

MARIO DIAZ-BALART

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0925

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

January 15, 2016

Dear President Obama,

I write to bring to your attention the urgent case of independent labor activist Jorge Ramirez Calderon in Cuba, and to request that you demand the release of all political prisoners in Cuba.

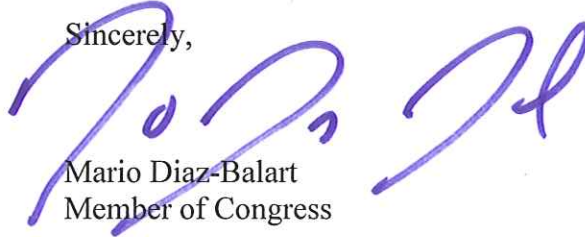
Mr. Ramirez Calderon is a member of the Confederation of Independent Workers of Cuba (CTIC) who was released in January 2015, purportedly as part of your deal with the Castro regime announced on December 17, 2014. However, Mr. Ramirez Calderon was re-arrested on March 28, 2015, and again on December 18, 2015 for protesting against the Castro regime in a silent march, after which time he was sentenced to two and half years in prison. He has been in prison for 29 days, and began a hunger strike to protest his treatment on December 18, 2015.

According to credible sources on the island, Mr. Ramirez Calderon has suffered inhumane treatment in his tiny prison cell in Santa Clara. He has been denied a mattress, bedding, toiletries and communication with his family. He is kept in a semi-dark cell and is unable to see the sun, has access to water only once or twice per day, and appears to be under constant video surveillance.

Regrettably, Mr. Ramirez Calderon is not the only political prisoner who was part of the so-called "list of 53" who has since been re-arrested. Those who were re-arrested include Marcelino Abreu Bonora, Rolando Reyes Rabanal, Luis Enrique Labrador, Wilberto Parada, Carlos Manuel Figueroa Alvarez, Angel Yunier Remon, and Vladimir Morera Bacallao. Remarkably, according to the island's human rights organization Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, there were more than 8,000 political arrests in Cuba just since your announcement last year.

All of Cuba's political prisoners must be released permanently and without condition. The Castro regime's re-arrest of political prisoners after their "negotiated" release one year ago makes a mockery of the entire bad deal and is demonstrable evidence of the Castro regime's bad faith. Accordingly, I respectfully request that you demand that Cuba's prisons be forever emptied of all innocent men and women, and that it begin to adhere to the most basic standards of decency and human rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mario Diaz-Balart', is written over the typed name and title.

Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable John Kerry, Secretary of State