A new call to stop the persecution against Cuban artists has been made public this Wednesday with a statement joint of 300 global intellectuals who demand an end to the repression in Cuba. Personalities at the level of Mario Vargas Llosa, Meryl Streep, Paul Auster, Orhan Pamuk, Elena Poniatowska, Isabel Allende, Zadie Smith, JM Coetzee, Jules Feiffer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Khaled Hosseini have raised their voices to demand that the Cuban government “respect the right to freedom of expression, including artistic freedom.”

The demand includes “immediately ending ongoing abuses against artists, releasing all those who have been arbitrarily detained, and dropping all charges against them.”

The initiative has been promoted by the organizations PEN International, Artists at Risk Connection of PEN America and Human Rights Watch. It highlights the role that the new artistic movements play in Cuba, made up of young people unhappy and critical of the regime, who with their actions raise blisters among the nomenclature of Havana. “Cuban artists, including those who make up the San Isidro, 27N and Archipelago movements, have managed to draw attention in the country and internationally to the absolute disregard of the Cuban Government for human rights, and laid the foundations for the massive protests that occurred across the country on July 11, 2021. For years, these independent artists have organized peaceful demonstrations and used the internet to organize protests and report abuses. For example, the viral song Homeland and Life, which reformulates the old slogan of the Cuban government ‘Homeland or death’ to criticize the repression in the country, was intoned by many protesters during the protests, “the statement states.

The Archipelago platform was created by the young playwright Yunior García, a voice critical of the regime who has had to go into exile in Spain due to the harassment of which he was a victim after calling a protest in Havana. Archipelago was born after the demonstration of 300 young artists at the gates of the Ministry of Culture on November 27, 2020, produced after the arrest of several members of the dissident Movement San Isidro. The platform brings together a group of artists who from social networks demand openness and political change in Cuba. “It constitutes a plural space in which the existence of diverse ideas is important, where we learn to reach consensus, at least what unites us within that diversity, but respecting the difference, the possibility that the other has its share of truth and that we can get a collective truth, let’s say, without canceling that difference that characterizes us ”, explained García.
The actions promoted by this new breed of Cuban artists have generated a repression on the part of the regime, which persecutes them, illegally detains them, imprisons them, keeps them under constant surveillance and harassment, imposes house arrest and criminal charges without legal support. “There is no valid justification for persecuting artists for their opinions. We urge the Cuban Government to respect the fundamental role that art and artists play in society and to immediately cease the harassment of artists who express political positions and on social issues that do not coincide with the government’s rigid ideology,” the statement read. Statement, which is also signed by Colombian writer Héctor Abad Faciolince, actor Alec Baldwin, Nicaraguan writer Gioconda Belli, Mexican journalist Lydia Cacho, American novelist Jonathan Franzen, activist Bianca Jagger and Spanish writer Rosa Montero. “Art must be free from censorship and repression, in Cuba and anywhere else in the world,” concludes the manifesto.

These are the personalities who sign the statement:

Jane Aaron
Hector Abad Faciolince
Jose Luis Acevedo Daza
Chimamanda Danger Adichie
Ben Andoni
Folu Agoi
Ayad Aktar
Shahidul Alam |
José Antonio Albertini
Carlos Alberto Montaner
Still Alinejad
Isabel Allende
Diane Alméras
Angelica Altuzar Constantino
Ileana Álvarez González
Asieh Amini
Carlos Aníbal Alonso
Kwame Anthony Appiah
Marie Arana
Homer Aridjis
Salman Asif
Reza Aslan
Jessica Atal
Fidaa Ataya
Paul Auster
Nadezhda Azhgikhina
Asiel Babastro
Badiucao
Alec Baldwin
Jürgen Banscherus
Peter barbey
Lee Bellavance Diamond
Gioconda Belli
Carlos Betancourt
Katherine Bisquet
Erling Borgen
Beatriz Bracher
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Joseph Kozer
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Ebo Krdum
Konstantin Küspert
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Maira Landa
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Hamlet Lavastida
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Svenja Leiber
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John Lithgow
Aurora López Cancino
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Luis Alberto Mariño Fernandez
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Emile martel
Yann Martel
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Colum McCann
Jay McInerney
Layda Melian
Dinaw Mengestu
Claire Messud
Arno Rafael Minkkinen
Marta Minujín
Herman Mondaca Raitieri
Ricardo Montaner
Milena Montaño Cavero
Rosa Montero
Charles Montpetit
Rick Moody
Michel Mouffe
Silvanos Mudzvova
Paul Muldoon
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Victor Muñoz
Besnik Mustafaj
Perumal Murugan
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Ahmed Naji
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Ralf Nestmeyer
Hege Newth
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Lynn Nottage
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Kurt Oesterle
Jorge Olivera Castillo
Nduko o’Matigere
Begoña Osés
Raquel Otheguy
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Orhan Pamuk
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