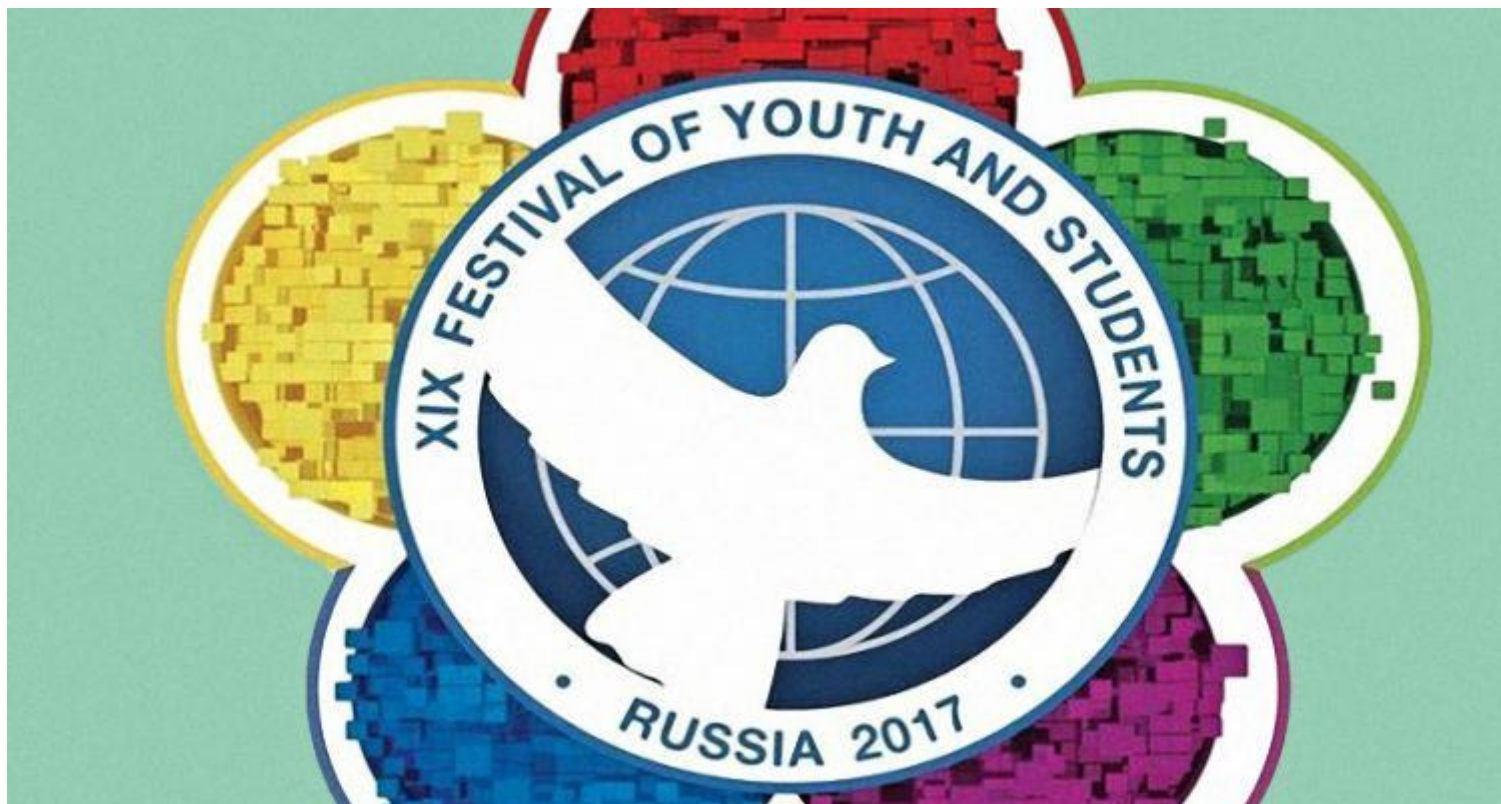


# *Global Youth Condemn U.S. Blockade Policy toward Cuba*

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Sochi, October 17 (RHC)-- Delegates to the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia, have raised their voices to condemn the blockade policy imposed and maintained by the United States of America against Cuba for nearly six decades.

A Cuba solidarity forum was held Monday, October 16, in the Main Media Center where many of the Festival activities are taking place.

Just a few days before a Cuban-sponsored draft resolution on the impact of the U.S. blockade over the last 12 months is set to be debated and voted on at the UN General Assembly, participants to a Cuba solidarity forum condemned the political, economic and human damage inflicted on the Cuban nation and people by Washington's hostile policy, as well as its extraterritorial nature.

Participants also demanded the return to Cuba of the portion of Cuban territory in Guantánamo illegally occupied by a U.S. naval base.

A delegate from the United States, Jacobo Perasso, spoke on behalf of the socialist youth and U.S. Socialist Workers Party. He demanded an end to all subversive programs against Cuba by the U.S. government and highlighted Cuba's solidarity and internationalist efforts.

Meanwhile, the Executive Secretary of the Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students (Oclae), Rafael Bogonin, spoke about the countless achievements of the Cuban people under the Revolution. He further said: “At a time when Latin American countries are facing a resurgence of hegemonic capitalism, Cuba stands out as a beacon of hope, an example for revolutionary youth in the regional and around the world.”

The President of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), Cuban hero Fernando González Llort, described the blockade policy as an economic war that affects all sectors of Cuban society, and allows the United States to harass third parties and countries that decide to do business with the island.

González, one of the Cuban Five, spoke extensively about the economic damage caused by the blockade, as Cuba can not purchase directly from the U.S., forcing the Caribbean state to purchase basic products, technology, equipment and raw materials in distant markets.

In a moving speech, Aleida Guevara –the daughter of legendary guerrilla commander Ernesto 'Che' Guevara-- spoke about the impact of the blockade on the Cuban health care sector, describing the pain families and doctors feel when they are unable to obtain a certain medicine to treat a patient.

She said: “As you all know out of 10 new medicines, eight have U.S. patents. In order to acquire them, Cuba must go through five or six intermediaries. This is the unquantifiable pain caused by the U.S. blockade.”

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