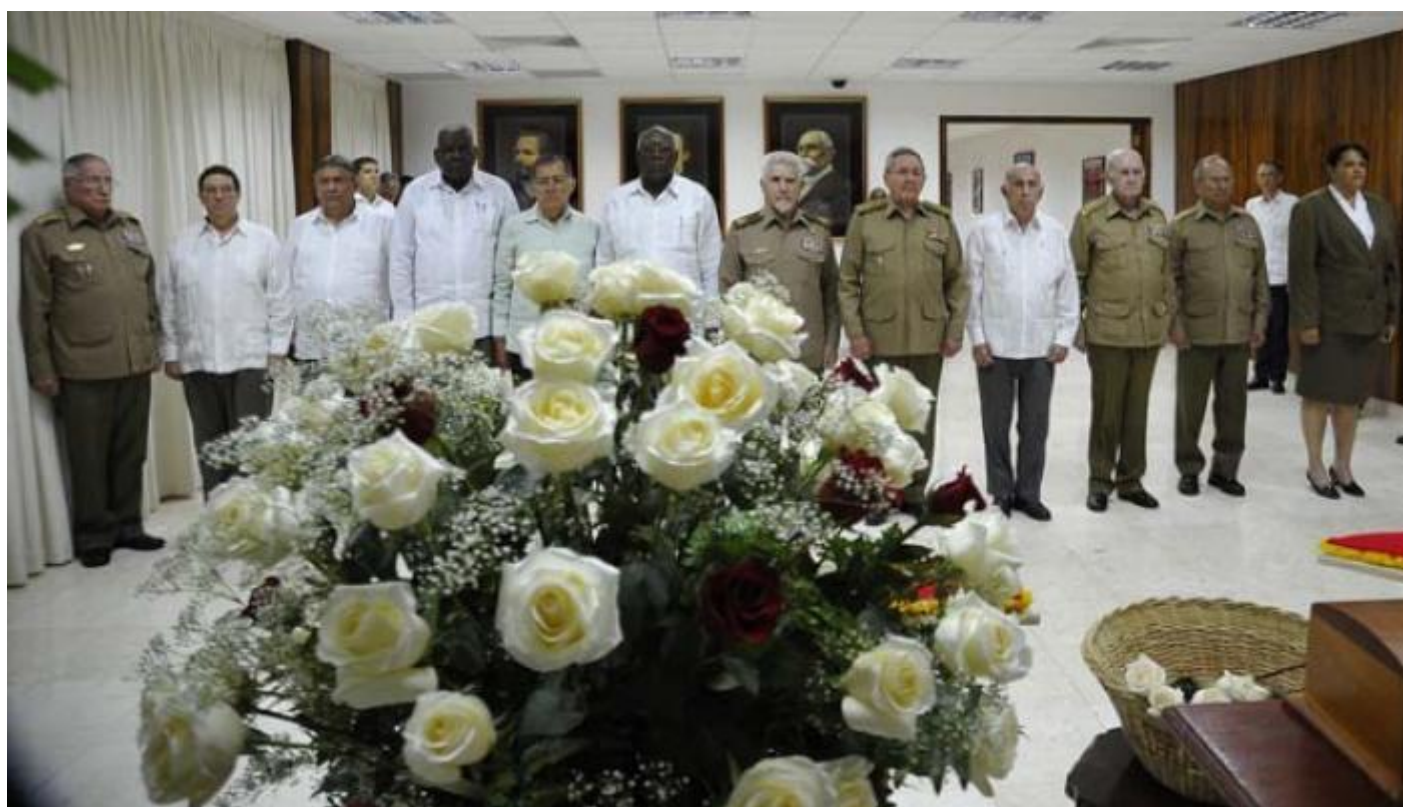


Raul Castro Pays Tribute to Cuban Heroine Melba Hernandez



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Havana, March 11 (RHC)-- Cuban President Raul Castro paid tribute on Monday evening to Cuban Heroine Melba Hernandez, who passed away on Sunday in Havana.

Along members of the Political Bureau of Cuba's Communist Party and relatives of the former combatant in the 1953 Moncada Assault, Raul Castro laid a white rose in front of the small wooden urn containing the ashes of Melba, flanked by the Cuban flag with a black ribbon as a sign of mourning. Many of the distinctions she was granted her during her memorable life, including that of Heroine of the Republic of Cuba, were displayed.

After paying a minute of silence, Raul expressed his condolences to Melba's relatives who gathered for the solemn and simple ceremony.

The mortal remains of the Cuban heroine will be transferred to the Santa Ifigenia Cemetery in eastern Santiago de Cuba, where the people will pay homage. Melba will be laid to rest along with the remains of her compatriots who were killed during assault of the Moncada Garrison in 1953.

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