



European Parliament, Brussels, 12 November 2021

**Mr. Juan Carlos Camacho Camejo**

Chargé d'Affaires

Embassy of Cuba to Belgium and the European Union

Avenue Brugmann 80, 1190 Forest, Brussels, Belgium

Dear Mr. Camacho Camejo,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, call upon the Cuban government to immediately and unconditionally release Reverend Lorenzo Rosales Fajardo, and to end its systematic violation of human rights.

Since Rev. Fajardo Rosales' arrest alongside other peaceful protestors on 11 July, we have been made aware that he has suffered severe beatings and torture in arbitrary detention.<sup>1</sup> We were particularly distressed to read his account of the police-sanctioned rape of some of his fellow inmates as part of an organised "reception to the prison". He has described the event as "the most terrible thing he has ever experienced in his life", which led other inmates present to "urinate on themselves in fear".

We understand that this inhumane torture was overseen by Major Edis Nelson, Head of Reduction at the Boniato Maximum Security Prison. We demand his immediate removal from station and criminal prosecution.

We note that Rev. Fajardo Rosales' arrest and subsequent treatment have also been on account of his religious faith. In 2009, State Security officer Luis Noel Plutin Rodriguez was involved in the arbitrary confiscation of Rev. Lorenzo's church and home. Now as a senior delegate in the Ministry of Interior, Officer Plutin Rodriguez was also responsible for the decision to charge and imprison Rev. Fajardo Rosales. We are concerned to hear that the government is seeking to impose a 10 year prison sentence on Rev. Fajardo Rosales, and that the seven separate attempts made by his lawyer to file for habeas corpus have all been rejected.

Given this collection of human rights violations overseen by the Cuban government, we will call on European Foreign Ministries to reflect the reality of the Cuban justice system in their travel advice for tourists looking to visit Cuba. Europe has a responsibility to fully inform its citizens about the risks involved in traveling to states where their legal protection may not be secure.

In keeping with the European Parliament Resolution of 16 September 2021, we will also petition the Council of the EU and HR/VP Josep Borrell to explore the possibility of introducing EU sanctions against those responsible for human rights abuses.

Yours sincerely,

MEP Peter van Dalen (NL), MEP Dita Charanzova (CZ), MEP Ladislav Ilcic (HR),

MEP Jens Gieseke (DE), MEP Joachim Kuhs (DE), MEP Javier Nart (ES), MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen (NL)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.csw.org.uk/2021/10/27/report/5462/article.htm>