

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 149

Expressing solidarity with the writers, journalists, and librarians of Cuba on World Press Freedom Day and calling for the immediate release of citizens of Cuba imprisoned for exercising rights associated with freedom of the press.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 14, 2009

Mr. MARTINEZ (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. VOINOVICH, and Mr. LUGAR) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Expressing solidarity with the writers, journalists, and librarians of Cuba on World Press Freedom Day and calling for the immediate release of citizens of Cuba imprisoned for exercising rights associated with freedom of the press.

Whereas Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”;

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly declared May 3 of each year to be “World Press Freedom Day” to raise awareness of the importance of freedom of expres-

sion and to remind governments of their obligation to respect the rights of free expression and of a free press;

Whereas the United States Department of State, in its 2008 report on human rights in Cuba, notes, “The government [of Cuba] subjected independent journalists to travel bans, detentions, harassment of family and friends, equipment seizures, imprisonment, and threats of imprisonment. State Security agents posed as independent journalists to gather information on activists and spread misinformation and mistrust within independent journalist circles.”;

Whereas Reporters Without Borders, an international non-governmental organization, continues to rank Cuba as one of the most repressive countries in the world, and the most repressive country in the Western Hemisphere, with respect to freedom of the press;

Whereas the International Press Institute, a global network of journalists, editors, and media executives, concludes that Cuba “remains a leading jailer of journalists”;

Whereas International PEN, an international network of writers, has reported that 22 writers, journalists, and librarians were among the individuals arrested and tried during the crackdown by the Government of Cuba on independent civil society activists in the spring of 2003, and subsequently imprisoned;

Whereas International PEN further reports that “the majority of the detained writers, journalists and librarians are suffering from health complaints caused or exacerbated by the harsh conditions and treatment they are exposed to in prison. Despite their deteriorating health status, access to adequate medical treatment is often limited.”; and

Whereas the Committee to Protect Journalists, a nonpartisan international organization of journalists, has identified more than 20 writers, journalists, and librarians in Cuba who remain imprisoned by the Government of Cuba: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) expresses solidarity with—

3 (A) the citizens of Cuba who are suffering
4 harassment, deprivation, or imprisonment for
5 exercising rights associated with freedom of the
6 press and pursuing livelihoods as independent
7 writers, journalists, or librarians; and

8 (B) the family members of those writers,
9 journalists, and librarians; and

10 (2) calls on the Government of Cuba to release
11 immediately all writers, journalists, and librarians
12 who are imprisoned for exercising their fundamental
13 human rights, including the citizens of Cuba that
14 have been specifically identified by international or-
15 ganizations that monitor respect for the freedom of
16 the press as being imprisoned by the Government of
17 Cuba.

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