

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/cuba-dissident-journalist-kills-himself-06-04-2012,42279.html>

Americas - Cuba

Exile and death

Dissident journalist kills himself in Spain, a year after being forced into exile

6 April 2012

Reporters Without Borders is deeply saddened to learn that **Albert Santiago Du Bouchet Hernández**, 52, a Cuban independent journalist and former political prisoner, took his life on 4 April in the Spanish city of Las Palmas, in the Canary Islands. Our organization shares the grief of his family, especially his ex-wife and son, who also now live in Spain.

Du Bouchet was freed from a Cuban prison on 7 April 2011 and flew to Spain the next day. Agreeing to go into exile was a condition for his release, as it was for most of the ["Black Spring"](#) political prisoners who were freed during the months prior to Du Bouchet's release.

The onetime head of the independent *Habana Press* agency, Du Bouchet was convicted twice on charges of "disrespect for authority," in 2005 and 2009. He was [the last of many dissident journalists](#) to be released in Cuba, where no journalists are currently detained.

"We do not know his exact reason for doing this, but Albert was very depressed and was really affected by the feeling of being cut off from one's roots that exile causes," Reporters Without Borders was told by **Juan Carlos Herrera Acosta**, a "Black Spring" dissident journalist who now lives in the United States after being sent into exile in Spain in 2010 like Du Bouchet.

"Du Bouchet's reasons for ending his days are his and his alone, but they were clearly linked to the years of suffering he endured as the victim of misfortune, persecution, imprisonment and finally forced exile," Reporters Without Borders said.

["As other dissident journalists told us](#) on arriving in Spain in 2010, being released from prison was not the same as recovering their freedom. The 'definitive exit' stamp in their passports was the final humiliation by regime that tolerates no dissident opinions, indulges in crude propaganda and disowns its own citizens."

Born in Havana, a trained historian and former Communist Party member, Du Bouchet began to dissent from official Cuban history in the course of his work as an historian. He joined the independent journalists in 1996 and took over *Habana Press* in 1999. He was first arrested on 3 December 2000 by State Security police, who seized and destroyed his journalistic material.

The Cuban authorities have still not honoured their international undertakings as regards civil liberties. In particular, they have not yet ratified the two UN conventions on civil and political rights they signed in 2008. This was highlighted yet again during the pope's visit from 26 to 29 March, which was accompanied by a crackdown and blocking of communications.

Reporters Without Borders continues to call for the lifting of the absurd US embargo on Cuba that has been in place since 1962. And it recognizes Cuba's achievements in health and education. But

it also condemns the refusal of many governments to recognize Cuba's violations of civil liberties.
