a location unknown until his relatives investigated the matter outside of official channels, causes us to think that this time the punishment could be more severe.

The sadism of this Regime is enormous, and they are hitting him where it hurts the most: his son. Evidently they're trying to punish the father for the courage shown by his son, isolate him even more, and prevent him from continuing to denounce to the world the reality of how it is with him and with Cuba.

Now, we are not speaking solely of accusations the human rights of an adult who committed to the liberty of his country. We are now dealing with a grave violation of the rights of the child during the Kafkaesque proceedings visited upon the father. They used the child as cannon fodder to falsely incriminate a dissident courageous enough to call Raúl Castro a dictator. Now, this child become an adolescent – who has provided a tremendous lesson in courage and honesty to the world – is at the mercy of State Security and its sadistic system for punishing those who dare express themselves freely. The boy's helplessness is further increased by his father being not only incarcerated, but in a unknown location.

It is not an exaggeration to sound an international alert in support of Ángel and Eduardo Ángel. It is enough to witness the numerous cases publicized by the media regarding the abuses and punishments of the children of dissidents, including their incarceration. One such is the case of [the three Alexei brothers, Vianco and Django Vargas Martín](#), who were jailed starting in late 2012, when the twins Vianco and Django were only 16 years old. They are the children of the dissident Miraida Martín Calderín, a member of the UNPACU [Patriotic Union of Cuba] and the Ladies in White. There is the case of an eight-year-old girl, [Yanisleidis Olivier Reve](#), daughter of Damaris Rodríguez Revé, member of the Ladies in White, who was held back a grade in school because of her mother's activism.

From this post I call upon the international community to support Angel and his son, and I emphasize, once again, that the life and health of both are the exclusive responsibility of Raúl Castro. The world is watching and there is no longer any hiding it, even less in the sham accusations against Ángel, ripped apart by a mere boy.

–The Editor

Translated by mlk and Alicia Barraqué Ellison

22 July 2014

Communication About the Situation of Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [August 2, 2014](#)

The truth is always above all and we must devote ourselves to it. And, before the accumulation of contradictory information about the actual status, location and circumstances that surround the case of the writer Angel Santiesteban, fulfilling the responsibility to be the voice of the writer and not adding our voice to any of the versions, rumors and speculations that are circulating, we have decided to wait to have direct news, hoping that he himself will communicate with us. We trust that he was soon find a channel to send us news.

The Editor

29 July 2014

RWB Exhorts Cuban Authorities to Clarify Angel Santiesteban-Prats' Situation

Posted on [August 12, 2014](#)

Published Wednesday, August 6, 2014

Cuban writer and blogger Angel Santiesteban-Prats disappeared from the jail at San Miguel del Padron on July 21, 2014. Authorities at first said that he had escaped; nevertheless, ten days later his daughter managed to speak with him briefly at a police precinct. His whereabouts are still unknown.

After having denounced the disappearance of Angel Santiesteban-Prats from the jail where he had been since April 2013, his relatives are worried about the accusation of attempted escape.

They have not yet been able to learn the Cuban writer and blogger's version, but his family suspects that this new complaint is unfounded and its only purpose would be to increase his sentence to captivity.

The only person who has been able to see Angel Santiesteban-Prats since his disappearance has been his daughter. The interview only lasted ten minutes and was in the presence of a police agent; during this time the father, therefore, had no opportunity to speak freely. Since the said encounter occurred, the authorities have reported nothing about the writer's situation, and rumors grow.

"Reporters Without Borders exhorts the Cuban authorities to explain clearly the current situation of Angel Santiesteban-Prats," said Camille Soulier, head of the Americas' Office of said organization.

"The risk increases for the blogger each day that passes without news of him. We demand his immediate liberation and the withdrawal of all and each of the accusations brought against him.

The repressive methods of the Cuba regime increasingly resemble those days of the 'Black Spring.'"

It has been more than a year since the author of the blog "The Children Nobody Wanted" found himself behind bars by virtue of his ostensibly critical position towards the Cuban government. In December 2012 after an expedited trial he was found guilty of "home violation and assault" and was sentenced to five years in prison. In April 2013 he was transferred to the prison center of San Miguel del Padron where he suffered torture and mistreatment.

His recent disappearance coincides with an interview given by his son last July 15 on Television Marti, a news channel with headquarters in Miami. In that interview, he affirmed that he had been forced to corroborate the false accusations against his father. Also, according to Eduardo Angel Santiesteban, the "hero of the report" has never assaulted his ex-wife, and the judgement is a mere sham.

Cuba is in place number 170 among 180 countries in the 2014 edition of the World Classification of World Press Freedom by Reporters Without Borders, occupying the last place among countries of the American hemisphere.

Published by Reporters Without Borders

Translated by mlk.

6 August 2014

Amidst Rumors and Disinformation, Angel Santiesteban Continues Missing

Posted on [August 18, 2014](#)

{*Translator's Note: Angel disappeared from prison on July 21, 2014. As of today he has not been heard from for 29 days.}

Five days* have passed now since the disappearance of the writer Angel Santiesteban in Havana, barely hours after he wrote a post from Lawton prison, in which he announced to the world that there were strong rumors that the Regime's prison authorities would transfer him to a higher security prison.

After his disappearance from said prison last July 21, without the Cuban authorities informing family members of anything, another rumor started circulating: supposedly, Angel Santiesteban had escaped. In a telephone call that the writer's son, Eduardo Angel Santiesteban, made to the prison, worried at not knowing anything about his father, a minor official confirmed the rumor. "I don't know if they did it to scare me, to make me more nervous than I am," said the 16-year-old, on the Columbian television program, Night, Channel NTN24. In conversations with family and friends he has said that he feels this lie by the regime's prison officials is a bad sign.

Maria de los Angeles Santiesteban Prats said the same thing, from Miami: "The telephone harassment I'm suffering since my brother disappeared in Cuba, and other information we have obtained and that can't now be revealed in order to protect some people on the island and in exile, make me think that this is another maneuver of the dictatorship: Spreading this rumor about my brother's escape serves only to deflect attention from something big they are doing to him and that they don't want known." In a conversation with the NeoClub Press agency, she affirmed that "They are blackmailing me; last night, for example, I received an anonymous call coming from Japan. They call me and tell me that it's better that I shut up, that I'm going to end up losing."

A simple analysis of the facts preceding Santiesteban's disappearance is enough to confirm the family's suspicions.

After many months without responding to the Request for Review of the judgment against Angel, undertaken by the defense attorney last year, the Cuban judicial authorities (as they have now demonstrated in this case, manipulated by the Cuban political police) received a hard blow which totally undid the judicial farce they prepared to condemn the lauded Cuban writer to five years for a supposed crime of domestic violence. One of the principal prosecution witnesses, the writer's own son, Eduardo Angel Santiesteban, granted an interview to Television Marti, in which he explained that being a minor he was forced and manipulated by his mother – Kenia Diley Rodriguez – at the urging of Castro's State Security, forcing him through psychologists and other specialists, to declare against his father.

In this interview, and in a later one on the television program Colombia Night, he confessed that he never saw anything like what his mother said Angel did, and that the political police took advantage of "amorous" problems between his parents, inciting Kenia Diley Rodriguez to collaborate in a plot to punish Angel's dissident stance and the international denunciations that he made in his blog, *The Children Nobody Wanted*. This evidence, which exposed the dirty strategy of State Security, makes it logical to think that the regime would want to punish the writer and his family with this disappearance. It's not an isolated fact, since every Cuban dissident who has been incarcerated can tell similar stories.

Another detail that casts doubt about the rumor of flight is the same post the writer sent from prison, hours before his disappearance, in which he made known that one of the possible reasons of his transfer was the fact that two high government officials, condemned for corruption, would be sent to Lawton prison, where he was located. Logic imposes itself: It was necessary to transfer Angel to

avoid his making contact with these officials and thereby getting first-hand information about the corruption in high spheres of the island's government.

A third event to take into account would be the constant threats that Angel received in the last months to stop writing denunciations in his blog. In spite of these threats, in spite of the fact that he had to hide in order to write and look for different ways of eluding the vigilance to get his writing out of prison, they didn't manage to shut him up; so that, in communication with his friends and family, he had shown his suspicion that they would transfer him to a higher security prison (thereby violating the established legal procedure for cases with his sanction), if only to avoid his continued denunciation of the most sinister face of a dictatorship that pretends to show itself to the world as a truly human system.

Finally, as Angel Santiesteban's international prestige has grown, the repressive forces of the regime have become more rabid and impotent. Its murderous blindness doesn't permit them to digest the fact that important intellectual and international human rights institutions have their eyes on the writer, unjustly imprisoned on the island; that this world recognition has allowed him to receive the *Jovenaje 2014* award, which is granted every year for the work and life of an important Cuban intellectual, and that Reporters Without Borders has included him on the list of the world's 100 Information Heroes.

"Something big has happened and they are hiding it," said Maria de los Angeles, Angel's sister, in several interviews these last days. "I demand that they show my brother alive and well, because he never has had the intention of escaping."

We have mentioned it many times but it's good to remember it again: The little time he has been in prison, Angel was visited by agents of State Security to offer him his freedom in exchange for abandoning his antagonistic position and testifying about this compromise in a video. After roundly refusing, they told him he should look for a friendly embassy to arrange his deportation, something Angel also roundly refused. It's also good to remember again how many times they threatened him with death, in prison or before.

Obviously they don't make such proposals to a simple "home invader"; if anyone knows something about home invasions it's the regime; it's a daily practice with which they try to intimidate the valiant and peaceful opposition. And they know about maltreating women, which we can add to everything the world knows and consents to with its complicit silence. The Castro regime takes the prize for its duplicitous discourse, now charging Mariela Castro to "sell" the image of an open government that respects gender diversity. It's enough to see the brutal images of aggression against the Ladies in White, to know their testimonies, along with that of other dissident women and LGBT activists who don't conform to the designs of the dictatorship, to know how much falsity there is in that Castrista discourse.

Angel has spent five days* in an unknown location, and WE DEMAND HIS IMMEDIATE APPEARANCE IN PERFECT CONDITION. We demand that finally justice be done, and that after the Revision of the judgment, with all its procedural guarantees, he be freed because HE IS INNOCENT.

RAUL CASTRO is absolutely responsible for what can happen to Angel, and WE WARN THAT THERE ARE NO POSSIBLE ACCIDENTS to justify what they can do. The international community is witness to all this horror happening to Angel, and NOW THERE IS NO PLACE FOR IMPUNITY. The same goes for his minor son, EDUARDO ANGEL SANTIESTEBAN RODRIGUEZ.

The Editor

Maria de los Angeles Santiesteban, in the name of the whole family

Amir Valle

Lilo Vilaplana

Follow the link to have Amnesty International declare the dissident Cuban Angel Santiesteban a prisoner of conscience.

Translated by Regina Anavy, August 18, 2014

26 July 2014

Communication About the Prison Situation of Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [August 27, 2014](#)

Inexact information published in recent days with respect to the true state of Angel Santiesteban created information and confusion and has been spread on the Internet, causing concern to those in many countries of the world who are concerned about the unjust imprisonment of this writer.

For him, after confirmation with family sources and others close to the writer, we want to offer the only information at our disposal.

Angel Santiesteban is in a prison in Jaimanitas, in a cell, alone, with the guard at the door all the time. They allow him out of the cell every three days and let him make a phone call. In principal, he can receive visits every 21 days.

The editor

[Spanish post](#)

25 August 2014

Liberty Costs Dearly, and Angel Santiesteban Decided to Buy It for Its Price

Posted on [September 2, 2014](#)

“In the world there has to be a certain quantity of decency, just as there has to be a certainly quantity of light. Where there are many men without decency, there are always others who have in themselves the decency of many men. Those are the ones who rebel with terrible force against those who steal from the people their freedoms, which is to steal decency from men. In those men are thousands of men, an entire people, human dignity. Those men are sacred.” Jose Marti.

Today, August 28, 2014, it has been a year and a half, 18 months, 72 weeks, 548 days or 13,152 hours since Angel was unjustly incarcerated.

In this time, not a single response from the dictatorship in answer to the requests for a Review of his rigged trial after the false complaints by a resentful woman manipulated by State Security.

In this time, his son grew enough to distance himself from his mother, the complainant, and to tell that he was manipulated to lie and testify against his father for the purpose of hurting him.

Cuban writer Amir Valle presenting Angel's book

In this time, Angel has continued writing, publishing, and reaping awards.

In this time, Angel has continued denouncing the brutalities of the most pampered dynastic dictatorship in the world where hypocrisy reigns.

But, in this same time, thanks to the same dictatorship that keeps him incarcerated, he has been able to denounce the horrors from the very heart of hell, the Castro penitentiary system.

After the simple words of his son — which dismantled the State Security's crudely concocted plot against him — they have only increased his isolation in punishment because of them, and that's why we continue not knowing his own version of the events that had him in an unknown location for a week. Right now, his own reality came to occupy the place of the complaints that he cannot send us.

The silence to which they condemn him, the blind, deaf and mute justice, the illegal transfers and his solo confinement, are the most tangible proof that his complaints are true, that Cuba lives in submission to a ruthless dictatorship, where there exists no separation of powers and that to assume the universal right of free expression one pays very dearly.

Incarcerating him and silencing him, the regime says through Angel much more than he himself; it only corroborates with events what it denies in speeches, that yes, always decorated with supposed reforms and feigned openings that are nothing more than the other such farces to which we have become accustomed.

Angel continues a prisoner but freer than ever. The truth is that they will never be able to silence him. The Jaimanitas cell where there is an officer posted at the door 24 hours a day is the most patent and pathetic proof that Cuba is steeped in terror.

“A just principle, from the depths of a cave, can do more than an army.” Jose Marti.

The Editor

Translated by mlk.

27 August 2014

Angel Santiesteban's New Dossier

Posted on [September 26, 2014](#)

The mechanism of annulment is cleanly bureaucratic: You can't hire an attorney without having completed the dossier. The prosecution prepares its case in the dungeons.

Lilianne Ruiz

Havana, Cuba. In the doorways of Avenue Acosta, in the neighborhood of La Vibora, some faded beings sell aluminum scouring pads, Band-Aids and little boxes of matches. A few meters away, crossing Calzada de Diez de Octubre – formerly Jesus del Monte – is the former police station of Acosta and Diez de Octubre, which now advertises itself, by a lighted sign, as a Territorial Unit of Criminal Investigation and Operations of the Ministry of the Interior. The latest news about the writer, Angel Santiesteban, places him in the cells of that sinister place.

Another writer, the Czech Milan Kundera, victim in his time of the same procedures, pointed out that our only immortality exists in the archives of the political police. In this city of changed names, where poetry is a military choir, where the violation of human rights is called anti-imperialism and there is thoughtless defense of socialism, and where some nameless beings without a voice sell scouring pads in order to eat, I think about my friend who is experiencing the same awful misfortune.

Except for Daniela Santiesteban, his 18-year-old daughter, sufficiently bewildered and frightened to not want to speak with the independent press or the dissident friends of her father, no one else has seen him nor can corroborate that he hasn't been maltreated, or that he really tried to escape from prison, as the authorities say.

The Territorial Unit building has checkpoint surveillance. It seems to be the entrance where the detainees are taken to the dungeons, which are in the basement. Those who have left that prison say that below there are around 70 cells. And that's where they look for confessions in all the cases. It doesn't matter if they don't know the first thing about the crimes that the official presents to them. The dossier can be false. It takes time to complete, so that in order to obtain the auto-inculpation, the false confession, no attorney can be present.

This is the beginning of total domination: The detainees can't count on having the right to an attorney from the beginning of the charging process. The mechanism of annulment is simply bureaucratic; you can't hire a lawyer without having a dossier and the case number. The trial is prepared underground.

It's in these cells where you can be interrogated at any time, where no family member can have access unless he's also a prisoner and where even your diet has been thoroughly studied with the goal of crushing your feeling of having rights. It's there that your dossier would be assembled and the charge against you enumerated in the most total incommunication. Hannah Arendt already said it, when in 1961 she formulated the expression "banality of evil" as a phenomenon that is characteristic of every dictatorship: The first essential step on the path that leads to total domination consists of suppressing the juridical person in Man.

There's another front entrance to the building. Going up the stairs you arrive at a reception area that is garishly green, with a sepulchral silence. Ornamental plants, always the same: miserable malanga vines. Portraits of Castro and other allegorical figures of July 26 provide ambience, so you don't have any doubt that you're in Hell. In this mournful place, the guard refuses to answer my questions about the situation of the detainee. He says that only his family can see him, and that he is accused of "detainee evasion". "I'm not giving you any more information", he concludes. The expression "detainee evasion" appears to be nonsense. It's not clear what the accusation is. Neither does he answer when I ask his name and military rank, in spite of the fact that I told him, before he asked me for my identity card, who I am and what I do.

I know Angel. Before being taken to prison he had time to leave the island, but that's not his intention. His awareness of not being guilty of the crime that the political police fabricated in collusion with his ex-wife, Kenia Diley Rodriguez, who had already made threats that she was going to destroy him, made him believe until the last moment that it wasn't possible that the authorities would go so far in the consummation of evil.

On one of those afternoons when we talked about this, he told me how at the beginning of the whole process, neither he nor the people who would serve as witnesses, making him believe that they would stand by him when his accuser, Diley Rodriguez, told her story, thought it possible that a case would be opened against him. But he armed himself with a dossier with the case number. Later, his lawyers told him that it was impossible that a trial would take place, because that would not be logical. And there was a trial. And the sentence? It was announced to him previously during a detention, by a minion of the political police named Camilo – famous for his sadism – with the exact number of years to which he was condemned. Five.

So that this isn't the first dossier prepared against Angel Santiesteban.

Interview with Marti News

The Lawton military settlement, which presents itself as the Ministry of Interior Housing Construction Company, was the last place Santiesteban was seen. So I went there to follow up. The prisoners, through a fence, repeated to me the authorities' version, but no one could tell me that they really saw him being transferred from the prison. They only affirmed what the authorities said.

A friend of the writer named Reinaldo Gantes Hidalgo was "visited" by State Security, in a move that can be part of the new judicial fabrication, to ask him if he knew where Santiesteban was. Another person, who asked me not to reveal his identity for fear of reprisals, was detained for a week, accused of complicity without any evidence, but he hadn't seen Santiesteban either. And it's clear that State Security wouldn't spare itself some arbitrary detention with which it could propagate the version that matches their perverted goals.

Gantes Hidalgo told me that after the visit of the son of Colome Ibarra, the present Minister of the Interior, to the military settlement of the regime prison, in his position as the head of the MININT Housing Construction Company, and after the escape of a boatman, an inmate who managed to get to Miami, three guards kept watch on Santiesteban at all times, even when he went to the bathroom. All of which was again inconsistent with the official version.

If there's a relationship between this visit and the increase in vigilance, we can only deduce this from the question that Colome Jr. asked him. With much sarcasm he questioned him about the woman who called the Directorate-General of Jails and Prisons to denounce Santiesteban for the possession of a laptop and a cell phone hidden inside the prison, and about a supposed plan to escape. From there they also started the records. With these notices it's not very probable that Santiesteban would have improvised an escape from an island where there are police guarding almost every corner, and boats patrolling 24 hours a day thanks to Venezuelan oil.

All this points to a set-up. After which his son, Eduardo Santiesteban, 17 years old, conceded an interview to Karen Caballero, a journalist from Marti News, where he denounced the manipulation of State Security in the trial against his father. And so he began to demolish the first dossier. Let's remember that during the trial, they used, as pretend proof, his declaration that Angel didn't accompany him home in order to claim, in a rare sophisticated use of ubiquity, that he found him at home with his mother, Kenia Diley. As if by being absent from one place he would be fatefully in another.

So that the prosecutor's maliciousness, added to the fact that trials aren't independent, had the result of an unjust sentence based on ridiculous reasoning, twists and lack of proof.

Until Angel Santesteban communicates his version, we can't believe the authorities, who are dependent on a government of which it can be said that not only do they lie, but they also hardly

ever tell the truth.

Published by Cubanet.

Translated by Regina Anavy

18 August 2014

Blatant Lies / Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [October 26, 2014](#)

During the days in which Ángel Santiesteban-Prats' whereabouts were unknown, and with fears absolutely based on the illegal transfers that he experienced before, we filed a complaint with the United Nations Working Group on Forced or Involuntary Disappearances, so they would put it before the Regime in Havana to clarify his whereabouts.



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND
www.ohchr.org • TEL.: + 41 22 917 9199 • FAX: + 41 22 917 9006 • E-MAIL: www@ohchr.org

MANDATO DEL GRUPO DE TRABAJO SOBRE DESAPARICIONES FORZADAS O INVOLUNTARIAS

REFERENCE:

GSO 217/1/Cuba

15 de octubre de 2014

Estimada Sra. Tabakman,

Tengo el honor de dirigirme a Usted, en nombre del Grupo de Trabajo sobre las desapariciones forzadas o involuntarias, con respecto al caso del Sr. **Ángel Lázaro Santiesteban Prats (caso n° 10005155)**.

Al respecto, desearía informarle que en la comunicación enviada al Gobierno de Cuba el 30 de julio de 2014, por un error administrativo, se omitió incluir la frase "Martí TV (Miami, Estados Unidos de América)", en lugar de "medios de comunicación cubanos".

Asimismo, le informo que esta corrección en el caso no afecta la decisión tomada por el Grupo de Trabajo durante su 104° período de sesiones, tal como le fue comunicado en su carta del 30 de septiembre de 2014.

Me gustaría informarle que el Grupo de Trabajo celebrará su 105° período de sesiones del 2 al 6 de marzo de 2015 en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Argentina.

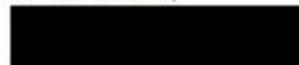
Atentamente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ariel Dulitzky'.

Ariel Dulitzky
Presidente-Relator
Grupo de Trabajo sobre las
desapariciones forzadas o involuntarias

.../2

Sra. Elisa Tabakman,



Translation of letter from the High Commissioner's Office of the United Nations Human Rights Commission:

Dear Mrs. Tabakman,

I have the honor of addressing you in the name of the Working Group on Forced or Involuntary Disappearances with respect to the case of Mr. Ángel Lazaro Santiesteban Prats (case no. 10005155).

In this respect I would like to inform you that the communication sent to the Government of Cuba on July 30, 2014, due to an administrative error, did not include the phrase "Marti TV (Miami, United States)" in place of "Cuban communication media."

Furthermore, I want you to know that this correction of the case does not affect the decision taken by the Working Group during its 104th session, such as was communicated to you in its letter of September 30, 2014.

I would like to inform you that the Working Group will celebrate its 105th session between March 2-6, 2015, in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Sincerely yours,

Ariel Dulitzky, President-Presenter

They acted with the dedication and speed that an emergency requires, and, of course, the Castro dictatorship did not. They only responded to the Group's requirement when it gave them the demand; that is, when Ángel already had been located by journalists from *14Ymedio*. Thanks to them we knew where he was, although they couldn't meet with him. The Regime had put him in the border military prison where he presently is.

I want to point out not only the fact that the Regime responded to the presenter for the Working Group, but they also took advantage of the occasion to lie blatantly and use against the "source" complainant the same strategies they use to falsely accuse and imprison the opposition. All thieves believe that others are like them.

Por otra parte, la información trasladada no es objetiva ni fidedigna No procede de fuentes pertinentes y creíbles que actúen de buena fe, de conformidad con los principios de cooperación en materia de derechos humanos y sin motivaciones políticas, contrarias a lo dispuesto en la Carta de las Naciones Unidas. Está sustentada en acusaciones infundadas que sólo persiguen empañar la realidad y la ejecutoria de Cuba en la promoción y protección de todos los derechos humanos para todos. ???

Translation of document from Cuban government:

On the other hand, the facts transcribed are not reliable. They don't come from pertinent and credible sources that act in good faith, in accord with the principles of cooperation in the matter of human rights and without political motivation, contrary to what is set forth in the United Nations Charter. They are supported by unfounded accusations that are only intended to tarnish the reality of Cuba's record in the promotion and protection of all human rights for everyone.

They exploited an involuntary omission in the group's communication to the Cuban government to try to disqualify the complaint and the complainants. Now they have just communicated and corrected the omission – again – in order to continue supporting their lies, but they will preserve the same pathetic silence that they have with respect to the whole case.

I am transcribing here the response from the Regime (the complete document is attached in a link in this post):

Session: 104

Government Item

Date: September 4, 2014

The Government of Cuba reported that:

“The allegations about a supposed transfer of the citizen Ángel Lázaro Santiesteban Prats, from the place where he was fulfilling a punishment of deprivation of liberty to a ‘military base.’

“After investigation, it was demonstrated that:

“1. At 7:00 a.m. on July 21, 2014, Santiesteban Prats tried to escape from the center where he was held as a prisoner (with open living). Immediately complaint 38563/14 was filed in the station of the National Revolutionary Police of Municipio Diez de Octubre, for the crime of Escape of Prisoners or Detainees.

“2. At 1:05 a.m. on July 27, 2014, Santiesteban Prats was detained and transferred to the Territorial Department of Criminal Investigation and Operations, where he remains. He enjoys good health and receives all the benefits established in the Cuban penitentiary system.

“3. Santiesteban Prats himself admitted that he fled from the detention center with the goal of leaving the country in an irregular and covert manner, with support from the exterior, and to thereby avoid having to continue serving his sentence.

“On the other hand, the facts transcribed are not reliable. They don’t come from pertinent and credible sources that act in good faith, in accord with the principles of cooperation in the matter of human rights and without political motivation, contrary to what is set forth in the United Nations Charter. They are supported by unfounded accusations that are only intended to tarnish the reality of Cuba’s record in the promotion and protection of all human rights for everyone.

“In that sense, it is false that his presumed disappearance was related to ‘declarations of a person associated with him in Cuban communication media in the days previous to July 20, 2014.’

“Nor for his activities as a writer and blogger was Santiesteban Prats sentenced to five years in prison for having committed common crimes, as regulated in the present Cuban Penal Code.

“He was accused by his wife, Kenla Liley Rodriguez Guzmán, in August 2009, of the crimes of Harm, Home Invasion, Injuries, Threats, Rape, and Robbery with Force. After investigation, the Prosecutor presented the case before the Provincial Court of Havana for the crimes of Injuries and Home Invasion.

“From that time they knew of his intentions to flee the country in an irregular and covert manner, incited by his sister who lives in the exterior, to evade his sentence. He finally tried, unsuccessfully, in July of this year, as already has been explained.”

Ángel Santiesteban, without even knowing of the existence of the complaint or this document, has already given an answer to that nonsense in the message that was sent explaining what motivated him to leave the Lawton prison settlement and saying that he would give himself up several days later. The only certainty in everything the dictatorship alleges is that he recognized that he abandoned the prison voluntarily, taking advantage of the movement of the prisoners who left for work in the morning.

The first lie, which falls of its own weight, is that “he receives all the benefits established in the Cuban penitentiary system.” Exactly because he DOESN’T receive them is the reason he left on his own to recover them (the 15 days of pass that corresponded to the last 10 months, which they arbitrarily denied him). He wasn’t “detained” on July 27 like they allege. He gave himself up, telling the official who received him that they still owed him 10 days of pass.

“On the other hand, the facts transcribed are not reliable. They don’t come from pertinent and

credible sources that act in good faith, in accord with the principles of cooperation in the matter of human rights and without political motivation, contrary to what is set forth in the United Nations Charter. They are supported by unfounded accusations that are only intended to tarnish the reality of Cuba's record in the promotion and protection of all human rights for everyone."

Such a declaration merits nothing more than remembering that we are facing a dictatorship where neither law nor justice exists, in which they only administer rewards and punishments according to whether one is obsequious or opposed. The cynicism of those who work for the Regime is such that they have the nerve to mention the United Nations Charter and human rights. Does Mr. Dictator finally want to ratify the pacts of the U.N.? The biggest violator of all human rights on the continent makes believe that the complaint "continues tarnishing reality and the executive of Cuba in the promotion and protection of all human rights for everyone." Ask him about all the executions, assassinations, tortures, imprisonments, and those who have been banished and forced into exile who have endured the said promotion and protection for 55 years.

Then they relied on the before-mentioned omission to lie again: "(...) It's false that his presumed disappearance was related to 'declarations of a person associated with him in the Cuban communication media in the days previous to July 20, 2014.' Now it's already been explained to them that it was a matter of an omission, clarifying that it referred to the declaration of Angel's son in a television program from Miami. How do they explain that they had prepared a transfer for Angel and that he complained only five days after his son said on Television Marti how he had been manipulated by his mother and the political police to lie and prejudice the case against his father? Wasn't there a relationship with the said complaints? Are they trying to delegitimize the rumor that he denounced his imminent transfer on July 20 when on August 13 they incarcerated him where he said they would? The Regime knows perfectly well that there was an involuntary omission in the report, and they knew that it referred to the declarations of Angel's son on Television Marti, who said that the political police were permanently spying on him, so that the Human Rights Commission granted cautionary measures for him also.

Ángel Santiesteban is the only "common" prisoner to whom the dictatorship has offered – on numerous occasions since he was incarcerated – freedom and banishment in exchange for renouncing his political position, documenting it in a video. Every time he has refused outright and denounced this in his blog. Even so, they continue stubbornly trying to convince him. So that "From this time they knew about his intentions to abandon the country in an irregular and covert manner (...)" is no more than another cock-and-bull story like the ones they habitually resort to in order to justify the unjustifiable: the lack of freedoms, guarantees, and protections for the citizen victims of the island prison.

Ángel never asked that they free him; he only requested a review of the trial with ALL the guarantees of due process that they denied him when they took him to prison. If they would proceed to carry out the review, he would be absolved, because the accusations are totally false. That's the reason they delay the review with the stupidest excuses, because they only pretend to penalize him by keeping him locked up: "Nor for his activities as a writer and blogger was Santiesteban Prats sentenced to five years in prison for having committed common crimes, as regulated in the present Cuban Penal Code."

The accuser is named Kenia Diley Rodríguez Guzmán; only by reading how they refer to her in the response do we have proof of the "care" they put into fabricating causes of action, the accusations and the accusers. It doesn't ever matter to them who has lied; the only thing that matters is that their lies serve the interests of the dictatorship: "He was accused by his wife, Kenla Liley Rodríguez Guzmán, in August 2009, for the crimes of Harm, Home Invasion, Injuries, Threats, Rape, and Robbery with Force. After investigation, the Prosecutor presented the case before the Provincial Court of Havana for the crimes of Injuries and Home Invasion."

I remember again that as there wasn't any proof that would incriminate him, they condemned him after a report from a lieutenant, a handwriting expert, who alleged that "from the size and

inclination of his handwriting, he's guilty.”

In the end, there is little to add that is not already known.

The Editor

Translated by Regina Anavy

20 October 2014

La CiDH otorga medidas cautelares a Ángel Santiesteban-Prats y a su hijo menor de edad

1º de octubre de 2014

REF: Ángel Lázaro Santiesteban Prats (Privado de Libertad)
MC-206-13
Cuba

Estimada señora:

Tengo el agrado de dirigirme a usted, en nombre de la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, con relación a la solicitud de medidas cautelares a favor de Ángel Lázaro Santiesteban Prats y su hijo en Cuba.

En atención a dicha comunicación, me permito informar a usted que la Comisión, en nota remitida en la fecha, notificó al Gobierno de la Resolución N° 26/2014, cuya copia se adjunta a la presente comunicación. Mediante esta resolución la CIDH decidió el otorgamiento respecto del asunto de la referencia conforme a lo dispuesto en el artículo 25 de su Reglamento.

La CIDH hace público en su portal de Internet (www.cidh.org) un resumen sobre las medidas cautelares otorgadas. En este resumen se divulga la identidad de los beneficiarios, con excepción de los nombres de niños y niñas y de víctimas de violencia sexual. Asimismo, en caso de que los beneficiarios de las presentes medidas cautelares prefieran que su nombre completo no sea divulgado en el portal de Internet, deberán informar a la CIDH por escrito en forma inmediata.

Aprovecho la oportunidad para saludar a usted muy atentamente,

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Elizabeth Abi-Mershed
Secretaria Ejecutiva
Adjunta

Señora
Elisa Tabakman
[REDACTED].com

10/1/2014-RS-5004761

Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos

Organización de los Estados Americanos

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Secretaria Ejecutiva Adjunta

Señora

Elisa Tabakman

Angel Santiesteban Prats: 20 Months of Unjust Imprisonment

Posted on [October 28, 2014](#)

Today, 28 October 2014, Angel Santiesteban Prats marks twenty months of unjust incarceration, waiting for the Review of this show trial which condemned him without any proof because he is INNOCENT. His son, being a child and used to testify against his father, has now completely dismantled the farce plotted against Angel and yet they still keep him in prison. His only crime: opposing the dictatorship that has plagued Cuba for more than half a century.

28 October 2014

Sensitive Issues / Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [October 30, 2014](#)

Moment at which the Government's TV show "Cuba's Reasons" declared Angel Santiesteban Prats "guilty"

In the days when they arrested me, between last July 21 and August 13, among other questions, the State Security officials questioned me about my economic support. In this regard, I'd never imagined that others would be interested in this aspect, but as the Cuban government likes to accuse every opponent of being a mercenary, I'd like to make this public.

Since I'm in prison, my sister María de los Ángeles, who has always supported me, assumed this role, not without pain on my part, because she didn't send me her excess, not even from reducing her wishes and desires, but from her own sweat, the same sacrifice, because as she likes to say, "I am the poorest person in the United States, but the richest of any Cuban found inside Cuba." In addition to my sister, I have received help from friends and colleagues with whom I've maintained a close friendship since I was a teenager and youth; and also from Masons living in Florida.

On the literary side, my brother for life and colleague, as well as legal representative as a literary agent, Amir Valle, has collected my copyright earnings and prizes, and gotten them to me in Cuba in various ways. In fact, in Miami it was proposed that in a literary presentation space, my books could be sold, and my sister, in a dignified act, with the greatest friendship, refused to receive the money and, in addition, asked that, without any disrespect, that they not do so, precisely to avoid the Cuban political police accusing me of being a mercenary or maintained by funding from people in Miami. She, from her poverty, will continue with my support.

I have never received money from the American government, nor from any Cuban-American foundation. When someone on Facebook offers to help me economically, with delicacy and thanks, I ask them to send photos of their family at a happy minute, or some book. I never accept money.

I am not a mercenary. On the contrary. I scorned the opportunities the Cuban government offers to the intellectuals and artists if they support the government, and if not, that they at least keep quiet and pretend to be allies.

I preferred, as my sister also says, "to give up being a prince to be a beggar," and although I never traveled on the Cuban government's money, I did travel on the invitation of universities book fairs and literary events, saw Europe and a great part of America, including, on more than one occasion, the United States.

I greatly preferred to abandon this life to dedicate myself to the freedom of my country, whatever sacrifice is necessary. And for that, I have been beaten, jailed, intellectually marginalized, humiliated by the cultural authorities, and still it doesn't seem to me the minimum quota of what it's worth to be able to freely say what I think in my time and my space.

So much so that I write with shame, because I always compare myself with the great Cubans who gave their lives and their youth to free the nation and, ultimately, to offer a better opportunity to their compatriots.

So I said to the political functionaries who dealt with me, and for this I also wanted to share it with my friends and readers because, above all, I am interested in being transparent like the wind.

Ángel Santiesteban-Prats. Coastguard Prison Unit. Havana. October 2014. 15 October 2014

The Island of the Long Shadows / Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [November 16, 2014](#)

Section 21, as this Department of State Security is known, works to track the political activities of the opposition in the Cuban archipelago. They are the omnipotent masters of the destinies of those who seek democracy and freedom.

Screen Capture – Moment in which Angel Santiesteban was arrested in front of Section 21, after being violently beat up by agents (8/11/12).

In my case, it was the official Camilo, the same one who on November 8th, 2012, after a beating in plain view of the public, told me that they were putting me in jail for 5 years [before Angel's trial was concluded].

Three months later, I went to prison, convicted by a rigged jury, where they didn't show a single bit of evidence against me, except that joke by the lieutenant colonel graphologist, who acted as something like a fortune-teller and said that given "the height and inclination of my handwriting*," I was guilty. Of no value were the five witnesses I presented who corroborated my statement. Not even justice is an impediment to the designs of the political police.

Since I entered prison, it has been the State Security officials who have manipulated my incarceration. The prison officials have always let me know that "they are there to keep me enclosed," but that they have no rights over my person.

If I fall ill, whether they are to approve or not the pass** that is provided every sixty days for those serving less than 5 years, transfers, disciplinary measures, or for any other motive, they are to call Section 21 and there they will be instructed as to what is to be done with me.

Of course, it was those authorities in that very same Section 21 who gave the go-ahead for my transfer from the Valle Grande prison to La Lima camp, in keeping with my sentence (as I am not supposed to be in prison); from there to prison #1580 (in a new violation of my rights); later, to the Lawton settlement; and now, to the *Guardafronteras* (Border Patrol) unit, where I am currently held.

According to the prison officials, they are supposed to consult with the officials of Section 21 at each step in my process. They have retained the appeal of my case, delivered at the Ministry of Justice on July 4, 2013, for more than a year. This is because if justice were to be applied, they would have to release me immediately, as requested by my attorney, given my proven innocence. Instead, they gather an extensive list of flagrant violations that, as my defense attorney at the time said after the trial, left me "in a state of utter defenselessness."

I have stated before that murderers, drug traffickers, pederasts, and others who have committed grave crimes, are treated with the utmost mercy compared to the stance the authorities have taken toward my person, for they treat me according to the strictest of their laws.

At this time they have me cloistered inside a Border Patrol Troops unit, in a small apartment with two rooms and a bath. It is completely barred and there is a guard at the door who records in a log the hour at which I rise, if I take exercise, if I write, etc.

In addition, this small apartment made into a prison cell includes a patio that, in my honor, was completely enclosed in bars – even on the roof – just hours before they decided to transfer me to this place.

However, even while bearing every suffering that their impediments cause, I feel proud to be treated thus. Not even the worst of their measures against me will cause me to back down from my struggle for a more just country — a country in which free expression against the politics laid down by the powers-that-be will not be cause for imprisonment.

Ángel Santiesteban-Prats

Border Patrol Unit Prison. Havana. October, 2014.

Translator's notes:

**A handwriting expert literally testified at Angel's trial that his "too slanted" handwriting proved he was a guilty person.*

***In an earlier post Angel explained the Cuban penal system that allows prisoners with shorter sentences to leave prison every so many days for extended (overnight) home visits. He was granted one of these passes when he was in the Lawton Settlement, a work camp, but future passes were withheld.*

Translated by: Alicia Barraqué Ellison, and others.

10 November 2014

I'm Happy / Angel Santiesteban

Posted on [January 13, 2015](#)

Havana, December 30, 2014

Dear Internet users, bloggers, colleagues, friends and Cubans scattered around the world:

Writing you is always an adventure. The constant surveillance is relentless, but perhaps this deepens the desire for communication with the outside and to do so means an unmistakable flavor. After the tensions decrease, and knowing it all came out well, I received the prize for mocking the dictatorship. As a writer, I would be capable of describing my own firing squad, and I would enjoy it, but — in addition to enjoying it — it's a beautiful obligation that arises from the depths of the being.

I have allies — for now I can only name the closest — some wild cats who don't allow anyone but me to approach them, to them I have dedicated great love. Slowly they came to accept me as I gained their confidence. They stay close to me, and surround me while I write, I hear their purring, admire the plan to the youngest and the tenderness of their mothers who wash them and love them. When someone barely approaches, they warn me, transmitting the possibility of danger, so I hide what I'm writing.

Before, there were twelve, then it fell to nine. The guards are annoyed by the fidelity they show and the discourteous way they almost scare the guards, poking their uniforms. Maybe they're waiting to go to the coast to look for the remains abandoned by the fishermen on the shore and executed there, because now I have only two — shut in the hole from where they emerge — staying inside the walls that rob me of my freedom. For now these cats are small, they can't release them. Irony of life, but they must be thankful for their lives in prison.

I wanted to share with you this daily passage of my you so you can imagine how happy I am when I feed and caress them. I protect and defend them like my children, friends, compatriots and dreams of freedom, which — after almost two years of imprisonment — have grown in necessary intensity, in the oxygenation of existence.

In my own way, I'm happy because I'm in a place of the punished for thinking differently, for the height and slant of my handwriting* being incompatible with the totalitarian regime, to my honor.

Thanks to every one who has shouted for the freedom of Cuba, including me or not, because achieving the end of the Castro family dynasty I'm sorry is above me, and all those who dedicate their efforts have my respect and admiration and are my comrades in arms.

May you all have a prosperous 2015, and may our mutual aspirations for a democracy illuminate our archipelago.

Ángel Santiesteban-Prats

December 2014. Jaimanitas Coastguard Prison Unit, Havana

*Translator's note: A "handwriting expert" testified at Angel's trial that the excessive height and slant of the letters in his handwriting, are proof that he was guilty.