

UNIVERSAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

International Human Rights NGO

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 6, 2026

International NGO Files Urgent Action with UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention for 16-Year-Old Cuban Prisoner Jonathan David Muir Burgos

Universal Justice for All calls on the Cuban government to immediately release the teenager, who has been denied medical treatment and held in a maximum-security adult prison for participating in a peaceful protest.

CORAL GABLES, Florida — Universal Justice for All (UJFA), an international human rights NGO led by refugees and based in Florida, today announced that it has filed an Urgent Action communication with the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) on behalf of Jonathan David Muir Burgos, a 16-year-old Cuban national currently held in Canaleta Maximum Security Prison in Central Cuba.

Jonathan was arrested days after participating in a peaceful protest in Morón, Ciego de Ávila Province, on March 13, 2026 — one of a wave of demonstrations triggered by Cuba's chronic power outages, food shortages, and deteriorating living conditions. He has been charged with sabotage, a charge that carries a potential sentence that could keep him behind bars until his 30s or 50s.

He is 16 years old. He is not a criminal. He is a child who asked for the lights to come on.

"Jonathan's case represents everything that is wrong with how the Cuban government treats its own people. A teenager should not spend decades in a maximum-security prison for raising his voice. Universal Justice for All will use every international legal mechanism available to fight for his freedom."

— Marilia Garcia Lazo, Executive Director, Universal Justice for All

KEY FACTS OF THE CASE

Name: Jonathan David Muir Burgos

Age: 16 years old

Detained: Canaleta Maximum Security Prison, Central Cuba

Charge: Sabotage — for participating in a peaceful protest

Health: Suffers from dyshidrosis (chronic skin disease) — medical treatment denied in detention

Legal Counsel: No access to independent legal counsel — two government-appointed lawyers only

Family: Father is Pastor Elier Muir of the Tiempos de Cosecha evangelical church in Morón

ABOUT THE URGENT ACTION SUBMISSION

The submission filed by Universal Justice for All calls on the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to issue an Urgent Appeal to the Cuban government requesting:

1. The immediate and unconditional release of Jonathan David Muir Burgos
2. Immediate access to medical treatment for his chronic skin condition
3. Access to independent legal counsel of his family's choosing
4. Transfer to an appropriate juvenile facility if not released
5. Dismissal of all charges, which are grounded solely in protected peaceful assembly

BROADER CONTEXT

Jonathan's case is not isolated. According to Prisoners Defenders, Cuba currently holds at least 1,092 political prisoners, including 33 minors. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has already called on Cuba to protect Jonathan's rights, and Amnesty International has cited his arrest as evidence of intensifying state repression. His case has been covered internationally by NBC News and Noticias Telemundo.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention itself determined in June 2024 that the detention of 17 persons following the July 2021 Cuban protests was arbitrary — establishing clear precedent for Jonathan's case.

"The international community cannot look away from what is happening in Cuba. Children are being imprisoned in adult maximum-security facilities for asking for food and electricity. This is not politics — this is a human rights emergency."

— Niurys Robaina, Litigation Director, Universal Justice for All

ABOUT UNIVERSAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Universal Justice for All (UJFA) is an international human rights NGO based in Coral Gables, Florida, led by former refugees and legal professionals. The organization pursues justice for displaced, persecuted, and silenced people through strategic international litigation, UN advocacy, and survivor-centered legal action. UJFA is committed to the principle that justice cannot be limited by geography, politics, or power.

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