

Association in Japan against the US blockade and for the sovereignty of Cuba

[Statement]

We demand the US end the blockade against Cuba and defend Cuba's sovereignty.

Cuban society faces unprecedented crisis after the triumph of the Revolution in 1959. While Cuba's economic growth has been stagnant in recent years, the Trump administration applied 243 new sanctions on top of economic, commercial and financial blockade enforced since 1962, with the aim of asphyxiating the Cuban economy and inciting citizens up against the government to provoke a “regime change”. According to data published by the Cuban government, from April 2019 to December 2020 the damage caused by the economic blockade amounted to 9.157 million dollars (monthly average of 436 million, equivalent to about 5% of GDP). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically reduced tourists and tourism revenues, which are important sources of foreign currency revenues. In 2021, tourism revenues decreased by 95.5% and 2.4 billion dollars were recorded as foreign exchange earnings, 14.5% less than the previous year. In the first half of this year, foreign exchange earnings have also suffered a loss of \$ 480 million, thus complicating the foreign exchange situation even more. Last year, the registered economic growth was -10.8%, and -2% in the first half of this year. Imports have been 40% below projections and the shortage of products has been noted in state stores. Thermoelectric power plants, meanwhile, are experiencing constant power outages due to lack of spare parts.

Cuba is focusing on the longstanding task of the “exchange and monetary ordering”, to promote economic development. This, however, has carried secondary effects such as inflation and speculation, generating some confusion in the daily lives of citizens. In such national and international context, the economic reforms that have been implemented for several years has been slowing down. Moreover, the penetration of Delta strain of COVID-19, has led to a rapid increase in the number of new infections to the level of 70 at 100,000 inhabitants, amid a shortage of medicines and isolation facilities. Due to introduction of behavioral restrictions citizens' stress is increasing. Given the upsurge in discontent for those reasons, the number of irregular immigrants who arrived in the United States through Mexico in the last nine months has exceeded 21,000, double than the previous year.

Taking advantage of this extremely difficult situation in the country, at the beginning of July some requests to the United States for humanitarian aid and humanitarian intervention in Cuba began to circulate on social networks, and on July 11 unusual demonstrations against the government took place simultaneously in dozens of Cuban cities with hundreds of participants. According to the images published by the media, a

dozen people from the center of the demonstrations shouted radical political slogans, such as "we reject the government of the dictatorship", but most of the participants complained only about the current situation of their lives. The mobilization of these demonstrations was broadcasted from the social media accounts of US residents financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other agencies. The demonstrations continued on the 11th and 12th, but subsided after the authorities and government supporters appealing to the protesters the importance of preserving the achievements of the Revolution in the fields of health, education, culture and sports, through the media as well as on the streets. On the 15th, US President Joe Biden, based on his own value diplomacy, which divides the world into democratic states and autocratic states, accused Cuba in his speech of being a "failed state that oppresses its own people". In addition, on the 22nd, the US government additionally sanctioned senior Cuban government officials and public security organizations for human rights violation, such as unfair detentions of the protesters on the 11th and 12th of July. In addition, on August 11th, the US government authorized US companies and individuals to provide Internet services to Cuban citizens to support SNS anti-government activities in Cuba.

The protests against the Cuban government have spread to Japan, where on July 16 ten Cubans living in Japan held an unauthorized protest in front of the Cuban Embassy in Tokyo, and on July 25 more than a dozen members of the same group together with some non-Cuban foreigners, carried out a demonstration in the Hachiko square in Shibuya. As can be seen in the social networks of the leaders of the protests, it was clear that these actions were taken by the group with the support of the United States.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against Cuba, which has lasted 58 years since 1962, plus the recent sanctions, is not based on any UN Security Council resolution but a policy of unilateral interference by the United States that violates the UN Charter and International Law. In June of this year, the 75th session of the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution against the US blockade of Cuba, by an overwhelming majority of 193 member states: 184 in favor, 2 against (United States and Israel), 3 abstentions (Colombia, Ukraine and Brazil) and 4 absences (Central African Republic, Myanmar, Somalia and Moldova). This resolution calling for the lifting of the blockade has been adopted for 28 consecutive years since 1992. The US government must immediately end the blockade and sanctions, in accordance with international law and world public opinion.

Instead of easing, the Joe Biden administration, continued and reinforced Trump administration's economic sanctions policy. The administration, concluding that Cuba lacks universal human rights, is strengthening external interference, considering that it is a great opportunity to suffocate the Cuban economy in unprecedented difficulties, and

to stir the Cuban people up to overthrow the government working toward socialism. The incidents on July 11 have caused serious discrepancies in the opinions among some Cubans and cultural and intellectual personalities over their cause and nature. However, they are precisely issues that the Cuban people themselves must resolve democratically through dialogue. We consider that whatever problem Cuba has, it is fundamentally an internal matter, and that no one should condemn Cuba like an international judge as lacking of human rights, strengthen sanctions, violate its sovereignty and justify interference in its internal affairs..

We reiterate our resolute decision to demand the US government immediately lift the blockade and sanctions against Cuba, to oppose the policy of interference of the US government, as well as to defend the sovereignty and the right to self-determination of the island.

August 2021, Japan