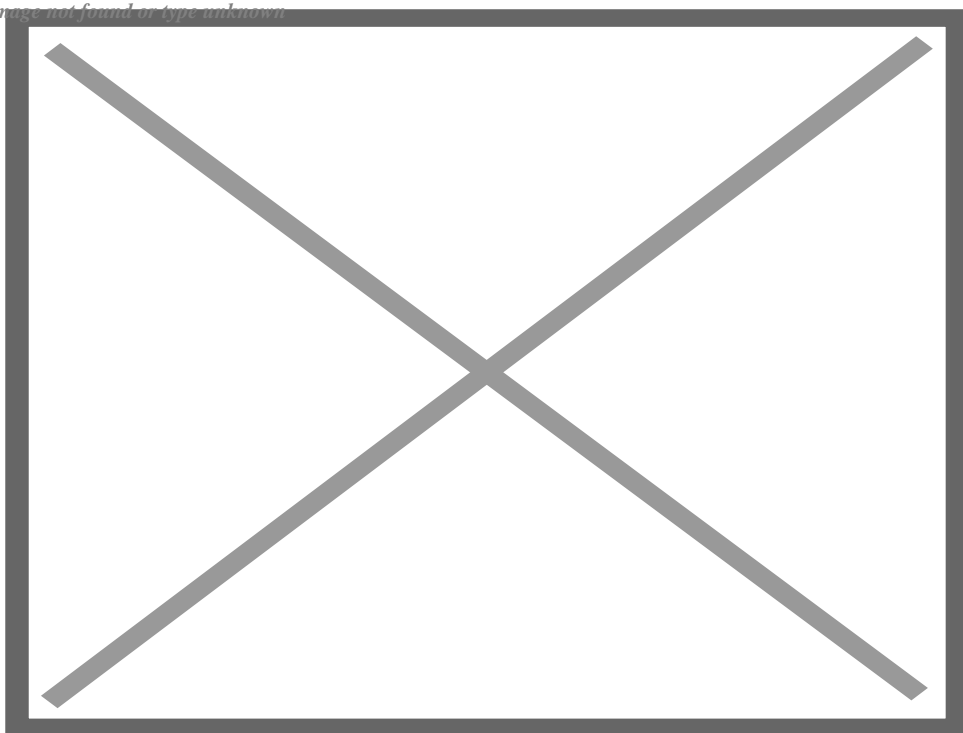


Solidarity with Cuba in the USA during 2024: Another love story

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By Deisy Francis Mexidor / Chief correspondent in the United States

Washington, January 1 (RHC / Prensa Latina)-- The story of solidarity with Cuba in the United States completed a new chapter in 2024 with numerous displays of love and support for the people of the Caribbean nation.

"During the period, there was a noticeable strengthening of solidarity and a constant struggle for Cuba's removal from the list of countries that supposedly sponsor terrorism and against the genocidal economic blockade of the United States against Cuba," expressed Ambassador Lianys Torres.

Torres, head of the Cuban Mission in the United States, told Prensa Latina that collective efforts allowed the growth of this support network—which encompasses more than 65 organizations based here—and the incorporation of young people.

She also highlighted "the coordinated work among groups from different sectors of society (African Americans, religious, cultural, sports, academic, unions, among others), expanding their reach with

strategies that allowed the voices of our peoples to be extended for the sovereignty and dignity of Cubans, against imperialism and genocide."

He mentioned that among the most significant initiatives was the campaign Take Cuba Off The SSOT List. (Eliminar a Cuba de la Lista de Estados Patrocinadores del Terrorismo).

Strategies were deployed ranging from sending letters and signatures, making phone calls, requesting meetings with congress members, to public demonstrations in support of Cuba, he argued.

Social media also became, he said, a new battleground for truth-loving friends, against the disinformation campaigns generated by major Western media outlets.

Torres noted that in 2024, the number of delegations to Cuba increased, both from organizations and from members of various solidarity brigades that visited the country.

"The solidarity activists from the United States constituted the largest delegation that participated in the May Day celebrations in Cuba, as well as in other events held during the year in the national territory," emphasized the diplomat.

It is also important to highlight "the work and the links of important unions in the country with the solidarity movement." With this year's efforts, more than 116 resolutions have been approved by organizations, city councils, state councils, and unions, demanding Cuba's removal from the terrorist list," emphasized Torres.

Given the difficult situation Cuba is going through, solidarity groups led national support campaigns to raise funds and send significant donations, among which the "Saving Lives" campaign stands out, which allowed the shipment of pacemakers to our country, she argued.

Additionally, campaigns were carried out to send medications, medical equipment, food, generators, and other supplies to the victims of the climatic events that struck the nation, noted the representative of the Caribbean nation.

During the Annual Conference of the National Network on Cuba (NNOC) in November 2024, its leadership "envisioned a 2025 filled with abundant work to build more solidarity with Cuba from the United States, in order to expand their networks even further, and integrate into international campaigns for our Homeland," she concluded.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Precisely the activist Cheryl LaBash, co-chair of the NNOC, in her evaluation of the work in the calendar year that is coming to an end, pointed out that 2025 holds a great number of challenges for both Cuba and the people of the United States.

"We have optimism, energy, and determination to face those challenges," said LaBash, who stated that the struggle was driven by "people who traveled to Cuba and saw there the hope of creating a better future than the one they foresee for themselves in the United States."

The list of those interested in the International May Day Brigade of 2025 has already grown to over 200, each armed with suitcases or canvas bags filled with material aid to counteract the effects of the blockade, he stated.

"The slow and hunger genocide imposed on Cuba by the United States against the will of the world is not acceptable," LaBash stated.

Diana Block, a member of NNOC in the Bay Area in San Francisco, California, assessed the role of unity in 2024. "It is being built here among different groups in the face of this new period in which there will be a new administration (Donald) Trump with (the senator from Florida) Marco Rubio as Secretary of State."

The activist praised the role of the youth who, above all, have taken the lead in the NNOC.

For her part, Gloria La Riva, representing the Venezuela-Cuba Solidarity Committee and the Hatuey Project, urged to "expand the work of solidarity with Cuba" based on "these terrible four years of (Joe) Biden (without change in policy towards Cuba) and the experience of a previous term with Trump, who is returning to the White House."

La Riva added: "We know that we cannot fail in that struggle and we cannot disappoint, nor will we ever disappoint the Cuban people."

For Joshua Parks, a member of the Network and a resident of Florida, 2024 has yielded results in terms of solidarity: "The people are energized and excited to find different ways, more creative ways, and creative solutions to support Cuba."

"We are really excited about what the future holds for us in this struggle." A new administration is coming, that of Donald Trump. Unfortunately, Joe Biden's administration did not lift the blockade, did not remove Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

So our struggle continues -he added- to keep demanding justice for Cuba, to keep mobilizing until our demands are met and we can have a Cuba that is truly free from this economic war and not under the thumb of the United States, noted Parks.

For his part, Michael Mc'Carthy, a member of Massachusetts Peace Action, stated that this year closes a cycle in which "I believe we have been given an opportunity to make the movement stronger."

We had -he commented- "a lot of discussion about Trump's White House versus Biden's and their similarities in terms of how they maintain sanctions on Cuba and the designation on the list of State sponsors of terrorism."

Ideally, with Trump in office and Marco Rubio as Secretary of State, we have to continue exerting pressure to lift the blockade and improve relations with Cuba.

The people of the United States, whom they do not represent, mostly believe that Cuba is our neighbor and deserves to live freely and without obstacles, he noted. "I love Cuba for the people." Originally, I came to Cuba through poetry. There was a university professor who showed me some Cuban poets," he confessed.

"And simply getting to know the people, their use of language and their music, art, and culture, and then learning about the rich history of Cuba has been a truly powerful and impactful tool in my own life and a good motivation for me and for the world of what is possible."

For Sandhya, a member of the Michigan Cuba Solidarity Committee, they must strategize together on "how we have to explain, expand the solidarity movement, and reach new horizons."

"I am very encouraged by the youthful energy that is rejuvenating the movement at this moment," said the young woman from Michigan.

"So many of us talk about how we have to bring Cuba closer to people who still don't know what that people are going through, not only in terms of the blockade but also in terms of how they creatively resist the blockade," she opined.

From the next Trump administration, we expect an aggressive policy towards Cuba, similar to the one we saw in his previous administration in 2017, so now is the time for us to gather our numbers in terms of solidarity work, he concluded.

WHAT BIDEN DID NOT DO

The writer and activist Medea Benjamin said that at the time they thought "Biden was going to follow the path of (Barack) Obama by opening relations with Cuba, opening trade with Cuba, but unfortunately, he didn't."

With a Trump victory, it will be more difficult, warned the activist, reaffirming her hope that "with a larger, more unified, more effective movement in the United States, we could pressure the government to respect not only Cuba's sovereignty but also public opinion here, which is in favor of good relations with the island."

The young Luz Rodríguez believes that "a second Trump presidency will endanger many of the civil rights we have here in the United States."

"Under Obama's presidency, there was an opening of relations between the United States and Cuba." And when Trump came in, he not only undid what the Democrat was able to achieve during his term, but he also implemented dozens and dozens of additional restrictions against the Cuban economy," he recalled.

Biden is leaving "and we haven't seen any significant change, and in reality, what there was was a strong alignment in maintaining Trump's policy towards Cuba," Rodríguez pointed out.

That's why -he added- "we have to keep demanding an end to the blockade and that Cuba be allowed to live with dignity, sovereignty, and freedom, without the oppression of a foreign government."

"In more than 30 occasions, just like the other times -he emphasized-, the majority of the world has come together and said no, that the blockade is criminal and must be lifted so that the Cuban people can live in peace, and it is clear that the only ones who have voted against are the United States and Israel."

On December 12, the State Department published its annual report on the fight against terrorism in 2023 and kept Cuba on the arbitrary list of countries sponsoring the scourge, a designation that has reinforced the unilateral blockade against the Caribbean nation.

A day earlier, the head of U.S. diplomacy, Antony Blinken, had ruled out any change in policy towards Cuba before January 20, 2025.

Blinken asserted: "I do not anticipate any change in our policy towards Cuba by this Administration."

Cuba was first included on that list in 1982, during the Ronald Reagan administration (1981-1989), and Obama (2009-2017) reversed the measure in 2015 after admitting it was unwarranted.

However, in January 2021, just days before leaving the White House, Donald Trump re-included Cuba on that list, a decision that Biden did not reverse.

Cuban authorities have systematically denounced that in reality, Cuba has been a victim of terrorism for years, often organized and planned from U.S. territory, and that the blockade qualifies as the worst violation of human rights against their people.

[SOURCE: PRENSA LATINA]

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