

# Maritime Union of New Zealand

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**By email: [uprsubmissions@ohchr.org](mailto:uprsubmissions@ohchr.org)**

**Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ)**  
**Individual Universal Periodic Review submission – Cuba – April/May 2013**

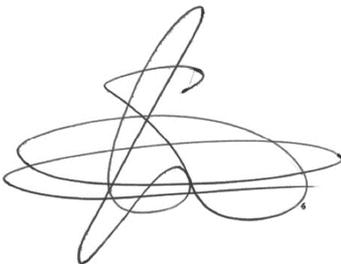
***Covering information:***

MUNZ is a New Zealand trade union that was formed from a merging of the New Zealand Waterfront Workers Union and the New Zealand Seafarers Union in 2002. Both of those unions had a long history of working to improve the pay and working conditions of seafarers and waterside workers in New Zealand reaching back to the late nineteenth century, something that MUNZ proudly continues to do today.

MUNZ is also part of a strong network of international seafarers and waterside workers unions with a tradition of democracy, militancy and international worker solidarity.

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission on human rights in Cuba during this second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review.

- 1) MUNZ wishes to applaud the Cuban government and its people on their strong and committed stance in supporting the human rights not only of their own people but of all people. We note that Cuba has consistently offered moral and practical support to people being denied their right to freedom and self determination in many countries, despite suffering from the devastating cumulative effect of the US blockade now lasting over 50 years.
- 2) As a seafaring union we are aware of the difficulty that Cuba faces in transporting essential commodities by sea as companies face severe financial and political repercussions if they break the blockade. This has in recent years resulted in even fewer ships visiting Cuban ports and meant that facilities built to accommodate marine transport are under utilised and commodities needed to improve the lot of the Cuban people, especially after natural disasters such as hurricanes, are prevented from entering the country.
- 3) Despite the severe impediments imposed by the US blockade to progress and prosperity, we note that the Cuban government continues to work towards providing its people with more opportunities; greater freedom of expression, political participation and involvement in their community, arts, culture and employment. We note Cuba's readiness to co-operate with international bodies around the issue of human rights, among many others and to continue to strive towards greater freedoms for its people.
- 4) We also congratulate Cuba on the superior level of health and education that it provides its people; despite the difficulties the blockade creates in preventing medicines and essential equipment from entering the country. Cuba's free healthcare system is one that many much more developed nations should envy and their almost 100% literacy rate is something they can be proud of. It is also a sign of great humanitarianism that Cuba sends medical personnel around the world to assist in natural disasters and in disadvantaged communities such as Haiti and the South Pacific. Cuba also takes in and trains doctors for other countries, at their own cost. We believe these actions demonstrate a country with a great respect for the human rights of all peoples.
- 5) We commend and support the Cuban government and its people in their right and commitment to self determination. We believe that Cuba's social and political system shows a respect for human rights and liberty and the continuing changes that are being made to their economy and society demonstrate a commitment to further rights and freedoms for their people which the international community should also support and encourage.



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