

Cubans executed or assassinated by the Castro regime for attempting to flee

Article 215 of Cuba's Penal Code forbids Cuba's citizens from leaving the island without prior government authorization. Attempting to do so is punishable with years of prison. Thousands of Cubans have paid for foiled escape attempts with jail and some are currently serving long prison sentences for this reason. Many have paid with their lives, killed by Cuban authorities. Many who are feared lost at sea may have actually been executed by Cuban Border Guard (by shootings or sinking of vessels).

Selected cases of deaths in exit attempts

MINORS: SELECTED CASES

Owen Delgado Temprana. Age 15.

3-23-81. Villa Marista, Havana. Assassinated. Cuban Security agents stormed the Embassy of Ecuador, where he had taken refuge with his family. Taken to State Security headquarters, he was beaten to death.

Loamis González Manzini. Age16.

7-1-93. Cojimar beach, Havana province. Assassinated. Shot by Cuban border guards while swimming towards a boat that had gone to Cuba to pick him up.

Three Lazo children.

1971. Caribbean Sea. Assassinated with their mother. Disappeared after their boat was sunk by a Cuban Navy vessel. Their mother was devoured by sharks, their father survived and died in prison several years later under suspicious circumstances.

Angelo López Rabí. Age15, and Nelson Rodríguez, Age 18.

1971. La Cabaña Fortress, Havana. Executed by firing squad after an unsuccessful attempt to hijack a Cubana Airline flight to flee Cuba.

Eusebio Silva. Age 17.

12-8-1963. Assassinated by Cuban authorities while trying to reach the U.S. Naval Base at Guantánamo Bay

Alexis E. Márquez Ríos. Age 6.

10-22-99. Cuban waters, 12 km. North of Havana. Assassinated with his mother. Drowned when their boat was rammed and sunk by a Cuban Coast Guard vessel.

Orlando Travieso Jr. Age17.

3-91. Cuban territorial waters, north of Havana. Assassinated. Killed by machine gun fire from a Cuban Navy vessel while attempting to flee the island.

“13 de marzo” Tugboat Massacre, July 13,1994.

37 people, including 11 children, drowned when the Cuban Coast Guard sank their hijacked tugboat.

Ángel René Abreu, age 3; Giselle Borjes, age 4; Juan Mario Gutiérrez, age 11; Caridad Leyva, age 4; Hellen Martínez, age 6 months; Mayulís Méndez, age 17; José Carlos Nicle, age 3; Yousell Pérez, age 11; Yasser Perodín, age 11; Xicdy Rodríguez, age 2; Eliecer Suárez, age 11.

*See full account of the Tubgoat massacre at www.CubaArchive.org.

ADULTS: SELECTED CASES

3 executed 4/11/2003: **Lorenzo Enrique Copello Castillo, Barbaro Leodan Sevilla García, and Jorge Luis Martínez Isaac.**

On April 2nd a group of ten hijacked a ferry with fifty passengers in an attempt to flee Cuba for the United States. A standoff of one day ended without violence, although the hijackers were reportedly armed with one pistol and several knives. On April 8th, the three ringleaders, Copello Castillo, Sevilla García and Martínez Isaac, were sentenced to death for acts of terrorism in secret summary trials, absent due process of law. Less than three days later, they were executed by firing squad, their families notified only after the bodies had been buried under cement. Seven alleged co-conspirators received prison sentences ranging from life to three years.

Three Protestant Ministers executed 8-16-1963. Reverends José Durado, Pablo Rodríguez and Antonio González. The three Protestant ministers left Cuba by boat as part of a group of nineteen. They arrived at Anguilla Key, Bahamas, where the Cuba Coast Guard staged a raid and returned them to Cuba. They were swiftly executed for leaving the country illegally.

Miguel Guerra Mora, Daniel Cosme Ramos and Federico Martí Jiménez, assassinated by Border Guards. Guerra Mora, a 36 year-old father of two, was a dredging technician awaiting the right moment for his escape. On May 19, 1991, he, a fellow worker and a friend commanded a boat at his workplace at the port of Palo Alto in Ciego de Avila. They were never heard of again. His family searched for them desperately, contacting neighboring countries. After five years, a Cuban Border Guard took pity of them and confidentially told them they had been machine gunned down for attempting to flee. (*See Case Profile at www.cubaarchive.org/version_espanol/articles/44/1/Miguel-Mariano-Guerra-Mora)

The Vatican Case: Three brothers executed, Jan. 2, 1981 at La Cabaña Fortress, Havana.

Cipriano (Age 21), Eugenio (Age 25), and Ventura (Age 19) García-Marín Thompson.

The three García-Marín brothers were Jehova's Witnesses, who are strongly persecuted in Cuba. At least one had served political imprisonment. They had received several warnings under Cuba's "dangerousness" law and had been desperately seeking refuge.

On December 3, 1980. together with two men and three women, they pushed their way into the Vatican Embassy ("Nunciatura") in Havana, requesting asylum. Hours later, a team of the Interior Ministry's Elite Special Troops burst into the complex and captured them. Accused of killing a Cuban worker at the embassy, they were told they had been tried and sentenced to death. The others, including relatives who were not part of the raid, were sentenced to prison terms of 15 to 25 years, but released some years early after the case received international attention.

Four weeks later, the brother were taken from their prison cells in the middle of the night and presumably executed. The mother served several years in political prison and died in 1992 still clamoring for her sons' bones.

Cuban authorities sustain the brothers were armed with a pistol, which witnesses deny. The embassy worker allegedly killed in the raid was an employee of the Cuban government agency Cubalse and reported to have been an agent. Subsequent investigations revealed he was living in Havana, having staged his injuries with fake blood to play his part in the raid.

Documented assassinations by Cuban Border Guard in exit attempts at the U.S. Naval Base at Guatanamo.

Francisco Aguila Galano, 1965; Raúl Atala Lauda, 1966; Luis Beltrán, 1982; Pedro Barana, 1966; Manuel Castro Blanes, 1968; Remberto Brausen, 1959; Humberto Castro Ramirez, 1968; Carlos M. Céspedes, 1966; René Gómez Cruz, 1967; Armando García Valdés, 1967; Genoveva Guinan, 1988; Nelson López, 1966; Iskander Maleras Pedraza, 1994 (*See Case Profile in www.CubaArchive.org); Reyton Larey Mendoza, 1994; Alexander Mustafat, 1994; Eduardo Ramos 1990; Rubén y Otoniel Rey Terrero, 1993; Daniel Rodríguez Santos, 1965; Alberto Rosalba Arza, 1963; Victor Rosalba Arza, 1963; Luis Serret, 1982; José Silva Cruz, 1960; Margarita Yero, 1995; Manuel Whitaker, 1993.

Note: Theodore Scotese, Commander at Camp Bulkeley on the Naval Station at Guantánamo Bay in 1968, confirms that Cuban border guards stationed around the base had orders to shoot to kill to prevent people from fence-jumping. The now retired former officer reports that U.S. government records are classified.

The Canimar River Massacre: 56 people, including 4 children.

July 6, 1980.

The Canimar river flows into Matanzas bay, near Varadero beach. In 1980, a tourist excursion service was inaugurated on the "XX Aniversario," to navigate five miles along the river with 100 passengers.

On July 6, 1980, the boat was hijacked by three youngsters seeking to take it to the United States –Ramón Calveiro León (15) and the brothers Silvio Aguila Yanes (18) and Sergio Aguila Yanes (19), a sergeant in the Cuban Armed Forces who had secured firearms for the escape. They commanded the vessel amid screams of approval by the passengers. The boat's security guard shot at them, who wounded him. Concerned for his wellbeing, they placed him and a passenger who did not want to leave on a boat with a local fisherman. Once on shore, the three alerted authorities.

Julián Rizo Alvarez, Secretary of the Communist Party for Matanzas province, commanded a chase. Two high-speed Cuban Navy boats were dispatched with orders to prevent the escape, sinking the boat if necessary. They opened fire, the youngsters fired back, and several passengers were killed or wounded. A Cuban Air Force plane then

opened fire on the boat, leaving more dead and wounded on the bloodied deck.

The "XX Aniversario" was very close to international waters when a huge boat commandeered by Rizo rammed and sank it. Surviving passengers were thrown into the water, soon contending with sharks attracted by the blood.

The toll of the disaster was 56 victims: eleven bodies recovered and forty-five missing at sea, including four children. The Cuban government sustains that the boat was accidentally sunk when waves forced a collision. It did not allow communal funerals for the victims. The ten survivors were ordered to keep silence and to never gather in groups of more than two of them present. For years, government agents monitored their activities. They and victims' relatives were offered gifts of televisions and appliances usually reserved for high government officials.

The Cuban government claims Sergio Aguila Yanes committed suicide. Other reports indicate he was pulled from the ocean and never seen again. Silvio Aguila Yanes is serving a 30-year prison sentence in Havana. Witnesses report he has been subjected to psychiatric torture with large doses of psychotropic drugs. 15 year-old Roberto Calveiro served time in prison but reportedly was released and lives in exile.

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