



**Cyprus-Cuba Friendship Association**

**Written submission on Cuba's Periodic Review 2023**

1. The Cyprus-Cuba Friendship Association, is a non-governmental organisation, that was founded in 1992, with the aim to promote the friendship and solidarity between the Cypriot and Cuban peoples. Through exchanges of experience and getting acquainted with the realities of each people we aim to contribute to the understanding, mutual respect and cooperation between our peoples. This we consider as an integral part of building a world where each people can decide about its path of development, thus fostering peaceful cooperation.
2. The points raised below are based on knowledge acquired through the exchanges of the Association.
3. In submitting the present document, the Cyprus Cuba Friendship Association would like to stress that human rights include as an integral part the right of peoples, as a collective and of their individual members, the access to all the necessary conditions that protect their dignity as human beings.
4. Thus, access to public health, education, dignified housing, a dignified job, clear environment, *inter alia*, is an integral part of human rights.
5. In the last six decades, Cuba has been working consistently to build and provide its people free public health and education, dignified housing, and dignified jobs. This has allowed the Cuban people to achieve a high level of scientific, political and cultural development, enjoyed by all the people without any discrimination.
6. More specifically our Association highly values the Cuban state's advancements in what concerns the Right to health:
  - a) Cuba is known for the high quality of its public health system with universal coverage and free care. There are 486,900 employees in the national health system, including 101,876 doctors, and there are 9.2 doctors per 100 inhabitants, the most favourable indicator of its kind internationally.



- b) The Cuban immunisation programme protects children against 13 diseases through the use of 11 vaccines, 8 of which are produced nationally, which has a great impact on the quality of life of boys and girls. Fourteen communicable diseases have been eradicated and 9 others are not a health problem.
  - c) Diseases such as poliomyelitis, diphtheria, neonatal tetanus, pertussis, rubella and mumps have been eliminated.
  - d) By the end of 2022, Cuba reached a preliminary infant mortality rate of 7.5 deaths per 1,000 live births. This is thirty-nine fewer deaths than in 2021, when the country achieved a rate of 7.6.
  - e) As to the fight against the COVID 19 pandemic, in Cuba, the cure rate for Covid-19 is 99.2% of diagnosed cases, which is a reflection of the effectiveness of the approved clinical protocol and the preparation of medical staff.
  - f) At the same time, the Cuban scientists thanks to the levels achieved, developed 5 vaccines, and as of January 2023, Cuba had administered more than 42 million doses of the national vaccines Soberana 02, Soberana Plus and Abdala, while the country was the first to vaccinate children under the age of two.
7. The fact that Cuba has been generously sharing its scientific achievements in medicine has been important particularly for poor countries or countries hit by natural disasters. This was outstanding more recently in the midst of the complex international situation caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. Cuba sent 4,700 specialists to 42 countries to help in the fight against the COVID 19 pandemic.
8. The Cuban people would have been able to achieve a much higher level of development had it not been for the 62-years-long economic, trade and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. This blockade is illegal and has been repeatedly denounced by the overwhelming majority of UN member states. Most recently, the relevant resolution presented by Cuba was supported in the UN General Assembly by 185 member-states, with only two abstentions and two against.



9. The US blockade on Cuba represents the most unjust, severe and prolonged system of unilateral coercive measures ever applied against any country. It has caused immense damage to Cuba and continues to be the main obstacle to the development of the full potential of the Cuban economy, to the implementation of the country's National Economic and Social Development Plan, as well as to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.
10. Hence the US blockade constitutes a gross and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people, as it limits the Cuban state's possibilities to provide its people with all necessary goods.
11. The fact that the blockade was tightened further with 243 more measures during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, obstructing the provision of necessary life-saving medicines and equipment, demonstrates its inhuman nature, proving that its aim is to provoke the economic collapse of Cuba.
12. The blockade is an aggressive policy that is contrary to the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of states and is intended to general disorder and instability.
13. Further the Cyprus-Cuba Friendship Association underlines that:
  - a) Cuba has cooperated fully with human rights mechanisms, which are applied on a universal and non-discriminatory basis. The country has ratified 44 of the 61 internationally recognized human rights instruments.
  - b) Since 2019, a comprehensive legislative update has taken place with the adoption of the new Constitution of the Republic, which has strengthened the treatment and protection of human rights.
  - c) The new Magna Carta significantly expands the catalogue of rights and reaffirms the universal, indivisible and interdependent nature of all human rights.
  - d) Among the aspects that strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights is the recasting of the equality clause and the principle of non-discrimination by including new persons or categories that are vulnerable or susceptible to discrimination, such as age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ethnic origin, territorial origin.



e) It strengthens the protection of women, equality with men in all areas, guarantees the exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights and protects them from gender-based violence in all its manifestations and spaces.

f) The prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment and enforced disappearances is given constitutional status.

g) New rights are introduced, such as the right of access to public information and to truthful, objective and timely information, the right to water, to healthy and adequate food, to adequate housing and to a safe and healthy living space, the right to a healthy and balanced environment.

14. The Association would like to raise a parallel experience of Cuba and Cyprus: the existence of military bases in both countries. In Cyprus (a country where 37% of its territory is under the Turkish occupation since 1974) the British military bases are a colonial administration leftover, while the US still keep the military base of Guantanamo in Cuba, which has also become a notorious illegal detention centre. Both bases should be dissolved as they violate the sovereignty of the states and undermine peace and stability in the two countries and their respective regions.

15. In conclusion, the Cyprus-Cuba Friendship Association would like to recommend that work should be done to increase people-to-people contacts that permits better first-handed knowledge and hence understanding and mutual respect. This interaction can only be profitable to all those involved.

The Cyprus-Cuba Friendship Association



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