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State President

# FLORIDA CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

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## - PRESS RELEASE -

IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, January 2, 2012

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### FLORIDA CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION TO INVESTIGATE ORLANDO POLICE OFFICERS FOR EXCESSIVE FORCE OF TWO MEN ARRESTED AT THE BLUE MARTINI LOUNGE

A video shows Officers Punching, Kneeing,  
Kicking and Striking a Suspect with a Baton

ORLANDO – Today, the Orlando based Florida Civil Rights Association announced that it will conduct a police misconduct investigation to determine if Orlando Police use excessive force on two men arrested at the Blue Martini lounge, early Friday morning, December 30, 2011.

Suspect **Luis Fernando Cabeza** was allegedly tased several times, punched, kneed, kicked, pepper sprayed and struck several times with a police baton by at least four Orlando Police Officers demands a use of force investigation into the tactics use by these officers, said Florida Civil Rights Association President J Willie David, III. The video shows a police officer running up to Cabeza while three other officers held him down appears to kick him.

Cabeza sustained injuries to his head, chest, back, arms, legs, and feet. His injuries were so severe that jail officials refused to process him in the jail and inform the officers to take Cabeza to the hospital for medical treatment.

Patrons and family members of Cabeza informed the Florida Civil Rights Association that they went to the Blue Martini lounge for Latin Night to celebrate a family member's birthday. According to **Kara Hernandez**, Cabeza's sister stated that Blue Martini security kept her brother under surveillance inside the lounge because he was kissing and hugging his boyfriend. Cabeza and his boyfriend walked outside to the parking lot where security observed them kissing. Security refused to allow them re-enter and requested that they leave.

**FCRA Press Release**  
**Orlando Police, Luis F. Cabeza/Miguel Cabeza**  
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Hernandez informed the Florida Civil Rights Association they believe that Blue Martini security and Orlando police treated Cabeza and his boyfriend differently because they are gay.

The Florida Civil Rights Association is also calling on the Orlando Police Chief to review the facts and investigate the actions of the officers, including the arrest of Miguel Cabeza.

Miguel (brother of Luis Cabeza) was arrested by Orlando Police for resisting with and without violence because he used his cell phone to video record the incident. We asked the Chief to review the facts and investigate the actions of the officers, including the violation of the cell phone owner's constitutional and other rights.

Law enforcement personnel need to understand that they do not operate secretly when performing their duties in public places, David said. "They can and should be observed by all of us. The public has a First Amendment right to video record in public places—including video recording the police."

The Florida Civil Rights Association believes the officers' actions were wrong in the arrest of Miguel Cabaza and should be immediately dismissed. We are asking that the Chief direct his staff to prepare and distribute a new policy so that rights of individuals are safeguarded while making audio or video recordings and taking photographs of police officers in public places, so long as they do not interfere physically with law enforcement operations.

The Florida Civil Rights Association believes that a majority of Orlando police officers are honorable law enforcement professionals who risk their physical safety and well-being for the public good, David said. "However, a pattern of excessive force exists as a result of a subset of officers who use force improperly.

**ABOUT THE FCRA**

*The Florida Civil Rights Association is a non-profit, non-partisan, organization with members and supporters nationwide dedicated to protecting and expanding the civil rights and civil liberties guaranteed by the Constitutions and civil rights laws of the United States and the State of Florida. Visit FCRA website for more information at [www.fcraews.com](http://www.fcraews.com)*

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