

To: Federica Mogherini, High
Representative of the Union for
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

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The EU Must Speak Out Against Repression of Freedom of Assembly in Cuba

The repression against the Ladies in White, independent journalists, opposition activists and human rights defenders in Cuba, which we have seen taking place on a nationwide basis over the last nine weeks, is alarming. The increase in violence by the authorities has arisen as a result of people exercising their rights to public protest and from the public exposure of political prisoners. (See the attached denunciations to the *Fiscalía General de la República*)

Beatings, physical abuse and various types of torture have become an every day reality. **The number of arbitrary detentions in May was the highest since July of last year.** The current actions of the Cuban government **can be attributed to the silence of the international community who refuse to condemn these violations.**

The Forum for Rights and Freedoms and Civil Rights Defenders are writing to you and sending a stark warning regarding the deteriorating situation for human rights defenders in Cuba. We note with great concern the indifference of the international community, especially the European Union. The EU is in the final phase of concluding a broad agreement with the Cuban government, without any steps being made to improve even a single human right.

In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – for which Cuba is a signatory – the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – which the government of Raul Castro has signed but not yet ratified – and, as Maina Kiai, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, has recently explained clearly in his final report; **states shall ensure the full exercise of freedom of assembly, association and peaceful demonstration.**

The Forum for Rights and Freedoms and Civil Rights Defenders urgently call on the EU and its member states to act now against the dangers currently faced by Cuban human rights defenders when exercising these basic freedoms. The EU and its member states claim so often that they are utilising their bilateral relations to push the agenda when it comes to respecting human rights. This has clearly not worked and **it is now time they speak out publicly against the consistent violations of human rights in Cuba.**

Yours sincerely

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