

Pentecostal pastor sentenced in Cuba

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Quito, Ecuador-- A Paris-based church support group said a Pentecostal clergyman has been sentenced to two years in jail in Cuba on charges of insubordination and holding illicit meetings at his home.

The group Portes Ouvertes (Open Doors) said preacher Orson Vila was tried and sentenced within hours of being detained at his home on May 24 in the province of Camaguey, east of Havana.

It said Vila was operating a house church with 2,500 members. House churches are part of a growing movement in Cuba in which clergy hold religious meetings at their homes to escape government control over churches.

Portes Ouvertes, which campaigns for religious freedom, said the Cuban justice ministry had earlier warned Vila and other clergy that they could face fines or prison unless they ended their house churches.

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