

Cuban Five Granted International Human Rights Award



Washington, April 5 (RHC), -- The five Cuban anti-terrorist fighters, serving long sentences in U.S. jails, have been granted the People's Choice Human Rights Award 2014, the rights organization Global Exchange announced.

Gerardo Hernández , Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, known internationally as the Cuban Five, were chosen for the award, among many other nominees for their outstanding work for justice and human rights, read an statement by the NGO.

"The Cuban Five are heroes of the Cuban people, known by many across the world, yet their case is almost unknown in the United States," said the Global Exchange communiqué.

The organization recalls that these men, two of which, Fernando González and René González are already back in Cuba after completing their prison term, were arrested by U.S. authorities in 1998 under forged charges.

“These five men were sent from Cuba to investigate and report on right-wing groups based in Miami planning attacks against the Cuban government and people,” reads the statement, adding that “their presence in the U.S. was in response to several attacks in Cuba for which these U.S.-based groups claimed responsibility, including bomb attacks at many popular tourist hotels and restaurants in Havana.”

The Global Exchange document also denounced the trial for the Cuban Five as partial, having been conducted in the U.S. city of Miami, a known bastion of anti-Cuban extremists.

“The men received lengthy prison sentences, and when jailed, were kept in isolation for extended periods of time,” it said.

In addition, Golbal Exchange highlights that the imprisonment of the Five has been deemed arbitrary by a United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in 2005, and their arrest, trial, verdict, and sentencing has been protested and criticized by activists, Nobel Laureates, EU Parliamentarians, and prominent characters including the former Chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana and many others around the world.

The human rights award will be officially presented on May 8th at a Human Rights Awards 2014 gala to be held in San Francisco, California.

Other personalities previously honored with this distinction include the artist and human rights advocate Harry Belafonte, Paul Farmer, physician and activist working in Haiti, Alice Walker, author and activist for human rights and peace, and Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan writer and journalist.

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