Mr. President Díaz-Canel,

I appeal to you to release artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, who is serving a prison sentence solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression and assembly.

Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara was arrested on 11 July 2021 after posting a video stating his intent to participate in demonstrations against economic grievances, public health policies, and harsh restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Cuba. Although originally arrested in the context of the 11 July demonstrations, Luis Manuel Otero was later on charged with regard to other incidents; “insulting national symbols” for his use of the Cuban flag in an art performance, and “public disorder” and “contempt” for a peaceful protest he had participated in earlier in 2021.

On 24 June 2022, the Popular Municipal Court of Central Havana sentenced him to five years in prison.

I am deeply concerned that Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara is being punished solely for peacefully exercising his human right to freedom of expression and assembly, and I appeal to you to release him immediately and unconditionally and drop all charges against him. Pending his release, I call on you to ensure that Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara is not ill-treated in detention, and that he has full access to medical care and regular contact with his family and lawyers.

Yours sincerely,