

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Statement on the First Anniversary of the Death of Orlando Zapata Tamayo
February 23, 2011

One year ago today, the selfless and tragic death of Orlando Zapata Tamayo galvanized the world's attention to the ongoing mistreatment of those unjustly held by Cuban authorities for bravely standing up for the rights of the Cuban people.

The attention brought to the plight of Cuba's political prisoners by Zapata's courageous act and by the peaceful protests of *las Damas de Blanco* has helped free a number of his fellow activists through the good offices of the Catholic Church in Cuba. Today I join the Cuban people in marking this anniversary by again calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Cuba.

Sadly, the harassment and detention by Cuban authorities of Zapata's mother, Reina Luisa Tamayo, and others across Cuba as they sought to commemorate her son's death underscores how much of his dream remains unfulfilled.

Since taking office, I have reached out to the Cuban people to support their desire to freely determine their future and enjoy liberty and justice. Today and every day, the Cuban people must know that their suffering does not go unnoticed and that the United States remains unwavering in our commitment to defend the inalienable right of the Cuban people to enjoy the freedoms that define the Americas and that are universal to all human beings.

Categories: Statements by the President : Cuba :: Orlando Zapata Tamayo, first anniversary of death.

Names: Tamayo, Reina L.

Subjects: Cuba : Democracy efforts; Cuba : Ladies in White organization; Cuba : Political prisoners, condition of; Deaths : Tamayo, Orlando Z.; Foreign policy, U.S. : Democratization.

DCPD Number: DCPD201100106.