

**Individual report from the Centrist Democrat International for the April-May 2013
Universal Periodic Review of the government of Cuba**



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The **Centrist Democrat International (CDI)** was founded in 1961 under the name World Union of Christian Democrats (WUCD). It was created by the New International Teams, predecessor organization to the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD), the Christian Democrat Organization of America (CDOA) and the Christian Democratic Union of Central Europe (CDUCE). In 1999 it adopted its present name. The CDI is in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The International Center Democratic Party brings together political parties, organizations and associations whose thoughts and actions are guided by the principles of Christian or integral humanism; that is, a humanism that is open to transcendence and committed to brotherhood. For these parties and organizations, this means:

The recognition of the inalienable dignity of every person regardless of sex, age, skin color, their economic, social or cultural beliefs or convictions. The recognition and promotion of personal rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants that complement it. The pursuit of peace based on the aforementioned values. The recognition and affirmation of the social character of man, who makes his living by integrating the multiple communities, in particular the family, that constitute human society; Achieving the common good as the goal of political society and the guiding principle of public power.

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The suspicious and untimely deaths of Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas and Harold Cepero Escalante

1. **On the afternoon of July 22, 2012 Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas the founder of one of our member parties, the Christian Liberation Movement, along with fellow party activist and Chairman of the Christian Liberation Movement Youth League, Harold Cepero Escalante died under circumstances that have led the family of Payá Sardiñas to demand an international and independent investigation. The Centrist Democrat International is presenting the following report on the circumstances surrounding their deaths and aftermath to be taken into consideration for the Universal Periodic Review that the government of Cuba will undergo in May of 2013. The basis for this report is found in the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations which states, in part, that part of its mission is to “reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.” It is also based in Article 3 of the Universal Human Rights Declaration which states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”**
 2. Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas was the author and the main organizer of the Varela Project which sought to obtain reforms by means of a petition drive that gathered more than 25,000 signatures and forced the Cuban government to change the constitution to make it “untouchable.” The Cuban opposition leader was awarded the European Union’s Sakharov Prize in 2002. A lifelong catholic layman and nonviolent opposition activist he was one of the founders of the Christian Liberation Movement in Cuba where the only legally recognized party is the Communist party. Harold Cepero Escalante was expelled from university for gathering signatures for the Varela Project and later became a youth leader in the Christian Liberation Movement.
 3. According to the Cuban government’s International Press Center, Oswaldo Payá and Harold Cepero died in a car crash on July 22, 2012 at 1:50pm near Bayamo in Granma province. There were two survivors Aron Modig, of the Young Christian Democrats and Spanish youth leader Angel Carronero Barrios survived the incident with minor injuries. Ofelia Acevedo learned that something had taken place when she was contacted from Madrid, Spain and told that the car had been attacked. The Cuban government claims that the deaths were the result of driver error. The family of Oswaldo Payá does not accept the government’s version of events. They have pointed out prior death threats by government agents and a June 2, 2012 incident where a car was launched against Oswaldo and his wife Ofelia Acevedo that led their own vehicle to be flipped on its side. They are calling for an independent and international investigation into the events surrounding these deaths.
 4. ***On August 1, 2012 the widow of Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, Ofelia Acevedo made the following statement:***
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5. Today is 10 days past the event that killed my husband, Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, National Coordinator of the Christian Liberation Movement and the young Harold Cepero Escalante, a member of that movement.
6. The event was explained over national television in Cuba, which is something unusual in that fatal traffic accidents happen every day and have never been given this television coverage.
7. I will not go into detail about the technical analysis done according to the official version. I'm not an expert, although one does not need to be one to question it. I want to clarify that I learned on television of how the event occurred since I had only had a very brief verbal version of the event given by a criminologist, Major Sanchez, when he turned over my husband's body. I expressed to him that I did not believe in that version and needed to interview the surviving witnesses. I was never informed by any authority of the death of my husband. Yesterday, July 31 at 8:45 pm, 10 days after the death of Oswaldo and Harold, I was visited by two officers of the Centre for Criminal Investigation and Operations with a summons in my name for today at 11am, with the aim to "ventilate issues of civil liability derived from the accident."
8. I as the wife of Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas in representation of the family living inside and outside of Cuba, want to declare.
9. We do not accept the explanation of the event televised because: It is presented by the same organs of State Security of the government that have threatened to kill him multiple times through their agents over the years in which they have defamed, insulted, watched, discredited with television campaigns inside and outside of Cuba, the same ones that have placed microphones over our bed in telephone boxes, the same ones knowing that her mother had cancer, visited to intimidate her, and did not allow their children who live outside of Cuba to visit, which forbade my oldest son , a 24 year old student from visiting his aunt on holiday in Spain last year.
10. They do not allow anyone from our family to exit or enter Cuba. They are the same ones who intimidate our neighbors, my husband's co-workers, my brothers in the Christian community, and those who I need to hire to make repairs in my house. That go to the centers of study of my children to alert their peers to avoid relating to them. They are the same ones that break into hospitals, intimidate doctors every time my children have any health problems. They are the same ones that have attacked my house with mobs that they bring in from other places, painted the facade of my home with offensive slogans, and have stained my door with red paint simulating blood. They have surrounded the walls of the neighborhood with signs full of phrases of threats and hate.

11. They are the same ones who on several occasions have loosened the nuts on the wheels of our car while parked and knowing that the whole family and even friends were traveling. On June 2, 2012 while he and I were traveling in our car (1964 VW station wagon), to my mother's house in La Lisa traveling on the road of El Cerro and having practically surpassed the intersection of Rancho Boyeros Avenue were impacted by an old American car in the rear right wheel of our vehicle with such force that rocked our car, my husband could not control it and after sliding with only two wheels on the left side turned on the opposite path being trapped inside and covered with broken windshield glass. Oswaldo was wounded in the left arm by the elbow and nothing happened to me.
12. They are the same ones that have bullied and threatened to kill members of the Movement and their families. Today they have imprisoned Yosvany Melchior [the young son of Rosa María Rodríguez, a member of the Movement], serving twelve years in prison for a crime he did not commit. All of this in order that they leave the Christian Liberation Movement.
13. I do not believe the official version:
 1. Because my husband Oswaldo Payá was distinguished by his sense of responsibility without limit towards all people, especially those associated with him. He would never let the chauffeur driving the car that they were traveling in to be speeding. His friends and those who know him know that I speak the truth when I say this. He knew the risk to his life each day in Cuba.
 2. Because I received the news from Madrid of the supposed car accident that my husband was traveling at three eighteen on the afternoon of Sunday, July 22 where they communicated to me, "Four people were traveling, only three in the hospital, we do not know about one. Two friends, one of them unconscious they were attacked and removed from the road. Do you know who the other two where? The whereabouts of one of them is unknown."
 3. Why wasn't I allowed to meet with the Swedish boy and still have not allowed me to meet with the Spaniard who were survivors of the event?
 4. For all these antecedents and information that has come to us about what happened in Granma, my family requests to international institutions an investigation independent of the Cuban government on the facts about what happened.

5. I want to say that I'm very proud to have shared 26 years of life with an extraordinary man and of the family that we founded. He had the sorrow of not having been able to devote to his family all the time that he wanted but his dedication to service led him always to work for the common good. All his intelligence, intellectual ability was in constant search for ways for the people to ascend to their rights, he said: Neither the state nor the market can dominate society, or be above the people's decisions, or of the freedom and dignity of persons.

Now we must try to direct our life without the physical presence of Oswaldo. It will be very hard, but for those who live by the faith we know that he will continue to protect us, to always be in our midst.

Denial of freedom of travel to members of the Payá family to CDI meeting in Rome

14. The Centrist Democrat International invited Ofelia Acevedo and Rosa Maria Payá, Oswaldo Payá's widow and daughter respectively, to attend our Congress in Rome between September 21-22, 2012 but they were denied permission by the Cuban authorities to travel to Italy. This is in violation of Article 13 subsection 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." Despite this restriction on a fundamental freedom, Rosa Maria was able to send a video that was played on September 21, 2012 at the gathering during which, in part, she addressed the nature of the events that had transpired on July 22, 2012:
15. "We believe that the events that took the life of my father and the young Harold Cepero Escalante were not accidental. There is evidence in Europe, it was from Madrid and Stockholm we got the first news of what had occurred. We put our trust in God and you, our friends, to reveal the whole truth that has been covered up by those who think they can escape it. There are also those that between good and strange intentions are tempted to act as if the ends could justify the means, but without recognizing the whole truth there is no justice. So, along with the need for transparency for Cuba, we have the duty to seek and demand transparency for Oswaldo Payá and Harold Cepero."
16. Angel Carromero Barrio, who was driving the vehicle has been placed on trial for the equivalent of vehicular manslaughter in a judicial proceeding that falls short of international standards. In addition the family of Oswaldo Payá has not only not been able to speak with the survivors but were also banned from attending Carromero Barrio's trial which began on October 6, 2012.
17. The children of Oswaldo Payá attempted to attend the trial of Angel Carromero Barrio, accused of being responsible for their father's death according to the Cuban government's version of events. Rosa María Payá Acevedo tweeted at 11:08 am: "I'm with my brothers 100m from court, surrounded by 30 state security agents, they don't let us pass, we want to see Angel." More than two hours later she gave an update at 1:37pm: "Tried for hours to reach Court gates where the trial of Carromero is being is

conducted. State security stops us 90m from there." At 2:52pm Oswald's daughter still denied entry to the trial tweeted: "We don't believe in a trial made by the same ones who threatened my dad with death. But its our right to attend, we want to see Angel Carronero." At 10:37pm her final tweet of the evening on the matter: The circus is over for tonight, the authorities have taken a city and have only demonstrated all that they hide. Everything that they fear."