



Press Release: Arbitrary Detention and Imminent Deportation of 147 Cubans

Allegra
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Today in the early morning, between 2am and 3am, the Ministry of Interior Affairs



and the Ecuadorian National Police violently displaced the encampment of Cubans who had spent various nights in “El Arbolito” Park in Quito, Ecuador. As a result of this displacement, many people were physically and psychologically attacked and their property was confiscated (tents, blankets, cooking supplies, identity documents, etc.), and a total of 147 people were deprived of their liberty and relocated to the Criminal Justice Prison.

From that moment until 11am, they were not allowed communication with anyone, and only after 8 hours were human rights lawyers finally able to contact them to verify various human rights violations: abusive, cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment during detention; the arbitrary and illegal detention of minors, among them an adolescent with a broken arm; two pregnant women (one of whom lost consciousness in the prison and required ambulance assistance); and various people over 50 years of age, all of whom are packed into cells located on the ground floor of the jail, which does not comply with the minimum standards to hold such people.

Efraín Sánchez, one of the detainees, was held in a different space than the others and was presumed disappeared. At 5pm, we learned that he was being held in a separate cell within the same prison, isolated from the rest of the group. It is presumed that he will face criminal charges and that the arraignment hearing will take place tonight or in the early morning on July 7, 2016.

On the other hand, once all the detainees were registered, a *habeas corpus* was presented (a constitutional act that seeks the immediate liberty of people detained arbitrarily or whose physical integrity has been violated). The *habeas corpus* has been negotiated in the Court of Criminal Guarantees, located on 10 de agosto Avenue and Murgeón Street. Furthermore, this action includes a petition of precautionary measures to stop the deportation hearings until there is a decision regarding the illegal, arbitrary, and unconstitutional detention of these people.

Considering that the Minister of Interior Affairs José Serrano has declared that



this is a migration issue, we denounce the state for violating these people's human rights, especially due to the fact that the Constitution prohibits considering any person illegal because of their migratory status, and due to the fact that migratory processes are of an administrative character. These people have been deprived of their liberty for more than 16 hours without a court order or police report.

We have received unofficial information that the deportation hearings could begin tomorrow at 8am in the Criminal Justice Prison.

We urgently call on migration, human rights, and other civil society organizations to accompany our brothers and sisters from Cuba during this violent attack by the national government.

We continue asking, **#WhatUniversalCitizenship**

Human rights defenders of migrants!

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