

Díaz-Balart Asks Germany to Arrest Castro

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On Wednesday, U.S. Congressional Representative Lincoln Díaz-Balart, R-Florida, made a formal request to the German government, to arrest, indict and try the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, for crimes against humanity, should he travel to that country in the next week as has been announced.

"It would constitute a great and historic honor for Germany if it is the first country to charge Castro for crimes against humanity under the Convention Against Torture," said Díaz-Balart.

The Congressional Representative sent a letter to the German Justice Minister, Herta Daubler-Gmelin, in which he cites specific articles from the United Nations' International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and asks that German justice arrest and indict Castro if he visits that country.

In his petition, the Representative indicates that the Conventions, which were ratified by Germany on September 30, 1990, establish that acts of torture should be indicted by each country that has ratified the Convention.

Castro, said Díaz-Balart, has carried out a systematic campaign of repression and terror, including assassination and torture, against those who have opposed his regime since he took power in Cuba in January of 1959. In his letter, the representative indicated that on July 13, 1994, Castro ordered the sinking of the tugboat *13 de marzo*, in which 41 refugees who sought to escape Cuba were drowned, including at least 12 children.

He added that Castro was the intellectual author of the downing of Brothers to the Rescue's small aircraft in international waters, by Cuban MiGs, at the cost of the lives of three U.S. citizens and one U.S. resident.

In recent months Díaz-Balart has developed an intense campaign asking federal and state prosecutors in the United States to indict Castro for these acts. His efforts forced Castro to cancel his planned trip to Seattle, Washington in December, to attend the annual meeting of the World Trade Organization.

At that time Castro expressed regret over the cancellation of the trip and made reference to "the hysteria and threats of the noisy terrorist mob in Miami, who are always eager to provoke a bloody armed conflict between Cuba and the United States, which in this case would be an inevitable consequence of any attempt to forcibly hold me in Seattle," in a letter sent to Representative Jim McDermott, D-Seattle, who'd prepared a warm reception in that city.

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