



RESOLUTION ON THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION SITUATION IN CUBA

The Cuban government, after 59 years in power, continues to violate the human rights of all those persons who disagree with the government and who try to exercise their right to freedom of expression.

The repression method, currently put into practice by the government in Cuba, consists of brutal beatings of peaceful objectors by both the police and the paramilitary forces. It includes attacks on homes and destruction of working facilities, used to carry out independent journalism, in breach of Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The government classifies activities such as peaceful and intellectual protest or criticism of the administration as criminal offences, which appear in Article 4 of the PEN International Charter; such as in the case of the writer Ángel Santiesteban Prats, who was sentenced to five years in prison, serving nearly three of them.¹ He is currently in ill-health and on probation; the legal proceedings were developed under the false accusation of domestic violence. There is also the case of the biologist Ariel Ruiz Urquiola, who was charged and sentenced to one year's imprisonment on the charge of "contempt of court" for denouncing bad government environmental protection administration.

The Cuban government keeps Law 88 of 1999 in force, known as the gag law, which allows the courts to impose high and extra sanctions, simply for citizens exercising their freedom of expression. In addition, there is also the practice of State terrorism, which involves short- and long-term detention in police custody, of dissidents who maintain a peaceful opposition. This is the case of various writers, independent journalists, bloggers, essayists and analysts currently marginalised by the current national situation in Cuba.²

The Assembly of Delegates of PEN International urges the Cuban Government to:

- Put an end to attacks against journalists, press and media workers, in general, and guarantee that these attacks will be investigated and that those responsible will be brought to justice;
- Repeal Law 88 of 1999;
- Guarantee conditions allowing freedom of expression through a legal framework in the country, which guarantees the right to access public information, and comply with the provisions of Articles 13 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as complying with the International Covenant on Civil Political Rights signed by Cuba in February 2008.

¹ <http://pen-international.org/app/uploads/CASE-LIST-January-December-2015.pdf>

² See the cases of Ubaldo Ramón Olivero Guzmán and Rolando Sánchez Mejías: http://pen-international.org/app/uploads/PEN-CaseList_2017-FULL-v2-1UP.pdf