

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 19, 2015

The Honorable Loretta E. Lynch  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Madam Attorney General,

We write to express our profound concern regarding reported requests that Ricardo Palmera be permitted to leave the United States, and to request information regarding how the Department of Justice has responded to those requests.

According to numerous press reports, the U.S.-designated terrorist group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (hereinafter, "FARC"), has requested repeatedly that Ricardo Palmera, a.k.a. "Simon Trinidad," be permitted to attend talks in Havana between the FARC and the Santos Administration.

Ricardo Palmera is the most senior FARC member to be captured and convicted, and the only person held responsible for the hostage-taking of three innocent Americans, Mark Gonsalves, Keith Stansell, and Thomas Howes in Colombia. For his role in that crime, FARC commander Palmera was convicted in U.S. federal court of conspiracy to commit hostage-taking and sentenced to sixty years. He is currently serving his sentence in a maximum-security prison in Colorado.

The FARC remains a violent foreign terrorist organization which has been responsible for brutal acts of violence, narco-trafficking, and efforts to destabilize Colombia for many years. After President Uribe's overwhelming success in defeating the FARC, the terrorist organization has decided to "negotiate" peace terms with the Santos administration. However, the FARC has not abandoned its violent ways, as demonstrated by the attack in April 2015 that killed eleven Colombian soldiers. Furthermore, Ricardo Palmera was a high-level commander in the FARC who participated in its criminal activities, including the hostage-taking of Americans Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell, and Thomas Howes.

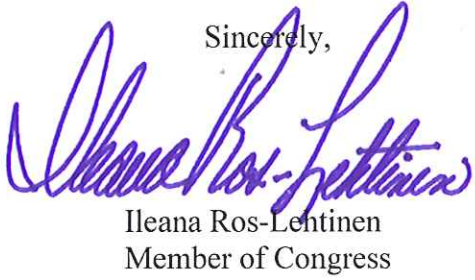
Regrettably, the Obama Administration has an established history of providing numerous, unwarranted concessions to America's enemies. Particularly after the Administration's strange participation in the artificial insemination of the wife of incarcerated Cuban spy Gerardo Hernandez, who was serving a double life sentence for conspiracy to commit espionage and conspiracy to murder three Americans and one resident, there is little reason to trust this Administration's judgment in protecting American interests and keeping terrorists in prison.

If a high level FARC terrorist who was convicted, after receiving a fair trial in U.S. federal court, were released to participate in talks of dubious value in Havana, it would be an egregious affront of justice for Palmera's victims. Furthermore, it would be another example of how the Obama Administration has ceded important leverage and received nothing in return. Accordingly, we respectfully request information on how the Department of Justice has responded to the FARC's request for Ricardo Palmera's participation in the negotiations in Havana, and whether arrangements are underway to permit him to attend the negotiations.

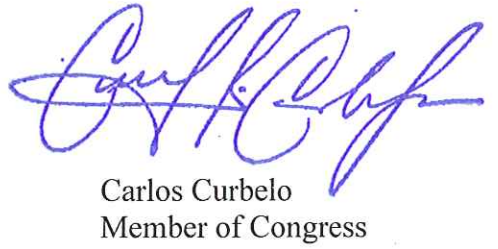
Sincerely,



Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lentini  
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo  
Member of Congress