

# Brothers to the Rescue legal battle intensifies

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The organization Brothers to the Rescue announced at a press conference on Thursday, that it will strengthen its legal efforts to ensure that the case of the pilots brought down in the Straits of Florida would end with the prosecution and a lawsuit against the Cuban government.

"With the evidence available to the federal prosecution, there is no reason to prevent charges being filed in the next 10 months against the perpetrators of the criminal act," affirmed the attorney Ralph Fernández, who recently joined the legal team of the organization.

Fernandez successfully defended three Cubans recently, in Tampa, who were accused of air piracy. One of them, Adel Regalado, is considered a key witness in the investigation of the downing of the planes.

The lawyer and José Basulto, president of Brothers to the Rescue, also participated in a meeting on Thursday with federal prosecutor Caroline Heck Miller, from the southern district of Florida, in the presence of a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent.

According to Fernández, the meeting served to establish a contact that did not previously exist.

The lawyer explained that in one way or another a charge against the government of Fidel Castro should be made, or alternatively, an explanation be given to Basulto and the families of the victims as to why it won't proceed.

For three years, Basulto has asked the U.S. government for detailed information about issues related to the tragic events of February 24, 1996, in which four Brothers died when they were shot down by the Cuban air force. Washington has refused, arguing that it is a matter of national security.

"We disagree with the use being made of the concept 'national security,' but predicted that it would be used in this case," Fernandez said.

The federal prosecutor declined to respond to El Nuevo Herald on the subject.

Basulto, meanwhile, questioned whether results can be obtained with the authorities in charge of the case in Miami's U.S. attorney's office.

"It's hard to think that in a matter that seriously compromises the U.S. government, decisions can be made at the level of Mrs Heck Miller," said Basulto.

Caption: Photo: José Basulto and Ralf Fernández (a)

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