



**Statement from the Irish Chapter of the Network in Defence of Humanity
END THE ILLEGAL BLOCKADE OF CUBA AND END IMPERIALISM!**

We condemn the criminal US blockade of Cuba and the current US-funded attempts to overthrow the sovereignty and constitution of the Cuban people. Let us be clear what the US blockade is. It is not a set of sanctions. There are no international laws providing legal sanction to these unilateral coercive measures that collectively punish the Cuban people for having the fortitude to overthrow imperialism and assert their sovereignty. The illegality of this 62-year imperialist campaign violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1948 Geneva Convention, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and the UN Charter by which membership of the United Nations is approved. It is economic warfare adjudged to be genocidal under the terms of international laws, laws to which the US empire refuses to submit itself while hypocritically invoking those same laws to judge others.

Anyone genuinely committed to the defence of the human rights of the Cuban people must oppose the blockade urgently. US imperialism has consistently shown itself to be the violator of the human rights of the Cuban people. During the current COVID pandemic Cuban doctors and medical teams, in the form of their Henry Reeve Brigades, have once again travelled the world to help people wherever they are needed, without fear or favour. This incredible generosity and humanity is undertaken despite the fact that at home, as a direct result of the US blockade, Cubans cannot even access or purchase basic supplies like syringes and have to rely upon donations. Cubans are very much driven by the words of their great poet and hero, José Martí, who once wrote '*patria es humanidad*' (my homeland is humanity). The selfless humanitarianism and generosity of Cubans stands in stark, illustrative contrast to the inhumane and punitive measures of the blockade which is designed to isolate and crush the Cuban people.

These are the words of the US state itself, in the form of Lester D. Mallory, the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, at the outset of the blockade over 60 years ago. And it is worth prefacing Mallory's remarks with the fact that the blockade has intensified rather than lessened over the six decades that it has been inflicted upon the Cuban people:

'every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba. If such a policy is adopted, it should be the result of a positive decision that would call forth a line of action which, while as adroit and inconspicuous as possible, makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation, and the overthrow of the government.'

To bring about hunger. Anyone who supports an empire that uses starvation as a means of war is a traitor to Ireland and its anti-imperialist traditions and struggle, and a traitor to humanity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is clear what that imperialist tactic should be called: genocide. It is utterly depraved for anyone to be complicit in such egregious and flagrant violations of human rights, and of international law, and it is particularly despicable for Irish people or those of

Irish descent to be a part of that horror, the inflicting of that level of suffering on others. One of the fundamental reasons why there are so many members of the 'global Irish', so many millions in the US, and across the world who are part of that diaspora, is the cataclysmic impact of British imperialism upon Ireland. In particular, An Gorta Mór (1845-1852), or The Great Hunger, combined colonial racism with liberal economics to use starvation as a weapon of imperialist warfare: millions were killed or starved into exile, and whole communities and cultures, ways of living and belonging, and indeed a national language, were ruptured and fragmented.

Such burdensome historical experience, such painful political memory should ensure that Ireland, is always, implacably, irresistibly, on the side of the vanquished, the colonized, and the dispossessed. The attempt by the US government to position itself as a bearer of freedom and human rights, given the murderous impact of its imperialist blockade of Cuba, is an obscene falsification of reality. The US has cynically used a global pandemic as an opportunity to inflict further suffering upon the Cuban people, to deny them the basic necessities and medicines by which to live and be free.

We call upon all anti-imperialists to show solidarity with Cuba and to oppose this vile blockade to the hilt. Ireland itself has its own historical experience of an empire just off its shores using tactics of hunger as a weapon of war. In terms of the historical experience of our own people and the lessons that should be learned from that history, we have a historical debt and obligation to humanity to call this kind of thing out wherever it occurs: it is ongoing now against Cuba and the Cuban people and has been for over 60 years. This malign interference in the lives of Cuban people, including the denial of their right to life, must be ended forever, and we in Ireland must play our part.

The Board of REDH Ireland