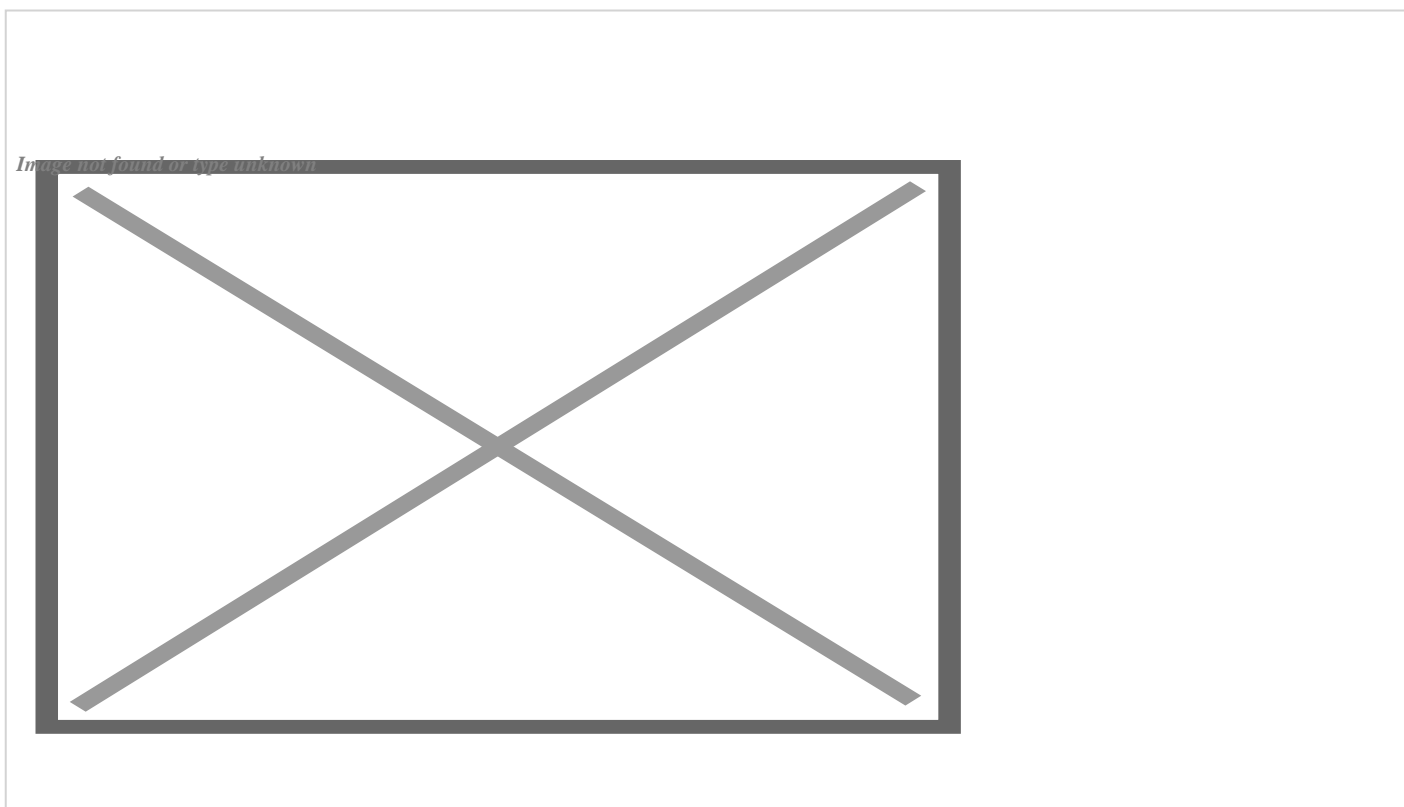


Speech by the President of Cuba at the Palenque Summit



Speech delivered by Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Republic, at the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Migration, Palenque Meeting: for a fraternal neighborhood with well-being, in Chiapas, Mexico, October 22, 2023, "Year 65 of the Revolution".

(Shorthand Versions-Presidency of the Republic)

Dear Andrés Manuel;

Dear Heads of State and Government present;

Heads of delegations;

Guests:

Our first words express a strong condemnation of the genocide and aggression carried out by Israel against the Palestinian people, condemnation of the merciless massacre of defenseless people, a shame for humanity that must cease.

I sincerely thank the Government of Mexico and especially the authorities of the State of Chiapas for the kind welcome in an appointment armed with the haste that urgencies always put.

And again, thank you friend, brother Andrés Manuel for the initiative. We really needed this regional dialogue, to meet and address with frankness and realism the drama of irregular migration that every day hits us with painful news, because only in a coordinated manner could we decipher the multiple causes and consequences of the problem and only in this way will we be able to advance in its possible solutions.

There is no other way to confront the notable increase in irregular migratory flows.

According to public figures, between 2022 and so far in 2023, more than 4 million migrants have transited irregularly through the countries of the region en route to the United States. These are numbers never seen before.

In general, we are well aware of the factors that cause this phenomenon, but it is important to investigate the main motivations of our fellow citizens, because it is up to us to mitigate the problem and mitigate its negative effects, while ensuring the safety of migrants.

Although there are attempts to impose other versions, politically motivated, there is an unavoidable truth: the fundamental cause of irregular migration lies in the socioeconomic conditions of the countries of origin -which is accentuated after the impact of the pandemic- and the aspiration of migrants to settle and work in the United States, where the offers of the labor market attract those who dream of a more prosperous economic scenario than that of their surroundings and do not always find it.

Family ties and vulnerabilities associated with climate change can also be mentioned.

None of these motivations is foreign to Cuba. However, Cuba's migratory potential is additionally stimulated, in a very significant way, by the hostile policy of the United States towards our country.

This hostile policy, which has a direct and extraordinary impact on the Cuban migratory flow and, collaterally, on the countries of the region through which this migration passes, is expressed in three fundamental components:

First, there is the economic blockade, criminally reinforced in recent years with a comprehensive and all-encompassing system of coercive measures aimed, by definition, at depressing the standard of living of the Cuban population, reducing their real income and making them suffer hunger and misery. The unjust, absurd and arbitrary classification of Cuba as a State sponsor of terrorism has a significant weight in the economic effect of that policy.

Secondly, and for political reasons, the United States Government grants privileged treatment to Cubans who arrive at its southern or maritime borders with the purpose of settling permanently in that country. The vast majority of these migrants are accepted regardless of the status with which they arrived at the border or succeeded in crossing it. Consequently, many Cubans are confident that, unlike nationals of other countries, their chances of settling in the United States are very high if they manage to reach the border by any means.

Third, and also for political reasons, there is a federal law in the United States called the Cuban Adjustment Act, according to which any Cuban who entered the United States after January 1, 1959 has the opportunity to obtain permanent residency one year after arriving. This is a unique privilege not enjoyed by nationals of any other country. It is exclusive to Cubans and provides an extraordinary incentive for the migrant.

More than a decade ago and in his capacity as President of the Republic, Army General Raúl Castro, historic leader of the Revolution and to whom we owe important changes introduced since then in our migratory law for its necessary updating, called attention to the great ignorance prevailing in the world about the policy towards Cuba, in the following terms:

"Nobody in the great international press talks about the aforementioned Adjustment Act, it is as if it did not exist. The Cuban emigrants are, as a result of the lie repeated thousands of times, called 'political exiles' escaping from communism. That is to say, for them, from Cuba the citizens 'escape', while from the rest of the world they emigrate.

"What would happen if a Latin American, Asian or African adjustment law were put into effect in the United States or the European Union? The answer is obvious. There is the gigantic wall built on the northern border of Mexico and the thousands of deaths that, year after year, occur in deserts and seas bordering the centers of world power".

On the other hand, the impunity of the U.S. authorities in the face of migrants who have used the theft of a fumigation aircraft, or others who travel as stowaways in civilian aircraft, in addition to stimulating illegal emigration from Cuba, sets very dangerous precedents for the security of international civil aeronautics, in violation of the migration agreements signed between the two countries.

All these practices respond to purely political motivations and lack any legitimacy or moral justification whatsoever.

These regulations clearly show how the U.S. government puts the objectives of destabilization against Cuba before its national priorities in the area of migration.

Between Cuba and the United States there are several agreements, still in force, which were conceived to ensure that migration between the two countries was orderly, regular and safe, and to promote the full normalization of bilateral migratory relations. However, the actions I have commented on on the part of the U.S. Government run counter to these objectives and impede their fulfillment.

It is impossible to understand the volume and nature of the migratory flows of Cubans transiting through countries in the region to the United States without considering the weight of these factors that singularize and reinforce it.

Modifying the structural causes of Cuban migration, both regular and irregular, and fundamentally influencing the reduction of the flow of Cuban migrants through various countries is in the hands of the U.S. authorities.

As I have said recently, in general, Cubans who leave Cuba legally become irregular migrants, subjected to all kinds of risks and dangers, even to their lives, in transit to the United States.

When there is the will to act in this direction, I assure you that you will always count on Cuba's commitment and cooperation.

Cuba's migration policy favors the travel of Cuban citizens abroad and their return to Cuba.

We maintain bilateral mechanisms of migratory cooperation with several nations of the region, and exchange of migratory alerts with others, with the objective of implementing the tools that allow us to achieve a regular, orderly and safe flow of travelers; and, at the same time, to combat the trafficking of irregular migrants and human trafficking.

This type of meeting is of great value for our fellow citizens, for their families, for our societies and for the relations between our countries. It is what strengthens the sense of brotherhood of Our America.

Once again, thank you very much, Chiapas; thank you very much, Mexico; thank you very much, brother Andrés Manuel!

(Cubaminrex-Presidency)

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