



Havana, Cuba
May 22, 2008

Senator Barack Obama
The United States

Dear Senator Obama:

The 'Ladies in White', the voices of the 75 prisoners of conscience condemned to prison sentences of up to 28 years during the wave of repression in 2003 that became known as the "Black Spring", are very hopeful that you can contribute to facilitating the immediate and unconditional release of the remaining 55 prisoners of conscience arrested over five years ago. They are suffering under inhumane conditions with serious health conditions, 9 of those that have been conditionally released because of their precarious health but live in daily fear of being returned to prison. We petition not only for them, but for the 200 prisoners of conscience held throughout the island.

As you may know, since July 31 of 2006, Cuba is living through a period unlike any we've experienced in the last 50 years. We believe that if the authorities are determined to take on real changes, they should begin with the liberation of our family members who have committed no crime. Their desire is simply to promote the development and well being of the citizens of our nation through peaceful means and the respect for human rights.

There is no reason that these prisoners should be held when President Raul Castro has recognized the seriousness of several issues affecting our society and has in fact, begun to make structural changes and has called upon the citizens of Cuba to express their opinions and criticism. The majority of those who have been condemned simply spoke up in criticism of these same issues under public discussion today. They are not mercenaries nor agents of the United States as claimed by Cuba's rulers, they simply use this accusation in order to flame confrontation between our two nations and justify our current problems, repress the citizens of our country, instill fear and confuse public opinion.

We know also that your wife, Mrs. Michelle Obama, is a caring and sensitive individual who can certainly help us with our plight to see our family members released and to help offer protection for our families, particularly those most affected by the incarceration of our loved ones; the children and senior citizens.

We wish you great success in your efforts and send you and your family our best wishes.

The Ladies in White