

URGENT ACTION

TEENAGER DETAINED IN ADULT PRISON

Jonathan Muir Burgos, 16, has been detained since 16 March 2026 after protests in Morón, Ciego de Ávila, against prolonged power cuts and food shortages. He is reportedly held in the Canaleta prison. He is charged of “sabotage”, a serious crime with a possible 15-year prison sentence. His family reports his physical and psychological health deterioration and lack of access to adequate medical care. We call on authorities to immediately release Jonathan Muir Burgos and, pending his release, protect him from violence and ill-treatment, from been held with adults, and provide adequate medical care, and regular family and lawyer's access.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Miguel Díaz-Canel
President of Cuba
Hidalgo Esq. 6, Plaza de La Revolución
CP 10400, La Habana, Cuba
Email: despacho@presidencia.gob.cu

Dear President Miguel Díaz-Canel,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the detention of Jonathan David Muir Burgos, a 16-year-old Cuban teenager who has been held since 16 March 2026 after protests in Morón, Ciego de Ávila, against prolonged power cuts and food shortages.

Jonathan is reportedly being held in Canaleta, an adult prison in Ciego de Ávila, and accused of “sabotage”, a serious criminal charge that could expose him to a possible 15-year prison sentence. His detention as a child, raises serious concerns under international human rights standards, including Cuba’s obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

According to information publicly reported by his family, Jonathan’s physical and psychological health has deteriorated in detention. He reportedly suffers from a chronic skin condition and other health problems, and his family has stated that he is weak and has not received adequate medication. His family has also expressed fear for his safety in prison. These allegations require urgent action by the authorities to protect his life, health and integrity.

I urge you to immediately release Jonathan David Muir Burgos. Pending his release, I call on you to ensure that he is immediately removed from any adult prison or detention setting, protected from violence and ill-treatment, provided with adequate medical care and medication, and guaranteed regular access to his family and legal counsel of his choice. Cuban authorities must also stop using severe criminal charges to punish or intimidate people, including children, for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Jonathan David Muir Burgos is a 16-year-old Cuban teenager from Morón, in the province of Ciego de Ávila. He was detained on 16 March 2026 after he and his father, evangelical pastor Elier Muir, reportedly attended a police summons following protests that took place in Morón on 13 March 2026. Those protests occurred in a context of prolonged power cuts, food shortages, deterioration of basic services and growing social discontent in Cuba.

Jonathan has reportedly been accused of “sabotage”, one of the most serious charges in Cuban criminal law. Media reports and statements from human rights organizations indicate that he was transferred to Canaleta, an adult prison in Ciego de Ávila. His family has publicly stated that he is being held in conditions that are affecting his physical and psychological health.

Jonathan reportedly suffers from dyshidrosis, a chronic skin condition that can cause severe dryness, cracking and pain, and his family has said that his condition has worsened in detention due to lack of adequate medical care. Recent public reports also indicate that his parents found him weak and emotionally distressed during a prison visit and that the family fears for his safety inside the prison.

Under international human rights law, deprivation of liberty of children must be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. Children deprived of liberty must be treated with humanity and in a manner that takes into account their age and needs. They must be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child’s best interest not to do so, and they must have prompt access to legal assistance, family contact and appropriate medical care.

His detention has drawn public concern because it appears to fit a broader pattern in Cuba of criminalising protest and dissent, including through the use of serious criminal charges against people accused of participating in demonstrations. Amnesty International has repeatedly documented the Cuban authorities’ use of arbitrary detention, harassment, criminal proceedings and prison sentences against people for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Amnesty International calls on Cuban authorities to immediately release all people detained solely for peacefully exercising their human rights. In Jonathan’s case, the authorities must act urgently to protect a child’s life, health, safety and integrity, and ensure that any proceedings comply fully with international juvenile justice and fair trial standards.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 19 August 2026

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Jonathan David Muir Burgos, he/him