

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 354

Honoring the life of dissident and democracy activist Wilman Villar Mendoza and condemning the Castro regime for the death of Wilman Villar Mendoza.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 26, 2012

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. NELSON of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Honoring the life of dissident and democracy activist Wilman Villar Mendoza and condemning the Castro regime for the death of Wilman Villar Mendoza.

Whereas, on Thursday, January 19, 2012, 31-year-old Cuban dissident Wilman Villar Mendoza died, following a 56-day hunger strike to highlight his arbitrary arrest and the repression of basic human and civil rights in Cuba by the Castro regime;

Whereas, on November 2, 2011, Wilman Villar Mendoza was detained by security forces of the Government of Cuba for participating in a peaceful demonstration in Cuba calling for greater political freedom and respect for human rights;

Whereas Wilman Villar Mendoza was sentenced to 4 years in prison after a hearing that lasted less than 1 hour and during which Wilman Villar Mendoza was neither represented by counsel nor given the opportunity to speak in his defense;

Whereas, on November 25, 2011, Wilman Villar Mendoza was placed in solitary confinement after initiating a hunger strike to protest his unjust trial and imprisonment;

Whereas Wilman Villar Mendoza was a member of the Unión Patriótica de Cuba, a dissident group the Cuban regime considers illegitimate because members express views critical of the regime;

Whereas security forces of the Government of Cuba have harassed Maritza Pelegrino Cabrales, the wife of Villar Mendoza and a member of the Ladies in White (Damas de Blanco), and have threatened to take away her children if she continues to work with the Ladies in White;

Whereas Human Rights Watch, which documented the case of Wilman Villar Mendoza, stated, “Arbitrary arrests, sham trials, inhumane imprisonment, and harassment of dissidents’ families—these are the tactics used to silence critics.”;

Whereas Amnesty International stated, “The responsibility for Wilman Villar Mendoza’s death in custody lies squarely with the Cuban authorities, who summarily judged and jailed him for exercising his right to freedom of expression.”;

Whereas Orlando Zapata Tamayo, another prisoner of conscience jailed after the “Black Spring” crackdown on opposition groups in March 2003, died in prison on February 23, 2010, after a 90-day hunger strike;

Whereas, according to the Cuban Commission on Human Rights, the unrelenting tyranny of the Castro regime has led to more than 4,000 political detentions and arrests in 2011; and

Whereas Cuba is a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council despite numerous documented violations of human rights every year in Cuba: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) condemns the Cuban regime for the death
3 of Wilman Villar Mendoza on January 19, 2011, fol-
4 lowing a hunger strike to protest his incarceration
5 for participating in a peaceful protest and to high-
6 light the plight of the Cuban people;

7 (2) condemns the repression of basic human
8 and civil rights by the Castro regime in Cuba that
9 resulted in more than 4,000 detentions and arrests
10 of activists in 2011;

11 (3) honors the life of Wilman Villar Mendoza
12 and his sacrifice on behalf of the cause of freedom
13 in Cuba;

14 (4) extends condolences to Maritza Pelegrino
15 Cabrales, the wife of Wilman Villar Mendoza, and
16 their children;

17 (5) urges the United Nations Human Rights
18 Council to suspend Cuba from its position on the
19 Council;

1 (6) urges the General Assembly of the United
2 Nations to vote to suspend the rights of membership
3 of Cuba to the Human Rights Council;

4 (7) urges the international community to con-
5 demn the harassment and repression of peaceful ac-
6 tivists by the Cuban regime; and

7 (8) calls on the governments of all democratic
8 countries to insist on the release of all political pris-
9 oners and the cessation of violence, arbitrary arrests,
10 and threats against peaceful demonstrators in Cuba,
11 including threats against Maritza Pelegrino Cabrales
12 and members of the Ladies in White (Damas de
13 Blanco).

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