



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE - COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

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ICJ CONDEMNS SUMMARY EXECUTIONS BY CUBA

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) deplores the summary execution on 11 April of Lorenzo Enrique Copello Castillo, Bárbaro Leodán Sevilla García and Jorge Luis Martínez Isaac, who reportedly participated in the hijacking of a Cuban ferry on 2 April 2003.

The entire range of legal proceedings against the three men, including trial, appeal to the Supreme Court and appeal to the Council of State occurred over a period of several days, after which they were executed by firing squad. The proceedings were carried out in a summary manner, without due process of law.

“Although little is known about the procedures, because of the secretive manner in which they were conducted, this inconceivably narrow time frame in a capital case on its face constitutes a denial of the right to a fair trial under internationally recognised standards,” commented Ian Seiderman, ICJ Legal Adviser.

The three men were reportedly convicted under antiterrorism legislation adopted in 1991. Their execution by the Cuban authorities constitutes but the latest incident within a growing trend among many states to use the fight against terrorism as a pretext to short circuit fundamental human rights obligations.

“Between the continuing arbitrary and unlawful detention of more than 600 persons by the United States in Guantanamo Bay and these executions and recent mass arrests in Cuba of persons for political reasons, the island of Cuba seems of late to be an incubator for gross human rights violations committed in the name of countering terrorism,” said Ian Seiderman.

The ICJ is also deeply disappointed at Cuba’s decision to end a three-year de facto moratorium on the use of the death penalty. The ICJ considers the application of the death penalty to constitute a violation of the right to life and, accordingly, seeks its abolition world-wide.

For more information, please contact Ian Seiderman (41-22-979-3823) or Federico Andreu (41-22-979-3819)

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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