

FOR MEDIA RELEASE-

FAMILY STATEMENT RE: MARK SIMMS AND JORDAN LONG

Our hopes and prayers in Mark and Jordan's situation have always been for truth, evidence, fairness and justice to be honoured. This was shown to be the case in a Cuban court of law with the unanimous verdict for acquittal by five female judges. We are so grateful that the Cuban judiciary recognized that the case against Jordan and Mark was based on a lie that had no evidence to support it, but in fact only had evidence to refute it. As families, we knew from the start that the allegations were false, and the Rev. Blake Field was so moved by everything he saw and heard in relation to the matter that he felt compelled by his faith to speak publicly. In Cuba, unlike in Canada and many other western countries, people accused of crimes are considered guilty *until proven innocent*. As such, the fact that the acquittal was unanimous and unequivocal is particularly telling. Mark and Jordan and our families and friends have endured tremendous suffering in every area of our lives for the last eight months- emotional, physical, psychological, financial, spiritual and social. We have been overjoyed at the thought that this ongoing nightmare would soon be over and that the long journey towards healing could finally begin.

Since we had the good news of their acquittal and exoneration, we have learned that the prosecution is appealing the unanimous decision of the judges. We have been advised that appealing a verdict is common procedure in Cuba. Nevertheless, as we enter month nine, this news comes as a painful realization that the nightmare is not yet over. We expect that truth and justice will continue to prevail as this process unfolds. However, timelines are unclear, and as such, we have no idea when to expect our beloved Jordan and Mark to be able to return to their families, friends, communities and jobs. The impact of this false allegation has been incalculable and continues to drain our resources with every passing day. We expect the very highest levels of the Government of Canada to take action and work collaboratively with Cuban authorities to expedite this process so that two innocent Canadian police officers, who risk their lives daily to serve the public, are rightfully able to return home without further delay. We also look forward to a prompt OPCC investigation so that the truth of this matter can be fully revealed to Canadian authorities and the Canadian public. Our thoughts are with genuine victims of sexual assault whose experiences are undermined by false accusations such as this.

We are grateful to God for the many blessings that have enabled us to get through this difficult time, and we are uplifted by the incredible love and support for the boys and our families from friends, extended family and church family, colleagues, acquaintances, and strangers, both here in Canada and around the world. While we have experienced the worst aspects of human nature during this ordeal, we have also witnessed the very best, which gives us faith that the light will overcome the darkness once and for all, very soon.

We ask for your continued prayers for justice and truth and for the expeditious return of Mark and Jordan to Canadian soil. We are holding on to the hope that they will be home to celebrate Christmas with their loving families and friends.

With Gratitude,

The Long and Simms Families
November 19, 2018