

Cuba Pardons Thousands of Prisoners on Eve of Pope's Visit



Havana, September 11 (RHC)-- On the occasion of the upcoming visit by Pope Francis, the Cuban Council of State agreed to pardon 3,522 prisoners. According to a report in this morning's edition of Granma newspaper, the decision was taken in consideration of the nature of their crimes, the inmates' behavior in prison, their prison terms and reasons of health.

Among those to be released from jail are persons older than 60, young people under 20 years of age with no previous criminal records, persons with chronic diseases, women and some who are close to completing their terms for parole, as well as others who are serving their terms while working in open conditions, and foreigners whose country of origin guarantees their repatriation.

The article in Granma newspaper explains that with very few exceptions, those punished for murder, homicide, rape, corruption of minors, theft, drug trafficking, robbery with violence and intimidation were not included nor were those who are imprisoned for crimes against the security of the state.

The decision will be implemented in 72 hours after the announcement and in the case of the foreigners, the Foreign Ministry will coordinate with corresponding embassies in Cuba the steps to be taken for the repatriation of their citizens who were benefited by the action.

Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry will coordinate with the ministries of Labor and Social Security and Public Health, and with provincial governments all necessary actions for the social reintegration and medical attention of all released inmates requiring such assistance.

The Cuban government also released prisoners on the occasion of the visits here by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI.

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