

# URGENT ALERT

## LGBT ACTIVIST LEANNES IMBERT DETAINED IN CUBA



*Tuesday, September 11, 2012.* This morning LGBT activist Leannes Imbert Acosta was detained in Havana by State Security (political police) and taken in a white LADA car to an undisclosed location. She was about to leave for the CENESEX (Center for Sexual Education) to deliver for its director, Mariela Castro, copies of materials prepared for a special exhibit planned for tomorrow, September 12<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Imbert is also scheduled to participate by telephone conference next Saturday September 15 in a panel hosted by the New York Public Library titled “LGBT Lives in Contemporary Cuba.” (See [www.schomburgcenter.eventbrite.com](http://www.schomburgcenter.eventbrite.com).)

Ms. Imbert is National Coordinator of PLAC LGBT, an umbrella organization of 12 LGBT groups in Cuba founded in June 2012. In 2007 she founded the Cuban Movement for Homosexual Liberation (MCLH), which became the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights Observatory (LGBT OBCUD). These groups are extra-official, as all independent organizations in Cuba are banned by the state.

The scheduled multimedia exhibit documents the UMAP (Military Units to Aid Production) concentration/work camps created in Cuba in the early 1960s to hold gays and other “anti-social elements” considered politically undesirable. International correspondents, diplomats, and members of Cuba’s outlawed civil society have been invited to the show, which aims to educate the public and to contribute to Mariela Castro’s statements that what happened at UMAP camps will be investigated. But, Cuba’s State Security has been actively disrupting the event and it unclear if an alternative location can be found or if the event coordinator, Ms. Imbert, will be present.

Ms. Imbert is currently an independent journalist with CUBANET, which informed almost immediately of her detention (see report in Spanish at <http://www.cubanet.org/noticias/detenida-hoy-activista-lgtb-leannes-imbirt/>). She holds a degree in Special Education, but is unable to obtain work in her field due to her activities. Although her organizations are expressly not political and are centered on advancing LGBT rights, she has endured repeated harassment and repression from Cuban authorities.

Elizabeth García, Ms. Imbert’s partner, provided Cuba Archive details of today’s arrest and recent events surrounding the planned exhibit.

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