

Final declaration of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and TUC

Unions for Cuba Conference

London, Saturday 2 November 2019

The Unions for Cuba Conference held on Saturday 2 November in London affirms its support and solidarity with the people of Cuba, in particular with the CTC and representatives of Cuban workers present in this conference today and across Cuba.

Unions for Cuba, organised by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign alongside the British Trades Union Congress and 21 affiliated national trade unions representing over 5 million British workers, sends fraternal greetings to the Anti-imperialist Meeting of Solidarity, for Democracy and against Neoliberalism taking place in Havana. The Cuba Solidarity Campaign has sent representatives from its national executive to this meeting and we stand united with you against the current imperialist offensive against Cuba and other progressive causes in the region.

We are honoured to have 14 Cuban trade unionists in London today, representing the CTC and leaders from the SNTS (health), SNTAP (public administration), SNTCED (education) SNTCIE (communications), SNTTP (transport and ports) and SNTM (energy and mining) unions, the largest Cuban trade union delegation to visit the UK for many years.

This conference, of over 200 delegates representing trade unions from across England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, provides an opportunity to share experiences, disseminate ideas, and build the alliances and solidarity needed to defeat the new economic and political attacks unleashed by the Trump administration against Cuba in recent months.

This conference congratulates the Cuban people on the 60th anniversary of their Revolution and the 80th anniversary of the CTC. Anniversaries which have been achieved due to the heroic resistance of the Cuban people in the face of almost 60 years of blockade and aggression from successive US administrations.

We condemn the Trump administration's actions to tighten the blockade. The implementation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, new restrictions on US citizens' rights to travel to Cuba, the reduction in the amount of money Cuban American families can send home, the ending of direct flights to nine Cuban airports, and the stopping of leases on domestic aircraft, represent a clear attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of Cuba and cause suffering to the Cuban people. These measures are nothing short of economic warfare and take US belligerence and cruelty against Cuba to unprecedented levels.

We recognise that despite these attacks Cuba remains a beacon for social justice around the world, as recognised in the motion unanimously passed in support of Cuba at the 2019 Trades Union Congress in September which praised Cuba's "world-renowned achievements in education, health, social welfare, women's representation and international humanitarianism: including 400,000 medical volunteers in 165 countries since 1960; training 31,000 doctors from 65 countries since 1998; and the second highest representation of women MPs in the world (53.2 per cent)."

We send solidarity to the people of Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Bolivia in their fight to defend their sovereignty free from US interference, and call for peace and unity. We support those in Ecuador, Chile, Honduras, Haiti and all peoples in the region in their struggle for social justice. We call for the immediate release of Lula in Brazil. We condemn attempts by the US to undermine and misrepresent the noble work of Cuba's international medical volunteers in Venezuela and around the world.

This conference pledges to continue and develop the historic bonds of friendship between our two countries and to continue campaigning in solidarity with the Cuban people. Past campaigns saw the fight to free the Miami Five reach every trade union in Britain and the highest levels of government. There have been massive material aid campaigns to send medical and educational equipment to Cuba, and recently we have been successful with our campaign against the extraterritorial blockade in overturning the ban on Cuban students studying at the Open University in Britain.

We are proud to have welcomed René González, Gerardo Hernandez, and Fernando González, three of the five Cuban heroes to Britain since their release. We were also proud to welcome President Miguel Díaz-Canel to London in November 2018.

However, we recognise that in this time of heightened aggression from the US government towards Cuba, this solidarity must be further strengthened.

We pledge to unite together to develop solidarity between workers in Britain and Cuba; to increase our understanding in order to counter propaganda and attacks against the Cuban Revolution; to encourage affiliations to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and active involvement in their work and campaigns in support of Cuba; and to encourage exchanges between workers from both our islands.

We demand an end to the inhumane 57 year old US blockade of Cuba, an end to Title III of the Helms Burton Act, and call for the return of the land illegally occupied by the United States at Guantánamo Bay.

We thank the Cuban people for the courage and resilience they have displayed during the last 60 years and for the inspiration and solidarity they have given to people in struggle around the world. We stand with Cuba in the fight for a better and peaceful world without exploitation and suffering.