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Americas - Cuba

Missing

Cuban authorities urged to explain detained blogger's disappearance

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When detained Cuban writer and blogger Angel Santiesteban-Prats disappeared from San Miguel del Padrón prison on 21 July, the authorities said he had escaped but his daughter managed to talk briefly with him in a police station ten days later. His present whereabouts are unknown.

After reporting his disappearance from the prison where he had been held since April 2013, his family is now worried that the authorities will charge him with escaping. As they do not know his version of events, they fear that a trumped-up escape charge will be used to give him an additional jail sentence.

His daughter is the only relative who has seen him since his disappearance. As a police officer accompanied her during their ten-minute meeting, [Ángel Santiesteban-Prats](#) was unable to talk freely. Since then, no information about his situation has been provided while rumours continue to circulate.

"We urge the authorities to provide a clear explanation of Santiesteban-Prats' current situation," said Camille Soulier, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Americas desk.

"Each day without news increases the risks for this blogger. We demand his immediate release and the withdrawal of all charges against him. The repressive methods being used by the regime recall the worst days of the 'Black Spring' of 2003."

An outspoken critic of regime in his blog, called "[Los hijos que nadie quiso](#)" (The children no one wanted), Santiesteban-Prats was given a five-year jail sentence after being convicted on trumped-up charges of "home violation" and "injuries" in a summary trial in December 2012.

He began serving the sentence in April 2013 in San Miguel del Padrón prison on the outskirts of Havana, where he was subjected to mistreatment and acts of torture.

His disappearance followed an [interview](#) that his son, Eduardo Angel Santiesteban, gave to Miami-based *Televisión Martí* on 15 July in which he said he was forced to testify against his father and that the prosecution's claim that his father physically attacked his former wife was a complete fabrication.

Santiesteban-Prats is on the Reporters Without Borders list of "[information heroes](#) ." Cuba is ranked 170th out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#) – the lowest position of any country in the Americas.
