

Cuban Five Visitation Rights for Adriana Pérez:
Obama and Clinton Must Change their Position

July 15, 2009

By Arnold August *

Today we have been informed that the US State Department has once again refused a visa for Adriana Pérez to visit her husband Gerardo Hernández. He is one of the Cuban Five, unjustly condemned to two perpetual life terms plus fifteen years. Gerardo, like the other four Cubans, has been in US penitentiaries for close to eleven years under the most difficult conditions. Their sole “crime” was to peacefully infiltrate South Florida ant-Cuban terrorist organizations in order to inform the US authorities about the terrorist activities with the unique purpose of stopping these attacks against the Cuban people. Their trials and arbitrary treatment have been condemned by all those justice-loving people in the world, from all walks of life, as they slowly became aware of the facts. The reality exposed the case as fraudulent and constituting a travesty of justice not only according to the US laws, but also international norms. The refusal to allow visitation rights all this time to Adriana constitutes a violation of US and international norms which prohibit double punishment such as the cruel, unnecessary, inhuman and unjustified repeated refusal of a visa to Adriana who has not seen her husband since he was arrested close to 11 years ago. She has been consistently refused by the State Department under the pretext that she is a “threat to the stability and security of the US”! This is the same excuse used by the State Department whether under the Bush or the Obama administrations.

This is a political case. The Cuban Five are political prisoners. If the case was open and transparent, why did the recent June 15 Supreme Court decision to refuse the review of the case (despite the record number of friends of the Court petitions) not go public and openly state to the world the reason for this denial? In the same way, why did the State Department not tell the truth today about the refusal of the visa to Adriana instead of hiding behind the Bush-era rhetoric of “threat to security and stability”?

President Obama has made so much political capital on the slogan of “change”. Hillary Clinton, amongst other characteristics, recently made her trade-mark as a

woman candidate and thus was hoping to become the first female president of the US. How can she, as a woman, be instrumental in such a cruel punishment against Adriana and Gerardo? However, the Cuban Five case, like other situations nationally and internationally, are all merging together these days into a series of litmus tests for the Obama Administration. The fall from the height of “popularity” riding on the winds of change can be easily converted into a stunning tumble as quick as his rise to fame as the apostil of change.

The ball is now in the camp of the Obama Administration. Change or status quo? He must immediately release the Cuban Five as the US Constitution allows the president to do. Hillary Clinton, perhaps with the assistance and understanding of First Lady Michelle Obama, must grant a visa to Adriana. This is one way to prove to the world that change was indeed the real goal.

This note is being sent to President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Canadian Prime Minster Stephen Harper.

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