I. SUMMARY

1. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) decides to issue this follow-up resolution on precautionary measures in the terms of Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure. The Commission regrets the absence of the State response regarding the measures adopted to implement these precautionary measures. In view of the information available and evaluated as a whole, the Commission makes an urgent appeal to the Republic of Cuba to adopt prompt measures for the implementation of the precautionary measures considering that the risk factors remain in force under Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. On October 28, 2013, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights requested that precautionary measures be adopted for the members of the organization Damas de Blanco (Ladies in White), in Cuba. The request alleged that the members of Ladies in White were being subjected to threats, harassment, and acts of violence against them, as a retaliation for the peaceful demonstrations they carried out in order to expose the situation of persons identified as “political dissidents” in Cuba.

3. Upon analyzing the submissions of fact and law offered by the applicants, the Commission considered that the information submitted showed prima facie that the members of the Ladies in White were in a serious and urgent situation, given that their rights to life and personal integrity were at risk of irreparable harm. The Commission identified as beneficiaries the members of the Ladies in White, who numbered approximately 237 persons, identified at the time in the lists provided by the applicants. The Commission also indicated that these persons “may be identifiable because of their membership in the said organization.”

4. Consequently, in accordance with Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the IACHR, the Commission requested that Cuba:

   a) Adopt the necessary measures to protect the rights to life and personal integrity of the members of the Ladies in White organization;

   b) Consult and agree upon the measures to be adopted with the beneficiaries and their representatives; and

   c) Report on the actions undertaken to investigate the alleged events that led to the adoption of this precautionary measure, so as to prevent them from reoccurring¹.

5. On May 12, 2014, the IACHR extended the precautionary measures in favor of Mileidis Cabrera Leiva, Yelenni Aguiler Santo, Miladis Escalona Lissabet, Bertha Guerrero Segura, Yaniuska Mayo Céspedes, and María Teresa García Roja, members of the Ladies in White organization. The Commission requested that the State:

a) Take the necessary measures to preserve the life and personal integrity of the persons identified as members of the Ladies in White organization;

b) Consult and agree upon the measures to be adopted with the beneficiaries and their representatives; and

Report on the actions taken to investigate the alleged facts that gave rise to the adoption and extension of this precautionary measure, so as to prevent them from reoccurring.2

6. Following the granting and extension of the precautionary measures, the State has not provided any response to the IACHR, and the timelines granted have expired.

7. Initially, the request for precautionary measures was filed by the Cubalex Legal Information Center. Subsequently, the Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights was incorporated as a representative.

III. SUMMARY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE PARTIES FOLLOWING THE GRANTING OF THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

8. During the time the precautionary measures have been in force, the Commission has followed-up on the situation that is the subject matter of these precautionary measures by requesting information from the parties in accordance with Article 25(10) of the Rules of Procedure. After the granting of the precautionary measures, the representatives continued to submit information on the situation of the members of Ladies in White. The Commission notes that, to date, the State has not submitted any relevant observations or information on this matter. In this sense, none of the allegations presented by the representatives has been disputed throughout these proceedings.

A. Information provided by the representatives

9. On August 12, 2016, the beneficiaries’ representatives reported that Leticia Ramos Herrería, representative of the Ladies in White Movement for the province of Matanzas, had been subjected to harassment by state authorities. On August 9, 2016, while riding a motorcycle, she was allegedly hit by a police vehicle and subsequently detained from 9:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. As a result of these events, she is said to have suffered injuries and bruises on her leg and hand. Furthermore, during her detention, Ms. Ramos was allegedly threatened with death by State agents if she attempted to leave the country. She was then reportedly taken home with a prohibition to leave. Despite having been informed of a formal accusation against her, Ms. Ramos would not have been notified by means of any document on the charges against her or the judicial progress of them.

10. On August 22, 2016, the representatives reported that a constant operation of state agents surrounded Ms. Ramos’ house. Concerning Ms. Heredia Morales, the representatives indicated that she was detained on April 15, 2016, for participating in a peaceful protest. As of the date of the communication, it was alleged that she was still being held in the prison for HIV-infected persons. It was noted that she had no safe drinking water, proper nutrition or access to antiretroviral drugs. It was also indicated that, at that time, Ms. Heredia did not have an official document supporting the allegations of public disorder and resistance made against her.

Additionally, Ms. Heredia had not appeared before a judge at the time of her arrest. Regarding Ms. Xiomara de las Mercedes Cruz de Miranda, the representatives indicated that she was arrested on April 15, 2016, she had been accused of public disorder and resistance without any official document explaining the accusation. Likewise, she would not have had the opportunity to appear before a judge. With regard to Ms. Nieto Muñoz, the representatives inform that she was reportedly arrested on July 11, 2016, on charges of public disorder. No official document would have been handed over and she would not have had the opportunity to appear before a judge at the time.

11. On May 2, 2017, the representatives indicated that, after participating in the Thematic Hearing on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in Cuba that took place on April 8, 2017, before the IACHR, Ms. Ramos’ house was allegedly the subject of an operation by state authorities to prohibit her from leaving. The representatives reported that, in attempting to leave, she was detained, interrogated and sometimes beaten. The State authorities would not have provided any formal charges against her. On 25 April 2017, Ms. Ramos was reportedly arrested while attempting to participate in a protest. When she was forced into a police vehicle, Ms. Ramos reportedly suffered a cut in the hip. Afterwards, she was admitted for dehydration and, a month later, had surgery for the infection of the hip wound.

12. On January 7, 2021, the representatives submitted information. On that occasion, they reported that on several occasions police officers had been operating on the outskirts of Ms. Ramos’ house for weeks. From February 2020, every Sunday a patrol reportedly arrives at the beneficiary’s house in the early hours of the morning until approximately 1:00 p.m. in order to prevent her from participating in the demonstrations called by the Ladies in White. On November 22, 2020, Ms. Ramos Herrería reportedly left her home to participate in a demonstration. However, she was reportedly questioned by a State agent to the effect that her participation was not permitted. When she refused to return home, she was reportedly detained in a patrol car for two hours. Once returned to her home, the state agents remained on the outskirts until 8:00 p.m. Eventually, she was allowed to leave the house to obtain food, always under surveillance by State Security agents. Ms. Ramos indicated that surveillance would have stopped on December 18 and would have resumed on December 23, 2020. When she tried to leave her home, State agents reportedly questioned her and told her that she could not leave her house because she had a police restriction. Nevertheless, the beneficiary would have decided to continue and was followed by agents to her son’s house.

13. On October 28, 2021, the representatives submitted information regarding the persons listed below. Regarding Ms. Berta Soler Fernández, on July 13, 2021, she was reportedly detained with her husband at her place of residence. Both were then taken to different police units and informed that they were charged with the crime of “disturbing the peace” for having participated in a demonstration on the day of their arrest. Since then, both the beneficiary and her husband would be detained if they leave the headquarters of the Ladies in White (which is also their place of residence) and are under surveillance. Likewise, they have not been sent any notice of trial or information on charges against them. On July 16, 2021, Ms. Soler Fernández was reportedly arrested by State Security agents at 8:20 a.m. and released at 10:20 p.m. on the public road near the Ladies in White headquarters. On July 19, 2021, Ms. Soler Fernández was reportedly detained on two occasions, between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and at 11:20 a.m. The arresting officer indicated that she had an arrest warrant against her and that she could not leave or take the bus. On July 26, 2021, the beneficiary was reportedly detained by State Security. The detention reportedly took place at 10:30 a.m. as she was on her way to participate in a peaceful protest. Ms. Soler Fernandez was presumably released at 9:20 p.m. On August 9, 2021, Ms. Soler Fernandez was stopped at 10:30 a.m. at a bus stop. She was then taken to the Police Unit until she was released at 8:45 p.m. Ms. Soler Fernandez would not have had service on her cell phone from 9 a.m. on August 24 until 7:30 a.m. the next day. On September 6, 2021, Ms. Soler Fernández's surveillance would have been intensified. Several people in civilian clothes stood outside her home at 7 a.m. and remained there until September 8 at 9 p.m. On September 23, 2021, Ms. Soler was stopped at a bus stop along with her husband. Both were on their way to the Attorney General's Office to deliver a document requesting proof of life for José Daniel Ferrer García, director of the Patriotic Union of Cuba. Once at the Police Unit, the document was confiscated, and they were
released at 9:00 p.m. On September 24, 2021, Ms. Soler Fernández was reportedly detained by a State Security agent and locked in a cell for two hours. After being taken to an interrogation room, she was released in the street at 8:40 p.m. On October 14, Ms. Soler Fernandez and her husband’s internet and cell phone service was reportedly turned off. On October 15, 2021, when they went to complain to the Cuban Telecommunications Company, they were reportedly detained and transferred to different police units. Both were released on the public road at around 8:45 p.m. On October 19, 2021, the couple were reportedly arrested again at 12:40 p.m., forced into unidentified cars and transferred to different Police Units. The husband was released at 4:10 p.m.; and Ms. Soler Fernandez, at 8:15 p.m.

14. Regarding Ms. María Cristina Labrada Varona, it was reported that on July 11, 2021, the beneficiary’s home would have been placed under surveillance by agents of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police from 12:30 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. On July 13, 2021, the surveillance of the beneficiary’s home would have lasted from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On August 2, 2021, Ms. Labrada Varona was reportedly arrested at 11:10 a.m., detained for an hour in a patrol car, taken to a police unit and locked in a meeting room. She was released at 8:40 p.m. On September 8, 2021, the beneficiary's home was reportedly under surveillance from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., prohibiting her from leaving the house to attend Mass.

15. Concerning Ms. Lourdes Esquivel Vieyto, the representatives pointed out that between July 11 and July 28, 2021, her home would have remained under surveillance by State Security and the National Revolutionary Police. On July 19, 2021, Ms. Esquivel Vieyto was reportedly arrested at 7:30 a.m. upon leaving her home to attend her husband’s trial. She was later reportedly released at 1:30 p.m., after the end of the trial. Ms. Esquivel Vieyto’s home remained under surveillance from September 7 at 6:00 a.m., until 10:00 p.m. the next day. The State Security agents and the National Revolutionary Police, in charge of the surveillance, reportedly prohibited her from leaving the house to attend Mass.

16. Ms. Leticia Ramos Herrería, the representatives indicated that the State Security and the National Revolutionary Police would have monitored her house from 5:00 a.m. on September 7, until 9:00 p.m. the following day, prohibiting her from leaving the house. In the following days, on September 11, 2021, the beneficiary would have received a summons at 11:00 a.m. to appear half an hour later. Given the short notice, Ms. Ramos Herrera would have presented herself at 12:20 p.m. Once at the Police Unit, she was allegedly “threatened” with a 25-year prison sentence and informed that she was under a precautionary measure of “limitation of movement” for participating in the demonstrations of July 11 and 12, 2021.

17. With regard to Ms. Amada Rosa Herrería Rodríguez, the representatives indicate that the State Security and the National Revolutionary Police would have surveilled her house from 5:00 a.m. on September 7 to 9:00 p.m. on September 8, prohibiting her from leaving it. Regarding Ms. Caridad María Burunate Gómez, the representatives inform that her home was under surveillance from 6:00 a.m. on September 7 to 10:00 p.m. on September 8, prohibiting her from leaving it to attend Mass. Likewise, the representative informs Ms. Asunción Carrillo Hernández that her house would have been surveilled from 6:00 a.m. on September 7 to 10:00 p.m. on September 8, prohibiting her from leaving it to attend Mass.

18. In relation to Ms. Tania Echevarría Menéndez, the representatives indicated that on July 13, 2021, she was reportedly intimidated by a State Security agent for having posters in favor of people detained during the July 11 demonstrations. At 11:00 a.m. three patrols and a truck full of soldiers would have arrived at her house and painted the facade. She was also confiscated two bottles of oil, 2000 Cuban pesos (CUP) and a cell phone. She was reportedly fined 3000 Cuban pesos (CUP) and told that if she continued to support detainees, her husband, in prison, might feel the consequences. On August 2, 2021, Ms. Echevarría Menéndez was reportedly detained by State Security agents in front of the national headquarters of the Ladies in White at 11:10 a.m. She was held in a patrol car for approximately one hour and after being directed to an office of the Police Unit, she was released on the public road at 1:40 p.m. Ms. Echevarría Menéndez’s home would have been under
surveillance from 7:00 a.m. on September 8 until 8:00 a.m. on September 9, prohibiting her from leaving to attend mass. On September 18, 2021, Ms. Echevarría Menéndez reportedly received a summons to appear before the Police Unit of her neighborhood. Once there, she would have been informed that she was charged with the crime of public disorder and incitement to commit a crime. She was verbally informed that her trial would take place on September 28, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. in the Colon-Matanzas Municipal Court. On September 27, 2021, Ms. Echavarría Menéndez went to the law firm in her neighborhood, where she was informed that no documentation had been received from the court but that, likewise, she should appear the next day. In the end, the trial did not take place, but the Matanzas Provincial Prosecutor’s Office reportedly filed a petition for a seven-year sentence for her participation in the July 11 protests, and also requested confirmation of her preventive measure of house arrest.

19. Regarding Ms. Sonia Álvarez Campillo, the representatives indicated that her residence was under surveillance by agents of the State Security and the National Revolutionary Police from 7:00 a.m. on September 7 until 10:00 p.m. on September 8. When attempting to leave the house at 8:00 a.m. on September 8, 2021, to attend Mass, Ms. Álvarez Campillo was reportedly prevented by the agents. In relation to Ms. Sayli Navarro Álvarez, the representatives indicated that the beneficiary had participated in the public demonstrations of July 11, 2021, with her father. The following day, Ms. Navarro Álvarez went with her father to the Perico Police Unit to inquire about people arrested the day before. Once there, they would both have been arrested. Several women immobilized Ms. Navarro Álvarez, grabbing her by the neck. They would have said that she was charged with the crime of assault and was under house arrest until the day of her trial. At 7:30 p.m. she was allowed to return home. On September 3, 2021, Ms. Navarro Álvarez allegedly received a summons to appear before the Perico Police Unit the following day at 10:00 a.m. Upon arrival, she would have been informed that her precautionary measure may be modified if she leaves the municipality, resulting in her transfer to prison pending trial. Ms. Navarro Álvarez’s home would have been under surveillance from 6:00 a.m. on September 7 until 10:00 p.m. on September 8, prohibiting her from leaving to attend Mass.

20. On May 20, 2022, the representatives submitted information. The representatives addressed the situation of short-term detention, which they described as arbitrary. This situation would have intensified as of January 23, 2021, following the announcement by the Ladies in White to resume the protest actions interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Until May 16, 2022, there have been uninterrupted detentions and fines against members of the Ladies in White for 15 Sundays.

21. Regarding Ms. Leticia Herrera Ramos, the beneficiary’s representation reported that she was arrested on November 3, 2021, by the State Security Department and the National Revolutionary Police. The detention lasted from 4 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Likewise, she would have been threatened with imprisonment if she went out to demonstrate on the 15th on the occasion of the “Civic March for Change”. Regarding Ms. Jacqueline Heredia Morales, she was reportedly arrested at the door of the national headquarters of the Ladies in White on November 8, 2021. She would have been transferred to the unit of the National Revolutionary Police of Aguilera and there she would have been told that the national headquarters would be under surveillance and that she would not be able to enter it from November 12 to November 15, 2021. On November 14, 2021, Ms. Yolanda Santana Ayala and Lourdes Esquivel Vieyto were reportedly arrested. Ms. Santana Ayala would have been arrested at 11:00 a.m. and released the following day at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Esquivel Vieyto was reportedly arrested with her husband at 3:00 p.m. and released on the 16th at 2:00 a.m.

22. On November 15, 2021, three arrests allegedly took place. Ms. Micaela Roll Gilbert was reportedly arrested by agents of the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police at 3:45 p.m. and released at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Celina Osoria Claro was reportedly arrested, and her home raided by the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police. Four cell phones and two tablets were allegedly confiscated. Ms. Leticia Ramos Herrería was reportedly arrested at 1:40 p.m. by agents of the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police and released at 7:00 p.m. On November 19, 2021, Ms. Oylin Hernández Rodríguez was reportedly arrested by the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police.
Revolutionary Police agents from 1:35 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. On November 23, 2021, Ms. Jacqueline Heredia Morales was reportedly arrested and detained at 2:00 p.m., when she left the national headquarters of Ladies in White with her daughter. Their identity card would have been held for a few minutes, although they would not have been taken to a police unit.

23. On Sunday, February 13, 2022, on the occasion of the Sunday Mass, several arrests and, in some cases, fines of the following beneficiaries took place: Berta Soler Fernández, Leticia Ramos Herrera, Marisol Fernández Socorro, Odalis Hernández Hernández, Mercedes Figueroa Rodríguez, Luz Caridad Águeda Pino, Caridad Burunate Gómez, Asunción Carrillo Hernández, Maritza Acosta Perdomo, Mayra García Álvarez, Yelena Marrero Burunate Gómez, Sayli Navarro Álvarez, Sonia Álvarez Campillo, Yessenia Campillo García, Lazara León Cabrera, Lazarahy Valido Cambert, Soraya Vicencio Campos, Julia Herrera Roques, Yunet Cairo Reigada, Yolanda Santana Ayala, Reyna Rodríguez Cañada, Yraisel Clavel Masía, Euledi Sánchez Rodríguez, Oylin Hernández Rodríguez, María Rosa Rodríguez Molina, Lourdes Esquivel Vieyto, Zenaida Hidalgo Cedeño, Gladis Capote Roque, Mercedes de la Guardia, Yudaixis Pérez Meneses, Annia Zamora Carmenate, Norma Cabrera Valiente, and Lazara León Cabrera.

24. On February 22, 2022, Ms. Zenaida Hidalgo Cedeño was reportedly arrested by agents of the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police. On Sunday, February 27, 2022, on the occasion of the Sunday Mass, several arrests and, in some cases, fines of the following beneficiaries took place: Berta Soler Fernández, Sayli Navarro Álvarez, Sonia Álvarez Campillo, Annia Zamora Carmenate, Lazarahy Valido Cambert, Soraya Vicencio Campos, Maritza Acosta Perdomo, Mayra García Álvarez, Yudaixis Pérez Meneses, Caridad Burunate Gómez, Asunción Carrillo Hernández, Luz Caridad Águeda Pino, Marisol Fernández Socorro, Odalis Hernández Hernández, Mercedes Figueroa Rodríguez, Rebeca Santo Hernández, Elsa Osiris Castro Paula, Mercedes de la Guardia, Reyna Rodríguez Cañada, and Celina Osoria Claro.

25. On February 28, 2022, agents of the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police reportedly arrested Ms. Yolanda Santana Ayala. On April 1, 2022, Ms. Maria Josefa Acon Sardiña was reportedly arrested along with her youngest daughter by agents of the State Security Department. The arrest would have lasted from 4:30 p.m. until approximately 6:30 p.m. and would have taken place when the beneficiary was on her way to Aymara Nieto’s home. During the arrest, Ms. Acon Sardiña was allegedly threatened so that she would not make any further visits. On Sunday, April 3, 2022, Ms. Berta Soler Fernández was reportedly arrested with her husband as she left the national headquarters of the Ladies in White by members of the Rapid Response Brigades and people dressed in civilian clothes. Once transferred to a first police unit, a medical check-up would have been carried out. In another unit, a fine of 150 Cuban pesos would have been imposed. The beneficiary would have remained confined in a cell until 1:05 a.m. the following day.

26. Further arrests were reportedly made on Sunday, April 3, 2022. Ms. Lourdes Esquivel Vieyto was reportedly detained when she left her home from 7:45 a.m. to 8:50 a.m. and then placed under surveillance. Ms. Gladis Capote Roque was reportedly arrested when she left her home at 8:15 a.m. by plain-clothed guards and kept in a patrol car until 11:40 a.m. Ms. Zenaida Hidalgo Cedeño was reportedly arrested between 8:35 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Ms. Leticia Ramos Herrera was purportedly arrested between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Ms. Marisol Fernández Socorro was reportedly arrested between 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Ms. Luz Caridad Águeda Pino was reportedly detained between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Ms. Mercedes Figueroa Rodríguez was reportedly arrested between 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Ms. Mercedes de la Guardia was reportedly arrested between 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Ms. Odalis Hernández Hernández was reportedly detained between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Ms. Annaia Zamora Carmenate was reportedly arrested between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. and fined 150 Cuban pesos (CUP). Ms. Sayli Navarro Álvarez was reportedly arrested between 8:25 a.m. and 12:12 p.m. and fined 150 Cuban pesos (CUP). Ms. Sonia Álvarez Campillo was reportedly arrested between 8:30 a.m. and 12:12 p.m. Ms. Yudaixis Pérez Meneses was reportedly arrested at 10:00 a.m. and taken to an office of the local Psychiatric Hospital and released at 12:00 p.m. Ms. Mayra García Álvarez was reportedly arrested between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Ms. Asunción Carrillo Hernández was reportedly kept in a patrol car from 11:00 a.m.
to 12:00 p.m. Ms. Maritza Acosta Perdomo was reportedly arrested between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Ms. Lazarahy Valido Cambert was reportedly arrested between 6:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Ms. Julia Silvia González was reportedly detained between 2:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Ms. Celina Osoria Claro was reportedly detained between 6:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and threatened with imprisonment.

27. On April 4, 2022, Ms. Gladis Capote Roque was reportedly arrested between 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. and fined 150 Cuban pesos. She was also allegedly threatened with prison for going to the headquarters of the Ladies in White or walking down the street with Ms. Berta Soler Fernández. On April 6, 2022, Ms. Leticia Ramos Herrerías was reportedly arrested at 6:15 p.m. and fined 3000 Cuban pesos (CUP), and summoned for the following day by State Security. On April 10, 2022, on the occasion of Sunday Mass, the arrests of Berta Soler Fernández, Lourdes Esquivel Veyto, Leticia Ramos Herrería, Marisol Fernández Socorro, Luz Caridad Águila Pino, Mercedes Figueroa Rodríguez, Annia Zamora Carmenate, Yudaixis Pérez Meneses and Mayra García Álvarez were reported. On April 17, 2022, on the occasion of Sunday Mass, the arrests of Berta Soler Fernández, Lourdes Esquivel Veyto, Gladis Capote Roque, Yolanda Santana Ayala, Leticia Ramos Herrería, Marisol Fernández Socorro, Mercedes Figueroa Rodríguez, Lazarahy Valido Cambert, Soraya Vicencio Campos, Yudaixis Pérez Meneses, Mayra García Álvarez, Asunción Carrillo Hernández, Maritza Acosta Perdomo, Annia Zamora Carmenate, Sayli Navarro Álvarez, Sonia Álvarez Campillo and Celina Osoria Claro were reported.

28. On April 24, 2022, when going to or returning to Sunday Mass, the arrests of Berta Soler Fernández, María Josefa Acon Sardiña, Luz Caridad Águila Pino, Marisol Fernández Socorro, Mercedes Figueroa Rodríguez, Lazarahy Valido Cambert, Soraya Vicencio Campos, Yudaixis Pérez Meneses, Mayra García Álvarez, Maritza Acosta Perdomo, Caridad Burunate Gómez, Annia Zamora Carmenate, Sonia Álvarez Campillo, Julia Silvia González Fundora, Marbelis Gonzales Reyes, and Yaima Elena Pérez López were reported. On April 30, 2022, Ms. Lourdes Esquivel Veyto was reportedly notified of the conjugal visit in the Combinado del Este prison at 4:00 p.m. Once there, the visit, which was to last three hours, would have lasted until May 1 at 1:30 a.m., when she was detained in the visiting area with her husband. On May 15, 2022, 19 members of Ladies in White were reportedly arrested when they went to or returned to the Sunday Mass.

29. In May 2022, the representatives reported on alleged continued harassment and persistent surveillance of the beneficiaries’ homes. Regarding Ms. Sissi Abascal, the representatives reported that she had been the victim of a trial that qualifies as rigged by the State Security Department for participating in the demonstrations of July 11, 2021. The trial was reportedly held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and concluded with a 6-year prison sentence. Her sentence was due to be issued on December 18, 2021. On November 12, 2021, Ms. Lourdes Esquivel Veyto’s home was allegedly besieged and placed under surveillance by agents of the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. the following day. On November 13, 2021, the homes of Celina Osoria Claro, María Josefa Acon Sardiña and Maria Cristina Labrada Varona were allegedly besieged and put under surveillance by agents of the State Security Department and the National Revolutionary Police. This situation purportedly lasted until November 15 between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. On the same day, November 13, Ms. Oylin Hernández Rodríguez and Ms. Maria Rosa Rodríguez Molina were reportedly summoned by the Department of State Security for the following day at 10:00 a.m. There they would have been threatened if they could not go out on the streets on November 15.

30. On November 14, 2021, the homes of Jacqueline Heredia Morales, Caridad Burunate Gómez, and Asunción Carrillo Hernández were allegedly besieged and placed under surveillance from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on November 15. On November 15, 2021, the homes of Ms. Yunet Cairo Reigada and Julia Herrera Roque were allegedly besieged and placed under surveillance from early morning until 7:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. respectively. On the same day, Sissi Abascal Zamora and Annia Zamora Carmenate were reportedly warned by the Department of State Security that they could not leave their homes and remained under surveillance. On November 20, 2021, Ms. Lourdes Esquivel Veyto’s home was allegedly besieged and placed under surveillance by agents of the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. On November 25, 2021, Ms. Yolanda Santana Ayala’s home was allegedly besieged and placed under
surveillance by the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. On the same day, Berta Soler Fernández allegedly suffered a cut in internet service from 10:00 a.m., a situation that would last until November 27 at 6:30 a.m.

31. On November 27, 2021, Ms. Lourdes Esquivel Vieyto’s home was allegedly besieged and placed under surveillance by agents of the Department of State Security and the National Revolutionary Police from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The following day, surveillance would have been extended from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. On November 29, 2021, this situation would have lasted from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and the next day the surveillance would have taken place between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. On February 22, 2022, the beneficiary’s home was besieged again. This situation was reportedly repeated three times during the month of April. On April 1, 2022, Ms. Esquivel Vieyto’s home was besieged and guarded between 8:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. On April 11, 2022, the same events occurred between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and on April 20 these events took place between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

32. On February 22, 2022, the homes of María Josefa Acon Sardiña and Celina Osoria Claro were allegedly besieged. On April 26, 2022, Ms. Yolanda Santana Ayala was reportedly summoned by the fines office to warn her that non-payment would result in imprisonment. After the summons, agents of the Department of State Security besieged her home. On April 29, 2022, Ms. María Cristina Labrada Varona’s home was besieged and remained under surveillance from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 a.m. on May 1, 2022. On April 30, 2022, Ms. Yolanda Santana Ayala’s home was allegedly besieged and placed under surveillance from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on May 1, 2022. On the same day, the house of Ms. María Josefa Acon Sardiña was allegedly besieged and placed under surveillance from 6:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on May 1, 2022. On May 1, 2022, several members of the Ladies in White reportedly woke up with their homes besieged and under surveillance.

33. Finally, in May 2022, the representative party reported on the situation of various members of the Ladies in White who would be deprived of their liberty, which, according to the representative, responds to “political reasons.” Ms. Martha Sánchez González would be on probation since December 2021 after serving a four-year and six-month effective prison sentence. The penalty imposed would be for the offences of contempt, defamation and disobedience. Ms. Aymara Nieto Muñoz would be deprived of liberty serving a four-year prison sentence imposed in 2019 for the crimes of attack, public disorder and damage. A second conviction was allegedly confirmed on February 20, 2022, in which she was accused of organizing a riot in prison in January 2020. Ms. Nieto Muñoz would have been imprisoned earlier. On June 3, 2017, she was reportedly sentenced to one year’s imprisonment along with prisoners for common crimes for an alleged crime of public disorder. The representative points out that the lady had two daughters under the age of 10 at the time and that her husband was also in prison and was not released until April 2018.

34. On December 27, 2021, Ms. Sissi Abascal Zamora was reportedly sentenced to six years in prison on charges of contempt, public disorder and assault. The representative alleges that the conviction took place after her participation in the demonstration on July 11 and that the oral trial was rigged by the Department of State Security. Likewise, her father, who accompanied her on the day of the demonstration, was reportedly imprisoned for 45 days. On 19 January 2022, Jacqueline Heredia Morales was reportedly informed of a final sentence of three-year imprisonment without detention for her participation in the 2019 “Sunflowers March.” On April 14, 2022, Ms. Tania Echevarría Menéndez was reportedly sentenced to six years in prison with imprisonment for crimes of public disorder and contempt. On April 18, 2022, Ms. Sayli Navarro Alvares was reportedly arrested to serve an eight-year sentence for crimes of public disorder, contempt, and assault related to her participation in the July 11 protests.

B. Information provided by the State
35. Following the granting of the precautionary measures, the Commission has not received a response from the State on the corresponding implementation of these precautionary measures. Nor has it received information indicating that the State has been adopting measures in this regard. The above situation has been maintained over time despite the requests for information made to the State through communications from the IACHR of May 12, 2017, April 19, 2021, September 29, 2021, and March 18, 2022.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF URGENCY, SERIOUSNESS, AND IRREPARABLE HARM

36. The precautionary measures mechanism is part of the Commission’s function of overseeing compliance with the human rights obligations set forth in Article 106 of the Charter of the Organization of American States. These general oversight functions are established in Article 41(b) of the American Convention on Human Rights, as well as in Article 18(b) of the IACHR Statute. The mechanism of precautionary measures is set forth in Article 25 of the Commission’s Rules of Procedure. In accordance with that Article, the Commission grants precautionary measures in serious and urgent situations in which these measures are necessary to avoid irreparable harm to persons or to the subject matter of a petition or case before the organs of the inter-American system.

37. The Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (“the Inter-American Court” or “I/A Court H.R.”) have repeatedly established that precautionary and provisional measures have a dual nature, both protective and precautionary.3 Regarding the protective nature, these measures seek to avoid irreparable harm and protect the exercise of human rights.4 To do this, the IACHR shall assess the problem raised, the effectiveness of state actions to address the situation described, and how vulnerable the persons proposed as beneficiaries would be left in case the measures are not adopted.5 Regarding their precautionary nature, these measures have the purpose of preserving a legal situation while under consideration by the organs of the inter-American system. The precautionary nature aims at safeguarding the rights at risk until the petition pending before the inter-American system is resolved. Their object and purpose are to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of an eventual decision on the merits and, thus, avoid any further infringement of the rights at issue, a situation that may adversely affect the useful effect of the final decision. In this regard, precautionary or provisional measures enable the State concerned to comply with the final decision and, if necessary, to implement the ordered reparations. In the process of reaching a decision, according to Article 25(2) of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission considers that:

a. “serious situation” refers to a grave impact that an action or omission can have on a protected right or on the eventual effect of a pending decision in a case or petition before the organs of the inter-American system;

b. “urgent situation” refers to risk or threat that is imminent and can materialize, thus requiring immediate preventive or protective action; and

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3 See in this regard: I/A Court H.R. Matter of the Yare I and Yare II Capital Region Penitentiary Center, Request for Provisional Measures submitted by the IACHR regarding the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Order of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of March 30, 2006, considerandum 5; I/A Court H.R. Case of Carpio Nicolet et al. v. Guatemala, Provisional Measures, Order of July 6, 2009, considerandum 16.


c. “irreparable harm” refers to injury to rights which, due to their nature, would not be susceptible to reparation, restoration or adequate compensation.

38. With respect to the foregoing, Article 25(9) provides that the Commission shall evaluate periodically, at its own initiative or at the request of either party, whether to maintain, modify or lift the precautionary measures in force. In this regard, the Commission should assess if the situation’s severity and urgency and the possibility of irreparable harm that caused the adoption of the precautionary measures persists. Moreover, the Commission shall consider whether new situations that might meet the requirements set forth in Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure have subsequently arisen. Similarly, Article 25.10 establishes that the Commission shall take appropriate follow-up measures, such as requesting relevant information from the interested parties on any matter related to the granting, observance and maintenance of precautionary measures. These measures may include, as appropriate, timetables for implementation, hearings, working meetings, and visits for follow-up and review. Through Resolution 2/2020 of April 15, 2020, the IACHR ruled on the possibility of issuing Follow-up Resolutions.

39. Considering the nature of the information available and given the lack of response from the State over time, the Commission considers it appropriate to assess the situation of the beneficiaries in the terms of Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure. The Commission recalls that, in the instant matter, it has made requests for information to the parties under the terms of the Rules of Procedure, receiving a response only from the representatives. With this Follow-up Resolution, the Commission seeks to make visible the situation that the beneficiaries continue to face in the current context that Cuba is going through, considering the vulnerabilities to which they have been exposed over time. In addition, the Commission decides to issue this resolution considering the lack of information from the State on the measures effectively adopted and in response to the request of the representatives to adopt actions to guarantee the effectiveness of these precautionary measures.

40. The Commission carries out the corresponding analysis in the following order: (i) Universe of the proposed beneficiaries; (ii) Current compliance with the requirements established in Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure; and (iii) Request for consent for a working visit.

(i) Universe of the proposed beneficiaries

41. In relation to the universe of beneficiaries, the Commission recalls that the precautionary measures were initially granted in favor of 237 persons fully identified in lists provided by the applicants. Subsequently, the Commission extended these measures to six additional members. In that regard, the Commission protected duly identified individuals who, in turn, belonged to the Ladies in White organization in Cuba.

42. After the follow-up in the matter at hand, the Commission notes that the representatives did not submit individualized information on each of the identified beneficiaries. However, the Commission notes from the information available that the members of the Ladies in White organization share common risk factors because of their relevance to that organization, particularly in the identified context of the country. In this sense, the available individualized information allows this Commission to chart the different risk events that all the members of that organization face in common. In making this determination, the Commission recalls that Article 25(3) of its Rules of Procedure allows for the protection of persons who may be identifiable through, inter alia, their membership or association with a group or organization.

43. Likewise, the Commission understands that the members of the Ladies in White organization are changing over time, considering that new people join, and others leave, depending on various factors. In this way, the current members of Ladies in White may not include the 237 people initially protected, or may include new ones. To this end, the Commission considers, on the basis of the information available, that it is sufficiently proven that there is a risk common to all members of Ladies in White in Cuba for their institutional actions.
44. Given the current context in Cuba, the Commission also identifies that the representatives have serious challenges in obtaining information from each and every one of the current members of the Ladies in White organization. Without prejudice to this, and in order for this Commission to be able to carry out a proper monitoring of the situation of the members of the organization, the representation is required to periodically update the list of people who make up it. Notwithstanding, and in order for this Commission to be able to duly monitor the situation of the members of the organization, the representation is required to periodically update the list of persons who are members of the organization. For such purposes and following the provisions of the 2013 Granting Resolution and other Follow-up Resolutions, \(^6\) the Commission considers the following factors to be relevant to identify the persons of the organization covered under this resolution:

i. These are women members of the Ladies in White organization;

ii. They reportedly carry out peaceful rallies, with the purpose of protesting and exposing the human rights situation that their relatives and people of political dissent would be facing;

iii. They allegedly attend mass every Sunday in different Catholic churches;

iv. They dress in white;

v. They generally carry the portraits of their relatives and flowers; and

vi. After the religious services they would march in silence through various streets along several locations in Cuba. \(^7\)

45. Consequently, the Commission decides, under the terms of Article 25(3) of its Rules of Procedure, to continue to monitor these precautionary measures in favor of the women of the Ladies in White organization, whose members are identifiable by reason of their relevance and link with the organization in the terms established in the paragraph above. With a view to keeping a list of the women members of Ladies in White, the Commission requests the representatives to update the census of its members on a regular basis. This will allow this Commission to properly monitor their situation under the terms of Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure, and to have up-to-date information on who the current members are, in a timely manner. The Commission also requests that the representation include, together with the updated census, the concrete facts that the identified persons have been facing in the country.

46. The information on who the current members of the organization Ladies in White are, as well as the facts they face, must be shared with the State in the consultation forums. Failing this, the Commission will send the State the information on the current members of the organization on the understanding that the State must know the beneficiaries that this international body has asked it to protect in the terms of the applicable international standards. Inasmuch as Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure establishes that a periodic evaluation regarding the compliance with the procedural requirements shall be carried out, the Commission may subsequently evaluate the validity of the procedural requirements.

(ii) Current compliance with the requirements set forth in Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure

47. The Commission has been monitoring the situation of women members of Ladies in White in Cuba over time, in particular, as well as the human rights situation in general. \(^8\) In the 2018 Report on Freedom of Expression in Cuba, the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression expressed concern about the harassment and acts of pressure and violence against the Ladies in White organization. \(^9\) Similarly, the

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\(^6\) IACHR, Resolution 88/2021, Precautionary Measures No. 405-09 and 112-16. Berta Isabel Cáceres, her nuclear family, members of COPINH, et al. regarding. Honduras., November 15, 2021, para. 69

\(^7\) For example, during 2018, the IACHR issued two letters requesting information from the State and published two press releases: IACHR, Press Release 98/2018, The IACHR publishes a substantive report in a case related to the criminalization of opinion and political deliberation in Cuba, April 11, 2018 and IACHR, Press Release R152/18, The Office of the Special Rapporteur expresses concern about criminal convictions for contempt of court in Cuba, July 17, 2018.

Commission noted in its 2020 Annual Report that this organization was among those that are frequently affected in the context of human rights violations in the country.10

48. In the 2020 Report on the “Human Rights Situation in Cuba,” the Commission highlighted testimonies of women activists in Cuba about what the detentions would look like. In this regard, the testimonies indicated that:

“The detentions in the case of women activists are very cruel, they do not give you explanation in the street in the house, public place. I have been detained in the same way with both women and men, the detentions are much crueler because the women are very loud and shout a lot. They say they are activists, so they attack harder. They cover your mouth, they hit you in your face.”11

49. In 2020, the Commission also expressed concern about the use of criminal law against people who demonstrate critically against government officials, including the situation of the members of Ladies in White. In this regard, the following was indicated:

The IACHR and its Office of the Special Rapporteur have consistently expressed concern about information on the use of criminal law - through criminal offenses such as contempt, assault, and public disorder-as a mechanism for subsequent accountability against those who express opinions, information, or some type of criticism on issues of public interest, or who refer to authorities or government officials. This is one of the most severe tactics used against deliberate groups. In this regard, some of the civil society organizations that remain active, despite the fact that proceedings are repeatedly brought against them, are [...] the Ladies in White.12

50. Taking into account the above context in the country, the Commission proceeds to analyze the specific situation alleged of the beneficiaries. In this regard, the Commission notes that, from 2016 to date, the following events have occurred against the beneficiaries:

- Harassment of the beneficiaries, which has been attributed to state authorities.
- Death threats against the beneficiaries, which were attributed to state authorities.
- De facto prohibitions to prevent beneficiaries from leaving their homes freely. When they tried to leave, state agents would stop them and sometimes beat them.
- Operations of State agents in the homes of the beneficiaries or periodic monitoring of their homes by State agents and/or persons dressed in civilian clothes, which may extend for several consecutive days.
- Follow-up of beneficiaries during their movements by State agents and during their participation in demonstrations.
- Opening of proceedings against beneficiaries without them being duly notified of them, it being alleged that certain beneficiaries would not have initial knowledge of the charges against them.
- Detentions that are not necessarily linked to judicial proceedings, which have been accompanied by subsequent transfers to Police Units for various time frames. In certain cases, it was alleged that, after

10 IACHR, Annual Report 2020, Chapter IV, Section B: Cuba, para. 31.
their arrest, they would not have appeared in time before a judge to analyze their situation, would be placed in cells, or would not have the possibility of making telephone calls.

51. For the Commission, the above elements reflect that the risk identified in 2013 persists to date. In reaching this determination, the Commission notes that the State has not disproved any of the allegations of representatives, despite the various requests for information made over time. As to the nature of the alleged facts, the Commission notes that all the events have been reportedly attributed to personnel of the Department of State Security and/or the Cuban National Revolutionary Police. This is particularly serious given that they are State agents, which places the beneficiaries in a particularly vulnerable situation. While it is not appropriate in this procedure to perform a compatibility analysis of detentions in light of the American Declaration and applicable standards, the Commission does take into account the various risk factors that have accompanied such detentions over time. In particular, allegations that they have been accompanied or preceded by threats, harassment and intimidation by State agents.

52. The Commission notes that the harassment and threats directed at the members of the Ladies in White have continued over time, with the state authorities being identified as the main perpetrators, according to the representatives. This ongoing situation may lead to more serious acts of harassment. In this regard, the Commission notes that the actions carried out by agents of the State take place in various areas and by various means. Thus, operations would be developed in homes, prolonged surveillance actions, monitoring and arrests.

53. Taking these elements as a whole into account, the Commission considers it necessary to assess the situation of risk to the health, life, and integrity of the beneficiaries from a gender perspective, which implies not only analyzing the situation of risk itself but also taking into consideration the dimension of the differentiated impact, thus allowing a comprehensive assessment. In this regard, the Committee notes that the harassment and harassment of members of the Ladies in White may be aggravated by the existence of additional vulnerabilities faced by each of the women members of the organization.

54. As a background, the Commission recalls that, in June 2020, the Commission published its Report “Situation of Human Rights in Cuba,” in which it gave an overview of the human rights situation in the country between 2017 and 2019. It was stated that on February 24, 2019, within the framework of the constitutional referendum procedure, several members of the Ladies in White were detained for periods of up to 96 hours. In relation to these detentions, the IACHR highlighted testimonies of the members of the Ladies in White in the following terms:

“ [...] people who have participated in the Ladies in White protests reported harassment, detention, injury, persecution, and constant police surveillance. The police authorities allegedly mistreat women detainees, making obscene and unpleasant statements to them, and leaving them in prisons with people who disagree with them to mistreat them. One of the witnesses said that even the detentions were before the demonstrations: “if they find out that there is going to be a meeting, they will immediately detain us.”

55. In summary, the IACHR deems that the risk factors assessed persist and that the requirements of Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure remain in force. The Commission requests the State of Cuba to take all necessary measures immediately to protect the rights of the beneficiaries. This call is made taking into account that, since the granting of the precautionary measures in 2013, there have been no substantial changes in the situation of the beneficiaries. In this regard, the Commission has continued to receive information indicating

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that acts of threats, intimidation, harassment and violence have been attributed to State authorities. This would have a serious impact on the performance of the tasks carried out by the members of the Ladies in White organization, which have been hindered over time.

(iii) Request for consent for a work visit

56. The Commission considers that this matter shows a particularly serious situation that requires due attention from the State of Cuba. In this regard, with a view to assisting it in complying with its international human rights obligations, the Commission expresses its willingness to conduct an on-site visit to the country, as long as circumstances permit, and it has the consent of the State to do so.

57. Under the terms of Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure, the IACHR has made use of several tools at its disposal with a view to achieving the effective implementation of these precautionary measures. However, the IACHR has not received a response from the State indicating that it has been adopting measures to protect the rights of the beneficiaries. On this occasion, given the time that has elapsed and after having determined that the risk factors persist, the IACHR considers that a visit to the country would allow it to acquire first-hand knowledge about the situation of the beneficiaries and the measures adopted from 2013 to date. The IACHR makes its request in the most constructive spirit with a view to ensuring that the situation of the beneficiaries is duly mitigated, and their rights are effectively protected.

V. DECISION

58. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights considers that this matter continues to meet prima facie the requirements of seriousness, urgency, and irreparable harm contained in Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure under the terms indicated throughout this resolution. Accordingly, it decides as follows:

a) To maintain the precautionary measures granted in favor of the members of the Ladies in White in the terms indicated in the paragraphs of this Follow-up Resolution;

b) Request that the parties send specific, detailed, and updated information on the situation of the beneficiaries with the aim to continue to analyze their situation pursuant to Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure. In particular, keep the parties updated regarding the census of the beneficiaries from the organization;

c) Express the willingness of the IACHR to carry out an on-site visit to Cuba, upon consent from the State, in the terms set forth in this Resolution. During the visit, the Commission would seek to verify the situation of the beneficiaries and that of these precautionary measures. This may include, inter alia, a working meeting with the parties, and meetings with the beneficiaries and the domestic authorities directly responsible for the implementation of these precautionary measures. The above, as part of the appropriate follow-up measures for the effective implementation of these precautionary measures; and

d) To continue implementing the appropriate follow-up measures pursuant to Article 25(10) and other provisions of its Rules of Procedure.

59. The Commission requests the parties to submit the above information to the Commission within 60 days from the date of this Resolution.

60. The Commission instructs its Executive Secretariat to notify this resolution to the State of Cuba and the representatives.
61. Approved on September 28, 2022, by Julissa Mantilla Falcón, President; Edgar Stuardo Ralón Orellana, First Vice-President; Margarette May Macaulay, Second Vice-President; Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño; Joel Hernández García; Roberta Clarke; and Carlos Bernal Pulido, members of the IACHR.

Tania Reneaum Panszi
Executive Secretary