

Life imprisonment for Cuba's former economy minister for espionage



Alejandro Gil in front of Parliament in July 2023 (Source: [Presidencia](#))

On Monday, Cuba's Supreme Court [announced](#) the verdicts against Alejandro Miguel Gil Fernández. The [former deputy prime minister and minister of economy](#) was sentenced to life imprisonment for espionage. He also received a 20-year prison sentence for corruption offenses.

The convictions are based on [two separate criminal proceedings](#) that took place in November. The first trial was held between November 11 and 13 and dealt with espionage and acts against state security. The second trial took place between November 26 and 29 and dealt with corruption offenses during his tenure as minister.

Guilty verdict in two trials

In the first criminal trial, the court found Gil guilty of “espionage, acts detrimental to economic activity or contracts, bribery, theft and damage to documents in official custody, violation of official seals, and violation of regulations for the protection of classified documents.” For these offenses, the court imposed a life sentence.

In the second trial, he was convicted of continued bribery as a means of document forgery, as well as influence peddling and tax evasion, both on a continuous basis. This trial resulted in a sentence of 20 years' imprisonment.

Both sentences include additional penalties such as confiscation of assets, a ban on holding administrative positions, and the deprivation of public rights.

Allegations of personal enrichment

According to the official statement from the Supreme Court, Gil “used his position of responsibility to gain personal advantage through corrupt and deceptive behavior.” He received money from foreign companies and bribed other officials to legalize the acquisition of goods.

The court found that the former minister “deceived the country's leadership and the people he represented, thereby damaging the economy.” He failed to comply with work procedures involving classified official information, stole it, damaged it, and ultimately “made it available to enemy services.”

The ruling describes these actions as “highly damaging” and evidence of “ethical, moral, and political degradation” that justified “a severe criminal response.” This is in accordance with Article 4 of the Constitution, which states that “treason against the homeland is the most serious of all crimes.”

Gil and the currency reform

Alejandro Gil held the office of Minister of Economy and Planning between 2018 and February 2024. In February 2024, he was [dismissed](#) for “serious misconduct.” During his tenure, he was responsible for key economic policy decisions amid the severe crisis Cuba is experiencing.

Months after his dismissal, it became known that he had been charged with eleven offences, including espionage, embezzlement, document forgery, tax evasion, influence peddling, money laundering and bribery.

The proceedings were held behind closed doors. According to the authorities, this was necessary due to the nature of the offenses related to national security, in particular the espionage allegations. No further details on the exact facts of the case were disclosed. Gil's daughter [called for](#) more transparency and a public trial, particularly in view of the espionage allegations in the run-up to the trial.

The former minister was responsible for implementing the failed [currency reform](#) (“*Tarea Ordenamiento*”) from January 2021, which was intended to end the dual currency system in Cuba. The reform proved to be a failure with devastating consequences for the economy, including a sharp devaluation of the Cuban peso and inflation.

The actual “architect” of the reform, [Marino Murillo](#), was dismissed from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) in the year it was implemented and [demoted](#) to head of the state-owned tobacco company Tabacuba.

Appeal possible

The Supreme Court announced that both the defendant and the prosecution have the right to appeal within ten days. With regard to the life sentence, the court will initiate an appeal procedure ex officio, even if the verdict is not contested. This is a procedural guarantee laid down in the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Once all appeals have been decided and the defendant's guilt confirmed, a combined total sentence shall be formed from all the penalties imposed, in accordance with Article 86 of the current Penal Code.

The official statement emphasizes that both Gil and his lawyers “recognized that during the proceedings and oral hearings, the rights and guarantees enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic and the Code of Criminal Procedure were respected.”

The case represents one of the most serious proceedings against a high-ranking Cuban government official in recent years. ([Cubaheute](#))