

Cuba's 'first lady' dies

by UPI

HAVANA - Vilma Espin, the wife of Cuban interim leader Raul Castro, died Monday following a prolonged illness.

Espin, 77, was a leading proponent of women's rights on the Communist island and was long known as Cuba's "first lady," Cuba's Granma newspaper reported online Monday.

Espin also fought alongside her husband and long-time Cuban leader Fidel Castro during the 1959 revolution that resulted in the ouster of former Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista.

Her husband Raul took over Cuba's leadership from his older brother when Fidel fell ill in July 2006.

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