

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2015

His Excellency Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez
President of the Republic of Panama
c/o The Embassy of Panama
2201 Wisconsin Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Mr. President,

We are gravely concerned about reports regarding the treatment of U.S. citizens and pro-democracy Cuban activists in your country.

According to media reports, Rosa María Paya was detained by Panamanian officials at the airport and threatened with arrest and deportation if she dared to speak out.

Yesterday, American citizens Orlando Gutiérrez, Silvia Iriondo, and Gus Monge, accompanied pro-democracy Cuban activists Jorge Luis García Pérez (Antunez), Yris Pérez Aguilera, Juan Carlos González Leyva, Leticia Ramos Herrería, Rolando Rodríguez Lobaina, and others, to lay a wreath at the statue of José Martí. Agents of the Cuban regime began screaming at, then assaulting the peaceful activists. This incident was captured on video by various media reporters and independent bloggers.

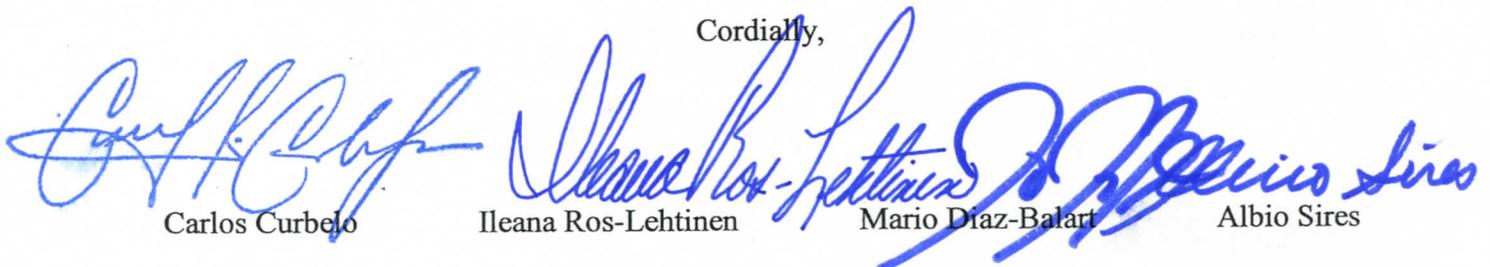
We have been informed that while the American citizens and pro-democracy activists who were victims of the assault were detained by Panamanian authorities, none of the pro-Castro perpetrators were detained by law enforcement.

This assault on peaceful demonstrators should have never occurred. That it occurred in the shadow of the Summit of Americas, which is intended to bring together the democratic nations of the Western Hemisphere to discuss overarching policy concerns, is all the more alarming. However, such intimidation tactics are common in Castro's Cuba, the only non-democratic nation in our hemisphere.

Mr. President, we ask that you ensure the safety and security of American citizens and all pro-democracy activists in your country for the Summit of the Americas. We also request your government investigate these incidents and bring to justice those responsible for the attack.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Cordially,



Carlos Curbelo

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Mario Diaz-Balart

Albio Sires