## What really ails Kirchner's daughter in Cuba? Only Fidel and Chávez's doctor knows

BY MARIO J. PENTÓN MARCH 27, 2019 07:35 PM

Florencia Kirchner, daughter of former Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, is being treated at a top Havana hospital by Dr. Roberto Castellanos Gutiérrez, a member of the medical team that treated the late leaders Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez.

Fernández, now a senator, recently revealed the names of Castellanos Gutiérrez and another doctor, Charles Hall Smith, when she thanked them on Twitter for their "humanity" during her daughter's treatments at the Centro de Investigaciones Médico Quirúrgicas (Cimeq) in Havana.

The physicians signed a summary of the daughter's clinical history declaring that she's in no condition to travel back to Argentina, where she is wanted on charges of money laundering and unlawful association.

The summary, posted by the former president on Twitter, reported that Florencia Kirchner, 28, suffers from post-traumatic stress, a skin condition known as purpura and demyelinating polyneuropathy of unknown causes, amenorrhea, low weight for height and slight swelling of the lower limbs.

A federal Argentine tribunal has ordered her to appear to face charges, along with her mother, of money laundering and unlawful association in connection with public works contracts during the presidencies of her father, the late Néstor Kirchner, and mother from 2003 to 2015.

Authorities seized \$4.66 million in cash found in 2016 in a strongbox owned by the daughter and another \$1.03 million found in a bank account. She said the money was part of her inheritance from her father.

Argentina has never signed an extradition treaty with Cuba, and her trip to Cuba sparked suspicions of an escape. Prosecutors on Monday requested her full medical history and asked court doctors to review it. A request for a 45-day delay filed by the family attorney was denied.

In a Spanish video posted on her Twitter account, with background music and images of her daughter, the former president of Argentina said that Florencia's health had been broken by the "brutal siege she suffered."

"I was twice president of this country. I have chosen political militancy for training and conviction. On the other hand, Florencia chose another life: art and feminist militancy. The persecution they have done to her and that has devastated her is because she is the daughter of Néstor and Cristina Kirchner. So I ask those who hate us to please mess with me but not with her," Fernández said in the post.



Cristina Kirchner
√@CFKArgentina

Quiero compartir con ustedes lo que nos está pasando.

42.9K 12:00 PM - Mar 14, 2019

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Cimeq is the top hospital in Cuba. Founded in 1982, it was used to treat Cuban leader Castro and Venezuelan leader Chávez as well as Bolivian President Evo Morales, Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona and many leftist leaders from Latin America.

Castellanos Gutiérrez, who directs the hospital, is a lieutenant colonel in the Cuban security forces and treated Castro when he first fell ill in 2006 with what authorities said was a bout of diverticulitis. Illness ultimately forced him to transfer power to his brother Raúl. Details of Fidel Castro's ailments were a tightly held state secret and few details ever leaked to the news media even after his death in 2016.

Castellanos Gutiérrez was also part of the medical team that treated the former Venezuelan president until his death. Chávez's successor, Nicolás Maduro, later granted him one of Venezuela's top medals.

Although Chávez was officially reported to have died in Venezuela on March 5, 2013, at least two top supporters have said they were notified that he had died in 2012, but a phone call three hours later reported that doctors had revived him.

The shortage of details about Chávez's health and Maduro's maneuvers to increase his power as the president convalesced fueled rumors that he had died in Havana but that the announcement was manipulated to help Maduro.

Castellanos Gutiérrez is a specialist in emergency and intensive medicine, according to the few details about him published in the official Cuban press.

In 2017, he received a top Cuban award, Hero of Labor, for his "continuous, dedicated labor, with a total and permanent dedication" to the treatment of Castro. During the award ceremony, led by Raúl Castro, he was also praised for his treatment of Chávez.

Hall Smith, the other doctor who signed the summary of Florencia Kirchner's health status, is a specialist in internal medicine. Medical sources consulted by el Nuevo Herald questioned the absence of a signature by a psychiatrist who would be responsible for the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress.

Cristina Fernández, who was long close to the Cuban government, was given an all but official reception when she visited the island last week.

She met with Raúl Castro, 87, who remains in charge of the ruling Communist Party of Cuba, and with his successor as the head of the government, Miguel Díaz-Canel.

"Yesterday I met with former president and senator ... Cristina Fernández de Kirchner," Díaz-Canel wrote on his Twitter account last Wednesday. "During the friendly meeting, we discussed the most recent developments in the region."

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez saw the visitor off and wrote on Twitter: "I take leave at the Jose Marti International Airport in Havana of former president and senator of the Argentine Republic, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who finishes her private visit to our country."