Dear President Joe Biden,

July 23, 2021

It is time to take a new path forward in U.S.-Cuban relations. We, the undersigned, are making this urgent public appeal to you to reject the cruel policies put into place by the Trump White House that have created so much suffering among the Cuban people.

Cuba – a country of eleven million people – is living through a difficult crisis due to the growing scarcity of food and medicine. Recent protests have drawn the world's attention to this. While the Covid-19 pandemic has proven challenging for all countries, it has been even more so for a small island under the heavy weight of an economic embargo.

We find it unconscionable, especially during a pandemic, to intentionally block remittances and Cuba's use of global financial institutions, given that access to dollars is necessary for the importation of food and medicine. As the pandemic struck the island, its people – and their government – have lost billions in revenue from international tourism that would normally go to their public health care system, food distribution and economic relief.

During the pandemic, Donald Trump's administration tightened the embargo, pushed aside the Obama opening, and put in place 243 “coercive measures” that have intentionally throttled life on the island and created more suffering.

The prohibition on remittances and the end of direct commercial flights between the U.S. and Cuba are impediments to the wellbeing of a majority of Cuban families.

“We stand with the Cuban people,” you wrote on July 12. If that is the case, we ask you to immediately sign an executive order and annul Trump's 243 “coercive measures.”

There is no reason to maintain the Cold War policies that required the U.S. to treat Cuba as an existential enemy rather than a neighbor. Instead of maintaining the path set by Trump in his efforts to undo President Obama’s opening to Cuba, we call on you to move forward. Resume the opening and begin the process of ending the embargo. Ending the severe shortages in food and medicine must be the top priority.

On 23 June, most of the member states of the United Nations voted to ask the U.S. to end the embargo. For the past 30 years this has been the consistent position of a majority of member states. In addition, seven UN Special Rapporteurs wrote a letter to the U.S. government in April 2020 regarding the sanctions on Cuba. “In the pandemic emergency,” they wrote, “the lack of will of the U.S. government to suspend sanctions may lead to a higher risk of suffering in Cuba.”

We ask you to end the Trump “coercive measures” and return to the Obama opening or, even better, begin the process of ending the embargo and fully normalizing relations between the United States and Cuba.

Sincerely,

The People's Forum
ANSWER Coalition
CODEPINK
Black Lives Matter Global Network
Susan Sarandon
Silvio Rodríguez Dominguez (Cuba)
Danny Glover
Jane Fonda
Daniel Elberg
Mark Ruffalo
Laura De Silva, Fmr. President (Brazil)
Jeremy Corbyn (UK)
Rafael Correa, Fmr. President (Ecuador)
Rev. Dr. Dora Arca Valencia, Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba (Cuba)
Rev. Jim Winkler, National Council of Churches USA
Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Prize (Argentina)
Andres Arauz (Ecuador)
Bishop Mulán Phillips, Anglican Church of Southern Africa (South Africa)
Boots Riley
Brian Becker, ANSWER Coalition
Chico Barreto (Brazil)
Chris Hazzard, Sinn Fein
David Harvey
CUNY Graduate Center (UK)
Dr. Cornell West
Dr. Earl D. Trent Jr.
Florida Avenue Baptist Church
Dr. Jil Smith, Green Party
Eduardo (Chico) Roca Salaris (Cuba)
Emma Thompson (UK)
Fari Betto (Brazil)
Gary Walker, PFCO/Pastors for Peace
Glacia Hoffman, Worker's Party (PT) (Brazil)
Irwin Rojas Fial, Don Bueno Fe (Cuba)
Jackson Browne
Jode Evans, CODEPINK
Landless Workers Movement-MST (Brazil)
Marcelo De Los Santos, The People's Forum
Manu Pineda (Spain)
Marisa Torni
Mark Weidner, Center for Economic and Policy Research
Medea Benjamin, CODEPINK
Miguel Barrett Lanza (Cuba)
Nancy Nonni (Cuba)
Nnimmo Bassey (Nigeria)
Noam Chomsky
Oliver Stone
Opa'el Tomé, Co-Founder, Black Lives Matter
Prof. Judith Butler
Prof. Raj Patel, University of Texas
Prof. Roxane duBose-Ortiz
Reinventing Arco, Instituto Económico de Ciencias de las Religiones (Cuba)
Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson, World Communion of Reformed Churches
Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis
Rev. Raul Suarez, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center (Cuba)
Rudolfo Buena Fe de Faris, ACT Alliance
V (Formerly Eve Ensler)
Vermont State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Vijay Prashad, Tricontinental Institute for Social Research
Wagner Moura (Brazil)
Yara Varela/Robles (Guinea)