



NHCSL

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION **No. 2021-07**

Solidarity with Cuban people demonstrating peacefully for fundamental freedoms

Reported to the Caucus by the NHCSL Human and Civil Rights Task Force
Rep. Jessica González (TX), Chair

**Sponsored by Sen. Moisés “Mo” Denis (NV), Sen. Annette Taddeo (FL) and
Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto (NM)**

Unanimously approved by the NHCSL Executive Committee on behalf of the entire
Caucus on October 6, 2021

WHEREAS, starting on July 11, 2021, the people of Cuba spilled out onto the streets in massive grassroots demonstrations clamoring for fundamental rights and freedoms, for the first time since the rise of the repressive, Stalinist-style communist dictatorship started by Fidel Castro in the 1960s; and,

WHEREAS, vloggers and citizen-reporters used anonymous social media accounts to showcase video of the peacefulness and massiveness of the protests and their main chants, culminating in the call for toppling current dictator Miguel Díaz Canel:¹

¡Que viva Cuba libre!
¡Abajo el comunismo!
¡Abajo la dictadura!
¡Abajo el castrismo!

“Long live free Cuba!
Down with communism!
Down with dictatorship!
Down with Castroism!

¹ <https://twitter.com/Yusnaby/status/1414668615471742976> ;
<https://twitter.com/Yusnaby/status/1414323424378376197>

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¡Abajo Díaz Canel!”

Down with Díaz-Canel!”

and,

“¡Libertad! ¡Libertad!
¡Libertad!”

“Freedom! Freedom!
Freedom!”

WHEREAS, human rights activists also smuggled clandestine, personal video recordings of the protests to supporters outside of Cuba and sat down for interviews with the outside world providing contextual explanations of the day-to-day developments; and,

WHEREAS, dictator Díaz Canel responded by calling for civilian-on-civilian violence, specifically on “communists” to “confront decisively” the people protesting and chanting for freedom on the streets;² and,

WHEREAS, Cuban regime police also violently attacked duly-credentialed foreign press photographers and camera operators for documenting the protests;³ and,

WHEREAS, the regime started cutting off internet access to impede the truth from reaching the people and the outside, while delegitimizing protestors as “criminals” and “paid” agents; and,

WHEREAS, finally, the regime violently unleashed special military units against peaceful civilians to suppress the protests;⁴ and,

WHEREAS, activists estimate that around 5,000 or even up to 8,000 peaceful protestors and activists were detained,⁵ most without due process,⁶ many were beaten and subjected to sham trials and sentences,⁷ and around 500 are still allegedly detained as of September, “including over a dozen minors,”⁸ and,

² <https://twitter.com/ShinjiTheCuban/status/1414325366492106755>

³ <https://twitter.com/AFPespanol/status/1414374627388841986>

⁴ Nora Gámez Torres, *Cuba’s leader, facing growing criticism, doubles down on order to crack down on protesters* (The Miami Herald, August 26, 2021). Available at <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/cuba-s-leader-facing-growing-criticism-doubles-down-on-order-to-crack-down-on-protesters/ar-AANMMnH>

⁵ <https://www.prisonersdefenders.org/2021/09/02/atencion-prisoners-defenders-verifica-381-presos-y-condenados-politicos-5000-detenciones-balance-del-11j/>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/WHAAsstSecty/status/1437803340599988224>

⁷ Reuters, *Cuba starts handing out sentences following historic protests* (July 21, 2021). Available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/cuba-starts-handing-sentences-historic-protests-rcna1481>

⁸ Alex Tabet and Isa Gutierrez, *Demanding U.N. action, a man’s hunger strike focuses attention on Cuba* (NBC News, September 21, 2021). Available at <https://news.yahoo.com/demanding-u-n-action-mans-172211617.html>. And see Diego Lopez Marina, *Cuban priest decries summary trials of protesters*

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WHEREAS, the brunt of the repression was suffered by Afro-Cubans, who “have primarily represented the dissident movement in Cuba for the last 20 years,” “live in the most neglected parts of Cuba's urban areas, especially in Havana” and represent the majority of Cuba’s large prison population;⁹ and,

WHEREAS, the regime has not accepted any responsibility for the conditions that led to the protests, including “shortages of food and medicine amid a higher number of Covid-19 cases, rising prices due to inflation and hourslong power outages,”¹⁰ and insists on blaming solely the US embargo on certain goods and services,¹¹ ignoring the need for change.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators recognizes and supports the right of the Cuban people to peacefully protest, and expresses solidarity with their call for fundamental freedoms, democracy and civil liberties; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators condemns the violence unleashed by dictator Díaz Canel against peaceful protestors, calls for the release of all persons imprisoned as a result of or in relation to the protests, and calls on any person or entity able to do so to permit the Cuban people the free access to and communication using the internet without fear of criminal or violent reprisals for speech disagreeable to the regime; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators calls on all governments in the Americas to pledge their support for democracy and freedom in Cuba and join us in condemning the repression against demonstrators.

AT THE REQUEST OF THE HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS TASK FORCE, AND PURSUANT TO THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS PROCESS OF THE NHCSL BYLAWS, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE GAVE FINAL APPROVAL TO THIS RESOLUTION AT ITS VIRTUAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 6, 2021.

without a defense lawyer (Catholic News Agency, August 3, 2021). Available at <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/248569/cuban-priest-decries-summary-trials-of-protesters-without-a-defense-lawyer>.

⁹ Michelle Quesada, *Hispanic Heritage Month: Afro-Cubans share perspective on Cuba's historic protests* (WPTV September 15, 2021). Available at <https://www.wptv.com/news/hispanic-heritage/hispanic-heritage-month-afro-cubans-share-perspective-on-cubas-historical-protests>

¹⁰ Carmen Sesin, *Are protests 'the beginning of the end' for Cuba's communist government?* (NBC Latino, July 22, 2021) <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/are-protests-beginning-end-cubas-communist-government-rcna1460>

¹¹ Carmen Sesin, *Cuba says the U.S. embargo is 'genocidal.' What does it really do?* (NBC Latino, August 22, 2021). <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/cuba-says-us-embargo-genocidal-really-rcna1733>