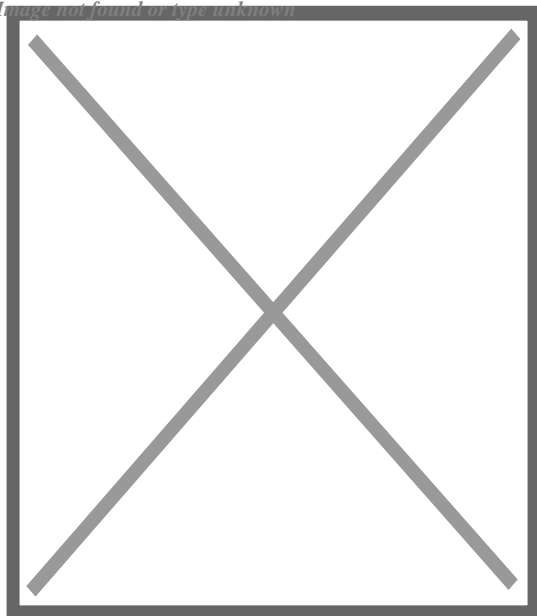


In the memory of the people

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The Five

By María Josefina Arce

June 8 is engraved in the memory of the people. On that day in 2001, five Cubans were unjustly convicted of espionage, who, risking their lives, monitored in U.S. territory the terrorist actions of anti-Cuban groups against Cuba and its citizens.

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero and René González were victims of a long and rigged judicial process in the city of Miami, a safe haven for terrorist groups of Cuban origin and where they should never have been tried.

Since their arrest in September 1998, their human rights were violated. For 17 months they were locked up in solitary confinement cells. Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanuevo, wives of Gerardo and René, respectively, were constantly denied visas to visit their spouses.

The Five Heroes, as they are known internationally, never endangered the security of the United States, nor harmed the values of the American people or their integrity.

However, as they denounced in a letter to the Cuban people in June 2001, the perpetrators of criminal actions against Cuba, who have caused pain and suffering to many Cuban families, walked freely through U.S. territory with the complicity of Washington.

A reality that the United States has never been able to hide. There we have the case of the notorious terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, mastermind of the 1976 mid-flight explosion of a Cuban commercial airliner with 73 people on board. Posada Carriles died peacefully in 2018 in the city of Miami.

Without evidence to support the accusation, Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando and René were sentenced to severe and unjust prison terms, including life sentences.

The historic leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro, promised in a speech to the people that the five heroes would return to their homeland. A broad solidarity movement accompanied the Cubans in their struggle for the return of their compatriots.

Solidarity Committees were formed all over the world in favor of the release of the five anti-terrorist fighters, who became an example and symbol of the resistance, dignity and determination of Cubans to defend their homeland and the revolution.

Actions in favor of Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando and René took place throughout Cuba. Actions that counted on the support of numerous people around the world, lovers of peace and truth.

There have been many condemnations of the detention of the Five Heroes by personalities from all spheres of social life, peoples, governments and international organizations. In 2005, for example, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the UN Commission on Human Rights described the arrest, trial and imprisonment of the Cubans as arbitrary.

Gerardo, Antonio, René, Fernando and Ramón finally returned to their homeland as Fidel had promised. Their return was undoubtedly a victory for the Cuban people and for all the people throughout the world who fought for their liberation.

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