



## Psychiatric abuse in revolutionary Cuba

May 21, 2021

Although in 1986 Cuba became a party to the *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, which it ratified in 1995, the Cuban revolutionary regime has regularly confined mentally sane individuals considered threats to “state security” in psychiatric institutions and used psychotropic drugs and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) on them to obtain information, punish, demoralize, coerce, subdue, terrorize, and cause psychological damage. Medical doctors and other health workers, following orders from the State Security apparatus, administer and oversee the abuses, which have extreme and lasting effects on the victims.

### A history of psychiatric abuse against political dissidents

Generally speaking, the systematic abuse of psychiatry for political purposes dates to the USSR in the late 1950s and early 1960s, although psychiatric hospitalization of dissidents goes back to Czarist times in Russia. After it became a signature human rights’ issue in the 1970s, the Soviets withdrew from the World Psychiatric Association at the 1983 World Congress of Psychiatry in Vienna rather than being expelled. (They were able to return conditionally in 1989.) The abuse of psychiatry was also systematic in Communist Romania and, during the first decade of the 21st century, it became clear that it was also occurring in Communist China.<sup>1</sup> Although it has been denounced in Communist Cuba since the 1960s, Cuba’s enormous and effective propaganda and influence apparatus has kept this issue mostly absent from international public scrutiny.

Eduardo Prida,<sup>2</sup> who worked as a psychologist for Cuba’s Ministry of the Interior and Armed Forces, explains that Cuba adopted the Soviet model of psychiatric torture from the KGB since the early years of the revolutionary regime that came to power in January 1959. He knew the first Cuban officers who in the 1960s trained in Moscow at the Lubyanka (KGB) prison and at the Ministry of the Interior’s Academy, NKVD. Eventually, Cuba developed its own curriculum on “Operative Psychology,” the methodology used to psychologically destabilize and destroy prisoners who had committed infractions against state security.<sup>3</sup>

Cuba’s Ministry of the Interior (MININT) and the former Ministry for State Security (Stasi) —the political police of the former German Democratic Republic— had diverse collaborations that included joint efforts in the field of psychology and psychiatry.<sup>4</sup> The Stasi had a “Department of Operative Psychology” specialized in operational procedures, interrogation techniques, and proscription methods —some of which is subsumed in the Stasi term *Zersetzung* (decomposition of personalities).<sup>5</sup> Documents recovered from the Stasi archives include a 1981 list of 16 drugs requested by MININT that includes LSD, cocaine, methadone, and barbiturates.<sup>6</sup> There is evidence of instructions, starting in particular in 1977, for Cuban and German psychiatrists to counter “enemy propaganda intended to defame Soviet psychiatry” by directing influence and “political work” on Western colleagues, especially “progressives” within the Committee of the World Psychiatric Association.<sup>7</sup> In a letter to the Stasi, Cuba’s Colonel Lorenzo Hernando Caldeiro writes that the fundamental objective of “exchanging criteria and experiences on psychology” was to “use these branches of science in the

fight against the enemy” and confirms an agreement to send Cuban psychologists to several institutions in Germany as part of the 1988 “Exchange Work Plan.”

A review of reported cases of psychiatric abuse in Cuba reveals that —although there are a few reported in the 1960s— MININT systematized psychiatric techniques to diffuse political opposition from the late 1970s into the early 1990s, using them much more selective thereafter.

In March 1988, Amnesty International (AI) was allowed to visit the infamous Carbó Serviá ward of Havana’s Psychiatric Hospital, Mazorra, to investigate allegations that political prisoners had been sent to state psychiatric institutions, where they were mistreated and kept in unhygienic and dangerous conditions. AI reports that a Mazorra official denied the existence of a second forensic ward, the Castellanos ward, and denied them a visit, although this was where prisoners were allegedly kept in harsh conditions as punishment.<sup>8</sup>

In 1991, Cuba Archive’s co-founder, the late Armando Lago, PhD, co-authored the book *The Politics of Psychiatry in Revolutionary Cuba*.<sup>9</sup> The scholarly work, which is regrettably out of print, reached the international scientific and human rights community. (In 2008, the Cuban Democratic Directory published a report in Spanish on torture in Cuba, which is available online, that incorporated a section on the use of psychiatry based on that work.<sup>10</sup>) Brown and Lago profiled numerous cases and provided extensive witness testimonies of unspeakable cruelty. They paint a traumatizing picture of dangerously unsanitary conditions, beatings and rapes at the hands of guards, officers, or criminally insane inmates, the use of criminally insane inmates as orderlies, and excessive doses of psychotropic drugs, at times mixed in with the food or forced with beatings. The authors cite horrifying testimonies of torture in the form of unnecessary electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), systematically delivered without anesthesia or muscle relaxants —at times the electrodes attached to the genitals— to patients laid on a wet cement floor “often covered with the urine, vomit and excrement of those who had preceded them.”<sup>11</sup> One victim reported that the electroshocks were administered by a common prisoner with no professional training and often “given to patients on a whim, sometimes as entertainment, sometimes as punishment.”<sup>12</sup> The ECT often produced short term memory loss and other lasting effects.

The imputed crimes on the victims documented in Brown and Lago’s work were enemy propaganda, attempted “illegal” exit from the country, contempt, foreign currency exchange, clandestine printing, taking photos without a license, illicit association, painting graffiti, chanting anti-regime slogans, refusing to provide State Security with private medical records, refusal to serve in the Armed Forces, and the unauthorized killing of the victim’s own cow to consume as food. The objective was to punish, intimidate, and render the victim powerless against an all-powerful state.

Drugs such as Sodium Pentothal, “truth serum” were already used on certain political prisoners since the 1960s.<sup>13</sup> In Brown and Lago’s work, phenothiazines were reported as the most commonly used. In the early 1990s, a high executive of a major U.S. pharmaceutical company confidentially told Cuba Archive’s Executive Director that his company had stopped exporting drugs to Cuba after they had become aware that some were being used for psychiatric torture. (Medical exports to Cuba have been allowed under the U.S. embargo since 1992 and, before that, from foreign subsidiaries.)

### **Havana’s Psychiatric Hospital Mazorra**

Mazorra holds around 2,500 patients and is known for its poor conditions, ill treatment, and rampant corruption by the administrators and staff, who have systematically embezzled food, materials, and goods intended for the patients and the facility. In January 2010, at least 26 patients died of thermal exposure when the temperature dropped close to freezing. The facility had missing windows while the

malnourished and barely-clothed patients had no blankets. Workers at the facility were instructed to stay silent and a security operative was mounted outside the hospital but human rights defenders alerted public opinion. Pictures taken at the morgue were smuggled out of Cuba and illustrate the state of extreme malnourishment of the victims,<sup>14</sup> some with signs of physical abuse.<sup>15</sup> Abuses at Mazorra are said to continue.<sup>16</sup>



*One of the victims of Mazorra of Jan. 11, 2010.*

Eriberto Mederos, known as “the nurse” at Mazorra, was convicted by a Florida federal court on August 1, 2002, of lying to obtain U.S. citizenship by hiding the fact that he had tortured political prisoners. Several former Cuban political prisoners testified during a three-week trial. He had arrived in the U.S. during the Mariel exodus of 1980 and had become a citizen in 1993; one of his former victims found him to be part of the staff of a nursing home when she went for a visit. Mederos did not deny in court that he had administered electroshocks to political prisoners and said in a 1992 interview that he had only done followed doctors’ orders. He died at the age 79 of prostate cancer three weeks after his trial; he was out on bail awaiting a hearing to determine if he would be detained pending his sentencing set for October of that year.<sup>17</sup>

### **Victims of psychiatric abuse<sup>18</sup>**

\*See the Annex on page 9 for a list of reported victims of abuse/torture in psychiatric institutions.

31 cases of dissidents confined in psychiatric institutions ranging from 1 day to 5 years are profiled in *The Politics of Psychiatry in Revolutionary Cuba* and a 1992 update profiled 8 additional cases. Among the victims known occupations (for both the 1991 book and 1992 update<sup>19</sup>) are: 5 students, 3 writers, 3 teachers, 2 university professors, 1 artist, 1 filmmaker, 1 musician, 1 graphic designer, 2 engineers, 2 physicians, 1 computer scientist, 1 member of the military, 1 business executive, and 4 unskilled laborers. Most had been forced to take drugs and a good number had been subjected to electroshocks, although specifics were unknown for several cases. Most of the victims had been committed to one of two wards for political dissidents at Mazorra (Carbó Serviá and Castellanos wards), while a few had been institutionalized, at least initially, at other medical facilities around the island, such as the psychiatric ward of the Gustavo Machín Hospital of Santiago de Cuba.

More cases as well as subsequent ones have surfaced in reports to the media, international organizations, directly to Cuba Archive, or in lawsuits against Cuban entities in the United States.<sup>20</sup> However, many —perhaps most— of the victims of psychiatric abuse/torture in Cuba are probably unknown. One of the victims, former political prisoner Eugenio de Sosa, reported from his 1977 ordeal at Mazorra that several young boys —the oldest not over 16— caught writing anti-government

*Psychiatric abuse and torture in revolutionary Cuba, Free Society Project/Cuba Archive, 2021.*

graffiti had been brought to the ward after a judge had declared they must be needing psychiatric treatment. Before the day was over, they had all been systematically gang-raped by more than thirty patients in the ward. Sosa recalled: “To this day, I can hear their cries for help and see their bloodied bodies as I stood by in impotent rage. Not a single staff member intervened.”<sup>21</sup> None of the boys’ names are known at the time of this writing.

Considerable abuse of psychotropic drugs also occurs in Cuba outside of psychiatric facilities. In 1990, Lieutenant Colonel Omar Ruíz Matoses was sentenced to 20 years in prison for requesting his retirement from the MININT after the execution of General Ochoa and other comrades in arms.<sup>22</sup> In November 1990, when was detained and taken to a counterintelligence safehouse, in his first “conversation” with a Major of the counterintelligence service, he made it clear that he would not abandon his stance. Soon, he developed a very bad headache, probably from the “Kool aid” they were giving him to drink. He asked for an aspirin and was given a large pill, which he eagerly took seeking to ease the intense pain. Very soon he felt that he was not himself and explains: “I fell into a state of foolishness and total helplessness. ... I felt like the vilest person on the planet ... they could do with me whatever they wanted.” He believes he was administered a drug that supplied by the Stasi to Cuba’s counterintelligence services that leads to a state of absolute defenselessness in which the victim becomes totally agreeable. In fact, he says, during General Ochoa’s televised trial, it had been clear to him that he had been given that drug.<sup>23/24</sup>

Ruíz Matoses’ son, Ariel Ruiz Urquiola, was a 16-year-old at the time his father was forcibly disappeared. With the family lacking any information of his whereabouts, one day, Ariel was fetched by State Security from his boarding school and taken to the house where his father was in custody. He says: “When I saw my father, he was not exhibiting his normal behavior and was in a position of total submission, expressing trust in his captors and in the leaders of the revolution. I told the counterintelligence officer to get me out of there, ‘that’s not my father.’ He then warned me: ‘If you report this to a European embassy or human rights groups, you will not be allowed to study your desired science at the university despite your high performance. The university is only for revolutionaries.’”<sup>25</sup> (Why State Security would use an adolescent son in this way is subject of speculation, although, no doubt it had a purpose, perhaps to further manipulate his father and/or to scare the family.)

For many years, political dissidents confined in regular detention centers and prisons have suspected that the food is or may be tampered with. What’s more, some political prisoners have developed fatal illnesses —some with fatal consequences— after receiving injections of unknown origin or unwarranted blood tests from prison doctors.<sup>26</sup> High-ranking regime defectors in custody have died from reported pharmacological/chemical attacks<sup>27</sup> and bio-chemical experiments have been reported on common prisoners.<sup>28/29</sup>

Furthermore, in Cuban prisons, untreated mental illness and indiscriminate abuse of psychotropic drugs with complicity from prison authorities appears to be widespread.<sup>30</sup> Reports on some prisoners said by authorities to have committed suicide often cite drug abuse and/or mental illness as the cause (see CubaArchive.org/database). Prisoner self-aggressions are also common for the same reasons. According to Eduardo Prida, former psychologist for Cuba’s MININT, a division for “Secret Operative Work” (Trabajo Operativo Secreto, or TOS) is in charge of keeping informants among the prisoners. TOS officers, he says, are known to be the most corrupt within MININT, as they are the ones who manage the drug trafficking in the prisons.<sup>31</sup>

### Two victims who paid the highest price



**Angel Tomas Quiñones González**,<sup>32</sup> age 39, died March 9, 1990, at Mazorra Psychiatric Hospital of Havana. The auto mechanic had served a one-year political sentence in 1972 at Havana's Príncipe castle prison, where he had been held with common criminals. He was arrested in 1989 for writing anti-regime graffiti and having a defiant attitude against the system. Despite having no history of mental illness, he was confined at Mazorra's Carbó-Serviá ward for an alleged evaluation. Government authorities claimed he committed suicide by hanging and that his body had been doused with gasoline and set on fire by mentally-ill patients. His mother claims that the presence of gasoline in the hospital ward points to the participation of hospital authorities.

**Leandro Hidalgo Pupo**, age 20, was a talented student of Mathematics who, with friends also fed up with repression, decided to shout "Down with Fidel" during an internationally-televised boxing match held at the *Ciudad Deportiva* stadium of Havana February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1990. His friends backed out at the last minute but he went ahead and was subjected to a brutal beating that resulted in cerebral swelling. After a 2-month detention at State Security headquarters, *Villa Marista*, Leandro was transferred to Mazorra's Carbó Serviá ward, and diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. According to a January 2001 report to the Interamerican Commission of Human Rights, he was still there, displaying a disfiguring scar from a cut to the face by a stranger and severe damage to his psyche. In 2011, it was reported that he had not been seen or heard from for seven years.<sup>33</sup>

### Two recent cases

On May 1, 2018, a 53-year-old taxi driver, **Daniel Llorente**,<sup>34</sup> ran on foot into Cuba's Workers' Day parade waving the American flag and yelling "Freedom for everyone." Plain-clothed policemen attacked him, dragged him away, gave him a severe beating. Llorente was not a member of any opposition group but considered the U.S. as "the greatest defender of human rights, hope, freedom, justice, brotherhood, and the pursuit of happiness." He had previously been arrested in May 2016 for waving a U.S. flag at the Havana harbor to welcome the first American cruise ship to the island in decades. After a month in a detention center, he was transferred to Mazorra, where he was confined for eleven months despite having no prior diagnosis of mental illness. A Mazorra medical report of June 2018 cleared him of any mental illness but it disappeared and was replaced a month later with a state document claiming Llorente was aggressive and required institutionalization. His charges of "public disorder" were dismissed by a local court in August 2018 but after his release, he and his son were arrested and threatened. In May 2019, Llorente was expelled from Cuba, forcibly put on a plane to Guyana, which doesn't require entry visas for Cubans, handed \$50, and told to not return or he would be disappeared.





The young composer and rapper **Henry Lazo**,<sup>35</sup> “El Encuyé,” was asked for bribes in 2012 by state officials of the Institute of Music to keep his license for musical performances. Having paid the steep bribes, his license was not granted. After complaining to the police and other authorities to no avail, he began posting signs and singing against the government, asking young people to protest. In February 2018, a State Security agent attacked him in public, seeking to frame him, and he was badly beaten and arrested. Given his popularity inside and outside Cuba, criminal charges were dropped but he was placed in several mental institutions with violent mental patients and diagnosed with schizophrenia, a diagnosis his family disagreed with. He was released in October 2018 after going on hunger strike and emigrated to the U.S. in 2019.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Robert van Voren, “Political Abuse of Psychiatry—An Historical Overview,” *Schizophr Bull.* 2010 Jan; 36(1): 33–35, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2800147/>; Paul S. Appelbaum, M.D., *Cold War in Psychiatry: Human Factors, Secret Actors*, Mar 1, 2011, <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2010.10111651>.

<sup>2</sup> Eduardo Prida is a licensed Psychologist and specialist in Penal Sciences who worked as researcher for the Investigative Bureau of the Cuban Air Forces (1982-1990) as well as Associate Professor at the Superior Institute of the Ministry of the Interior and interviewer at the Institute for Legal Medicine before failing in disgrace and facing two 20-year prison sentences for attempted assassination of Fidel Castro and a call to rebellion. He was released in February 1996 and exiled to the United States as part of a negotiation by the Cuban government with U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson.

<sup>3</sup> Maria C. Werlau, telephone interview with Eduardo Prida, May 24, 2021; Eduardo Prida, “La psiquiatría y sus psiquiatras, un arma mas de la Revolución,” and “Tortura psicológica y física sistemática utilizada por régimen de Fidel Castro” Aug. 15-16, 2010, <http://baracutecubano.blogspot.com/2010/08/tortura-psicologica-y-fisica.html>; <http://baracutecubano.blogspot.com/2010/08/tortura-psicologica-y-fisica.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Gerhard Ehler, Jochen Stadt, Tobias Voigt, “Die Zusammenarbeit des MfS und MdI der DDR mit dem kubanischen MININT,” *Arbeitspapiere des Forschungsverbundes SED-Staat* Nr. 33, Berlin 2002.

<sup>5</sup> See Andreas Maercker & Susanne Guski-Leinwand (2018), “Psychologists’ involvement in repressive “Stasi” secret police activities in former East Germany,” *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*, 7(2), 107–119. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ipp0000085>.

<sup>6</sup> See articles from an extensive bibliography in: Robert van Voren, *Political Abuse of Psychiatry—An Historical Overview*, *Schizophr Bull.* 2010 Jan; 36(1): 33–35, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2800147/>; and Paul S. Appelbaum, M.D., *Cold War in Psychiatry: Human Factors, Secret Actors*, Mar 1, 2011, <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2010.10111651>.

<sup>7</sup> Jorge L. García Vázquez, “Psiquiatría y psicotrópicos. Notas y Solicitudes de la Conexión La Habana-Berlín,” *Berlin*, Jul. 23, 2011. (From Document 1: BStU Archive / Document 2: Federal Archive, Request from Cuba’s Ministry of the Interior, Sep. 17, 1981, DO1/0.1.4/Nr. 029511.)

<sup>8</sup> “Abuse of psychiatry for political reasons,” *Amnesty International*, July 1995, p. 5, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/172000/act750031995en.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Brown and Armando Lago, *The Politics of Psychiatry in Revolutionary Cuba*, London/New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1991. (The book is out of print.) Dr. Lago co-founded Cuba Archive in 2001.

<sup>10</sup> “La tortura en Cuba Informe sobre las distintas modalidades de torturas, y otros tratos crueles, inhumanos y degradantes aplicados en el curso de la revolución cubana,” *Directorio Democrático Cubano*, Jan. 2008. <https://incubadorista.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/tortura-informe-directorio.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> Gerardo Rodríguez Capote, reports being injected twice with sodium pentothal in April 1963 when he, a member of Cuba’s resistance, was arrested by State Security. (“A Mano Limpia” con Oscar Haza, *AméricaTeVe*,

Apr. 12, 2006. The video is available at the end of this page: <https://stasi-minint.blogspot.com/2011/07/psiquiatria-y-psicotropicos-notas-y.html>.)

<sup>14</sup> See photos at <https://profesorcastro.jimdofree.com/fotos-de-muertos-en-hospital-psiqui%C3%A1trico/>.

<sup>15</sup> The scandal was too difficult to ignore and in 2011 several workers at the hospital were tried and convicted to prison sentences ranging from 6 to 14 years of prison. (Juan Tamayo, “Entre 40 y 50 los muertos en Hospital Psiquiátrico de La Habana,” *El Nuevo Herald*, 29 enero 2010; Isabel Sánchez, “Veintiséis muertos en hospital psiquiátrico de Cuba por frío y negligencia,” *AFP*, Jan. 15, 2010; “Información a la Población” Ministerio de Salud, Diario Granma, Órgano Oficial del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, 16 de enero de 2010; Mauricio Vicent, “Condenados los responsables de la muerte de 26 enfermos mentales en Cuba,” *La Habana, El País*, Jan. 31, 2011.)

<sup>16</sup> Yoani Sanchez, “The hospital staff steal and the patients die,” *Huffington Post*, May 25, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> John-Thor Dahlburg, “Alleged torturer now a U.S. citizen,” Miami, *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 11, 2001; Alexandra Zayas, “Cuban torture victim sues estate for \$10M,” *Tampa Bay Tribune*, Nov. 21, 2005; “Alleged torturer Now a U.S. citizen,” Miami, *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 11, 2001; Madeline BarM-s Diaz, “Cuban accused of torture dies,” Miami, *Sun Sentinel*, Aug. 24, 2002; “Una mujer y un hombre demandan al gobierno cubano en EE UU por ‘torturas’,” Miami, *AFP*, Nov. 18, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Sources include: “Cuba: Situación de los derechos humanos – Resumen,” Amnesty International, London, Dec. 1990, AI: AMR/25/07/90s; C. Brown and A. Lago, op. cit., [CubaArchive.org/database](http://CubaArchive.org/database);

<sup>19</sup> “Disidentes cubanos en hospitales psiquiátricos,” Actualización del libro *The Politics of Psychiatry in Revolutionary Cuba*, Primavera 1992, Of Human Rights.

<sup>20</sup> See, for instance, lawsuit in the USA dismissed Mar. 28, 2011 for lacking subject matter jurisdiction: Nilo Jerez, Plaintiff, v. The Republic of Cuba, Fidel Castro Ruz, Individually and as President of the State and Council of Ministers, Head of the Communist Party and Commander-in-Chief of the Military, Raul Castro Ruz, Individually and as First Vice President of the Head of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, The Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, and El Ministerio del Interior, Miscellaneous Action No. 09-466 (RWR/AK) Defendants, United States District Court for the District Of Columbia, [https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCOURTS-dcd-1\\_09-mc-00466/pdf/USCOURTS-dcd-1\\_09-mc-00466-0.pdf](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCOURTS-dcd-1_09-mc-00466/pdf/USCOURTS-dcd-1_09-mc-00466-0.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> C. Brown and A. Lago, op. cit. pp. 59-60.

<sup>22</sup> General Arnaldo Ochoa, a hero of Cuba’s armed intervention in Angola, was accused of drug trafficking together with a number of members of the Armed Forces and Ministry of the Interior. In what is known as “Cause Number 1” of 1990, Ochoa and three others were executed and many were imprisoned, including the Minister of the Interior, who later died in prison of a reported heart attack said to have been induced. Several regime defectors have reported that the drug trade was managed by Fidel and Raúl Castro, who sought scapegoats as the U.S. had accumulated damning evidence, and took the opportunity to diffuse internal pressure to initiate a reform process during the perestroika-glasnost period in the former Soviet Union. (See “Ileana de la Guardia: ‘Castro executed my father because of rivalry,’” Dec. 16, 2016, <https://translatingcuba.com/ileana-de-la-guardia-castro-executed-my-father-because-of-rivalry-juan-juan-almeida/>.)

<sup>23</sup> Ruiz Matoses had a lifelong career in the Cuban Armed Forces and MININT and was due for his 30-year retirement. At time he was Head of the Special Group for Development of Operative Techniques (electronic surveillance) and Advisor to General Galbán Vila, Chief of MININT’s Operative Techniques.

<sup>24</sup> Omar Ruíz Matoses, “¿Qué está por ver con Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara?,” May 23, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3uw7gxneXY>; Omar Ruíz Matoses, audio messages for Maria C. Werlau, May 24, 2021. (Ruíz Matoses had a lifelong career in the Armed Forces and MININT since age 15.

<sup>25</sup> “Procedimientos de coacción y tortura del aparato represivo cubano,” *ADN Cuba*, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H\\_Wq\\_5usrzk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_Wq_5usrzk). (Translation from Spanish of Ariel Ruiz Urquiola’s remarks.)

<sup>26</sup> Several examples follow: 1.) José Angel Hernández Maso died in prison on November 8, 1975 after receiving daily injections with a mysterious substance in punishment for refusing to attend political indoctrination sessions. He vomited daily without receiving medical attention. (See <https://cubaarchive.org/database/?caseid=8845>.) 2.) Cesar Paez Sánchez died November 9, 1977 without receiving medical attention after being taken for “blood tests” in prison and contracting an illness known to only afflict horses. (See <http://database.cubaarchive.org/case-record-simple-search/6850/>.) 3.) Former prisoner of conscience José Gabriel Ramón Castillo died in 2018 of cirrhosis of the liver from a hepatitis believed to have been deliberately infected in prison in Cuba. (See <https://cubaarchive.org/database/?caseid=8003>.) 4.) Nilo Jerez claimed to have been infected with Hepatitis C through forced drug injections in prison. (See footnote 16: Nilo Jerez, Plaintiff, v. The Republic of Cuba, op. cit.). Three opposition members who died of suspected deliberate infections are Laura Pollán, October 14, 2011; Sergio Díaz Larrástegui, April 19, 2012; and Hamell Mas, February 24, 2017. (See “The Cuban regime’s elimination of

detractors and opponents: in Cuba (Part I),” <https://cubaarchive.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Elimination-of-opponents-Part-I.pdf> and see individual case records at [CubaArchive.org/database](https://cubaarchive.org/database/).)

<sup>27</sup> See examples: 1.) Former Minister of the Interior, Division General Juan Abrantes Fernández, died in prison Jan. 1991 (<https://cubaarchive.org/database/?caseid=8003>), and 2.) Retired head of Cuba’s intelligence service, Manuel Piñero Losada, died at the hospital Mar. 1998 (<https://cubaarchive.org/database/?caseid=258>).

<sup>28</sup> In 2014, two prisoners reportedly died and three had been on the brink of death from “chemicals” administered by prison guards at Combinado del Este prison of Havana. (Calixto R. Martínez Arias, “Dos reos muertos y cuatro graves,” *CubaNet*, La Habana, Mar. 27, 2014.)

<sup>29</sup> In October 2018, 29-year-old Bárbaro José Verdecia died at the same prison after contracting a mysterious illness whose strange symptoms affected his entire body and not receiving medical attention. When his family reported that he might have been deliberately contaminated with an unknown substance, they were threatened by state agents and put under surveillance. (See <https://cubaarchive.org/database/?caseid=4549>.)

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Eisy Marrero Marrero, “Estimulan consumo de estupefacientes en prisión camagüeyana,” Camagüey, Cuba, Sep. 10, 2007, <https://cubadata.blogspot.com/2007/09/estimulan-consumo-de-estupefacientes-en.html>.

<sup>31</sup> E. Prida, “Tortura psicológica y física sistemática,” op. cit. (Prida reports that TOS officers also control the illicit entry of toiletries, food, and other goods for the prisoners and can also facilitate assassinations and extortions within the prison system.)

<sup>32</sup> Angel Tomas Quiñones González, <https://cubaarchive.org/database>, case record 7873.

<sup>33</sup> C. Brown and A. Lago, op. cit. pp. 105-106; “En honor a Leandro Hidalgo Pupo,” Mar. 2011, <http://elarchivodelchiva.blogspot.com/2011/03/en-honor-leandro-hidalgo-pupo.html>; E. Prida, “La psiquiatría y sus psiquiatras,” op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> “Cuba encierra en un psiquiátrico a un opositor por enarbolar una bandera de EEUU en el acto del Día de los Trabajadores,” *El País*, Jun. 27, 2019; Karen Caballero, *Radio Televisión Martí*, Jan. 24, 2018; Vladimir Turró Páez, Llorente, el hombre de la bandera, *CubaNet*, May 12, 2018. Frances Martell, “Cuba: Police exile pro-U.S. dissident to Guyana, threaten to ‘disappear’ him if he returns,” *Brietbart*, May 20, 2019; “UN Refugee office offers Cuban activist protection pending application approval,” [www.kaieteurnews.com](http://www.kaieteurnews.com), Jul. 7, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Laso, conversations with María C. Werlau, Oslo, Norway, May 2019; “‘Soy un preso de Salud Pública’: el rapero Henry Laso se declara en huelga de hambre,” Madrid, *Diario de Cuba*, Aug. 10, 2018; Waldo Fernández Cuenca, “‘Cogerás moho aquí’, advierte la Seguridad del Estado al músico Henry Laso,” La Habana, *Diario de Cuba*, Jul. 16, 2018; “Mantienen a rapero contestario Henry Lazo en hospital psiquiátrico,” *Radio Televisión Martí*, Sep. 27, 2018; “Radio Televisión Martí, la esquizofrenia de Henry Laso y el CID,” *InfoCID*, Nov. 7, 2019, <https://cubacid.com/radio-television-marti-la-esquizofrenia-de-henry-lasso-y-el-cid/>.



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## Annex

**41 reported victims of psychiatric abuse in Cuba,  
individuals held in psychiatric institutions (partial list)**

Name	Year of arrest	Length of confinement	Times held	Drugs	ECT
Aguila Yanes, Silvio	1980	7 days	1	Yes	Yes
Alvarado Delgado, José Luis	1980	1 month	2	Yes	Yes
Arencibia, Antonio Orestes	1970s	?	1	?	?
Bahomonde Basot, J. Roberto	1975	40 days	3	Yes	No
Barzaga Santa Cruz, Juan	1991	9 months	1	?	?
Cárdenas Unquera, Esteban	1970	24 days	1	Yes	No
de Sosa Chabau, Eugenio	1977	5 months		?	Yes
Ferro, Belkis	1970s	N/A	1	?	Yes
García Cao, Juan Manuel	1982	2 days	1	No	No
Gómez Boix, Amaro	1978	14 days	1	Yes	No
Guillén Landrián, Nicolás	1977	5 years	1	Yes	x
Guzmán, Juan Eligio	1991	7 days	1	?	?
Hidalgo Guillén, Ariel	1981	10 days	1	No	No
Hidalgo Portilla, Gualdo	1981	69 days	1	Yes	Yes
Hidalgo Pupo, Leandro	1990	N/A	?	?	?
Jerez, Nilo	?	3 months	?	Yes	Yes
Lazo, Henry	2018	? Months	1	No	No
Leyva Guerra, Jesús	1981	39 months	5	Yes	Yes
Llorente, Daniel	2018	11 months	1	?	?
Marcos, Julio	1991	N/A	1	?	Yes
Martínez Haydar, Orestes	1974	4 months	1	Yes	Yes
Martínez Lara, Samuel	1990	1 day	1	No	No
Miranda Morales, Marcos	1983	2 months	1	No	Yes
Montero Romero, Emilio	1986	7 days	1	?	?
Morales Rodríguez, José	1981	18 days	1	Yes	Yes
Núñez Córdova, Miguel	1991	12 days	1	?	?
Peña Rodríguez, Oscar	1988	65 days	1	Yes	?
Peñate Fernández, Juan	1978	48 days	1	No	No
Pita Santo, Luis Alberto	1991	52 days	3	?	?
Polo González, Orlando	1989	12 days	1	No	No
Ponce de León Escobar, Alcides	1973	49 days	5	Yes	?
Quiñones González, Angel	1989	12 months	1	?	?
Rodríguez, María Celina	1991	2 weeks	1	?	No
Saumell Muñoz, Rafael	1981	20 months	1	Yes	No
Simo, Ana María	1964	12 months	1	?	x
Solares Teseiro, Andrés	1982	3 days	1	No	No
Soto Angurel, Julio	1989	6 weeks	1	?	?
Suárez Iglesias, Gilda	1968	33 days	2	Yes	No
Tejera Garrido, Francisco	1988	N/A	1	?	?
Vento Roberes, Julio	1977	5 years	1	Yes	Yes
Yanes Santana, Eduardo	1967, 1969	1 month	2	Yes	No
Zaldívar Batista, F. Mario	1980	15 days	1	Yes	No