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Americas - Cuba

Detainee

Rights panel asks Cuba to guarantee jailed blogger's safety

10 October 2014

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has formally asked the Cuban government to guarantee the safety of Angel Santiesteban-Prats, a writer and blogger held since February 2013 who has repeatedly reported being the victim of mistreatment and torture in detention.

The IACHR submitted its request on 26 September after being contacted by Elisa Tabakman, who edits his website and who already provided the IACHR in June 2013 with details of the threats, mistreatment and psychological torture to which Santiesteban-Prats has been subjected.

Her approach to the IACHR was also prompted by rumours that **Santiesteban-Prats** might be transferred to a high-security detention centre operated by Cuba's border protection force. It was after this that Tabakman contacted the IACHR again, asking it to take rapid action.

On the 21 July, the Cuban authorities announced that Santiesteban-Prats had [escaped from jail](#). The blogger recently confirmed on his blog that he did indeed manage to leave the prison, enjoying five days of freedom before surrendering himself to the authorities, saying he had been using his right to leave prison and had not been on the run.

His position was based on the fact that his sentence provided for 72-hours of parole after two months in prison, a provision the prison authorities refused to implement. On his return to prison, he was indeed transferred to a high security detention centre.

Given the gravity of the situation, the IACHR asked the Cuban government on 26 September to adopt the necessary protective measures in order to guarantee Santiesteban-Prats' physical safety.

"We urge the Cuban authorities to comply with this request by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and we reiterate our request to them to free Santiesteban-Prats at once and quash his conviction," said Reporters Without Borders deputy programme director Virginie Dangles.

Santiesteban-Prats has been jailed because of his outspoken criticism of the government. He 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.

In an interview for [Miami-based Televisión Martí](#) on 15 July, his son said he was forced to testify against his father and that the prosecution's case was a complete fabrication.

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