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The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Duncan MP
Minister of State for Europe and the Americas at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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alan.duncan.mp@parliament.uk

27th September 2018

Dear Sir Alan Duncan MP,

The United Nations General Assembly vote on the extraterritorial nature of the United States' Blockade of Cuba

I am writing to ask you and the UK government to support Resolution 72/4 entitled "Necessity of Ending the economic, commercial, and financial blockade Imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" when it is presented at the United Nations General Assembly on 31st October 2018.

The United States has continued to apply this aggressive policy towards Cuba including its extraterritorial elements. The policy continues to cause immense suffering to the Cuban people affecting the island's economic and social development in all spheres including health, education and social provision.

The US blockade policy impacts on the ability of Cuba to trade with countries across the globe. Increasingly it affects companies, organisations and individuals in the UK who wish to conduct perfectly legal trade with the island. In doing so the US blockade impacts on UK sovereignty.

The US policy is extra territorial and a long list of British companies, including banks, have been threatened with and fined large sums by the US Office of Foreign Asset Control for trading with Cuba. The Cuba Solidarity Campaign itself has had our bank accounts closed by the Cooperative Bank as a direct impact of the blockade. Bank transfers to Cuba are hindered by the blockade, including over £80,000 raised by our members and affiliated organisations to help the Cuban people recover from the impact of the recent Hurricane Irma. The Open University even preferred to break UK equality legislation by banning Cuban students from attending courses in the UK due to the perceived threat from the US blockade policies. I am pleased to say that they have since overturned their discriminatory position under threat of legal action.

Over the past three years the National Education Union (NUT Section) have worked on a campaign to help overcome the effects of the blockade on schools in Cuba by taking over dozens of Braille machines to be used in special needs schools for visually impaired children on the island. Efforts such as these are commonplace yet they are all in effect 'breaking the blockade'. Yet such actions must be applauded here in the UK as they are against a policy that is so clearly wrong on every level.

We are sure that the stated position of the UK Government on the blockade issue is the correct one and we hope that the British Government will continue to vote for the resolution against the US Blockade alongside the overwhelming majority of nations.

We speak on behalf of hundreds of organisations representing millions of citizens and it is clear that there is real desire to see the UK improving its relations with Cuba. The US extraterritorial blockade is a real and dangerous impediment to such progress.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "R. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rob Miller
Director