

SOCIALIST FORUM OF GHANA (SFG)

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The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations
New York

Your Excellency,

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA

We write as an organization with a significant interest in developments in Cuba. This interest is derived from our conviction that such developments can and do affect the struggles of all peoples throughout the world to build for themselves new communities based on the principles of social justice and democracy. They also impact on the just application of international law with a view to ending the imposition of irrelevant and unsuitable social and political systems on smaller nations. The Socialist Forum of Ghana has also taken cognizance of the scheduled session of your Commission in February 2009 which will no doubt discuss the human rights situation in Cuba.

First, we urge your Commission to avoid the situation in which it can be turned into a forum for bashing Cuba in the service of the ruling elite in the United States of America and their surrogates around the world. Over the last five decades, successive US administrations have sought to use such fora as fronts for subverting the will and interest of the Cuban people in a futile effort to overthrow their legitimate and democratically elected government. In our view, these vile efforts clearly undermine the principles upon which your Commission was established and constitutes an affront to the dignity of an organization which should aim at setting the best standards for probity, accountability and justice.

The aggressive policy and actions of the US against Cuba are unparalleled in recent history. It has involved the imposition of an unreasonable blockade with wide ranging economic, social and political consequences. It has denied the Cuban people vital resources for enhancing social and economic rights and greatly undermined the full utilization of their creative potential. The US has also sponsored terrorist gangs which have unleashed mayhem on the small island state. These gangs have destroyed important infrastructure and caused deaths. They have heightened anxiety amongst the Cuban people and violated international law with impunity.

The only crime of the Government and people of Cuba is that they have chosen for themselves a system of government that is different.

As part of the general campaign against Cuba, the US and its allies have persistently questioned the Cuban political and electoral systems with a view to diverting global attention from their own violation of the rights of the Cuban people and international law. They have sought to portray the terrorist gangs as victims of human rights abuse, dissidents and human rights activists when in reality they are no more than mercenaries in the service of imperialism.

As you are no doubt aware of the reality, Cuba is substantially different from the picture painted by the US administration and its surrogates. Since 1959, Cuba has worked assiduously to break the yoke of institutional racism, discrimination against women, political murders and disappearances, drug menace illiteracy, chronic unemployment and hunger. Today, Cubans are proud citizens of a country in which nobody is discriminated against on the basis of the colour of their skin or social background. Cuba has managed even in the face of US blockade to establish universal access to education and health.

Significantly, Cuba is sharing its glorious achievements with the rest of the world. Every year Cuba gives Ghana about 200 medical personnel without whom the health delivery system in Ghana would have collapsed. The medical brigades from Cuba serve in very many countries with different ideological and political persuasions in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The contribution of the Cuban people and Government to the national liberation struggle in Africa is also commendable. We recall that it was the intervention of Cuban internationalist forces in Angola which broke the back of apartheid and guaranteed the right of the peoples of Southern Africa to determine their own system of government and to elect their own leaders. The victory at Cuito Canavale some 20 years ago was decisive in dismantling institutional racism and colonial imposition in Southern Africa and that could not have been possible without the principled intervention of Cuba.

In Cuba, democracy is not an abstract concept. It is guaranteed by the country's constitution and the daily lives of the people is the most eloquent testimony of their full involvement in the process of decision making at all levels. Anybody with even a passing knowledge of the reality in Cuba cannot deny the vigorousness of public debates on important national and international issues including the attempt to recolonise Latin America, the AIDS scourge, the degradation of the environment and how to improve the health and education systems. From local communities to the national political structure, Cubans freely elect their representatives. The truth is that sovereignty rests with the people in Cuba and they alone have the right to choose their path to development.

Cuba has built a society in which the resources of the state belong to all its people and are utilized in their interest. Production in Cuba is aimed at meeting the needs and aspirations of its people and not increasing the profit margins of local profiteers and multi-national corporations. Cuba is a law governed state in which the judiciary is sufficiently empowered to independently contribute to enjoyment of basic rights and the realization of the ends of social justice and democracy.

The Socialist Forum of Ghana strongly recommends that your February session reject the machinations of the US and its surrogates to use your forum to subvert the legitimate aspirations of the government and people of Cuba.

Warmest Regards.

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Acting Convener