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Chicago ALBA Solidarity Committee
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Open Letter to President Obama to Take Concrete Action on Ending the US Blockade/Embargo on Cuba, and to Return Guantanamo to Cuba

We welcome President Obama's decision to travel to Cuba for talks with the Cuban government.

We undersigned organizations and individuals call on President Obama to take concrete actions on two outstanding issues to restore normal diplomatic relations between the two countries:

1. End the 54 year old embargo/blockade of Cuba,
2. Return the US occupied territory of Guantanamo to Cuba.

Economic Impact of the Embargo/Blockade of Cuba

Cuba lost out on at least US\$117 billion between 1960 and 2014 due to the U.S. economic blockade on the country, according to the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.ⁱ

The embargo/blockade not only hurts Cuba, but also the US. The US Chamber of Commerce, which advocates lifting the embargo, states the cost to the US economy of the 54 year sanctions range from \$1.2 to \$3.6 billion *per year*.ⁱⁱ

On the US embargo/blockade of Cuba, President Obama can exercise his authority in the following areas:

- 1) authorize the use of the dollar in international transactions;
- 2) permit Cuba to import from third countries products with more than 10 percent U.S. components;
- 3) allow Cuban entities to open correspondent accounts in U.S. banks;
- 4) end the policy of financial persecution against Cuba;
- 5) not impede the granting of credits or other financial facilities;
- 6) allow imports of Cuba's exportable products or services;
- 7) authorize Cuban planes and boats to carry passengers, cargo and mail between the two countries;
- 8) authorize direct exports of U.S. products to Cuba;
- 9) authorize companies to invest in Cuba (international firms have submitted more than 400 proposals for investment in the Mariel Economic Zone);
- 10) remove the limit on Cuban products that can be imported by U.S. visitors to Cuba;
- 11) authorize U.S. citizens to receive medical treatment in Cuba;

12) allow the distribution of credits, loans and financing for the acquisition of products in the U.S. market.

The US Naval Base at Guantánamo

The US Base at Guantánamo is 113 years old as of February 23, 2016. It was the first U.S. base in our hemisphere and is the oldest U.S. overseas base in the world, and the only one whose host country lacks contractual authority to unilaterally revoke it.

We call on President Obama to implement these actions to alleviate the US blockade on Cuba and to set a timetable for returning US occupied Guantanamo to the Cuban nation.

Noam Chomsky

Chicago ALBA Solidarity Committee

Medea Benjamin, Co-founder, Code Pink

SOA Watch

Rev. Michael Kinnamon, former General Secretary, National Council of Churches

IFCO/Pastors for Peace

Glen Ford, Executive Editor, Black Agenda Report

Tom Hayden

Carl Rosen, President of Western Region, United Electrical Workers (UE)

Chuck Kaufman, National Coordinator, Alliance for Global Justice

Eva Golinger, Journalist/writer, *The Chavez Code; Bush vs Chavez*

Marjorie Cohn, past President, National Lawyers Guild; Professor, Thomas Jefferson School of Law

Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, former General Secretary, National Council of Churches

Cindy Sheehan, Author/Activist

James Early, Board member, Institute for Policy Studies

Kevin Martin, Executive Director, Peace Action

Council on Hemispheric Affairs

Council on Latin American Relations

Leah Bolger, CDR, USN (Ret), former National President, Veterans For Peace

José E. López, Executive Director, Puerto Rico Cultural Center

Fred Hirsch, Delegate to the South Bay Labor Council

Cristina Vazquez, International Vice President, Workers United WSRJB 52, SEIU

Task Force on the Americas

International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee

Blasé Bonpane, Office of the Americas

Rev. Kristin Stoneking, Executive Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation

Dave Welsh, Delegate, San Francisco Labor Council

Dan Kovalik, USW Associate General Counsel

Alicia Jrapko, US Coordinator, International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity

Mavis Anderson, Latin America Working Group (LAWG)

National Lawyers Guild, Cuba Subcommittee

Joe Lombardo, Marilyn Levin, Co-Coordinators, United National Anti-War Coalition (UNAC)

Bill Preston, President. AFGF Local 17

David McReynolds, War Resisters League (retired)
Margaret Randall, author, *Haydée Santamaría, Cuban Revolutionary* (most recent)
Jane Franklin, Historian, *Cuba and the United States, A Chronological History*
Alex Main, Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR)
Historians Against the War

Delvis Fernandez Levy, Cuban American Alliance
Walter Lippmann, CubaNews, Los Angeles
Tiana Ocasio, President, Connecticut Chapter, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Stephen Kimber, journalist, author, *What Lies Across the Water, The Real Story of the Cuban 5*
David Swanson, author, WorldBeyondWar.org, WarisaCrime.org
New Internationalism Project of Institute for Policy Studies (IPS)
Alejandro Molina, Michelle Morales, National Boricua Human Rights Network; Campaign to Free Oscar Lopez Rivera
Sara Flounders, Co-Director, International Action Center
Rabbi Brant Rosen

John McAuliff, Executive Director, Fund for Reconciliation and Development; Coordinator, Cuba-US People to People Partnership
Cherrene Horazuk, President, AFSCME 3800
RootsAction.org
Hon. Jim Ferlo, President, Pittsburgh-Matanzas-Sister Cities Association
(Former City Council President and PA State Senator 1988-2014, now retired)
Salim Lamrani, author, *The Economic War Against Cuba*
Tom Hansen, International Education Director, Mexico Solidarity Network
Arnold August, journalist, author, *Cuba and its Neighbours: Democracy in Motion*
Dan Beeton, CEPR

Reese Erlich, author, *Dateline Havana*
Albert A. Fox, Jr., President, Alliance for Responsible Cuba Policy Foundation
Art Heitzer, Wisconsin Coalition to Normalize Relations with Cuba
Pam Africa, Suzanne Ross, International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal
Joe Iosbaker, Co-Chair, SEIU Local 73 Joint Bargaining Committee at UIC
Richard Berg, past President, Teamsters Local 743
Matt Meyer, War Resisters International; International Peace Research Association
Keith Bolender, author, *Voices From the Other Side: An Oral History of Terrorism Against Cuba; Cuba Under Siege: American Policy, the Revolution and Its People*
Bob Guild, Vice President, Marazul Charters, Inc.

Charles A. Serrano, ASG International, Inc.
Elizabeth Hill, President, Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto
Mike Beilstein, Corvallis, OR City Councilor
8th Day Center for Justice
Lisa Valanti, President US-CUBA Sister Cities Association
Church Women United, New York State
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America
St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America
Kathy Kelly, Voices for Creative Nonviolence

The Friendship Association (formerly St. Augustine-Baracoa Friendship Association)

Minnesota Cuba Committee

Wendy Thompson, former Pres. L. 235, UAW, American Axle Detroit Gear & Axle

Felix Masud-Piloto, Professor of History, DePaul University

Alice Slater, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

Catherine Murphy, The Literacy Project

Marcela Vásquez-León, Director, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Arizona

Dereka Rushbrook, Associate Professor, School of Geography & Development; Co-Director, Contemporary Cuba Study Abroad Program, University of Arizona

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba

US Women and Cuba Collaboration

Let Cuba Live Committee of Maine

Heide Trampus, Coordinator, Worker to Worker, Canada-Cuba Labour Solidarity Network

Seattle/Cuba Friendship Committee

Ken Crowley, National Delegations Organizer, Witness for Peace

Portland Central America Solidarity Committee

Houston Peace and Justice Center

Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA)

Kentucky Interfaith on Latin America and the Caribbean

Graciela Sanchez, Executive Director Esperanza Peace and Justice Center (Texas)

Carl Gentile, President and Director of Litigation, Labor Union Advocates

Sacramento Action for Latin America

H. Bruce Franklin, Author

Pedro Cabán, Professor and Chair, Latin American, Caribbean and U.S. Latino Studies

University at Albany, SUNY

Charlotte Koons, co-founder, Code Pink-Long Island, Women for Peace

CUBAmistad (Bloomington, IN)

Leslie Salgado, Chair, Howard County Friends of Latin America

Friends of Cuba Against the Blockade - Vancouver

Nino Pagliccia, activist, author, *Cuba Solidarity in Canada*

John Laun, Colombia Support Network

Gabriel Hetland, Assistant Professor, Latin American, Caribbean and U.S. Latino Studies, University at Albany, SUNY

Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Committee, DC Metropolitan Area

Rebecca Navarrete-Davis, President Berkeley-Palma Soriano Sister City Association

Kathryn Albrecht, journalist/writer, Nueva Mexico

Shirley Warren, New Paltz Women In Black

Laurence H. Shoup, author, *Wall Street's Think Tank: the Council on Foreign Relations and the Empire of Neoliberal Geopolitics 1976-2014*

Nebraskans for Peace

Corinne Willinger, Granny Peace Brigade, NYC Metro Raging Grannies

Lee Robinson, African Awareness Association

Rockford Peace and Justice Action Committee

All-African People's Revolutionary Party (GC)
Meredith Aby, Minnesota Anti-War Committee
LELO (Legacy of Leadership, Equality and Organizing)
Carl Finamore, Machinist Lodge 1781 delegate, San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Kait McIntyre, Chicago Anti-War Committee
Rev. Mother Marcy, founder, Public Intellectuals for Social and Spare Change
Charles Newlin, Coordinating Committee Linn-Benton Pacific Green Party (Oregon)
Bert Hestroffer, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Marcela Vásquez-León, Director, Center for Latin American Studies, Associate Professor, Univ. of Arizona

Dianne Post, International Human Rights Attorney, Phoenix, AZ
Marc Becker, Professor of Latin American History, Truman State University
Christine Preble, Ass. Professor and Undergraduate Program Director Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies, University at Albany, SUNY
Barbara G. Harris, Granny Peace Brigade
Greater Hartford Coalition on Cuba
Michael Martin, Professor, Media School, Indiana University
Sarah Blue, Assistant Professor of Geography, Texas State University

United States Palestinian Community Network (USPCN)

Ann Eagan, Treasurer, Manhattan Green Party
Francis Shor, Professor Emeritus, History, Wayne State University
Sherry Millner, Professor, CUNY, College of Staten Island.
Lucille Roussin, Prof., Dir. Holocaust Restitution Claims Practicum, Cardozo School of Law(NYC)
Cole Harrison, Executive Director, Massachusetts Peace Action
William H. Slavick, Professor of English, University of Southern Maine (retired)
Alberto N Jones, President Caribbean American Children Foundation, Palm Coast, Florida

Hermann Engelhardt, Senior Research Associate in Geophysics, Emeritus, California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech)

Ken Hayes SOAW-Austin, TX
Mary Ann Jones, Southern Oregon Friends of Cuba
Rob Kall, Publisher, OpEdNews.com
Kim Scipes, Editor of *Building Global Labor Solidarity in a Time of Accelerating Globalization*

ⁱ <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/US-Blockade-Cost-Cuba-117-Billion-UN-Reports-20150805-0013.html>

ⁱⁱ Hanson Daniel, Dayne Batten & Harrison Ealey. "It's Time For The U.S. To End Its Senseless Embargo Of Cuba," Forbes Magazine. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2013/01/16/its-time-for-the-u-s-to-end-its-senseless-embargo-of-cuba/>

The US International Trade Commission makes a similar estimate:
<http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/time-end-cuba-embargo>

“By 1992, U.S. businesses had lost over \$30 billion in trade over the previous thirty years, according to researchers from Johns Hopkins. At that time, Cuba’s loss for the same period was smaller, but not by much: \$28.6 billion, according to Cuba’s Institute of Economic Research.”
<http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2009/0309pepper.html>

A study by the Cuba Policy Foundation estimated that the annual cost to the US economy could be \$4.84 billion in agricultural exports and related economic output. "America's Farmers Bearing Heavy Burden for U.S. Embargo Against Cuba: New Report,"
www.cubafoundation.org, Jan. 28, 2002