

# VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN URUGUAY



**COSUR** COMITE DE  
SOLIDARIDAD  
CON URUGUAY

ADDRESS: APARTADO POSTAL 70-565  
DELEGACION COYOACAN  
04510 - MEXICO, D.F.  
MEXICO

No. 2

August 1982

## THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CONDEMNS THE URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT

The UN Human Rights Committee has issued final sentences on six cases of violation of human rights in Uruguay.

These resolutions were taken subsequent to the presentation - with a five year delay and after six committee reminders - of the Uruguayan government official report; report which was subject to hard criticism on the part of the Committee.

These cases are:

**Eduardo Bleier.** He was arrested in 1975 and to date there is no information as to his whereabouts. In a previous resolution, the Committee had concluded that "either the Uruguayan authorities still hold Bleier incommunicated, or he has died in prison under the responsibility of the Uruguayan authorities". In view of these accusations, the government, in turn, accused the Committee of "unethical behavior" and "superficiality". Finally, the Committee rejected the government's arguments and ratified its previous conclusions. Furthermore, it demanded that measures be taken to investigate Bleier's disappearance, to punish all persons responsible for his death or maltreatment and to assure that this kind of situation does not occur again.

**Mario Teti.** In this case, the Committee presents evidence that Teti was forced to sign a declaration accepting charges which increased his sentence. Also, that following an International Red Cross prison visit to the Penal de Libertad, where Teti is confined, he was subject to physical maltreatment and threats of death and secluded in an isolation punishment cell. On September 26, 1980, Teti was transferred out of the Penal and not returned until May 1981; all this time he remained incommunicated and his relatives were unable to obtain any information as to his confinement place. Upon his return to the Penal de Libertad, Teti showed evidence of acute physical and psychical health deterioration, having lost close to 20 kilos in the previous eight months. According to the Committee, this situation violates numerous dispositions on human rights.

**Alberto Altesor.** A sentence on the case of this labor union leader was reached after five years of investigation and after having rejected the Uruguayan government's argument as to the competence of the military court. The Committee declares that Altesor was denied a fair trial and that his political rights were transgressed. It demands from the Uruguayan government the immediate rectification of this situation and that it guarantee that Altesor receive the necessary medical attention. Altesor suffers from severe heart problems.

**Raúl Sendic.** The Committee sentenced that the Uruguayan government violated his human rights by confining him in an underground prison cell, denying him the necessary medical attention and legal guarantees. The Uruguayan authorities had only claimed, upon request for information from the Committee, and without responding to the accusations, that the Committee was assuming undue powers.

**Mirta Cubas.** The Committee presented evidence of numerous human rights violations: arrest without legal warrant; three months incommunicated; secret confinement, physical maltreatment and absence of guarantees during trial. (Needless to say, this case is a clear example of the recurrent behavior pattern of the Uruguayan authorities with respect to political

opponents.) It must be pointed out that Cubas served her sentence in January 1982 and is to date still held prisoner.

**Sophie Vidal.** The Committee gave course to this Uruguayan citizen's accusation whereby the government had denied her a passport through its embassies in Mexico and France. (This has been the official policy applied to all political exiles.) The Committee sentenced that the Uruguayan government should be compelled to provide Vidal with the necessary documentation to travel abroad.

## SUBHUMAN IMPRISONMENT SUFFER NINE URUGUAYAN HOSTAGES

On September 9, 1973, nine alleged leaders of the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (Tupamaros), imprisoned since 1972, were transferred from the Penal de Libertad to different military rural units and there confined under special conditions which prevail to date. At the time, they were informed that from there on they would be held as hostages of the military regime and would be immediately shot if either the Tupamaro Movement carried out any further action or if the political prisoners held at the Penal de Libertad rebelled or attempted escape.

The social stragglers, to date held as hostages, are: *Henry Engler Golovtchenko, Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro, Jorge Manera Lluveras, Julio Marenales Saenz, José Mujica Cordano, Mauricio Rosencoff Silvermann, Raúl Sendic Antonaccio, Adolfo Wassen Alaniz and Jorge Zabala Waksman.*

The hostage policy, as it is applied on these men, not only entails a greater degree of insecurity since they are isolated as well as held in changing military units instead of in the regular political prisons, but also entails especially cruel imprisonment conditions which push to the limit all possibilities of survival.

They are individually held in underground, damp dungeons of two by two by one and a half meters, without windows and the door always shut. Light comes from an electric bulb on 24 hours a day; during energy restriction periods they have been held in the dark for days at a time. In 1974, Raúl Sendic was confined for months at the bottom of an unused well at the military regiment of Gral. Pablo Galarza in the province of Durazno. If not punished (in which case the prisoners must go to the bathroom inside the one bed-else naked cell), they have a twice a day bathroom cell break and a ten to fifteen minute handcuffed lonely barrack walk closely guarded by armed soldiers. In some regiments like that of Flores, the prisoners are guarded by trained dogs.

The isolation measures taken against these political prisoners are such that they never communicate with, nor see, other prisoners. The soldiers guarding their dungeons are under strict prohibition orders to speak to them. Furthermore, every few months they are transferred to a different rural regiment, where not only new regulations prevail, but also new military personnel guarantees the application of the strictest isolation discipline. Family visits are irregular, because of: their high punishment frequency, the different regulations arbitrarily applied in the different regiments, the great distances involved (at times, relatives must travel over 400 kms.), and the unexpected and uninformed regiment transfers. The visits are held in special rooms, in some units guarded by dogs, in

others with a two meter minimum distance between prisoner and relative, each behind glass or netted barred walls, in all, either recorded or witnessed by military personnel and with prohibition of physical greeting.

To date, these political prisoners are not allowed to make any sort of handcraft. For the first five years of this type of seclusion, all nine hostages had reading and writing banned. Some of them, like Raúl Sendic, only since last year, and that only in some regiments, were authorized to receive limited and restricted reading material.

The food situation is alike the rest of the political prisoners, as detailed in our Bulletin No. 1: insufficient and deficient.

These subhuman confinement conditions, in addition to: the uncared for injuries produced upon arrest (a few were shot and all brutally tortured) and the recurrent physical tortures they are being subject to, is resulting in rapid health deterioration. All nine hostages suffer from avitaminosis, motor and circulatory disturbances, sphincter control disorders, sleep and wakefulness disturbances, diarrhoea, dehydration, acute respiratory diseases, visual perceptive disturbances, premature oldness, osseous problems, acute weight loss, baldness and teeth loss.

Because of the isolation measures taken around these men, we can only provide updated health information on the following:

*Adolfo Wassen*, 38 years old, has an extremely painful malignant cervical hemangio pericitoma tumour. Not until May 1981 was he admitted to the Military Hospital where the tumour, the adjacent tissues and the transverse apophysis of the cervical vertebrae were surgically removed. Thirty applications with the cobalt bomb were practiced on him and, in August 1981, Wassen was returned to the underground dungeon of Paso de los Toros.

*Raúl Sendic*, 56 years old. Upon arrest in 1972, a bullet tore off part of his tongue, palate, maxillary and all his teeth. He suffers from an abdominal hernia (consequence of a brutal beating received in 1974) of such importance that it would require surgery, which has been denied. His physical weakness is such that in July 1976 a simple flu almost killed him.

*Mauricio Rosencoff*, 49 years old, suffers from a chronic kidney disease which produces frequent nephritic colics. He receives no medical care.

*Jorge Zabalza*, 39 years old, was shot upon arrest. A bullet destroyed a great part of the liver and the spleen. He has not recovered from this injury and has a fistule.

Throughout these ten years, several international petitioning campaigns have been carried out for the protection of the lives of these social strugglers. Once more we seek your active support and the utilization of all pressure channels within your range of influence in order to force the immediate termination of the hostage policy applied by the Uruguayan government.

## RECENT INFORMATION ON POLITICAL PRISONERS

*José Luis Massera* has suffered a fourth hypertension stroke. This situation confirms the world-wide concern for his life. Please refer to our Bulletin No. 1 for complete information on the case of this political leader confined at the Penal de Libertad.

*Jorge Selves*. Has recently been transferred from the Penal de Libertad and confined at the same place where presumably Rubén Sosa was assassinated last May. (Please refer to our Bulletin No. 1.) Prior to his transfer, Selves stated to his fellow prisoners that "he would not commit suicide". It must be pointed out that the official version on the death of Rubén Sosa was that of suicide.

## DISAPPEARANCE OF YOUNG SOCIAL STRUGGLERS

Since November 1981, the repression against the Uruguayan people and their democratic organizations has aggravated. As a result of it, numerous union workers and students have been arrested and have disappeared after torture. Following are some of the patriots who have disappeared:

*Antonia Yáñez*, 32 years old, ex leader of the Uruguayan University Students' Federation (FEUU), was arrested in December 1981 and to date, no official information has been released as to her whereabouts. It is presumed that she is being held at the Cuartel de la Paloma where she would have been tortured. Her husband, Pedro Giudice, is imprisoned at the Penal de Libertad since 1977.

*Ivonne Klinger*, 32 years old, was arrested in December 1981 and has legally disappeared since then. She was seen at the Cuartel de la Paloma, a military regiment in Montevideo, badly injured as a result of torture.

*Raúl Clerico* was arrested in November 1981 and has disappeared since then. There is no information at all on him.

*Hugo Machín*, *Adela Baz* and *Cristina Garrido* were arrested in September 1981 and no further information has been had on them.

## PERSECUTION OF THE OPPOSITION PRESS CONTINUES

The Uruguayan government, seeking to silence all opposition, has decreed new close-downs of the press in this last month. To the close-down of *La Democracia* (Partido Nacional), *Opción* (Partido Demócrata Cristiano) and *Opinar* (Partido Colorado), followed the close-down of *La Razón* and the definitive close-down of *La Plaza*.

The weekly *La Razón* was published in the city of Maldonado by the Partido Nacional once its prior party newspaper, *La Democracia* was closed-down on July 1 for 24 issues. Without any explanation, the government decreed the close-down of *La Razón* for 8 issues following publication of its first number on June 30. In that issue, the former congressman Eladio Fernández, had demanded that the political proscriptions be raised; furthermore, he took a stand against the new political parties statute, stating that it violated citizens' rights.

As was informed in our Bulletin No. 1, *La Plaza* had been closed-down for 8 months on May 14. On July 28, the government rectified its previous resolution and decreed the definitive close-down of this cultural magazine. Among the reason stated were: an article pleading for the amnesty and liberation of the political prisoners; another article which "showed an evident sympathy towards Nicaragua's current political regime"; and, finally, "for divulging marxist-leninist opinions which constitute a threat to the nation's security". On July 22, Raúl Ronzoni, of the *El Día* press staff, published a list of 122 Uruguayans who have disappeared in Argentina and which had been mailed to him by relatives of these people. (*El Día* is a conservative paper belonging to the right wing of the traditional Partido Colorado.) This publication gave way to a police investigation in which course Ronzoni and other members of the staff were summoned on several occasions. The end result was the dismissal of Ronzoni from his position in the Judicial Branch.

On August 4, the Joint Military Staff Chief, Jorge Laborde, addressed the nation in the name of President General Alvarez through a radio and TV broadcast. He spoke against the press and threatened the opposition with prison and political proscription. Two days after, Julio Sanguinetti, co-director of the weekly publication *Correo de los Viernes* and former congressman and secretary of state for the traditional Colorado Party, criticized Laborde's speech. He was arrested along with the paper editor, Walter Nessi, and submitted to legal proceedings.