

protest became difficult and unsafe.

Car Caravans against the U.S. blockade on Cuba have since taken off around the world, including in Vancouver, where FCAB-Vancouver and VCSC organize the monthly action in coordination with the Miami and worldwide car caravan. On September 25, the Vancouver Car Caravan enjoyed the final days of summer, driving through Vancouver's sunny streets and catching the attention of pedestrians and drivers alike! The October 30 Vancouver Car Caravan featured more Vancouver typical rainy weather, but Cuba supporters were ready to take to the streets rain or shine and still attracted thumbs-ups and honks of support while driving through Vancouver!

Join in solidarity with Cuba!

One of the ways the blockade hits hardest is in the face of disaster when urgently needed extra resources, and reconstruction supplies are in short supply due to the U.S. blockade. Hurricane Ian left a path of destruction through Cuba in late September, especially affecting Cuba's electrical grid. The Canadian Network on Cuba launched a Hurricane Relief Campaign to assist Cuba in its reconstruction, and locally in Vancouver, VCSC and FCAB-Vancouver have been fundraising towards these efforts. If you would like to donate, please check for more details on this page.

Another way to support Cuba is with the 1 Cent for Cuba Campaign! Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba is supporting this important campaign, which is an initiative from Rock Around the Blockade (Britain), Cuba Support Group Ireland and Cubanismo (Belgium) to challenge British and European banks which have been holding or rejecting transactions related to Cuba. Learn more about how to participate at www.1c4cuba.eu.

There are many events in the Vancouver area and beyond, as well as online! Check out the next event at www.vancubasolidarity.com or follow Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba on Facebook @vancubasolidarity and Twitter and Instagram @VanCuba_VCSC .

**VIGIL TO
END THE U.S.
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**VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA
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#BRIDGESOFLOVE
#PUENTESDEAMOR
#UNBLOCKCUBA

Cuba's New Families Code & the Dynamism of the Cuban Revolution!

By *Azza Rojbi*

The new Cuba Families Code should be seen within history and the reality of the Cuban popular democracy and its popular mass institutions. Since the beginning of the revolution, Cuba has always encouraged the Cuban people to mass mobilize for a better change. The Families Code is another example that shows us firmly how Cuba is a revolution in motion.

In this specific case, I would say that this motion started in 2019 when 86% of the Cuban population approved a new constitution. The new constitution stands for human rights and the protection of the Cuban people. This families code is the continuity of the constitution and expands the protection of all Cuban families.

The new code is another step in the revolutionary process of Cuba. It further consolidates the human rights that the Cuban people and families achieved since the revolution. This

new families code does not limit the existing code, but it expands it. It does not restrict the rights of anyone but again expands and extends them. This is a very important point to reiterate.



LGBTQ2S+ Rights and the Families Code

I now want to speak a little bit as a queer activist here in Canada. I want to speak about the point of LGBTQ2S+ rights. LGBTQ2S+ people in Cuba are protected from discrimination under the country's current constitution.

Trans people in Cuba have had access to free, gender-affirming surgery and health care since 2008. Additionally, in Cuba, trans people can correct their legal

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names and gender on official documents without having undergone surgery since 2013. Cuba also has a national network of trans people and supporters called TransCuba, designed to provide support and family counselling and build social awareness about trans issues across the country. This is more than we can say about the United States or Canada, where many trans people are constantly under attack, their rights threatened, and access to gender-affirming care is difficult, very expensive and even inexistent in parts of the U.S. and Canada.

The new families code expands on the rights of the LGBTQ2S+ community and families by expanding the definition of family. It protects the rights of same-sex parents to construct a family, whether that is through marriage, adoption, or assisted reproduction.

Mass Popular Consultation

The mass majority of the Cuban people are deeply involved in their popular democratic practices and are responding positively to exercise their rights to advance and build a



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socialist society for all. The fact that 6.4 million people participated in 79,000 meetings to discuss this new families code indicates the broad participation of people in shaping their destiny and the progress of society as a whole in Cuba.

I would say that this is not something new for Cuba. The Cuban socialist revolution, from the beginning, was not only a popular revolution supported by the Cuban people, but it also brought with it democracy from below. A democracy that is for working and oppressed people. A democracy that is based on the interest of the Cuban people. A democracy that is based on the human rights of all Cubans. No wonder the Cuban revolution, Cuban democracy, the Cuban government, and its leadership have always enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people.

This new families code is again the best proof showing how dynamic and alive the Cuban socialist project is. It also demonstrates the close relationship between the people and the leadership of the revolution, including the government, state, and the popular mass revolutionary institutions such as the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the Cuban National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), the University Student Federation (FEU) and others.

I want to highlight for a bit the importance of the work

of CENESEX in advancing LGBTQ2S+ rights in Cuba. I believe it was in 2016 that Janine Solanki, national coordinator of the Che Guevara Brigade, a volunteer work brigade from Canada that travels Cuba, was in Cuba and had the opportunity to attend the Annual National Days Against Homophobia and Transphobia organized by CENESEX. Basically, these are days of action that include cultural and educational events. What we call here a Pride Parade, in Cuba they call it a Conga against homophobia and transphobia. It's a beautiful march full of music, full of colours, full of dancing, really a day full of Cuban diversity taking over the beautiful streets of Havana. The new families code builds on all this colourful dynamism of Cuban society to

further expands the rights of all Cuban people and families.

Always Forward

The new families code is a great victory for the Cuban revolution. It advances not only the human rights of the Cuban people but also advances Cuba in its socialist path to advance and progress its revolution to a higher stage of human and social development.

This article is based on a talk given by Azza Rojbi at the May 2022 Webinar "Cuba's New Families Code," organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)



Biden's Limited Measures on Cuba - the Blockade Continues

The US government's announcement of new measures on Cuba "is a limited step in the right direction," though they do not change the blockade, Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez wrote in Twitter.

"The decision does not modify the blockade, nor the fraudulent inclusion of Cuba in the list of countries sponsoring terrorism, nor most of Trump's coercive measures of maximum pressure that still damage the Cuban people," Minister Rodríguez added.

On Friday afternoon, the US State Department announced several measures, "positive but very limited in scope, with respect to Cuba in the areas of visas, regular migration, flights to provinces, remittances and adjustments to regulations for transactions with the non-state sector", the Cuban Foreign Ministry underlined in a statement.

Minister Rodríguez further said in Twitter that "the content of the announcement confirms that neither the objectives nor the main instruments of the failed US policy against #Cuba have changed."

"To know the real scope of this announcement, it will be necessary to wait for the publication of the regulations that will determine its application," the Foreign Minister concluded hits tweets.

From Prensa Latina

#Unblock Cuba

Lift the Blockade of Cuba!

By Janine Solanki

Solidarity with Cuba is a working class Cuba today is not only under the immense strain of over 60 years of a U.S. blockade, itself layer upon layer of cruel laws and sanctions designed to make everyday life difficult for the Cuban people. Cuba is also still living under the destructive legacy that former U.S. president Trump unleashed on Cuba, and which current U.S. President Biden is continuing. This includes the 243 new measures that Trump imposed, making the blockade the tightest it's ever been.

As the last blow in the final days of the Trump administration, Cuba was added to the infamous U.S. State Department "State Sponsors of Terrorism" list. Besides this list being the epitome of hypocrisy, as the U.S. government itself is the most destructive terrorist state in the world, being on this list further reinforces the U.S. blockade. The "state sponsors of terrorism" list reinforces the extraterritorial nature of the U.S. blockade on Cuba, with the U.S. government fining major foreign banks and non-U.S. corporations for doing business with Cuba. This means Cuba is not only facing a U.S. blockade, but is met with restrictions in making international financial transactions, trading on the world market and importing food, fuel, medicines and other essential goods.

In Vancouver, activists with Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver (FCAB-Vancouver) have been organizing locally, nationally and internationally to defend Cuba against the U.S. blockade and to act in solidarity with Cuba.

Festive Cuba!

Summertime saw Cuba represented at festival season across the Vancouver region, and Cuba solidarity activists were out for the final days of the season to talk about Cuba with festival-goers! On September 3, the annual Vancouver Corn Festival was held in East Vancouver, organized by the El Salvadorian community to celebrate Latin American culture through music, dance and food! Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) had a table

at the event with books and newsletters about Cuba, a petition against the U.S. blockade on Cuba, and information about how to get involved in the Cuba solidarity movement.

On September 10, the annual Car Free Festival was held on Commercial Drive in East Vancouver, and on September 18, the festival also took over Vancouver's Main Street. This massive street festival sees thousands of people come out, many of whom stopped to pick up information at the VCSC and FCAB-Vancouver table, to talk with organizers and, in the case of kids, to take part in a drawing activity with pictures of Fidel and Che!

On September 1, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) joined the 21st Vancouver Latin American Film Festival to sponsor the Cuban film "Omara", a documentary about Afro-Cuban music icon Omara Portuondo. As part of VCSC's sponsorship, VCSC ran a social media contest to give away free tickets to this excellent film!

Monthly Virtual Pickets demand Lift the U.S. Blockade on Cuba!

Each month, the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) holds a virtual picket action against the U.S. blockade of Cuba, bringing together CNC member groups across Canada, solidarity activists from Quebec and Cuba supporters around the world. The September 17 virtual action countered Cuban democracy to U.S. oppression, with guest speaker Deborah Santana from the Cuba Solidarity Committee in Puerto Rico. Deborah spoke about a recent campaign of harassment towards Cuba solidarity activists in Puerto Rico by the U.S. government and FBI. CNC member group Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba published a statement in solidarity with the Cuba Solidarity Committee in Puerto Rico, which can be read at https://medium.com/@VanCuba_VCSC/vancouver-communities-



in-solidarity-with-cuba-vcsc-stands-in-solidarity-with-the-cuba-solidarity-2f3db32c8fa1

The next monthly virtual picket on October 17 focused on "Lessons of October '62" referencing the 60 year anniversary of the October Crisis (Cuban Missile Crisis). One of the featured speakers was His Excellency Héctor Igarza Cabrera, Cuban Ambassador to Canada, and his speech from this event is printed in this issue of Fire This Time, page 6 for the English version and page 7 for the Spanish one.

These virtual pickets also give time to CNC member groups to share greetings, and at these two actions Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba and Azza Rojbi, coordinator of Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver, both spoke to share greetings and report on Cuba solidarity actions from Vancouver.

Car Caravans Continue to Protest U.S. Blockade on Cuba!

The Car Caravans Against the U.S. Blockade on Cuba began in 2020 in Miami, Florida headed by Carlos Lazo, a Cuban-American, and the Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love) organization. This creative initiative was started during the first year of the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic where traditional forms of

GET INVOLVED WITH FRIENDS OF CUBA AGAINST THE U.S. BLOCKADE (FCAB - VANCOUVER)

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