

Pray for Cuba

19 -25 July 2020



On 27 March Yoe Suárez, an independent journalist, was summoned and interrogated by the police; less than a month later in April he was threatened by state security agents at his home. His mother was also interrogated twice during this period, forcing her to break quarantine and risk contracting or transmitting COVID-19.

Yoe has written extensively about human rights and religious freedom issues, and as a result he has been targeted regularly by the authorities. Speaking out against the government's human rights abuses often carries a penalty, and individuals who do so are frequently exposed to further harassment from the authorities.

Every year Cuba observes three days of public holiday from 25-27 July to commemorate the Moncada Barracks attack, when Fidel Castro's rebel forces attempted to spark a national revolt against Fulgencio Batista's repressive military regime on 26 July 1953. Although the initial attack failed, the event marks the start of the Cuban revolution which lasted for nearly six years and ended in early 1959. That same year, Fidel Castro assumed political and military power as Prime Minister of Cuba and then later as President from 1965-2008.

More than half a century has passed, yet true freedom for Cubans has not been achieved. Many fundamental human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, are still routinely violated by the government. In 2019 alone CSW received 260 documented cases of religious freedom violations from across the island.

Merciful Father, we bring before you the people of Cuba today.

For all those in power – we pray you would give them hearts of justice, compassion and genuine charity towards their citizens.

For all faith communities that regularly face harassment and restrictions on their right to practise their faith – we pray for protection, peace and true freedom.

For pastors who are routinely monitored and detained without reason, who witness the destruction of their churches and homes – we pray for courage, hope and renewed faith.

For women who are repeatedly and often violently prevented from attending Sunday worship – we pray for safety, resilience and conviction.

For adults passed over for promotion and children bullied by their fellow pupils and teachers because of their religious beliefs – we pray for fortitude, optimism and encouragement.

For those whose faith inspires them to feed the hungry, help the sick, support the elderly and vulnerable, and in so doing arouse the suspicion of the authorities – we pray for strength, perseverance and a yet greater outpouring of generosity.

For those who defiantly speak out for others who are denied their religious rights – we pray for wisdom, confidence and protection.

Loving Heavenly Father, we ask you to work powerfully throughout the land of Cuba to bring about real change and true freedom for its people today. Amen.

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. (Isaiah 43:18-19)

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

**CSW everyone
free to believe**

CSW is a human rights organisation advocating for freedom of religion or belief, and as Christians we stand with everyone facing injustice because of their religion or belief.