

End the Blockade!

Every year since 1992 Cuba has presented a motion to the UN General Assembly calling for an end to all aspects of the Embargo. It has always been passed, in November 2019 by votes of 187 to 3, with only the U.S., Israel and Brazil voting against. The U.S. ignores these votes. Many governments and peoples have tried to resist the U.S. legislation that seeks to control what they and their companies can do.

Worldwide solidarity with Cuba is very important, but ultimately the Blockade is a U.S. policy and has to be stopped here. U.S. presidents can take some steps to end it by executive action, as Obama did from 2014-2016, but the next president can overturn those steps, as Trump is demonstrating.

Only Congress can fully overturn the blockade. There are bills currently in Congress to totally end the travel restrictions and partially end the blockade, but Congress won't act without major pressure from the people of the U.S.



What can YOU do?

- **Go to Cuba.** Break the information blockade and see for yourself. Currently there still remain many licensed possibilities for group or individual travel, with direct flights from the U.S., and many travel agencies who work with Cuba. There are also unlicensed trips which challenge the restrictions.
- **Advocate** with your elected representatives in favor of lifting the travel restrictions and the whole blockade.
- **Find out how to organize** in your community by getting in touch with the National Network on Cuba who produced this brochure, or your nearest Cuba solidarity group

Contact:

National Network on Cuba

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End the Blockade of Cuba



In 1959 the Cuban people made a revolution that overthrew a U.S. backed dictatorship and began building a society that met the basic needs for food, housing, healthcare and education of all the people. Ever since successive U.S. governments have sought to overthrow that revolution.

For almost 60 years they have subjected Cuba to draconian economic measures which the U.S. calls an EMBARGO and Cuba calls a BLOCKADE. It has certainly been a sustained economic war against the island. The policy has been to starve the Cuban people and force them, out of desperation, to rise up against their own government.

Embargo? or Blockade!

In 1959 the vast majority of Cuba's trade was with the U.S. Since then the U.S. government has imposed severe limits on trade, often totally banning it. Currently a small amount of agricultural sales are allowed from the U.S. under very restrictive financial arrangements, and almost nothing can be bought from Cuba.

However the U.S. government has always tried to force other countries to support its Cuba policy and turn a unilateral Embargo into a worldwide Blockade. These attempts increased in the 1990s including the passing of two key Congressional acts.

1992 - the “Cuban Democracy Act” (known as the Torricelli Act) - banned subsidiaries of U.S. multinationals anywhere in the world from selling goods to Cuba. Foreign companies whose manufactured goods contained more than 10% of U.S. components could be heavily fined for selling those goods to Cuba.

1996 - the “Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act” (known as the Helms-Burton Act) – is a set of measures to discourage foreign companies from trading with and making investments in Cuba. Title 3 of the act allows U.S. companies and former Cuban citizens who now live in the U.S. to sue the Cuban Government and foreign companies for compensation for using properties that were legally nationalized by Cuba in the 1960s. Successive presidents exercised the right in the act to waive Title 3’s implementation. In 2019 President Trump allowed it to be implemented.

And a Financial Crackdown

A large part of the world’s commercial and financial transactions involve U.S. dollars and banks. From the Bush administration onwards U.S. banks, foreign banks and foreign companies have been subject to multi-million dollar fines for doing business with Cuba. It has been intensified under Trump.



A Travel Ban

For several decades there was an almost total ban on U.S. citizens being able to spend money in Cuba which effectively prohibited U.S. travel to Cuba. In recent decades some travel has been allowed but with U.S. government restrictions – ‘Licences’. In 2015 President Obama made licensed travel very easy but Trump has systematically reduced the possibilities. Trump has also made it extremely difficult for Cubans to get visas to come to the U.S., either for family visits or emigration.

These U.S. government restrictions on our travel are unique to Cuba, and no other government in the world imposes restrictions on travel to Cuba. Since the income from international tourism is a very important source of economic support in Cuba, the travel restrictions are a major part of the economic Blockade.

The Cost to Cuba

The 60 years of blockade is estimated by the Cuban government to have cost \$139 Billion with a current annual cost of over \$4 Billion.

The human impact is tremendous – for instance

- A major reduction in Cuba’s ability to import necessary food for its people.
- A total block on access to medicines (some of them specialized life-saving medicines) made by U.S. pharmaceutical companies.
- Currently the biggest attack is on Cuba’s ability to import petroleum for gasoline from Venezuela, with foreign oil tanker companies subject to enormous political and financial pressure to stop delivering it. This makes it much harder for Cubans to go to work or to school and for the society to function.

U.S. people lose out too

80,000 U.S. diabetics who have amputations each year and 550,000 lung cancer victims cannot access unique Cuban treatments for their condition.

50 Million U.S. adults are illiterate and cannot benefit from the Cuban “Yes I Can” worldwide literacy campaign that has helped 11 million people in 30 countries learn to read and write.

We are less able to visit a beautiful Caribbean island and to share experiences with its wonderful people.

U.S. farmers cannot sell food that Cuba needs to buy, while other businesses lose out on billions worth of sales to Cuba.