

FOIA MARKER

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Aglias
Treasury
President Bill Clinton
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC

#165046
CC 045

Dear President Clinton:

We write as deeply committed interreligious leaders to urge you to release a quantity of medical aid for Cuba which has been detained by the US Treasury Department.

We understand that an ecumenical group of Cuban religious organizations has requested a donation of used computers -- 286s which are practically obsolete by US standards -- to help build a medical information network which was founded with support from the Pan American Health Organization and the United Nations. US and Canadian citizens, under the auspices of the project Pastors for Peace, responded to that call. They were met with brutal treatment by US Treasury officers, and the used donated medical computers they attempted to take to Cuba were all seized.

We are writing to urge that these medical computers be immediately released to go to their intended destination.

Whatever the politics of US/Cuba relations, our government's restriction of the free flow of food and medical aid violates international conventions and the precepts of the religious bodies which we represent. A nation as powerful as ours can easily afford to be generous with respect to this outdated equipment which will clearly be put to humanitarian use.

The World Council of Churches has offered to assume responsibility for delivering and monitoring this medical aid, to be sure that it is used for its intended humanitarian purpose.

Your leadership, as our President and as a man of faith, would be well expressed in this instance in the scriptural mandate given in Matthew 25 -- to heal the sick, feed the hungry, give a cup of cold water to those who thirst.

We are deeply concerned for the health of the five fasters who represent the Pastors for Peace project of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization. As they enter the eighth week of their fast of repentance, their dedication to this cause is an inspiration. We are equally concerned for the health of the Cuban people, many of them members of our denominations, who have suffered needlessly under a policy which denies them countless necessities for their daily lives.

We urge you to act quickly to release the medical computers for shipment to Cuba. We await your reply.

Sincerely,
The Washington Interreligious Staff Council:

Rev. Eleanor Giddings Long - Director Washington Office
Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Jay Lintner - Director, Washington Office
United Church of Christ
Office for Church in Society

Rev. Paul Obitway, SA. Interfaith Impact for Justice
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