

URGENT ACTION

ARTIST NAMED PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

On 2 May, Cuban state security officials took artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara from his home and to a hospital, while he was hunger-striking in protest over the confiscation of artwork from his home around the 22 April. Luis Manuel is a key figure in the San Isidro Movement, a diverse group of independent artists, journalists and activists that defend freedom of expression in Cuba. He is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely because of peacefully expressing his ideas, and should be released immediately and unconditionally.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Miguel Díaz Canel
President of the Republic of Cuba
Hidalgo, Esquina 6. Plaza de la Revolución
La Habana, CP 10400
Cuba
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Dear Mr President,

I write to you to condemn the detention of Cuban artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, a key leader of the San Isidro Movement. Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara has been held seemingly under state custody in a hospital in Havana since 2 May, with little contact with the outside world and reportedly highly restricted visits, solely for peacefully exercising his freedom of expression.

Prior to this, Luis Manuel Otero has faced harassment and intimidation from state security officials due to his work as a human rights defender. Just in December 2020, he was submitted to frightening levels of surveillance and, following another hunger strike, was ultimately detained under similar circumstances.

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully expressing his ideas. I therefore urge you to secure his immediate and unconditional release.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara has become a leading voice of the San Isidro Movement (SIM), a diverse group of independent artists, journalists, academics and activists that defend freedom of expression in Cuba, originally created to protest Decree 349, a dystopic law that stands to censor artists in the country.

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara was taken by state security officials on 2 May 2021 from his home, the headquarters of the San Isidro Movement, where he was carrying out a hunger strike reportedly in protest over his artwork being confiscated from his home. According to information from the NGO Cubalex and state media, he was taken to a hospital in Havana, the Centro de Urgencias del Hospital Universitario “General Calixto García.”

As far as Amnesty International can ascertain, Luis Manuel has been held at the hospital, under supervision or control of state security officials and with very restricted visits from immediate family. He does not seem to have access to his telephone or the outside world. Pending his release, Luis Manuel Otero should be provided with medical care of his choice, be granted regular visits from family and friends, not be tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and granted access to lawyers of his choosing.

According to Cubalex, and Amnesty International documentation, state security officials have repeatedly had Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara under surveillance for months and he faced arrest by police if he tried to leave his house, in practice amounting to house arrest. Luis Manuel’s latest detention has occurred within a context of reports of harassment and intimidation against other members of the SIM and shows Cuba’s ongoing repression of human rights, including the right to freedom of expression in the country.

Luis Manuel has been named a prisoner of conscience of Amnesty International [twice already](#), in both cases for being detained solely for peacefully exercising his freedom of expression. He and members of the San Isidro Movement, as well as allies and journalists have also been under constant and frightening surveillance, which Amnesty International’s Digital Verification Team and researchers documented in December 2020.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish. You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 16 Julio 2021

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara (he/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr25/4147/2021/en/>