



INCIDENT REPORT MARCH 2021

Center for Incident Reports
Foundation for Pan
American Democracy

Cuba





The Foundation for Pan American Democracy (FDP) was established in 2015 by a group of Cuban and Cuban-American citizens concerned about the oppression and violation of human rights in Cuba and the need to defend and promote democracy in the Americas. The Foundation has no political or religious affiliation, and collaborates with local and international organizations committed to democracy and respect for human rights.

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Foundation for Pan American Democracy

P.O. Box 441716

Miami FL 33144-1716

United States

www.fundaciondemocraciapanamericana.org



Hope is now in the new generation, partly because of their own awakening, but also because the previous generation began even in a very difficult environment of pressure and persecution of oneself; to refuse harm. Popularly in Cuba when talking about the mechanisms of repressive bodies, people say: they are intended for harm”.

Oswaldo Payá

Incident Report

Cuba, March 2021

April 15, 2021

The **Foundation for Pan American Democracy (FDP)** Center for Incident Reports has once again found a pattern of harassment and persecution against independent activists, political opponents, communicators, artists and others.

In the month of March 2021, at least **52 verified incidents** occurred throughout Cuba, with a total of **57 victims**. Of the reported total, **36 people were arbitrarily detained** by State Security forces for the purposes of neutralizing their work and silencing dissenting voices. These arrests did not comply with due process procedures.

A common sanctioning practice employed by the authorities is imposing exorbitant fines on citizens. During the month of March, **fines were issued that were up to 2000 pesos** in national currency.

The events that occurred throughout the month warn of a worrying application of harassment patterns to intimidate and criminalize the work of opposition leaders and organizations and independent civil society in Cuba, which are mentioned below:

- Arbitrary arrests.
- Surveillance, intimidation and harassment.
- Attacks on freedom and personal integrity.
- Life-threatening attacks and personal safety.
- Threats due to public complaints.
- Criminalization of official organizations.
- Arbitrary arrests, attacks and intimidation against journalists and communicators.
- Social control over the victim.
- Attacks on human rights activists and promoters.
- Blocking activist communications (internet and phone).

Testimony

“ *... I work at the headquarters of the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU), and for several days, people have been prevented from accessing the headquarters. Faced with such indignity, we feel powerless, that is why we started the hunger strike, to demand the end of the repression and the police barricade ...”*

Liusvan Utra, member of the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU)
and promoter of the citizen campaign Cuba Decide



Cases received

1. Victim: Maikel Herrera - Date of Incident: March 2, 2021 - Havana

Arbitrarily detained when leaving UNPACU Headquarters in Calabazar, by political police in a particular police car. He was arrested along with activist Yoel Parsons.

2. Victim: Yoel Parsons - Date of Incident: March 2, 2021 - Havana

Arbitrarily detained when leaving UNPACU Headquarters in Calabazar, by political police in a particular police car. He was arrested along with activist Maikel Herrera.

3. Victim: Omar Ortega - Date of Incident: March 3, 2021 - Ciego de Avila

The young man was arrested in his home, for putting up a sign in his yard on the branches of a mango tree which read: "Patria y Vida." The police entered and charged him with contempt.

4. Victim: Bartolo Cantillo - Date of Incident: March 3, 2021 - Guantanamo

Arrested on the public road, next to the Municipal Court of the province of Guantánamo, by the security agents of the dictatorship. The police told him that he could not be there, because they were going to begin a trial. He was violently detained, threatened, insulted, and severely beaten. He was issued two fines, 2000 pesos each.

5. Victims: Julieta Herrera, Yamile Bargés, Marieta Martínez, Yaquelin Heredia, Lourdes Esquivel, Berta Soler - Date of Incident: March 3, 2021 - Havana

The *Damas de Blanco*, who attended a mass in the church of Santa Rita, were arrested.

6. Victim: Eliosbel Quevedo - Date of Incident: March 4, 2021 - Cienfuegos

Municipal Coordinator of FANTU in Cumanayagua, was expelled from his job as a night custodian at a private farm, after they threatened the owner of the farm that they would confiscate the land, if he did not fire Quevedo.

7. Victim: Yoandi Montiel - Date of Incident: March 5, 2021 - Havana

Yoandi Montiel, better known as “El Gato de Cuba”, a popular influencer, was summoned to appear at the Aguilera y Lugareño police unit, in the Havana municipality of Diez de Octubre.

8. Victim: Maykel Castillo - Date of Incident: March 6, 2021 - Havana

The member of the San Isidro Movement was arrested by the authorities on the night of March 6, in Cristo Park, in Old Havana, and transferred to the unit of Cuba and Chacón. He was released four hours after the arrest.

9. Victim: Gladis Capote - Date of Incident: March 6, 2021 - Havana

A member of the *Damas de Blanco*, she was in a line to buy chicken at the store near the national headquarters of the *Damas de Blanco*, when a police officer told her that he could not go to the national headquarters of her organization.

10. Victim: Marieta Martínez - Date of Incident: March 7, 2021 - Havana

Arrested at 8am on public roads on her way to St. Rita's Church to participate in Mass. She was detained and kept in the patrol car and was released around 11am, away from her home.

11. Victim: Berta Soler - Date of Incident: March 7, 2021 - Havana

Arrested at 9:30 am by the DSE and PNR, in a P13 urban bus, on Avenida Porvenir arriving in La Palma. A DSE agent and two uniformed policemen got on the bus and got off the bus. She was

detained inside a patrol car for about 30 minutes. Released on the public highway, on Martínez and Calle D, in Lawton.

12. Victim: Marieta Martínez - Date of Incident: March 7, 2021 - Havana

Arrested when leaving her home, around 11a.m. on public roads by the DSE and the PNR. She was later transported by patrol car to the Zanja police unit, keeping her inside the car until 5pm.

13. Victim: Angel Moya - Date of Incident: March 8, 2021 - Havana

Mr. Moya was accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Soler. They were going to Havana to buy food. When they got off the bus, they were arrested at the train terminal. They were taken once more to the police station, where they protested, and Moya was taken to the Cojímar police unit. Released at 6pm.

14. Victim: Berta Soler - Date of Incident: March 8, 2021 - Havana

Ms. Soler was heading to Old Havana with her husband Mr. Moya, in order to do some food shopping. Upon reaching the Train Terminal, they were detained and taken back to the police station, where they protested. Soler was taken to the Cotorro police unit. She was detained until 6:30 pm, where she was threatened in an intimidating way by showing her the gun.

15. Victim: Maikel Castillo - Date of Incident: March 8, 2021 - Havana

Mr. Castillo was harassed and detained, being led out of his girlfriend's house. He was taken to the police unit of Cuba and Chacón, where he was threatened with being accused of contempt, released at 2:34 pm.

16. Victim: Guillermo Fariñas - Date of Incident: March 9, 2021 - Villa Clara

FANTU General Coordinator was arrested in the city of Santa Clara to prevent him from supporting and guiding the relatives of some rafters, arrested or admitted to hospitals in the Bahamas.

17. Victim: Berta Soler - Date of Incident: March 10, 2021 - Havana

The national headquarters of the *Damas de Blanco* was barricaded by the DSE and the PNR, from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the 13th, with the aim of preventing the them from entering the headquarters and gathering to pay tribute and a tribute to Laura Pollán on her 73rd birthday.

18. Victim: Yaquelin Heredia - Date of Incident: March 10, 2021 - Havana

Beaten on the public highway by a very strong man, leaving her face disfigured while in line at a store in Havana, around 4pm. She was repressed by a policeman, who argued that this happened because she was speaking out against the Revolution, and she was separated from the line.

19. Victim: Celina Claro - Date of Incident: March 11, 2021 - Guantanamo

In the afternoon, the *Dama de Blanco* and activist from the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU) from the province of Guantánamo was arrested. She was arrested in the street, when she went to the bakery to buy food for her family especially, for her 4-month-old granddaughter.

20. Victim: Yeris Curbelo - Date of Incident: March 11, 2021 - Guantanamo

He was arrested while covering the demonstration of a citizen, who claimed to be unfairly fined 2,000 pesos. A PNR police officer attempted to violently snatch and steal his phone, hitting him and throwing him to the ground.

21. Victim: Candide Chacón - Date of Incident: March 11, 2021 - Havana

Mr. Chacón, an activist and human rights defender, was sentenced by the municipal court of Centro Habana to a 6-month sentence to correctional work without detention, for non-payment of fines.

22. Victim: Mileydis Salcedo - Date of Incident: March 11, 2021 - Havana

Ms. Salcedo was on her way to the hospital, to check on a relative who is sick with COVID, when she was violently detained by the police. She was taken to the Aguilera unit where she was detained for 5 hours and she was threatened for her political activism.

23. Victim: Humberto Mena - Date of Incident: March 11, 2021 - Havana

When Mr. Mena found out what was going on with his cousin Ms. Salcedo (above), he went to support her and was also detained and taken to the Aguilera police unit, where he stayed for 5 hours.

24. Victim: David Aguiar - Date of Incident: March 11, 2021 - Havana

The delegate of the MD, MONR from La Catalina neighborhood, was summoned to the police unit for March 13. The citation is handwritten and does not bear any signature or official logo.

25. Victim: Osmel Adrián Rubio - Date of Incident: March 12, 2021 - Havana

Mr. Rubio, while on Calle Morales #86, in Los Pinos, was bombarded by police because he was going to a demonstration in La Plaza, where they prevented him from leaving said address.

26. Victim: Oscar Casanella - Date of Incident: March 12, 2021 - Havana

Mr. Casanella was surrounded by State Security and police for more than 6 hours at his home to prevent him from going to a protest at La Plaza.

27. Victim: Niovel Tamayo - Date of Incident: March 12, 2021 - Havana

Mr. Tamayo was surrounded by police that day preventing him from leaving his home to keep him from attending a peaceful demonstration in La Plaza. He was surrounded for more than 6 hours.

28. Victim: Héctor Valdés - Date of Incident: March 12, 2021 - Havana

Mr. Valdés had a surveillance device outside his home. He was arrested in Tulipán and Boyeros, when he was going to the demonstration in La Plaza. He was taken to the La Lisa police unit, where they tried to issue him a warning for the crime of committing a crime which he refused to sign. They took him home around 1pm.

29. Victim: Leticia Ramos - Date of Incident: March 12, 2021 - Matanzas

His home was surrounded, from around 4pm to 5pm on the 12th, for wanting to protest in favor of human rights.

30. Victim: María Matienzo - Date of Incident: March 12, 2021 - Havana

The Cuban regime arrested freelance journalist María Matienzo when she was trying to leave her home.

31. Victim: Carolina Barrero - Date of Incident: March 12, 2021 - Havana

Cuban curator and art historian Carolina Barrero was arrested as she left her home in Havana. According to social media, after her release, she was taken to the police unit of Santiago de Las Vegas, Boyeros Municipality, south west of the capital, where she was detained for 7 hours.

32. Victim: Iliana Hernández - Date of Incident: March 12, 2021 - Havana

The police stopped the car she was traveling in from her home in Cojímar to El Vedado to visit a friend. The journalist conducted a live broadcast on Facebook, where she documented part of the arrest. The video shows several soldiers from the Ministry of the Interior, including a woman, who forced the journalist out of the car, and the video is interrupted when Iliana Hernández complained to the police that they had no right to arrest her.

33. Victim: María Josefa Acón - Date of Incident: March 13, 2021 - Matanzas

Her house was surrounded by the DSE and the PNR from 6:00pm to 7:15pm on the 13th.

34. Victim: Lourdes Esquivel - Date of Incident: March 13, 2021 - Havana

Their home was surrounded by DSE and PNR, from 7:10am to 3:30pm.

35. Victim: Gladis Capote - Date of Incident: March 13, 2021 - Havana

Their home was surrounded by DSE and PNR, from the 7th:30am to 3:45pm.

36. Victim: Micaela Roll - Date of Incident: March 13, 2021 - Havana

Their home was surrounded by DSE and PNR, from the 7th:30am to 3:45pm.

37. Victim: Berta Soler - Date of Incident: March 13, 2021 - Havana

The national headquarters of *Damas de Blanco* was surrounded by DSE and PNR, from 8am. They lifted the operation around 6pm. One block from the national headquarters, patrol cars and DSE agents remained in a parking lot, to maintain surveillance of the headquarters with the three cameras in front of them.

38. Victim: Camila Acosta - Date of Incident: March 15, 2021 - Havana

Mrs. Acosta Rodríguez was in a car at around 3pm where she was forcefully taken out and put into a patrol car. She was threatened with being taken to a police unit. They left her inside the patrol car and just drove her around, until one hour later they released her at her house, forbidding her to leave her home.

39. Victim: Camila Acosta - Date of Incident: March 15, 2021 - Havana

Ms. Acosta had two arrests that same day. In the second case, she was violently detained outside her home, around 4:30 pm, and again forced into the patrol car. They took her to Calle 19 and F, in

El Vedado, where she was in the car for more than an hour and a half. She asked to be allowed to use the restroom and they said no. She urinated in the patrol car, creating a nuisance among the police.

40. Victim: Escobar Light - Date of Incident: March 15, 2021 - Havana

According to the testimony, "Today, March 15, a State Security officer with two female officers arrived at my building to prevent me from leaving my house. He refused to show me his officer card, because he says that I have seen him other times, and because he was accompanied by two uniformed officers," the reporter denounced.

41. Victims: UNPACU Members - Date of Incident: March 15, 2021 - Santiago de Cuba

UNPACU Headquarters: surrounded by various State Security agents, national police, and other repressive forces, preventing the passage of activists and those in need.

42. Victim: Tania Bruguera - Date of Incident: March 16, 2021 - Havana

The artist was arrested for six hours at a police station in Havana. According to Bruguera's statements, she called her arrest "kidnapping." She has called for an end to "political violence" in Cuba.

43. Victims: Niubis Bisset, Nely Amelo - Date of Incident: March 16, 2021 - Havana

Violently detained to prevent their entry to the UNPACU headquarters. One of them is a teenager. Her clothes were torn and she was pushed, falling to the ground. The two were taken to Unit # 2 and threatened with going to prison.

44. Victim: Héctor Luis Valdés - Date of Incident: March 18, 2021 - Havana

When Mr. Valdés was coming home, he was arbitrarily detained in the worst way and was taken to the police unit in Zapata and C. They grabbed him by his sweater and began to insult him because

of his sexual orientation. They tore his shirt and threatened him that, next time, it will not be his shirt that they are going to break, and that he should take care of himself. He was taken home on patrol.

45. Victim: Héctor Luis Valdés - Date of Incident: March 19, 2021 - Havana

Due to the exile by the Cuban government, of which the journalist Karla María Pérez was a victim, Mr. Valdés went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX) to receive an answer about Pérez's exile. They do not let him leave his home, until the calls for peaceful demonstrations cease.

46. Victim: Berta Soler - Date of Incident: March 20, 2021 - Havana

The national headquarters of *Damas de Blanco* has been surrounded by the DSE since 7:30 am. The operation has continued since the 18th, with patrol cars two blocks away, in a parking lot where there is a command post to guard against the *Damas de Blanco*. The operation continues.

47. Victim: Osmel Rubio - Date of Incident: March 21, 2021 - Havana

Around 10am, Mr. Adrián was in a store, when he was arrested and taken to a patrol, where a State Security officer was. They took him to Ocho Vías at 11am, and released him far from his home, more than 10 kilometers away. They threatened him with death.

48. Victim: Burunate Charity - Date of Incident: March 24, 2021 - Matanzas

Member of the *Damas de Blanco*, member of the Pedro Luis Boitel Party for Democracy. She reported that the Head of Sector appeared at the door of her house to summon her to the police station in the city of Colón, Matanzas, on the orders of the secret political police.

49. Victim: Ariadna Mena - Date of Incident: March 25, 2021 - Havana

Ms. Mena was being followed from the bus stop at around 5pm. When she got off the bus at the Curita park, a State Security officer grabbed her and threatened that they are going to cut out her

tongue and that her days are numbered. Mena begins to remove her clothes and scream, until she lets go of her. These threats are due to her political activism.

50. Victim: Esteban Rodríguez - Date of Incident: March 25, 2021 - Havana

Mr. Rodriguez is violently arrested and forced to ride in a patrol car, where he was taken to the police unit located in Alamar. There, he was threatened and told that he was going to be charged with public disorder. His family members were looking for him in all the police units, and they were told that he was not detained, this being a lie, since he was detained for 8 hours.

51. Victim: Dasniurka Salcedo - Date of Incident: March 25, 2021 - Artemis

Ms. Salcedo was leaving her home when she was violently arrested in a white car. She was constantly threatened. They left her in the middle of a field, making it impossible for her to orient herself. A man arrives, who tried to hit her and take her cell phone away. Before her screams, another man appears to help her.

52. Victim: Oreste Varona - Date of Incident: March 31, 2021 - Camaguey

Arbitrarily detained by political police for several hours, due to their opposition activities.

Appreciation and Thanks

Incident reporting is an effort by the Fundación Para La Democracia Panamericana (FDP) Incident Reporting Center to make cases of abuse and persecution that Cubans have had to face in the interior of the island for more than six decades visible to the public.

This publication is made possible thanks to the contribution of hundreds of people who managed to overcome fear and censorship in Cuba, and they deliver their incident report so that the eyes of the world can see the suffering that activists must experience for freedom, democracy and human rights.

We are grateful for the collaboration of the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU) for the publication of this report.

