



September 17, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We, the undersigned, as elected members of Toronto City Council in Canada's largest city, respectfully ask that you use your Constitutional authority to order the release of the Cuban Five so that they can be reunited with their families in Cuba without delay.

Since 1998, these five men have been imprisoned in the United States for peacefully defending and protecting the lives of not only the people of Cuba, but also the people of the United States and the hundreds of thousands of Canadians, and people of other nationalities, who visit Cuba as tourists. The Cuban Five sought to prevent new politically motivated terrorist attacks against Cuba in the wake of decades of such actions by extremist groups in Miami and southern Florida that have caused more than three thousand Cuban deaths and many severe injuries. In one such attack on September 4, 1997, a bomb exploded in a Havana hotel, claiming the life of Canadian resident Fabio Di Celmo who was visiting Cuba.

The five Cubans were arrested after gathering information about the plans of terrorist organizations based in Miami. According to witnesses in their trial, they were unarmed. The Five harmed no one, and took no action against the terrorist groups. Instead, they reported the information to the Cuban government which then asked Washington to prevent the anticipated attacks.

We note that the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions stated on May 27, 2005 that the detention of the five Cubans was arbitrary and illegal and called on the United States to resolve the situation. On August 9, 2005, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals concluded that the Cuban Five did not get a fair trial in Miami. On October 13, 2010 Amnesty International voiced serious doubts about the fairness and impartiality of the trial of the Five, and the organization has called on the U.S. government to address any injustice through the clemency process or other appropriate means.

We are greatly concerned about the situation of the Cuban Five. We note that four of the five, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, and Gerardo Hernández are still in prison after 14 years, serving extremely harsh sentences, respectively 17 years and 9 months, 21 years and 10 months, 30 years, and 2 life terms plus 15 years. Furthermore, René González, who served his full 15-year sentence and was released on October 7, 2011, was barred for three years from leaving Miami to live with his family in Cuba, even though he has no relatives in Florida and faces potential danger from the terrorist groups that he had monitored.

President Obama, your executive clemency order — a humanitarian gesture — could end this long injustice and at long last allow the five Cubans to return to their families.

Sincerely,

Councillor Joe Mihevc

Councillor Paula Fletcher

Councillor Janet Davis

Councillor Maria Augimeri

Councillor Gord Perks

Councillor Mary Fragedakis