

ALBIO SIRES
13TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
WESTERN HEMISPHERE
EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
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SUBCOMMITTEES:
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
RAILROADS, PIPELINES, AND
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3013

February 17, 2010

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515
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260 HIGH STREET, 1ST FLOOR
PERTH AMBOY, NJ 08861
(732) 442-0610

Ambassador Susan Rice
Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations
United States Mission to the United Nations
140 East 45th Street
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Ambassador Rice,

I write to express my deep concern for the well-being and life of Orlando Zapata Tamayo, a prisoner of conscience being held by the Cuban regime. Since his initial arrest, Orlando Zapata Tamayo has been serving a prison term that the regime continually increases. For over two months, he has been on a hunger strike to protest the inhumane conditions of prisons and the ongoing oppression by the Cuban regime. Due to the hunger strike, his health is extremely poor, and I am alarmed that this admirable political activist is near death.

Orlando Zapata Tamayo was first arrested on March 20, 2003 for participating in a hunger strike to demand the release of Dr. Oscar Biscet and other prisoners of conscience. It is my understanding that since then he has been indicted multiple times with numerous increases to his sentence. According to information we have received, Mr. Zapata has been on a hunger strike since December 3, 2009 in protest the abusive actions of the Cuban authorities and his recent transfer from the Provincia del Holguín prison to a prison in Camagüey.

In light of these concerns, the regime's increasing repression, and considering Mr. Zapata's near-death condition, I would like to request that the United Nations Human Rights Council intervene in any way possible to protect the life of Orlando Zapata Tamayo.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

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February 17, 2010

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
U.S. Secretary of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

I write to express my deep concern for the well-being and life of Orlando Zapata Tamayo, a prisoner of conscience being held by the Cuban regime. Since his initial arrest, Orlando Zapata Tamayo has been serving a prison term that the regime continually increases. For over two months, he has been on a hunger strike to protest the inhumane conditions of prisons and the ongoing oppression by the Cuban regime. Due to the hunger strike, his health is extremely poor, and I am alarmed that this admirable political activist is near death.

Orlando Zapata Tamayo was first arrested on March 20, 2003 for participating in a hunger strike to demand the release of Dr. Oscar Biscet and other prisoners of conscience. It is my understanding that since then he has been indicted multiple times with numerous increases to his sentence. According to information I have received, Mr. Zapata has been on a hunger strike since December 3, 2009 in protest the abusive actions of the Cuban authorities and his recent transfer from the Provincia del Holguín prison to a prison in Camagüey.

In light of these concerns, the regime's increasing repression, and considering Mr. Zapata's near-death condition, I would like to request, within the applicable rules and guidelines, that the U.S. Department of State promptly examine and monitor the safety and health of Orlando Zapata Tamayo.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Albio Sires
Member of Congress