

30 Days for Freedom

4 April - 3 May 2014

#FreethePress

WAN-IFRA www.worldpressfreedomday.org

Head of State and Government
Raúl Castro Ruz
Presidente de la República de Cuba
La Habana, Cuba

Fax: +53 7 83 33 085 (via Foreign Ministry); +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)
Email: cuba@un.int (c/o Cuban Mission to UN)

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Mr. President,

We are writing as part of the global online campaign '30 Days for Freedom' to call for the release of journalist Juliet Michelena Díaz, jailed in Cuba since 7 April 2014.

A citizen journalist, Juliet Michelena Díaz was detained shortly after photographing a police operation in Havana. Ms. Díaz is a contributor to the Cuban Network of Community Journalists (La Red Cubana de Comunicadores Comunitarios/RCCC), a group known for its critical coverage of the government and that has fallen victim to official harassment in recent months.

Ms. Díaz's arrest followed an incident on 26 March in which she and other contributors to RCCC witnessed police officers using dogs to break up a neighbourhood brawl. Ms. Díaz was briefly detained after the incident but she was able to hide her photographs from the police. However, two weeks later, RCCC director Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello said police returned to Ms. Díaz's home to arrest her after they learned she still had photographs and was writing a report about police violence.

Authorities had initially charged Ms. Díaz with threatening a member of a pro-government mob who had applauded her initial detention, but when the article was published three days later on the Florida-based website Cubanet, officials escalated the charges to an "attack".

Mr. President, we call on you to reverse the current trend in Cuba for short-term, arbitrary detentions and to release Ms. Díaz. Small, but primarily cosmetic steps to open press freedoms have reportedly had minimal impact on the independent media. We urge you to relinquish the Cuban government's control over the media and to promote a better environment for freedom of expression.

Sincerely,

#FreethePress
The 30 Days for Freedom campaign

Organised by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the World Editors Forum, the '30 Days for Freedom' campaign aims to highlight the plight of imprisoned journalists worldwide in the 30 days leading up to 3 May, World Press Freedom Day.

www.wan-ifra.org / www.worldpressfreedomday.org

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