



## Take Action for María Cristina Garrido Rodríguez (Cuba)

**Name:** María Cristina Garrido Rodríguez  
**Occupation:** Poet and activist  
**Situation:** Imprisoned  
**#MaríaCristinaGarrido #ImprisonedWriter**

### BACKGROUND

On March 10, 2022, Cuban poet and activist María Cristina Garrido Rodríguez received a seven-year prison sentence on charges of ‘public disorder,’ ‘assault,’ ‘instigation to commit a crime,’ ‘contempt,’ and ‘resistance’.

This verdict came in the wake of her arrest on July 12, 2021, when she joined thousands of fellow Cubans, including her sister, in the [peaceful protests that swept the country on July 11](#). These demonstrations aimed to address the erosion of their basic rights, aggravated by the government's management of the COVID-19 crisis and the deteriorating economy.

Upon her arrest, Garrido endured multiple beatings at the hands of the Cuban authorities and was subjected to enforced disappearance for a harrowing 18 days.

Currently, she is imprisoned in the Guatao Women's Prison, where she has been subjected to harsh and inhumane treatment, including solitary confinement, physical assaults, deprivation of food and water, and inadequate sanitary conditions. Moreover, she has been denied family visits and phone calls on various occasions.

It was not until the 349<sup>th</sup> day of her detention that Garrido was able to resume writing. In December 2021, from her prison cell, she wrote a [letter](#) expressing her pride in participating in the events of July 11. She also spoke out against the horrors faced by those incarcerated in Cuban prisons, saying, "*On July 11, we exhibited courage and determination, breaking the silence of years. We demonstrated unity and diversity, as people of all ages and backgrounds took to the streets to voice their support for the overthrow of the dictatorship and for a prosperous, democratic Cuba.*" She also mentioned that State Security "*punishes me for every word I write, but I cannot cease to breathe.*"

Together with her sister Angélica, Garrido initiated a hunger strike on September 20, 2022, lasting for five days to protest their sentences and detention. According to their family members, the Cuban authorities relied on false testimony from police officers and other witnesses during her January 2022 trial.

Born in Quivicán, Mayaquebé, in 1982, Garrido is the author of "*Examen de tiempo*" (Time Examination), published in 2022. She was honored with the 2008 First National Prize in the

Carlos Baliño Tobacco Competition. An active member of the Cuban Women's Network, she actively promotes the visibility of women in various spheres and participates in other activist networks such as the *Fundación Vuelta abajo por Cuba* and the Latin Federation of Rural Women. Unfortunately, a significant portion of Garrido's work has been confiscated by the Cuban state from her residence in Quivicán.

*Voz cautiva: poemas escritos desde la cárcel* - Captive Voice: poems written from prison- is her most recent book, published in 2023 by the Spanish publishing house Deslinde. This edition highlights the challenges faced by Garrido during her political imprisonment, including ill-treatment, isolation, surveillance, and depression, among others.

For additional information on freedom of expression in Cuba, click [here](#).

## TAKE ACTION

PEN International calls for María Cristina Garrido's immediate and unconditional release, and for all charges against her to be dropped. This is what you can do:

### Advocacy

Write to the **Cuban authorities**, calling on them to:

- Release Garrido immediately and unconditionally, and drop all charges against her;
- Pending her release, ensure that she is allowed regular communication with her family and adequate health care, and that she is not subjected to any form of ill-treatment;
- Release all writers and artists unjustly imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of expression and artistic expression;
- Abide by their international human rights obligations and uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly.

Send appeals to:

### **President Sr. Miguel Díaz-Canel:**

Email: [despacho@presidencia.gob.cu](mailto:despacho@presidencia.gob.cu)

Twitter: [@DiazCanelB](https://twitter.com/DiazCanelB)

### **Minister of Justice Oscar Silvera Martínez:**

Email: [apoblacion@minjus.gob.cu](mailto:apoblacion@minjus.gob.cu)

Twitter: [@CubaMinjus](https://twitter.com/CubaMinjus)

Facebook: [@MinisterioJusticiaCuba](https://www.facebook.com/MinisterioJusticiaCuba)

### **Minister of Culture Alpidio Alonso Grau:**

Twitter: @AlpidioAlonsoG

Facebook: @MinisterioCulturaCuba

**Minister of Foreign Affairs (Minrex) Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla:**

Email: dm@minrex.gob.cu

Twitter: @BrunoRguezP

Facebook: @CubaMINREX

Please send emails to the [Embassy of the Republic of Cuba](#) in your own country.

### **Social media**

Raise awareness about Garrido's case on social media, using the sample messages below and the hashtags #MaríaCristinaGarrido #ImprisonedWriter, tagging @PEN\_LAC and @pen\_int

#### **Facebook**

#ImprisonedWriter Call for Action: Stand with Cuban writer and activist #MaríaCristinaGarrido. Garrido has endured political imprisonment for too long. It's time for change! Join us in calling on the Cuban authorities to:

- Immediately release Garrido and drop all charges against her.
- Ensure she has access to family visits, healthcare, and protection from ill-treatment while she awaits release.

#### **Twitter**

Take action for #MaríaCristinaGarrido, Cuban writer and activist unfairly imprisoned for her activism. Call on the Cuban authorities to:

- Release her immediately and drop all charges.
- Ensure her access to family visits, healthcare, and protection from ill-treatment.

#### **Visuals**

Please share this graphic on social media to highlight Garrido's case.

#### **Solidarity**

Messages of solidarity can be sent using the form [here](#).

#### **Outreach**

We also encourage you to highlight the case of Garrido, and the state of freedom of expression in Cuba:

- Publishing articles and opinion pieces in your national or local press;
- Organising public events, press conferences and demonstrations;
- Visiting PEN International's handles on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and
- PEN International - Las Américas y el Caribe's handle on [Twitter](#) for retweets, likes, comments and sharing our posts for wider outreach.

Please keep us informed of your activities. Messages can be sent to Alicia Quiñones, PEN International Head of the Americas Region, [alicia.quinones@pen-international.org](mailto:alicia.quinones@pen-international.org) and Sabrina Tucci, PEN International Communications and Campaigns Manager, [Sabrina.Tucci@pen-international.org](mailto:Sabrina.Tucci@pen-international.org)