



All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation

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The **All India Peace & Solidarity Organization (AIPSO)** is people's forum committed to the causes of peace and international cooperation across the globe. Ever since its emergence in 1951, soon after India's independence, as an integral part of World Peace Council (WPC), AIPSO has been carrying forward the best traditions of the Indian national movement.

Among those who took leading role in formation of the All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation, are luminaries like Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, veteran Congress leader and freedom fighter, Pandit Sundarlal, disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr M M Atal, leader of the Indian Medical Mission to China, Ajoy Ghosh, freedom fighter and Communist leader, A K Gopalan, freedom fighter and Communist leader, T B Cunha, leader of Goa, Prof. D D Kosambi, as also celebrated film personalities like Prithviraj Kapoor and Balraj Sahni, noted writers Krishan Chander, Rajendra Singh Bedi, renowned poets Vallathol, S Gurbaksh Singh, and many other leading personalities.

The All India Peace and Solidarity Organization (AIPSO) has been consistently working towards peace, disarmament and global security; for national independence, economic and social justice and development, for protection of the environment, gender equality, secularism, human rights and cultural heritage, solidarity with and support of those peoples and liberation movements fighting for the independence, sovereignty and integrity of their countries, and against imperialism.

“Peace is Everybody's Business”—is our motto, very relevant at a time when the entire world is threatened by growing terrorism, incessant disturbances and unrest across the globe.



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CUBA: HUMAN RIGHTS AS VALUE FOR HUMAN LIFE, INTELLECT AND DIGNITY

The All India Peace and Solidarity Organization (AIPSO) has from several years been closely associated with the Movimiento Cubano por la Paz, the Cuban Peace Movement. We follow with interest the developments in Cuba and have a long history of close relations and exchange with different Cuban political, social and cultural organizations. The AIPSO, therefore, is in a position to confirm the exemplary conduct of Cuban government in the implementation and granting of main human rights for its people.

COVID-19: A Test for Human Rights

If we look at the immediate past, nowhere has this commitment to human rights been more visible than in the manner in which Cuba confronted the Covid-19 pandemic. The country developed three vaccines and two of its own vaccine candidates to immunize its population, which have proven to be highly effective, such that Cuba has had a recovery rate of 99.2% of diagnosed cases of Covid-19. Until January 2023, more than 42 million doses of Soberana 02, Soberana Plus and Abdala vaccines had been administered in Cuba; 10,004,753 Cubans had a complete vaccination scheme, which represents approximately 90.3% of the population.

Cuba has, for more than six decades, been facing the US economic, commercial and financial blockade which constitutes a serious and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people. This genocidal policy has been significantly intensified in the last five years, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this challenge, Cuba faced the pandemic bravely and its government, backed by its skilled health professionals were able to ensure universal access to health services during the pandemic.

Having highlighted, to begin with, the commitment of the Cuban government to the basic universal right of its citizens to life and dignity during the worst times humanity has faced in the recent past, we now turn to other indicators of human rights in Cuba:

I. Cuba: Human Rights in the Institutional Framework of the New Constitution

AIPSO notes that Cuba has been maintaining extensive cooperation with the universal and non-discriminatory human rights mechanisms. It has ratified 44 international instruments on human rights out of the 61 that are internationally recognized. Cuba has continuously improved its legal and institutional framework by updating the economic and social model based on the twin pillars of social justice and solidarity. The newly approved Constitution of the Republic and the new Family Code are examples of this.

Protection of human rights has been key to the new Constitution of the Republic, which significantly expands the broad gamut of rights as it reaffirms the universal, indivisible and interdependent nature of all human rights. The clauses referring to equality and principle of non-discrimination have been reframed by incorporating new categories that are vulnerable or susceptible to discrimination such as age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic or territorial origin, aspects that reinforce the protection and promotion of human rights.

➤ **Rights of Women as Human Rights in the new Constitution and Family Code**

AIPSO stresses that in complete fulfillment of its commitment to equality of human beings in all spheres, the new Constitution in Cuba specifically enshrines the equality of rights and responsibilities between women and men in all spheres of society. Cuban women enjoy equal rights in all areas in relation to men; their sexual and reproductive rights are ensured, and they are protected from gender violence.

One of the main legislative changes that reflects the progress made in this area is the new Family Code. Approved by popular referendum after specialized consultations and broad citizen participation, the Family Code discards prejudices and stereotypes anchored in society. It seeks to solve family matters with immediate and specialized legal measures, improves and expands legal instruments based on real situations that arise, taking as a basis relations of equality, based both on affective and biological aspects, and on human dignity as the supreme value that sustains the recognition and exercise of the rights and duties enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic, in international treaties and in the Family Code itself.

With the entry into force of the new Penal Code, Law 151/2022, the Penal Law addresses gender and family violence and all forms of discrimination, normatively developing articles 42, 46, 81, 82 and 85 of the Constitution of the Republic. The inclusion of these crimes in the criminal legislation and the broadening of its sanctioning framework is aimed at the prevention of this type of criminal act and the strengthening of the protection system for women and girls.

Similarly, we would like to highlight that Women in Cuba have the right to technical, professional and cultural advancement, job training and apprenticeship, as well as to social security and assistance. Working mothers are entitled to maternity leave and social protection for up to one year. In December 2021, Decree Law 56/2021 "On the maternity of working women and the responsibility of families" was published in the Official Gazette, with broad recognition of the social role of maternity, the incorporation and reincorporation of women to work and the participation of other family members in the care and attention of minor children.

➤ **Rights of the disabled as Human Rights in the new Constitution**

The new Cuban Constitution ratified and strengthened the legal protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. We stress that in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Cuba has a system of institutions, public policies, legal norms, economic resources and qualified personnel to protect the human rights and meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The Cuban State creates the conditions required for their rehabilitation or

improvement of their quality of life, personal autonomy, inclusion and social participation. People with disabilities have access to quality, effective and affordable medicines.

➤ **Rights of the Elderly as Human Rights in the new Constitution and Family Code**

We also note that the new Constitution has strengthened the recognition and protection of the rights of the elderly, under the principle of co-responsibility. Also, with the approval of the new Family Code, Cuba has strengthened the rights and guarantees of older persons. The new Code establishes as one of the principles governing family relations, respect for the wishes, desires and preferences of the elderly and persons with disabilities. Older adults are guaranteed the right to family life with dignity, to an autonomous and independent life, to choose their place of residence, to a family life free of discrimination and violence, to an accessible environment, to self-regulation of future protection, to reasonable support and adjustments, to social and family participation and inclusion.

Article 333 of the Code regulates de facto guardianship, which refers to the possibility of a person without judicial or administrative designation being in charge of the elderly person's welfare, an aspect that avoids situations of abandonment. It prevents unwanted entry into shelters or specialized centers, since it allows the elderly to be integrated into family groups, or to be cared for by a person with whom they can form a nucleus.

➤ **Rights of Children and Adolescents as Human Rights in the new Family Code**

AIPSO believes that the tightening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America on Cuba hinders the extensive efforts made by Cuba in protecting and guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents in Cuba. The blockade hinders the provision of health, education and social assistance services, particularly affecting children and adolescents. In spite of this, Cuba is at the forefront and shows levels comparable to those of developed countries in this sphere. Because of the importance the country attaches to this issue, Chapter III on Families, Article 86 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, explicitly includes the special protection of children and adolescents by the State, society and families, taking into account their best interests in decisions and actions concerning them.

The Family Code, approved in September 2022, in a popular referendum, recognizes, strengthens and guarantees rights relevant to children and adolescents within the family environment, while regulating a broad catalog of rights, exclusive to children and adolescents, consistent with the postulates of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It highlights the relevance given to the right to participation of children and adolescents, both in the daily life of families and in judicial or administrative processes, which supports the conception of each child and adolescent as a subject of rights, an element already included in the Constitution of the Republic of 2019.

II. Fullest Enjoyment Human Rights in Health and Education

We confirm that in Cuba, education is a right of all persons and constitutes a responsibility of the State, which guarantees free, affordable and quality education services for comprehensive training, from early childhood to postgraduate university education. All persons have the possibility and the right to study and to achieve their education as far as their abilities and

efforts allow them, with equal opportunities. To guarantee this right, the Cuban State has a broad system of educational institutions at all types and levels of education.

We particularly note the newly conferred right to access public information and to receive truthful, objective and timely information in the context of increased access to information and communication technologies, including the Internet. The social use of Information and Communication Technologies, including the Internet, is being expanded. No one in Cuba is repressed for thinking differently. One thing is to disagree, and another quite different is to be financed by an enemy state to cause subversion. Cuba has ratified 44 international human rights instruments out of the 61 internationally-recognized instruments.

We similarly confirm that Cuba considers public health to be a fundamental human right and a responsibility of the State. The Cuban National Health System provides care without discrimination of any kind, based on Primary Health Care and with community and intersectoral participation. Cuba is recognized for the high quality of its public health system, with universal coverage and free care. There are 486,900 workers in the national health system, of whom 101,876 are physicians, and there are 9.2 physicians for every 100 inhabitants, the most favorable indicator of its kind at the international level.

We also confirm that at the end of 2022, Cuba achieved a preliminary infant mortality rate of 7.5 deaths per 1,000 live births. There were 39 fewer deaths reported than in 2021, when the country reached a rate of 7.6. In the last seven years, the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV has been equal to or less than 2 % and the conditions that accredited Cuba as the first country to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV-AIDS and syphilis in the region are maintained.

Conclusion

Thus, we are convinced that the triumph of the Cuban Revolution brought a very important change in Cuba against years of neocolonial domination by a powerful neighbor who for more than 60 years installed a shameful regime of subordination, corruption, crime, political harassment, torture and assassinations, exploitation of natural resources, illiteracy, unhealthy public service, malnutrition, racial discrimination, prostitution, gambling, etc. and permitted the Cuban people to attain, for the first time, their true independence and the full, universal enjoyment of all human rights for all.

We confirm that contrary to what is often said, in Cuba there are periodic elections in which people are highly involved. The vote, which is a voluntary in nature, is one of the ways to participate in the conduct of public affairs and access public services with broad participation. In the recent elections, despite a call for abstention by oppositors, there was a 75% voter participation. The Cubans voted on March 26, 2023 for a new National Assembly of People's Power for five years and elect the Presidency of the country, in elections without incidents, and a massive participation.

We also believe that each country is sovereign, and at this point of time in the human civilization, we cannot allow one model of thought or state to impose itself on others. Therefore, the idea of exporting “democracy” through “regime change” brought about by coercive methods runs completely contrary to the enjoyment of human rights by all. In this context, we believe that the policy of hostility, regime change, blockade and aggressions by successive United States administrations supported by unfair and malicious media campaigns

against Cuba has been a serious obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights and the basic freedoms of all Cubans, including their rights to life, peace, free self- determination and development. The economic blockade against Cuba is the most serious attack on the human rights of the Cuban people. Yet, the Cuban people have shown that it is possible, even in a geopolitical context of extreme adversity, to take collective possession of national resources and place human beings at the centre of the societal project.

We, along with the overwhelming majority of people living on planet Earth, believe that ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba is the biggest obstacle to the Cuban people enjoying their humanity to the fullest potential. The criminal economic blockade against the republic of Cuba, against which in successive years, almost the entire membership of the UN has been voting, has had a tremendous cost on the economy of the island. Despite that, the Cuban people have continued vindicating and defending the Revolution that made possible the enjoyment of civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights of everyone in the country.

We submit the above details to the UPR and urge that the UNHRC should move towards doing away with the long time injustices being carried out against the Republic of Cuba and its people.

Forwarded on behalf of the All India Peace and Solidarity Organization:



Pallab Sengupta



Nilotpal Bose