

Cuba Celebrates LGBTQ2S+ Rights with the XV Conference Against Homophobia & Transphobia!

There was no conga, there was no march through the streets of Havana and other cities in the country (the tragic accident at Saratoga hotel has marked these days), but Cuba celebrates this May 17th the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia with obvious achievements.

The consultation process on the new Family Code Draft is over, and beyond specific divergences or dissimilar visions on some key aspects, there's a certain agreement: what defines a family is above all the love between its members.

It's not a small thing. The legal framework must live up to the multiplicity of unions in society. The motto repeated so many times, "All rights for all", is much more than a motto: it has to be a shared aptitude.

The fullness in personal realization of each individual supposes the full exercise of his rights. And respect for each person's sexual orientation and family choices should be supported by law.

The law, of course, does not resolve all conflicts. Homophobia is a reality. Deep-rooted prejudices continue. And even manifestations of violence and intolerance. It's necessary to strengthen educational strategies, and consolidate a respectful and constructive dialogue, based on ethics and arguments.

But the law is important: it's a platform, a reference, a standard.

Much remains to be done, but the conviction that love compensates phobias is a big step. Cuba celebrates this year the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia by working on an agenda. There's a path, which the entire society will have to come together. Pitfalls and obstacles loom ahead, but there's a will: to accept families from love, not from phobias.

Editorial By the Cuba Si Staff



Tweet from Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel



"Cuba greets the International Day against homophobia, transphobia and biphobia, in the context of our intense legislative work in favor of laws oriented to guarantee all rights for all people"



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.



Spring 2022



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 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 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

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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 tlk 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

One Year of Monthly Car Caravans Against the U.S. Blockade on Cuba in Vancouver!



By Andrew Barry

Since February of 1962, the US government has imposed a cruel and unjust blockade on the people of Cuba in an effort to overthrow its government, undermining and violating the self-determination of Cuban people. Cubans and peace-loving people from across the world have joined together for over 6 decades calling for an end to this criminal policy that effects the day to day lives of every Cuban.



For 29 consecutive times, the United Nations General Assembly has voted overwhelmingly to condemn the US blockade on Cuba. This is important because it demonstrates that the vast majority of the world stands united with Cuba against this criminal policy.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic swept across the world in 2020, traditional forms of protest have been challenging. In late 2020 in Miami, Florida, Cuban American activist Carlos Lazo from the group Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love), organized the first ever Car Caravan for Cuba against the US blockade. This creative and dynamic action brought together Cubans and Cuba solidarity activists living in Miami to protest the US Blockade on Cuba while maintaining a safe distance from one another.

As the worldwide pandemic continued into 2021, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade-Vancouver introduced the idea to Vancouver and on March 28, 2021 held its

first Car Caravan for Cuba Against the US Blockade! The first Caravan was a success, bringing together over 30 peace loving people with the simple message of ending the US blockade through the unique form of protest that is the Car Caravan. This Car Caravan has turned into a monthly action, where activists join in vehicles covered with Cuban flags and signs denouncing the US blockade.

In Vancouver, the Car Caravan has been supported by Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade - Vancouver, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), Yemeni Community Association of Canada, Vancouver Communist Party of Canada Marxist-Leninist, Supporters of the Communist League in Vancouver, Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice - Vancouver, and Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) - Vancouver.

In the true spirit of Cuba, these Car Caravans have become international. The last Sunday of each month is a day of action, where Cuba solidarity groups and activists from around the world organize Car Caravans and other actions to defend Cuba against the cruel and illegal US blockade. From Tunisia to Venezuela, and Panama to Italy, and South Africa to the Philippines - people from across the world have united under the simple peaceful demand of ending the US blockade on Cuba.

Within Canada, many different cities have participated in the Caravans as well, including Victoria, Nanaimo, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax.

As the world has suffered and struggled to deal with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, instead of minimizing the impacts of the blockade on Cuba in order to help it face Covid-19 - the US government has intensified the blockade. This has made it difficult for Cuba to access many healthcare items like masks and syringes that are used to combat the virus.

Throughout this intensification of the blockade, Cuba has actually been able to not only confront the Covid-19 pandemic, but it has produced and manufactured three of the best vaccines in the world. Considering the impacts of the blockade and Cuba's difficulty of accessing medical equipment, it truly is remarkable what it has been able to contribute to the world's fight against the Covid-19 virus.

As we enter our second year of Car Caravans against the US Blockade on Cuba it is of utmost importance that we continue to defend Cuba against these unjust and cruel measures that the US government has imposed on the people of Cuba for over 60 years. Cuba like any country has a right to exist in peace and be able to determine its own future and sovereignty. As long as the US blockade continues to exist, we as peace loving people must continue to defend Cuba's fundamental right to self-determination in calling for an end to the immoral and illegal US blockade.

**Viva Cuba! Abajo el bloqueo!
Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!**

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