
Cuban 5 prisoner and Ebola-fighting doctor give each other strength

10/12/2014



The following is correspondence between a U.S.-held Cuban political prisoner Gerardo Hernández and Cuban doctor, Rotceh Ríos Molina, who is currently part of the team of medical professionals fighting the [Ebola epidemic](#) in Sierra Leone. Hernández and Ríos are considered heroes in Cuba, and as such Cuban journalist Marlene Caboverde Caballero thought to initiate a correspondence between the two. Caboverde and Dr. Ríos come from the same town in western Cuba, called Jaruco.

Hernández is one of the three members of the "Cuban Five" still imprisoned in the United States. He is serving two life sentences in the federal prison in Victorville, Calif., after a trial in Miami that many people worldwide have condemned as biased. There is a campaign in the United States as well as internationally to get the U.S. government to free Gerardo and the other two prisoners, Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino, perhaps as a humanitarian exchange for Alan Gross, a U.S. government contractor imprisoned in Cuba. Meanwhile, [Cuba is gaining worldwide praise for having sent more than 250 volunteer doctors and nurses](#), as part of the Henry Reeve Brigade, to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia in West Africa to risk their lives fighting the extremely virulent Ebola epidemic which has taken thousands of African lives so far.

•

Message of Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, one of the Cuban Five, to Rotceh Ríos Molina, internal medicine specialist from Jaruco, Cuba.

Our admiration for the Cubans who are fighting against Ebola

November 24, 2014

Dear Brother Rotceh,

I was able to read the note you wrote to Marlene. I appreciate your words, and am very pleased to have this opportunity to send you a salutation. Ever since I came upon the news of Cuban medical brigades leaving for West Africa to fight the Ebola epidemic, we have tried to keep ourselves informed about the extraordinary work our countrymen have been doing.

Now we are paying special attention to Doctor Félix Báez and the state of his health. His course fortunately seems to be satisfactory. I don't think I can find a more direct way to try to send Félix our best wishes for his quick and total recovery, so I take advantage of these lines.

On not a few occasions throughout these years, we the Five have been asked about what inspires us to resist unjust imprisonment for so long, so far from Cuba and from our families. Even before the present Ebola crisis presented itself, we were always speaking of the attitude of Cuban doctors and other Cuban internationalists as an important source of encouragement, pride, and inspiration for ourselves.

Now with that extraordinary lesson of heroism that you are providing the world, we feel even more pride, and words would not suffice to express how much you strengthen us with your example. You today are our heroes! To all the comrades who are part of the Cuban medical brigades in West Africa, we express to you our immense admiration, and we ask that you take great care of yourselves. I know that someday when you've won that battle for the good of humanity, and when justice has been secured for the Five, we will have the opportunity to embrace each other in the homeland.

All success, brothers!

Hasta la victoria siempre!

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo

Victorville Federal Prison, California

•

Reply from Dr. Rotceh Ríos Molina to Hernández via journalist Marlene Caboverde.

With your example we'll be able to finish this mission

November 25, 2014

Dear Marle,

Many, but many, thanks. The example of this giant of the Cuban Revolution and his words give us encouragement to keep focused on the mission of saving and bettering lives in these remote places, so beaten down by those greatest of scourges - hunger, immense poverty, illiteracy, and exploitation of man by man. He encourages us as we go about constantly stalking sicknesses, from the simplest and most common of them to the one that has us here today far from our homes.

With his example we will not only be capable of successfully accomplishing this, but also be always firm in doing what's necessary to make our way to the front. I would want, if it happens my reply reaches him, that he knows it came not just from me, but from all of those here who, like myself, were emotionally affected on reading his lines; we even shouted out revolutionary slogans. We acclaimed for a fact our eventual triumphant return to the homeland.

For the Revolution!

Dr. Rotceh Ríos Molina, internal medicine specialist.