



U.S. Peace Council

**Written Submission by the U.S. Peace Council (USPC) to the UN Human Rights Council's
Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Cuba, 4th Cycle, 2023**

1. The U.S. Peace Council (USPC) has longstanding relations with the Cuban Movement for Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples (MovPaz), the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) and other civil society organizations in Cuba.

2. USPC delegations have visited Cuba on numerous occasions, the most recent being on the May 6, 2022 USPC Regional Continental Meeting held in Guantanamo. During their numerous visits, USPC representatives have had direct contact with Cuban citizens from all walks of life as well as civil society organizations.

Theme: A General framework of implementation

3. The illegal U.S.-imposed economic, commercial and financial blockade on the Republic of Cuba and its further tightening since 2019 are the main obstacles to the full implementation of human rights for the Cuban people as they severely restrict Cuba's ability to import food, medicines, medical supplies, fuel, construction supplies for recovery from climate change induced hurricanes and other basic necessities.

4. As explicitly stated in the April 6, 1960 Memorandum from the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Mallory) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom), the blockade is meant to inflict suffering on the Cuban people by strangling the Cuban economy. This inhumane policy violates the UN principles that should prevail in the relations among peoples and States.

5. The extraterritorial application of the illegal U.S. sanctions regime against Cuba by banks and financial institutions worldwide further exacerbates the harmful impact of the blockade on the human rights situation of the Cuban people. Since 2019, Cuba has registered more than 850 measures preventing Cuba from doing business with foreign banks and financial institutions, making it almost impossible for Cuba to acquire and sell goods and services on the international markets.

6. The arbitrary and unjustified inclusion of Cuba in the U.S. State Department's list of State Sponsors

of Terrorism has contributed to a further tightening of the illegal U.S. blockade and its extraterritorial application, which violates international law.

7. Since January of 2021, citizens of European countries traveling to Cuba have been excluded from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's visa waiver program as a way to harm Cuba's tourism industry, one of the island's main sources of income.

8. In May of 2022, the USPC participated in the VII International Seminar for Peace and the Abolition of NATO and U.S. Foreign Military Bases held in Guantanamo, Cuba. The seminar was organized by the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples and the World Peace Council (WPC). It brought together human rights activists, peace activists, social actors and representatives of civil society organizations from all over the world in a common effort to condemn the illegal occupation of Cuban territory by the U.S. at Guantanamo Bay, call on the U.S. to immediately return the occupied territory at Guantanamo Bay to the Cuban people and close the illegal U.S. naval base at Guantanamo.

9. Mainstream media reporting on Cuba — often misleading and one-sided — does not accurately reflect the reality of life for Cubans. On the one hand, the mainstream media hardly covers the negative impact of the economic, commercial and financial sanctions on human rights in Cuba. On the other hand, the mainstream media does not report on the social and economic achievements of the government of Cuba in cooperation with that country's civil society organizations.

10. The media disinformation and misinformation against Cuba has been massively exacerbated in recent years by digital platforms spreading unchecked data about Cuba and shutting down hundreds of accounts and websites related to the Cuban government and to independent, non-corporate media outlets.

Theme: A3 Inter-State cooperation & development assistance

11. During the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, 58 Cuban medical brigades assisted health care professionals in 42 countries and territories in the fight against the virus.

12. As part of its long-standing internationalism and solidarity with peoples worldwide, Cuba has shared its vaccines with countries such as Iran, Mexico, Nicaragua, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam.

13. Cuba is a long-standing member of numerous international organizations promoting peace, trade, mutual aid and assistance based on the principles of solidarity and respect of national sovereignty and self-determination, including the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP) and The Community of Latin American & Caribbean States (CELAC).

Theme: A28 Cooperation with other international mechanisms and institutions

14. For 30 consecutive times, the UN General Assembly has adopted Cuba's Resolution "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" by an overwhelming majority of votes. The large majority of UN member states annually call for the immediate end of the illegal blockade which violates the rights of the Cuban people, bringing suffering and harm to Cubans and hindering Cuba's economic and human rights development.

15. Cuba has regularly denounced any kind of illegal unilateral coercive measures imposed by the U.S. government and its allies in Europe on third countries before the UN Human Rights Council for their violation of International Law and the Charter of the United Nations.

16. To guarantee every Cuban woman, man and child the right to healthy and adequate food in the face of the cruel U.S. blockade, the Cuban government has, in conjunction with the World Food Program, adopted the Food Sovereignty and Nutrition Education Plan in October of 2020. The Food Sovereignty and Nutrition Education Plan manages local, sovereign and sustainable food systems, based on intersectoral coordination and the participation of actors linked to the production, transformation, commercialization and consumption of food as well as the promotion of a food culture and nutritional education.

Theme: A41 Constitutional and legislative framework

17. On February 24, 2019 the Cuban people adopted a new Constitution with 87% of yes votes. Cuba's new constitution guarantees basic human rights such as the universal access to clean water, healthy and adequate food, health care, education, adequate and safe housing, culture and sports, the right to live in a healthy environment as well as the right to participate in the formation, exercise and control of the power of the State.

18. On August 6, 2021 Cuba adopted a law allowing for the establishment of private and state-owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. With the passage of the law, Cuba has broadened the array of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for Cubans. By the end of 2022, 6139 private micro, small and medium-sized enterprises were created in Cuba.

19. On September 25, 2022, the Cuban people adopted the New Families Code, one of the most progressive worldwide. The New Families Code expands the rights and obligations of family members based on biological ties to new forms of families based on affection and care. It particularly strengthens the rights of children and youth.

Theme: D7 Right to participation in public affairs and right to vote

20. The Cuban people actively participated in the drafting of the new Constitution during a three-month consultation process from August 13 through November 15, 2018. To that end, over 130,000 meetings were held nation-wide at the neighborhood level, at the work place and in educational institutions.

21. The Cuban people actively participated in the drafting of the New Families Code during a consultation process involving more than 6 million Cubans in 80,000 meetings held throughout the country. This resulted in modifications of 47.93% of the original draft code and the introduction of new elements which represent 2.06% of the code.

Theme: E22 Right to food

22. The economic, commercial and financial Blockade imposed on Cuba by the U.S. Government and its extraterritorial application severely restrict Cuba's access to international food markets. To guarantee the right to healthy and adequate food for the Cuban people (SDG goal #2), the Cuban government has, in conjunction with the World Food Program, adopted the Food Sovereignty and Nutrition Education Plan in October of 2020. The plan focuses on the strengthening of local food production in rural and urban areas through the creation of production collectives.

23. During the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, when the U.S. deliberately added over 240 sanctions against Cuba, Cuba strengthened local food production and the sale to the local population directly from the producer to keep costs low. Thanks to its sustainable and ecological agriculture, Cuba's food production does not require the importation and massive use of pesticides or fertilizers.

24. In December of 2022, Cuba joined the Special Ministerial Task Force on food production and food security of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which includes the establishment of a food terminal to provide a consistent supply of food items to Cuba and thus reduce Cuba's dependency on imported food.

Theme: E41 Right to health - General

25. Article 72 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba guarantees the right to universal, free-of-charge public health care to the Cuban people. The economic, commercial and financial sanctions imposed on Cuba by the U.S. government severely limit Cuba's access to medicine, medical equipment and other basic health care necessities, constantly putting at risk the lives of thousands of Cuban children, women and men.

Theme: E42 Access to health-care (general)

26. Cuba's community-based health care system saved countless lives during the Covid-19 pandemic despite the increased economic, commercial and financial sanctions. With 75.31 deaths per 100,000 residents (John Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center, February 27, 2023), Cuba has a low number of casualties related to Covid-19 compared to other countries. For comparison, there are 339.81 casualties per 100,000 residents in the U.S.

27. Cuba is the first country in Latin America to successfully develop three vaccines — Abdala, Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus — against Covid-19 in the midst of a worldwide pandemic and to make the vaccines available to countries worldwide whose access to Covid-19 vaccines has been denied due to intellectual property rights protecting the interests of multinational, profit-driven pharmaceutical corporations.

28. By March 3, 2023, 43,686,470 doses of Covid-19 vaccines had been administered to the Cuban population. 90.3% of the Cuban population is fully vaccinated, including children from the age of 2.

Theme: F14 Participation of women in political and public life

29. The equal participation of women in all aspects of the political, economic and social life in Cuba is promoted through the "National Program for the Advancement of Women" ("Programa Nacional para el adelanto de las Mujeres") adopted by the Cuban government in March of 2021 and implemented in collaboration with the Federation of Cuban Women that was founded in 1960 to promote gender equality and eliminate gender discrimination in Cuba.

30. With 53.4% of female members in parliament in 2022, Cuba has the second highest percentage of women deputies worldwide.

31. USPC urges the UN Human Rights Council to recognize Cuba's achievements in the implementation of fundamental human rights, in particular SDGs #1 (eradication of poverty), #2 (end hunger and achieve food security), #3 (ensure healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages) and #5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) in the face of the economic war waged on Cuba by the United States and the extraterritorial application of the illegal blockade by countries and companies in North America and Europe. An immediate end to the illegal economic, commercial and financial Blockade against Cuba is essential to fully guarantee the full enjoyment of human rights by the Cuban people.