

"When will we be able to look into each other eyes?"

**Olga Salanueva,
wife of
René González**



Ivette, our little daughter, answers the phone with one phrase, "House of the González Salanueva family, yes?"

She knows well that we are a family, her daddy, her mommy, her sister Irmitta and her. What is difficult to explain is why her daddy is missing for so long, why it is she can't remember him at home or anywhere else, giving

him a kiss, hugging him or playing.

She has never seen a photograph where the four of us are together. Those memories simply don't exist because she's been denied the right to live them.

Our child is five years old, the same amount of time that René has been imprisoned. Ivette was only four and a half months old on that sad September 12, 1998, when our family tragedy began.

Since then we have been victims of the hatred that the U.S. government expresses against our Five Cuban heroes who are fighters against terrorism.

In the 17 months of solitary confinement that Fernando, Antonio, Gerardo, Ramón and René, my husband, were subjected to, they only let him see his daughters twice.

The first time was especially cruel because René was handcuffed to his chair, preventing any physical contact.

To be able to see his daughters, the only option we had was to agree on a certain hour and take them close to the jail, from where he could see them through a tiny window.

From the 12th floor he could only distinguish the movements of a little mop of black hair, who was just learning to walk. That was Ivette, who was growing up.

In July 2000, the Miami prosecutors "offered" René a deal: to declare himself guilty. They reminded him that his family was at their mercy. In response to his dignified refusal, all their hatred and vengeance was once again heaped on our family. I was taken to jail for three months and then deported to Cuba without being able to say good-bye to René or to travel with my little Ivette.

Today we are in Cuba, separated from René, who remains in prison in South Carolina, condemned to 15 years in prison.

I have requested a visa to visit René on three occasions. Three times I have been denied by the U.S. government authorities. In this manner they have also deprived my little Ivette of any contact with her father.

All this time I have wondered:

If every person in prison has the right to be visited by his or her family members, and should have their human rights and dignity respected, then why can't we be reunited even under these cruel conditions? Why do they deny us being able to look at his eyes, the color of hope that we need so much? Why do they keep a couple from holding hands as a sign of support, love and commitment?

Why deny a child the sacred kiss of her father?

We will never tire of demanding our rights, by the strength that we draw from our truth, love and hope.

Every day we give thanks to all the men and women, who with their nobility and dignity, offer us their warmth, support and solidarity in these moments of family sorrow, in our struggle for the freedom of the five Cuban heroes, who are fighters against terrorism, unjustly imprisoned in the United States.

**Adriana Pérez,
wife of
Gerardo Hernández**



To all our friends who are in solidarity with us:

To live with the daily anguish and uncertainty that the future offers us is the life sentence that I share with Gerardo.

I was not condemned in a federal court like he was, I was not even close by. Yet, we received the cruelest punishment: psychological torture and definitive isolation.

By the United States government denying Gerardo my visits as his wife, as a prisoner condemned to two life sentences his rights are being violated. They are preventing the joining of two people who love each other, not even under restrictions that the Bureau of Prisons establishes.

The repeated denial of a visa has forced us into a major separation, to suffer the constant violation of human rights and international law. It increases our anxiety and the perpetual punishment of not being able to see each other.

With almost 15 years of marriage, I ask myself:

When will we be able to look into each other's eyes?

Who has the right to violate international law?

When will there be justice?

The confidence that we have in the U.S. people, in its noble values and as defender of family traditions, keeps us hopeful of a better future where truth and justice raise their voice. Please join forces to protest this situation.

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