



MEDIA ADVISORY
July 20, 2012

PEOPLES' TRIBUNAL AND ASSEMBLY FOR THE CUBAN FIVE
September 21–23, 2012

The Peoples' Tribunal and Assembly for the Cuban Five will be held in Toronto next September 21st to the 23rd, 2012. North American personalities such as actor Danny Glover, peace activist Cindy Sheehan, and documentary filmmaker Saul Landau, along with victims of terrorist acts against Cuba and against Canada, have been invited. Respected personalities in the legal field such as José Pertierra and civil rights lawyer William Sloan of Montreal, and well-known trade unionists from Canada, Cuba and the U.K. representing thousands of members, will also be present.

The Cuban Five, as they are known, are five men who attempted to stop terrorist activities launched from bases in Florida. The Cuban government shared information about them with the FBI and because of a change in administration, the focus turned from cooperation to confrontation and the persons trying to stop these acts were the ones arrested instead of the terrorists. The Cuban Five were arrested in the U.S. in September, 1998, and held in pre-trial isolation for 17 months. Twenty six charges, mainly, conspiracy to commit espionage, were laid and a trial was held in Miami, the judge refusing a request for a change of venue. Because there was no evidence, conspiracy charges were laid as the burden of proof is much lighter. The most serious charge, conspiracy to commit murder, was laid against Gerardo Hernandez, a charge which the Prosecutor himself asked the judge to remove as there was no evidence to back it. The judge refused. Aside from the dearth of evidence against the Five, there was no damage to person or property; witnesses from the U.S. military affirmed that any information gathered by the Five did not compromise the security of the U.S. In one of the longest most complex trials held in that country, the jury did not ask one question for clarification. Judge Lenard then imposed sentencing on the Five totaling four lifetimes plus 77 years.

Since the trial, it has been proven that journalists were paid by the U.S. government to help foster a climate of hysteria against the Five. Appeals on their behalf have gone nowhere except to vacate three of the sentences for somewhat lighter ones. These men helped to prevent terrorist acts against Cubans. One Montreal resident was killed by a bomb set in a tourist hotel. Attached are a list of specific attacks where Canadian residents or Canada were involved and more facts regarding the case. Amnesty International and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions of the U.N. Human Rights Commission have, among others, come out strongly in favour of the Five. Justice for them demands our attention.

A media conference will be held on Friday, September 21, 11:00 a.m. at Metro Hall, Room 303, 55 John Street, Toronto. Participants will be available for individual interviews after the conference.

Contact: Heidi Trampus, Co-ordinator, Peoples' Tribunal and Assembly

Assembly Media Committee:

Lisa Makarchuk, Chair, 416 603 9858

Marc Castillo, Spanish language media

Linda Meissenheimer, Cuba solidarity activist

Phil Taylor, CIUT Radio

Suzanne Weiss, Latin American solidarity activist

Media Liaisons: Don Foreman, CUPW, Ottawa; Saleh Waziruddin, Niagara