

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 24, 2014

The Honorable Roberta Jacobson
Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary Jacobson:

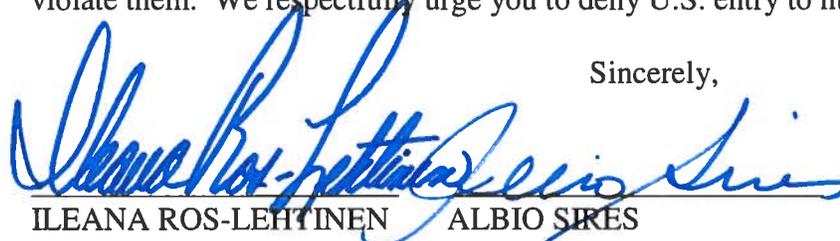
It has come to our attention that Cuban musician and songwriter, Tony Avila, currently in the United States on a tourist visa, has been publicly accused of perpetrating acts of repudiation by several members of the peaceful pro-democracy group known as the Ladies in White, or Damas de Blanco. According to these pro-democracy women, Mr. Avila is well known in the Matanzas municipality in Cuba for his participation and encouragement of insults, harassment, beatings and general violence against this group of women who stand in opposition to the brutal Castro regime and its policies.

According to news reports, Leticia Ramos Herreira, a Matanzas representative of the Ladies in White, as well as several other women, have written a letter denouncing Mr. Avila's violent actions against these demonstrators. It is a shame that under the guise of cultural interchanges, individuals, such as Mr. Avila, who regularly participate in the oppression of those who seek democracy, are afforded the luxury of enjoying the freedoms of the United States with no consideration to their sordid history of insulting, beating and committing acts of violence in their own countries.

President Obama's own Presidential Proclamation 8697 claims to "close the gap" so that human rights abusers are not permitted U.S. entry. According to the President's proclamation, U.S. entry must be denied to "(a)ny alien who planned, ordered, assisted, aided and abetted, committed or otherwise participated in" human rights abuses. Under this standard, it appears that Mr. Avila never should have gained U.S. entry.

We would appreciate, in accordance with applicable law, rules and regulations, an investigation into Mr. Avila's tourist visa issuance and ask that his visa be immediately revoked. Allowing human rights abusers such as Mr. Avila into the United States contravenes our longstanding commitment to supporting human rights and denying safe harbor to those who violate them. We respectfully urge you to deny U.S. entry to human rights abusers in the future.

Sincerely,



ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress

ALBIO SIKES
Member of Congress



MARIO DIAZ-BALART
Member of Congress