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July 2, 2009

Ms. Navanetham Pillay
High Commissioner of Human Rights
Office of the High Commissioner for
Human Rights-United Nations Office at Geneva
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Dear Ms. Pillay:

Since 1998, Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez, and Rene Gonzalez, known as the Cuban 5, have been imprisoned in the United States for trying to prevent attacks against Cuba. Throughout their incarceration, the Cuban 5 have been victims of what I believe should be considered human rights violations. One of the most blatant examples of these has been the systematic denial of visitation from their relatives.

The U.S. government has imposed a number of obstacles and unjustifiable delays in granting visas to the families of the Cuban 5. Some of the prisoners have only received an annual visit from relatives. Even more outrageously, Gerardo Hernandez and Rene Gonzalez have not been allowed to receive visits from their wives at all. The U.S. government asserts that these women are a risk to national security. I find it difficult to believe that the presence of these women would be a treat to national security, and the U.S. government has provided no proof or rationale for this assertion.

In order to bring to an end this flagrant violation of a basic right of all prisoners, I ask that you intercede in this matter and request that the U.S. government grant visas to the families of the Cuban 5 and allow them to see their relatives on a regular basis.

Sincerely,

Rosie Mendez
Councilwoman

