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News

Alan Gross Sues U.S. Gov. Over His Imprisonment in Cuba, *Havana Times*

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A lawsuit was filed in Washington yesterday on behalf of US “contractor” Alan Gross, who is imprisoned in Cuba, reported DPA news.

Gross is accusing both the US government and the company that hired him for not having protected him or properly advised him about his duties in work that led to him receiving a [15-year prison sentence](#) [1] on the island.

The lawsuit demands the company that hired him, Development Alternatives Inc. ([DAI](#) [2]), be held responsible, as well as the US government itself, “for its role in the arrest and imprisonment of Gross, including the unfortunate failure to advise, train and protect him” according to a statement from the law firm that filed the complaint at a Washington federal court.

“The destruction of this family is the direct result of a project that was approved, supervised and managed by DAI and our government and that was flawed from the start. This was done with complete disregard for the safety and welfare of Gross,” asserts the lawyer in charge of the suit Gilbert Scott.

“The tragedy faced by the family Gross is terrible. What doesn’t fit is that this is something that should never have happened,” he said.

According to the lawsuit, filed on behalf of Alan Gross and his wife Judy, both the company that hired him as well as the US government, under whose USAID contract the company acted, “failed when it came to properly inform Mr. Gross — both before and after he began traveling to Cuba — of the risks facing him due to his participation in the project.” The legal document defined that action as a “US government project aimed at increasing access to the Internet among the Jewish community in Cuba.”

The defendants “also failed when it came to taking appropriate measures to protect Mr. Gross.” Among those failures are listed the “lack of education and training necessary to minimize risk or harm, the failure to remove him from Cuba and/or prevent him from returning (to the island), as well as not delaying the project until risks had been reduced.”

The case of Alan Gross, 63, is currently one of the thorniest that hamper improvement in the difficult relationship between Washington and Havana.

Agent Gross was arrested in December 2009 while trying to enter Cuba with illegal advanced telecommunications equipment that is normally available only to the CIA and the US Defense Department.

In 2011, a Cuban court sentenced Gross to 15 years in prison on charges of “violating the independence and security of the state.”

Associated People



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The US claims that the equipment was intended for the Jewish community on the island to give them access to the Internet. Cuba accuses him of trying to use these to support outlawed Cuban opposition groups.

The Obama administration has repeatedly called for his immediate release, if only on “humanitarian” grounds, citing the serious deterioration of Gross’s health as claimed by his family. US officials also point to the advanced cancer suffered by both Gross’s mother and daughter.

“The decision of putting ideology and security benefits ahead of the interests of this US citizen — someone who has major health problems and is in a dangerous and increasingly desperate situation — has left an American family devastated,” decried his lawyer.

So far, the US government has not responded to Gross’s lawsuit.

The possibility of a prisoner swap has been indirectly mentioned on several occasions by Cuban authorities interested in obtaining the release of the [Cuban Five](#) [3], in US prisons since 1998 on espionage charges. The US State Dept. has thus far ruled out any exchange.



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