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First Lady Michelle Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Berlin, March 8, 2010
International Women's Day 2010

Dear Mrs. Obama,

**Re: This year's International Women's Day;
Denial of Visas to *Adriana Pérez O'Connor* (wife of *Gerardo Hernández Nordelo*) and *Olga Salanueva Arango* (wife of *René González Schwerert*),
both husbands being two of the so-called „Cuban“ or „Miami Five“,
granting multiple visas to all members of the families of the Five**

Five Cuban nationals, *Fernando González Llort*, *René González Schwerert*, *Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez*, *Gerardo Hernández Nordelo* and *Ramón Labañino Salazar*, are serving lengthy prison sentences in the USA. We are – in company with many others - convinced that they are innocent and should be freed immediately. They harmed no one. They did not endanger the national security of the U.S. and they did not even intend it. In the last analysis they have been sentenced for defending their native country Cuba against terrorism outgoing from US territory.

On that very March 8, the International Women's Day, we want to draw your attention to this case and we appeal to you in your capacity as a wife and mother hoping for your sympathy and understanding. Since 1998, when the five men had been arrested, wives are waiting for the return of their husbands, mothers for the return of their sons and children for that of their fathers.

In the meantime, as long as the five men have to stay in prison, they have the right, guaranteed by national and international law, to be visited by members of their families. But US authorities persistently violate this right: the families of all five prisoners have experienced considerable delays in being granted visas to the USA which they need for visitation purposes and – much more critical, more inhuman, more unlawful – the above mentioned *Olga Salanueva* and *Adriana Pérez* have been denied visa applications for more or less ten years. *Olga* saw her husband, sentenced to 15 years in prison, for the last time in the year 2000, *Adriana*, whose husband is serving two life sentences plus 15 years, in the year 1998.

Denying prisoners visits from members of their families is without any doubt unnecessarily punitive and contrary to standards for human treatment of prisoners and state's obligations to protect family life. In this context we refer to Article 10 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the USA have ratified, on the Human Rights Committee's General Comment 21 to Article 10, the UN Body of Principles for the Protection of all Persons under any Form of Detention or Imprisonment and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Dear Mrs. Obama, we trust in your sense of justice (you are known as an excellent jurist), of humanity and of solidarity. Therefore we urge you to use your reputation and your influence as the First Lady of the USA so that Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez are granted as soon as possible temporary visas on humanitarian grounds so that they may visit their husbands in prisons in the USA. Besides that, we urge that in future visas are granted to the families without undue delay.

Copies of this letter we send to the Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and the Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano.

Respectfully and sincerely yours,
By order

Günter Belchous
(Günter Belchous)

2 Anlagen