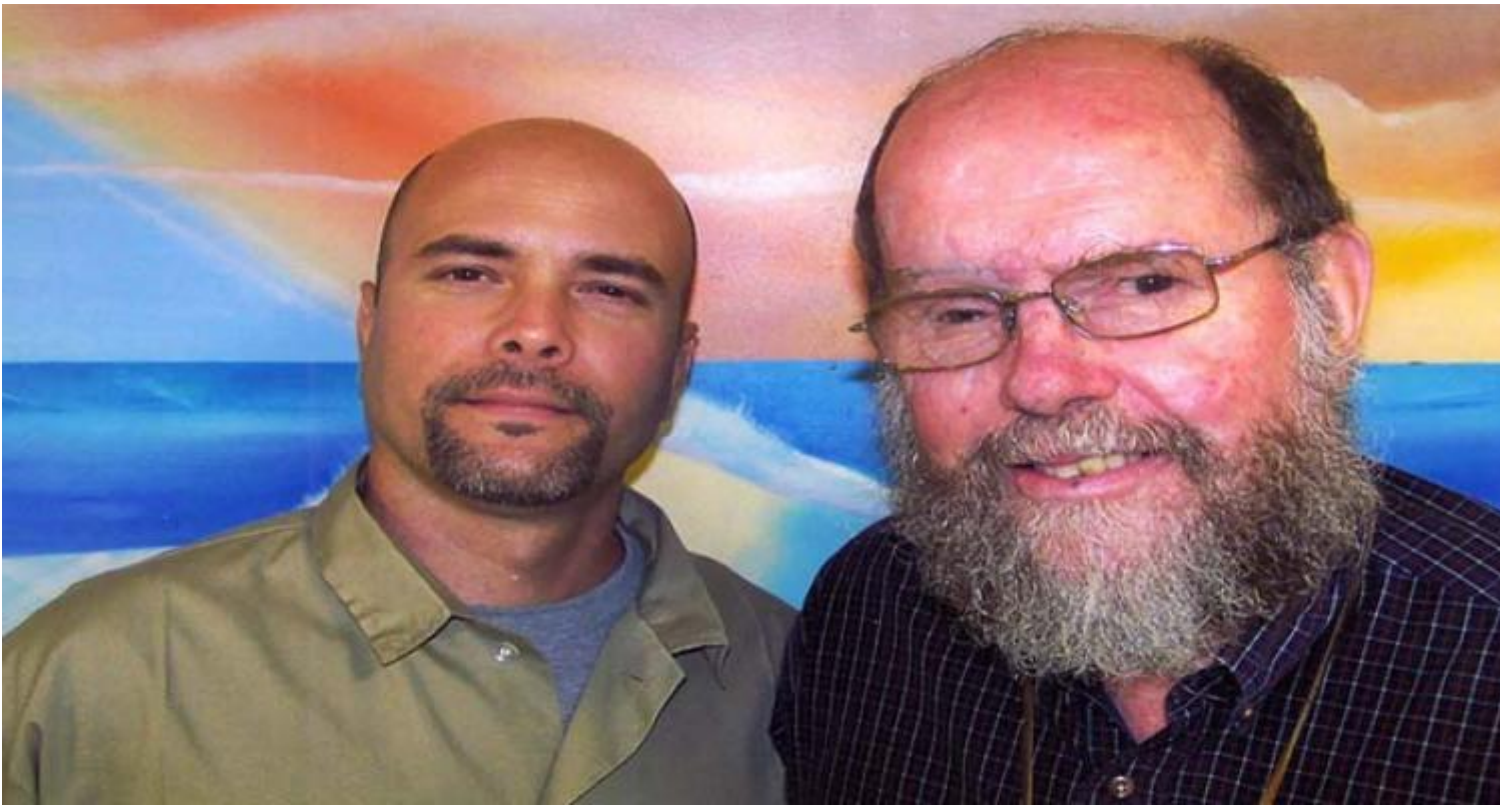


South African Priest Visits Cuban Anti-terrorist in U.S. Prison



Pretoria, September 30 (PL-RHC)-- Alan Michael Lapsley, South African Anglican priest and social justice activist, held his ninth visit with Cuban anti-terrorist Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, imprisoned at Victorville prison in California.

Gerardo has been jailed for 16 years and is serving two life sentences. Despite the long, hard and solitary years of confinement with other individuals who have committed terrible crimes, he looked very good and has a great sense of humor, Lapsley highlighted.

The priest said Hernández Nordelo remains strong thanks to the fact that his wife, Adriana, his relatives and entire Cuban nation are united in the struggle for his freedom and the freedom of Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero.

Gerardo is also more cheerful for the constant flow of letters with messages of solidarity he receives from all parts of the world, sometimes he receives 80 letters a day, Lapsley told Prensa Latina news agency.

"I visited Cuba two weeks ago, so we had a lot to talk about. We spent three hours talking to each other. I had the opportunity to tell Gerardo that the concern for the freedom of the Five is the major source of unity

in today's Cuba," Lapsley stated.

Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando González and René González, known worldwide as The Five, were detained in 1998 and in an unfair trial in Miami, sentenced to serve long life imprisonment, 19 and 15 years in jail.

Fernando González and René González served their sentences and returned to Cuba with their families.

International figures, civilian associations and government delegates have supported the Five heroes who were only controlling activities by extremist groups and trying to anticipate their actions or gather evidence about possible attacks against Cuba.

"I reiterated to Gerardo that there is a world consensus in favor of the release of the three Cuban anti-terrorists still imprisoned, equal to the universal demand that took place once in favor of Nelson Mandela," Father Michael said.

"Gerardo and I talked about everything under the sun: about today's Cuba, today's South Africa, about our families and the challenges the human family are facing. We agreed that none of us feel the slightest remorse for the big decisions we take in life," the priest pointed out.

We agreed that the release of the Five will become a reality when political pressure from all over the world increases over the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama, Lapsley underlined.

Father Michael said he wished Gerardo a quick return to the side of his beloved Adriana on the Malecon of Havana.

Alan Michael Lapsley was born 2 June 1949 in New Zealand and ordained to the priesthood in Australia where he joined the religious order the Society of the Sacred Mission.

When exiled in Zimbabwe in 1990, Lapsley was sent a letter bomb by the Civil Cooperation Bureau, a covert outfit of the apartheid security forces. He lost both hands and the sight in one eye in the blast, and was seriously burnt.

On his return to South Africa in 1992, Father Michael helped to start the association Friends of Cuba and later became its first national president. He has been awarded the Cuban Friendship Medal by the Cuban Council of State.

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