

# *Cuban Religious Denominations Express Support for IFCO/Pastors for Peace*

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Havana, August 31 (RHC)-- Cuban religious denominations have expressed their support for the IFCO / Pastors for Peace organization, while the U.S. government is threatening to strip of its tax exempt status for its humanitarian work in Cuba.

In a news report issued Wednesday, the Federation of Religious Denominations of Havana, the Yoruba Cultural Association and Bantú Institution announced their adherence to a recent statement by the Havana-based Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), which describes the arbitrary decision as an attack on solidarity and calls on all friends across the world to show their solidarity and support for the organization.

In Wednesday's news release, the Cuban religious denominations recall that for a quarter century, the IFCO / Pastors for Peace organization has organized multiple aid caravans loaded with donations of all kinds, including medicines, vehicles and school supplies, to Cuba, an expression of love and solidarity with the Cuban people, in opposition to the U.S. blockade.

Pastors for Peace was recognized as a non-profit organization by the U.S. government, due to its fund-

raising work or action in support of a specific cause or set of causes. As such, the organization has enjoyed tax-exempt status.

In statements to Cuban media, Gail Walker, executive director of the organization, said: “the organization’s work with Cuba provides no motive for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to strip it of its non-profit status, as it is attempting to do.”

Gail, the daughter of late U.S. Reverend Lucius Walker, who founded the friend-shipment caravans to Cuba back in 1992, explained that given President Obama’s opposition to the blockade, they had hoped that the efforts of the IFCO / Pastors for Peace would be respected. But the reality is that despite the new approach to Cuba, the U.S. government continues its campaign to undermine Cuba and its revolutionary principles.

Walker explained that should the IRS strip the organization of its status, it will be required to pay taxes on income received from donors, thus negatively impacting on the organization’s budget and ability to remain functioning.

However, Gail Walker stated that regardless of the penalties imposed against Pastors for Peace by the U.S. government, the organization will continue steadfast in its mission: to assist the dispossessed and fight against human and civil rights injustices.

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