

# Cuban Baptist pastors fined but will not face prison

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Two Baptist pastors in Cuba who were detained for an extended period after nationwide protests July 11 will be fined but will not face prison sentences.



Yarian Sierra (left) and Yeremi Blanco from the Berean Baptist Mission in Matanza were detained nearly two weeks in Cuba. (Facebook Photo via CSW)

Yéremi Blanco Ramírez and Yarian Sierra Madrigal learned Sept. 1 the Cuban government will impose a fine—but not sentence them to prison—for participating in the protests, according to [Christian Solidarity Worldwide](#), a United Kingdom-based human rights organization focused on religious liberty.

The two Berean Baptist ministers, associated with William Carey Biblical Seminary, were [released from prison](#) in late July and placed under house arrest after being detained incommunicado nearly two weeks. The wife and

child of Sierra Madrigal were evicted from their home after state security officers threatened their landlord.

Blanco Ramirez and Sierra Madrigal were among the [Christian leaders who were detained](#) following the July 11 demonstrations throughout the nation. Protestors marched under the banner “Patria y Vida” (Homeland and Life), calling on the government to allow humanitarian aid into the country and make it accessible to the general population.

Yusniel Pérez Montejo, a minister affiliated with the Eastern Baptist Convention of Cuba, also was detained in connection with the July 11 demonstrations but released prior to the two Berean Baptist pastors.

Another Protestant minister, Lorenzo Rosales Fajardo, remains in detention after more than seven weeks. He was transferred to a maximum security prison on Aug. 9, and his appeal was denied by Cuban authorities.

While expressing thanks for the release of some prisoners of conscience, a spokesperson for Christian Solidarity Worldwide said Cuban authorities must do more.

“While we welcome the fact that Pastors Blanco Ramírez and Sierra Madrigal have not been handed prison sentences, we maintain that they never should have been imprisoned or accused of anything in the first place,” said Anna-Lee Stangl, head of advocacy for CSW.

“We are also deeply concerned at the continued and unjust detention of Pastor Rosales Fajardo. We call on the Cuban authorities to drop the charges against all three men, releasing Pastor Rosales Fajardo immediately and without condition, and cancelling any fines imposed on Pastors Blanco Ramírez and Sierra Madrigal.”