



THREE YEARS ON, JUSTICE CONTINUES TO BE DENIED:

NO PROGRESS IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE KILLINGS BY POLICE OF CECILIO DÍAZ AND WILLIAM DE JESÚS CHECO.



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Three years have passed since Cecilio Díaz and William de Jesús Checo were killed by the police. Three years with no answers and no justice for their families and for all those outraged by human rights violations by the police in the Dominican Republic.

William de Jesús Checo, a painter and decorator, and bakery worker Cecilio Díaz, were killed by police on 10 October 2009 in Copey, Villa Vásquez, Monte Cristi Province in north-western Dominican Republic. The police claim both men were killed in an exchange of gunfire between gang members and police. According to the police, they were both wanted in relation to the kidnapping of Eduardo Baldera Gómez, a young man who was abducted on 18 September 2009 from the north-eastern coastal town of Nagua.

However, on 27 November 2009 a commission of investigation appointed by the Prosecutor General concluded that: “The large number of gunshots fired at both victims and their trajectory indicated that the alleged exchange of gunfire did not take place and that there was intent to kill the two men.” On the basis of the commission’s conclusions, a tribunal ordered five police officers and a navy officer to be detained pending an investigation into the incident.

The Minister of the Interior and Police dismissed the commission’s conclusions, saying the evidence was not strong enough. The Minister declared that he would ensure that the police officers received the best legal defence available. On 9 January 2010, a court ordered the release of the officers on bail. In March 2010, the President ordered the retirement of a member of the commission of investigation, and promoted two of the officers despite being under investigation for the killings.

In July 2010, lawyers of the families of William de Jesús Checo and Cecilio Díaz lodged a formal complaint with the Office of the Prosecutor of Monte Cristi Province against the Chief of Police, the Director of Criminal Investigations, and other members of the National Police for their involvement in human rights violations during the investigation of the kidnapping of Eduardo Baldera Gómez, including the killings of William de Jesús Checo and Cecilio Díaz. The lawyers were informed by a Prosecutor of the office of the Prosecutor of the Monte Cristi Province that it would be up to the Office of the Prosecutor General to decide how to proceed with the investigation into the case.

In August 2012 a new Prosecutor General was appointed, following the election of a new President of the Republic. However, no steps are known to have been taken in relation to the investigation of the killings of William de Jesús Checo and Cecilio Díaz

Three years after the killings, no officer has been charged with the deaths of William de Jesús Checo and Cecilio Díaz. The families of both men desperately demand justice.

Unfortunately, this case is not isolated. Hundreds of people are killed every year by the Dominican police, many in circumstances suggesting that the killings were unlawful. Although some cases are prosecuted, too many remain unpunished. For more information, please refer to Amnesty International’s report published in October 2011 **“Shut up if you don’t want to be killed- Human Rights Violations by the police in the Dominican Republic”** (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR27/002/2011/en>).

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ACT NOW

WRITE POLITELY TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AUTHORITIES:

- Write to the Prosecutor General requesting the expedition of the investigation while ensuring independence, thoroughness and impartiality;
- Write to the Minister of Interior and Police requesting, in the event that police officers are convicted, that the National Police and the Dominican state must recognize their responsibility and provide full reparations to the families of Cecilio Díaz and William de Jesús Checo.
- Write to the President of the Republic, reminding him that there are a number of cases of human rights violations by the police which remain unpunished, including this one, and that effective and urgent measures have to be taken in order to ensure justice for victims and to prevent repetition of similar human rights violations;

TAKE ACTION WITH US ON TWITTER:

- Follow us on Twitter in English (@AmnestyOnline) or in Spanish (@AmnistiaOnline) and participate in days of action for William de Jesús Checo and Cecilio Díaz from 27 November 2012!

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:

Sr. Francisco Domínguez Brito
Public Prosecutor

Procurador General de la República
Palacio de Justicia, Ave. Jiménez Moya esq. Juan Ventura Simón,
Centro de los Heroes, Constanza, Maimón y Estero Hondo.

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Sr. José Ramón Fadul
Minister of the Interior and Police

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