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| Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS  telephone: 020 7636 4030 fax: 020 7636 0632 [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk/)  General Secretary: *Frances O’Grady* Assistant General Secretary: *Kay Carberry CBE*  Assistant General Secretary: *Paul Nowak* |  |
| Rt Hon Theresa May MP  Home Secretary  2 Marsham Street  London SW1P 4DF | our ref EUIRD/Cuba/M5/FOG  date: 6 March 2014  contact: Stephen Russell  direct line: 020 7467 1395  email: srussell@tuc.org.uk |

Dear Theresa

Rene Gonzalez: visa application Cuba/40799

I would welcome your urgent intervention to ensure that Cuban citizen René González is granted a visa for entry to the UK for a conference in London this weekend.

René González was due to attend a conference, supported by the TUC, bringing together experts and campaigners from around the world to discuss the circumstances surrounding the widely criticised conviction of the “Miami 5”, of which René was the first to be released from prison.

The campaign to free the “Miami 5”, and their names, had a very high profile in Cuba (and in many other parts of the world) and René‘s name would have been well-known to Embassy officials in Havana.

I am therefore extremely disappointed to hear that René has been denied entry to the UK on the grounds that he has been convicted of an offence carrying a sentence of at least four years. The refusal states that there are no “compelling factors” that would nonetheless allow Mr González entry to the UK, because he has “applied solely for the purpose of attending an International enquiry”.

That the international enquiry is precisely being held into the legality or otherwise of his own conviction surely represents exceptional circumstances. To dismiss his contribution to a commission examining what remains a deeply controversial conviction criticised by many, including Amnesty International, suggests a limited examination of the issues by those responsible for the decision, and compounds what many see as a miscarriage of justice.

The rules state clearly that an element of discretion can be exercised in exceptional cases and I would ask that even at this late stage you intervene to ensure René is able to discuss his experiences with the lawyers, experts, supporters and human rights campaigners who will be gathering to hear him and discuss the case of the “Miami 5”.

Please let me know if there is anything you can do.

Yours sincerely

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**FRANCES O’GRADY**

General Secretary

cc Rt Hon William Hague MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs