



**ΕΛΛΗΝΟΚΟΥΒΑΝΙΚΟΣ ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΟΣ ΦΙΛΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ
ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗΣ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ**
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Written submission to the UN Human Rights Council
for the Review of Cuba under Universal Periodic
Review

APRIL 2023

**HELLENIC-CUBAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDSHIP AND SOLIDARITY OF
THESSALONIKI**

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THE HELLENIC-CUBAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDSHIP AND SOLIDARITY OF THESSALONIKI

1. The Hellenic-Cuban Association of Friendship and Solidarity of Thessaloniki (Ellinokouvanikos Syndesmos Filias ke Allilegyis Thessalonikis) consists branch of the Hellenic-Cuban Association of Friendship and Solidarity (HCAFS) and is based in Greece's second largest city. Founded in 1964 HCAFS was one of the first solidarity associations that were established internationally in order to express the solidarity and support of the Greek working class towards Cuban Revolution.
2. The fundamental aim of the HCAFS of Thessaloniki is the expression of solidarity and support towards the socialist construction in Cuba, on the basis of the country's independent and sovereign character. Within the aims of the Association is the development of friendship between the people of Cuba and Greece and the promotion of co-operation in political and cultural sectors.
3. The Association has a strong and continuous interest in Cuba. This interest has led many of the Association's members, as well as friends, to visit Cuba multiple times, either as participants in international solidarity brigades or as private travelers. Therefore, except from information, facts and figures, the Association's views on Cuba have been formed also on the basis of witnessing the existing situation in the country.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND CUBA

4. Cuba has always maintained a high level of cooperation with the United Nations human rights procedures and mechanisms. Respecting international human rights treaties and laws, the Republic of Cuba has maintained extensive cooperation with human rights mechanisms, applied on a universal and non-discriminatory basis.
5. Cuba remains firm in ensuring the achievement of the fullest enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all its citizens. The Constitution of the Republic of Cuba establishes the fundamental rights, duties and guarantees of citizens, as well as the basis for their respect, realization and protection.
6. Since 1959, the process of the Cuban Revolution has led to the creation of an independent and sovereign state of workers, organized with all and for the good of all, as a united and democratic Republic, for the enjoyment of political freedom, social justice, individual and collective well-being and human solidarity. Before 1959, the involvement of citizens in political life was extremely limited to a few elites, in a society marked by violence and political corruption.
7. As a socialist country, Cuba has showed full respect for human rights, without racial, ethnic or religious discriminations. All Cubans, without discrimination, have access to the provision of basic quality services such as education, health care, social security and welfare.

ELECTIONS IN CUBA

8. Despite the misinformation spread by various media that “no elections take place in Cuba”, the truth is that in Cuba there are periodic elections in which people are highly involved.
9. The nature of the elections in Cuba differs from the model of the bourgeois parliamentary democracies. In Cuba’s election process, all citizens have equal access to the highest public positions, based on their capabilities and merits and not on their economic or financial capacity.
10. In Cuba's electoral process, candidates are assessed for their merits and not for their stance according to media campaigns between political parties, or for the financial support of large corporations or big private businesses. Elected representatives are therefore not committed to large companies and donors for having funded their election campaigns. Their commitment is limited only to their voters, who can revoke them at any time, according to Law 89 of 1999 or by Revocation of the Popular Mandate.
11. The Parliamentary elections held in 2018 and 2023 with the mass participation of the population consist proof of a democratic system that actually works. In both electoral processes, 50% of candidates were nominated by people from the municipality and elected by direct vote in local assemblies. The other 50% of candidates were proposed by nominating assemblies consisting of representatives of workers, youth, women, students, farmers and members of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR).
12. The existence of a single party in the Cuban system consists the result of historical and contemporary factors and must be evaluated through the prism of the socialist process that is taking place in the country. The Communist Party of Cuba (Partido Comunista de Cuba), unlike political parties in bourgeois “western” democracies, does not constitute an electoral party, as long as it does not campaign, nor does it submit nominations, or participates in any way in the electoral process.
13. The electoral system in Cuba meets the actual needs of the people for direct participation in the political life of the country. The broad, overwhelming participation of the Cuban people in the electoral processes consists a proof of the fact that Cuban society embraces and supports these processes. Contrary to the example of Cuba, in many bourgeois parliamentary democracies, like for example in Greece, the participation of the people- especially the youth- in elections shows signs of decline.
14. A major adversary of the Cuban political system has been the government of the United States of America. There are numerous cases where U.S. government's officials have publicly expressed the false and slanderous argument that “there are no free elections in Cuba”. It is not in the aims of this submission to analyze the existing concept of “elections” in the political system of the United States, or the participation of large corporations, monopolies and businesses on the electoral process through “donations” and funding. We want, however, to remind the known case of the 2000 U.S. Presidential Elections and the political scandal emerged with the votes recount in Florida.

U.S. BLOCKADE

14. The U.S. blockade policy against Cuba consists an extremely serious, irrational and systematic violation of the Cuban people's human rights.
15. All U.S. governments since the J. F. Kennedy administration are responsible for this crime against the people of the Republic of Cuba. Between 2017 and 2020, the U.S. Government under Donald Trump strengthened the blockade by implementing 232 additional measures against the country. The current U.S. administration under President Joe Biden continues to implement these inhumane policies.
16. The U.S. blockade, as well as the continuing hostility and threats of the U.S. government against Cuba must end, so that Cuba can have the opportunity to fully guarantee the enjoyment of human rights for the entire population.
17. We, the members and friends of the Hellenic-Cuban Association of Friendship and Solidarity of Thessaloniki, have been eyewitnesses of the extensive damage that the U.S. blockade has caused to Cuban society. The blockade policy of the U.S. government deprives the Cuban people from enjoying a vast number of goods which are necessary for their well-being. Only in the period between April 2019 and March 2020, the blockade caused losses to Cuba of an estimated 5,570,300,000 USD. This represents an increase of some 1.226 billion dollars over the previous period (Minrex Cuba, 22/10/2020).
18. The tragic consequences of the U.S-imposed blockade were particularly seen during the 2020-2022 COVID Pandemic, as Cuba were deprived of basic medical equipment and medicine. In June 2021, the U.N General Assembly called the U.S Government to end Cuba embargo due to the situation caused by the pandemic.
19. The U.S. blockade against Cuba has profound long-time negative effects on numerous sectors of public life, including health, education, construction works, thus being an important factor that puts Cuban people's human rights at risk. We demand the immediate end of the blockade and every other hostile measure imposed against Cuba by the United States, the European Union or any other state entity.

CONCLUSION

According to our view, the most significant violation of human rights is taking place in the capitalist world, where the constant need for more profit perpetuates the exploitation of man by man. The capitalist system itself consists the root of all contemporary problems, including wars, imperialist interventions, extensive poverty, social inequality, creation of millions of refugees etc.

Cuba, a small but proud country which tries to build and maintain a socialist system, is not part of the social barbarity that is expanding in the capitalist world. Living and working in Greece, a country that is passing through a prolonged capitalist financial crisis, within the European Union, we have first-hand experience of the actual meaning that human rights have in capitalism: mass unemployment, extensive austerity, anti-workers measures, mass layoffs, decline of living standards, even broader opening of the gap between rich and poor, capitalists and workers. Cuba must be free to continue the path of socialist construction, without blockades and constant threats by the government of the United States.

The Cuban people have any right to continue being an independent and sovereign nation, guided by the values inherited by the Cuban Revolution. Every man and woman in the world who respect freedom and dignity must stand in solidarity with Cuba and its proud people.

On behalf of the Hellenic-Cuban Association of Friendship and Solidarity of Thessaloniki,

THE PRESIDENT

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Voula Karambidou

Georgios Katsouros