

Solidarity with Cuba: In view of the popular mobilizations in Cuba and imperialist aggressions

Statement of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

- End the imperialist economic blockade of Cuba now!***
- For a free and sovereign Cuba***
- Down with imperialist interference in Cuba!***
- For socialist democracy in Cuba!***

On July 11 we witnessed protests driven by the tremendous shortages that Cuba has been suffering since Trump placed it on the list of terrorist countries, cutting off remittances from the US to the island, worsened by the pandemic and the loss of income from tourism.

This is taking place on an island that has to import a large part of what it consumes, without any international support (the enormous difficulties that Venezuela is going through have also had a negative impact on Cuba), something that in some respects is reminiscent of the worst times of the “special period”. This blockade also impedes the production of Covid-19 vaccines for Cubans, and this despite the aid that Cuba has given to other countries during the pandemic.

This is compounded by a deep-seated malaise on the island: social differentiation has greatly increased over the last thirty years, while the government has sought to attract foreign investment, the tourism sector has developed, allowing for an increase in private initiative employing wage labour. In a situation of scarcity of goods, unequal access to US

dollars has further amplified inequalities, which have nevertheless remained much lower than in countries that have restored capitalism, such as China, Vietnam and the former Eastern European bloc. A large local capitalist sector able to exploit wage labour has not developed in Cuba. The local capitalist sector is certainly growing, but not to the same extent as the countries mentioned above. The 2019 amendments to the constitution made it clear that there are still legal barriers to the free development of the capitalist sector, in particular the limitation on the number of wage earners the local capitalist sector can hire.

In addition to the worrying effects of increasing inequality, the blockade and the increase in domestic production to meet the needs of the population; there is the development of evangelical religious sects that put pressure on the government to limit, for example, the full recognition of LGBTQI+ rights.

It is also worth mentioning the activity of new generations, closely connected to global social networks, in the midst of which a new generation of artists developed, who do not feel at all concerned by the legacy of the revolution. At the same time, an important part of the previous generation that participated directly in the revolutionary process of the 1960s and 70s is dying out.

This cocktail is exploding in a context in which the government has very little room for manoeuvre to mitigate the short-term effects of scarcity and great resistance to opening a democratic decision-making process that would re-engage the new generations (the constituent process was an attempt in this direction, but it has clearly been insufficient). By favouring bureaucratic methods, the government is making no effort to increase workers' participation, in particular for the development of workers' control in enterprises and citizens' control in society.

This explains the recourse to repression and mobilization of the sectors that remain loyal to the government, in order to stop the protests and try to recover at least a certain amount of tourist income during the summer season, which would give them room for improvement in order to combat certain aspects of popular disaffection. President Miguel Díaz Canel's speech on Sunday 11 July, following the wave of protests that have affected more than a dozen cities across the country from east to west, is not an adequate response to the situation. Although Díaz Canel acknowledged that a large part of the demonstrators were genuinely concerned about the hardships of life, he did not make any self-criticism of his handling of the situation and only emphasized the manipulations of the counterrevolutionary sector – which is clearly in favour of US intervention – which must be condemned. The government's call to revolutionaries to mobilize on the streets in response to the threats of the counterrevolutionaries risks provoking clashes and increased repression.

We cannot separate the protests in Cuba from what is happening in other Latin American countries where the high cost of living aggravated by the pandemic and ultra-liberal measures, is, with different motivations, behind social outbursts like the recent Colombian movement, or those in Ecuador and Chile in 2019. The pandemic has undoubtedly exacerbated all social contradictions internationally and in Latin America in particular, leading to growing social exclusion and increasing inequalities. Despite exemplary health care in many respects, Cuba is also unable to escape the most perverse economic and social effects of the global crisis and the pandemic. However, rising social resistances in Latin America, in confronting imperialism's economic and political plans for the region, work in favour of breaking Cuba's isolation and maintaining its political independence.

Unfortunately, important sectors of the left do not make any critical analysis of the situation in Cuba, the deterioration

of its political system and the despair of the younger generations. On the contrary, we see in many countries an uncritical closing of ranks in which everything is a conspiracy of imperialism, where the legitimacy of popular mobilization is not recognized and is attributed exclusively to "agents of imperialism". It is obvious that imperialism seeks to interpret the meaning of social protests in its interests in the different international conflicts of an increasingly convulsive world, particularly in a country that stands as an example of sovereign resistance for the whole region... And that it does so increasingly by intense campaigns on social networks, through which it tries to steer social discontent from the outside, in order to channel it towards the bringing down of the Cuban government. But to say that it is all the product of the interference of the great powers is far removed from the complex and contradictory reality. In addition, this response dismisses the participation of the popular sectors in social conflicts, as if everything were a chess game to which the people are never invited and where they are considered to be a kind of minors incapable of recognizing and defending their own interests.

Although the situation is complex and contradictory, we of the Fourth International, which from the earliest times has unconditionally supported the Cuban Revolution, defend some fundamental ideas:

- First, we condemn and demand an immediate end to the illegal and inhuman blockade to which the Cuban people are subjected.

- We call for solidarity mobilizations to alleviate the situation of shortage of basic products suffered by the island and to oppose the blockade decreed by the USA.

- We demand that the Biden Administration remove Cuba from its list of countries that harbour and favour terrorism, which is essential, for obvious reasons, to alleviate the country's economic situation. We reject the threats of intervention with

which Biden seeks to encourage the Cuban ultra-right abroad and the most reactionary Republican sectors.

– We denounce the international mainstream media campaign that falsely claims that the entire Cuban people are rising up against the government and that the government would respond with great brutality, while the mainstream media have turned a blind eye to the much more violent anti-people repressive forms of repression used in countries like France during the Yellow Vests movement in 2018-2019, in the United States during the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, or in Colombia in 2021, to name but a few examples from a long list.

-We demand that the Cuban authorities respect the democratic right to protest, the development of independent social movements, political pluralism and democratic debate, the only way to prevent the Revolution from ceasing to be an example for the peoples of Latin America and the world.

-We call for the truth about the conditions of detention and repression in order to stop the abuse of force and bring to justice those responsible for cases of abuse.

-We call for the immediate release of those arrested in the 11 July demonstrations, provided that they have not committed actions that have threatened the lives of others.

-We defend a sovereign, independent Cuba with real democratic-popular participation of the workers in the destiny of the island. For a socialist and democratic Cuba.

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Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

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