

Cuba's political prisoners

Cuba has agreed to free 52 political detainees in the island's largest mass liberation of prisoners of conscience in 12 years. The release follows high-profile hunger strikes and pressure from the Vatican and Spain



■ **1978:** Cuba's President **Fidel Castro** frees **3,600** political prisoners

■ **1998:** Castro releases **101** political prisoners after **Pope John Paul II's** visit to communist state

■ **Mar 2003:** **75** opposition activists imprisoned during "Black Spring"

■ **2006:** Fidel Castro hands over power to his younger brother **Raul Castro**. Number of political prisoners in Cuban jails stands at **316**

■ **2007:** Raul Castro sentences **325** opponents to short-term detention

■ **2008:** Number of long-term political prisoners falls to **234**. Short-term detentions soar to over **1,500**

Left to right: Guillermo Farinas, Orlando Zapata, Raul Castro, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos

■ **2009:** Number of long-term political prisoners falls to **205**

■ **Feb 2010:** **Orlando Zapata** dies after 85-day hunger strike. **Guillermo Farinas** begins hunger strike

■ **May-Jul:** Dialogue between Cuban government, Catholic church and Spain leads to announcement that 52 prisoners – jailed during Black Spring – will be released within four months

■ **Jul 12:** **First seven political prisoners freed by Cuba leave with their relatives for exile in Spain**