

TESTIMONY OF SARA MARTA FONSECA BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

5 FEBRUARY 2015

This testimony is being delivered in English by Orlando Gutierrez-Boronat

My name is Sara Marta Fonseca. I was born in 1970 . As a leader of the Cuban Resistance, and in spite of the existing repression, I led public protests calling for democracy in my country. In one of these protests, three fellow female activists and myself, members of the Cuban National Civic Resistance Front, led a protest on the steps of the old Cuban capitol building. This protest was greatly supported by the Cuban people, and sparked wider public protests.

My family had been considered opposed to the Castro Regime since 1959. They were deemed as counter revolutionaries by the Regime for expressing their opposition to Fidel Castro. For more than half a century the Castro Regime has violated and violates human rights, and controlled Cuban national life.

The Castro Regime has confiscated the private businesses of both Cubans and foreigners, transforming the Castro Regime into the sole employer. Crimes such as murder have been carried out against political opponents. Thousands of Cubans have been incarcerated or discriminated against in Cuban society. Any sign of dissent has been brutally persecuted.

Cubans do not have the right to elect their rulers. Children are indoctrinated in their schools. Those who do not comply with this indoctrination cannot finish their studies. The regime has condemned the Cuban people to permanent scarcity, to hunger and poverty. A people deprived of freedom of expression, with all media under control of the state, can be easily manipulated. People think only about how they can feed their families, and although they may not like what they are living through, they only think about survival.

Cubans have exiled themselves to different parts around the world, thousands have died trying to cross the Florida Straits. People venture out to sea in makeshift rafts in order to escape from dictatorship and oppression. In Cuba, there are few people left who remember what free presidential elections look like.

It is for all of these reasons that we do not agree with the negotiations between the Obama Administration and the illegitimate Castro Regime. Why negotiate with a dictatorship without taking into account the Cuban people and its Resistance? What about all of these years of suffering? Why should a regime with such a consistent history of repressing its own people be considered a legitimate partner in a negotiation process?

What concession has Raul Castro made? Only when all political prisoners are released, when independent political parties and labor unions can be organized,

only when free multiparty elections can be carried out, only when civil rights are fully respected, only then should economic sanctions on the Castro Regime be lifted.

Thousands of my people have rebelled against the Castro Regime, and paid a very heavy price for doing this. I thank God for having been raised in a family that raised me in freedom. I was not able to finish my university studies because I spoke out against the Regime. My children and family were also discriminated and imprisoned. My house was destroyed by mobs directed by the Regime. My family has suffered both psychological and physical torture, seriously affecting our health.

Ending the US embargo without the Regime freeing all political prisoners, without independent political parties and labor unions being able to organize, without free elections being held, means legitimizing the Castro Regime so that it continues in power, murdering and oppressing the Cuban people.

Ending the US embargo will benefit only the Castro Regime. The Castro family ultimately owns and controls the country's economic life. The Castro family monopolizes Cuban political and economic life. Their permanence in power will benefit only them, and not the Cuban people.

We ask for support for the Cuban Resistance, and for the Agreement for Democracy in Cuba, a consensus document of the Resistance which lays out a ten point program for true democratic change in Cuba. It is in this way that the United States can aid the Cuban people in building a new democratic nation.