

Dissident files criminal complaint against Cuba

A Cuban opposition leader said Tuesday August, 26th she has filed a criminal complaint against the communist government for airing on state television evidence collected by bugging her phone, going through her garbage and secretly filming her.

The evidence was used by Cuba's government to build a case that Martha Beatriz Roque allegedly took cash brought to the island by the former top U.S. diplomat in Havana.

Roque said that while Cuba's constitution allows state security agents to spy on citizens, it prohibits them from making public the evidence they collect.

In May, government television and newspapers dedicated three days to presenting e-mails, photos, letters, videos and audio tapes which claims to prove that then U.S. Interests Section chief Michael Parmly personally carried funds to Roque, who allegedly passed them on to other dissidents and activists.

In a Tuesday news conference, Roque claimed that much of the evidence presented three months ago was taken out of context or fabricated, but she repeatedly refused to confirm or deny whether she took money carried by Parmly or to say if any cash came from a group linked to Alvarez.

"I don't have an answer for that," Roque said. She added that she would not address the charges unless Cuban authorities allow her to appear on the government's nightly round-table program, which publicized the case against her in May.

Roque is an economist and former government official. She was among 75 opposition leaders and activists charged with working with Washington to undermine the communist system and sentenced to lengthy prison sentences in 2003. She was eventually released on medical parole.

She said she filed the complaint Monday with Cuba's Ministry of Justice, charging top officials, including Randy Alonso, host of the government round-table program, with criminal conduct.

Source: Miami Herald

Cuba detained leading punk rocker

The Cuban authorities have arrested one of the island's leading punk rock musicians, Gorki Aguila of band Porno Para Ricardo as the group was preparing to record their latest album.

He was originally facing charges of dangerousness. Under Cuba's penal code, the charge covers behaviors contrary "to the standards of communist morality" which could lead to a jail sentence (1 to 4 years in prison). On the end he was fined 30 USD for public disorder for playing his band's music too loud.

It is believed that pressure from international community had played a key role in the last-minute decision by prosecutors to drop the more serious charge.

Band was formed about 10 years ago. The group's lyrics are often critical of life on the communist island. Gorki's voice has been among the loudest and most defiant of Cuba's youth. His band, Porno Para Ricardo, has made a name for itself by fearlessly defying persistent censorship with lyrics like these:

Miren como nos hablan de libertad
cuando ellos nos privan en realidad.
Miren como nos hablan de paraíso
cuando nos lluevan penas como granizo.

(Translation)

Look at how they tell us about liberty
When they deprive us in reality.
Look at how they tell us about paradise
When sentences rain on us like hail.

This move serves as yet another example of Cuban authorities' disregard for human rights and free expression.

Sources: CNN, BBC News