



NETWORKING THE BAPTIST FAMILY TO IMPACT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

A Statement on the Recent Demonstrations and Protests in Cuba

Baptist World Alliance, the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, and Union of Baptists in Latin America

For more than twenty years, the Baptist World Alliance has stood with the people of Cuba noting “pain and suffering endured” by Cubans, reaffirming an urgency “for all nations and peoples to respect and support the human rights of all,” and believing “access to food and medicines is a basic human right” (BWA General Council Resolution 2000.5, Havana, Cuba). The ongoing protests unfolding in Cuba, including thousands of protestors demonstrating in towns and neighborhoods across several provinces, are a poignant reminder of the Cuban cry for freedom, reconciliation, and life in fullness.

The Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (CBF) is a network of more than 3,300 churches and 21 conventions and unions across 15 countries in the Caribbean. The Union of Baptists in Latin America (UBLA) is a network of more than 17,800 churches and 26 conventions and unions across 19 countries in Latin America. CBF and UBLA are two of the six regions of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), a Christian Worldwide Communion with 241 member conventions and unions in 126 countries and territories representing 173,000 churches and 49 million Baptists. The BWA family includes the Baptist Convention Association of Western Cuba, Baptist Convention of Eastern Cuba, Fellowship of Baptist Churches in Cuba, and the Free Will Baptist Convention of Cuba. In solidarity with the Baptists of Cuba and in pastoral love for all Cubans, especially with those who have lost their loved ones at this time and with those who are most exposed to violence, the CBF, UBLA and BWA share the following.

We reaffirm the BWA position first articulated in 1992 that international embargoes disproportionately impact the general population of Cuba and appeal “in the spirit of merciful compassion, the speedy removal of economic sanctions which impact leaders marginally, while devastating the population at large” (BWA General Council Resolution 1992.6, Montego Bay, Jamaica). A just Cuban homeland will be free from international embargoes and blockades as well as from internal economic restrictions.

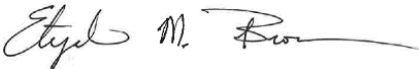
Committed to a biblical understanding of the image of God in every person, we caution that a governmental commitment to an ethic of life includes the right for all people to demonstrate peacefully, remain free from abuse of power and force, and receive expedient legal due process. We call for an immediate release of any Cuban citizen who may have been arrested without any real reason and who has not committed any violence. A just Cuban homeland will protect the human rights of all people as a foundation to life and work to ensure that the people of Cuba can pursue the fullness of life – including personal and family pursuits, the free expression of their faith, robust religious freedom, and civic engagement.

We urge, in light of the scarcity of basic resources like food and medicine, exacerbated by an ongoing global pandemic, for solidarity expressed in humanitarian aid. This would include a commitment from the Government of Cuba to prioritize the food and medical needs of all Cubans, especially those with limited resources or with greater difficulty in accessing those resources, as well as rapidly approving and releasing

humanitarian aid that is already available including at ports and ensuring the same for any additionally pledged humanitarian assistance. This would also include a commitment from the worldwide community to stand together in cooperative humanitarian support with the people of Cuba and working to ensure more just and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

We remain grateful for the work and ministry of Baptists and other Christians throughout Cuba who are seeking to serve their country in wisdom and sacrificial love during this turbulent period and encourage ongoing cooperation with one another as a family belonging together in Jesus Christ. We call upon all Baptists around the world to fervently pray for Cuba and to take steps to express their solidarity with the people of Cuba.

We join with the people of Cuba in hopes that this difficult moment will be a catalytic opportunity for national dialogue that pursues justice, peace, unity, and life, and that the national dialogue will help contribute to the avoidance of additional confrontation, particularly within the Cuban people itself. We kneel together with you in prayerful commitment to the truth of Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."



Rev. Dr. Elijah M. Brown
General Secretary and CEO
Baptist World Alliance



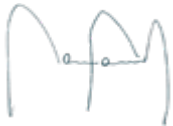
Rev. Dr. Tomás Mackey
President
Baptist World Alliance



Rev. Anslem Warrick
Executive Secretary and Treasurer
Caribbean Baptist Fellowship



Rev. Dominique Dick
President
Caribbean Baptist Fellowship



Rev. Parrish Jácome Hernández
General Secretary
Union of Baptists in Latin America



Rev. Alberto Prokopchuk
President
Union of Baptists in Latin America