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## CUBA

### **Pastor's wife who lost baby in street attack faces court today**

A Pastor's wife who miscarried after a neighbor attacked her, is facing a Cuban court today accused by the authorities of 'disturbing the public order' on that day.

Gilianys Meneses Rodriguez, daughter-in-law to Reverend Roberto Rodriguez and wife to Pastor Eric Gabriel Rodriguez, was attacked on the street by the wife of a neighbor in December 2008.

The attack was the latest in a campaign of harassment against the Rodriguez family, carried out with the tacit support of the authorities, due to the families' involvement in the Interdenominational Fellowship of Evangelical Pastors and Ministers in Cuba (Spanish acronym; CIMPEC) decision to leave the Cuban Council of Churches (CCC.)

The neighbors first contaminated the families' drinking water well, broke the water pipes, and septic tank before accusing Gilianys' husband of aggressive behavior. As a result of the violence, Gilianys miscarried after eight weeks pregnancy. The entire family has been forced to move away from their home in Placetas due to concerns for their safety.

Gilianys, a mother of two girls, is now the third member of the Rodriguez family to be summoned to appear before the Placetas Tribunal.

Her father-in-law was national president of CIMPEC until October 2008 when the Cuban authorities removed him, following the decision of CIMPEC to withdraw from the CCC. CIMPEC cited illegal government interference in their internal affairs as the reason for their withdrawal.

The harassment and legal proceedings against the family began after the difficulties between CIMPEC and the CCC. Reverend Roberto Rodriguez has since been summoned to appear in court four times on charges of 'threatening behavior.'

Gilianys' husband, Pastor Eric Gabriel Rodriguez, was tried on the same charges as his father in December 2008 and has been sentenced to one year probation. There has been an increase in reported violations of religious liberty since Raul Castro took power in early 2008.

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of CSW-UK, said: "We strongly condemn the legal persecution of the Rodriguez family and in particular the latest charges against Gilianys Meneses who has already suffered terrible personal injustice. We call on members of the international community to raise the case with the Cuban government as a matter of urgent concern and ensure the harassment of this family ceases".

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