

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 saluda el Día Internacional contra la homofobia, la transfobia y la bifobia, en un contexto de intenso trabajo legislativo a favor de leyes orientadas a garantizar todos los derechos para todas las personas.



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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.



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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

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 expand 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! Join the Car Caravan for Cuba!

By Andrew Barry

For over 60 years, the U.S. government has imposed a complete financial and economic blockade on the people of Cuba. And for over 60 years, the people of Cuba have resisted this economic warfare from the United States. Through revolutionary methods and various creative and dynamic responses, they have defended their country's right to self-determination and built their socialist project in Cuba.

In 1959, the Cuban people toppled the hated U.S. puppet dictator Fulgencio Batista. The U.S. government has never forgiven Cuba for this and has tried relentlessly to return Cuba to being a pawn controlled by U.S. business interests. Using its economic might, the U.S. has attempted to isolate Cuba and impose a cruel, unjust, and illegal blockade to starve the Cuban people to give up on their revolution and sovereignty.

Throughout these six decades of hostility from the United States towards Cuba, international solidarity activists have defended Cuba and called for an immediate end to the U.S. blockade on Cuba. When the Covid-19 pandemic swept across the globe in early 2020, Cuba faced significant challenges and shortages as a result of this brutal blockade.

The pandemic added another blow to the Cuban people, already suffering from the U.S. blockade for over six decades. Instead of the two countries coming together during the worldwide pandemic, as Cuba successfully developed five highly effective vaccines, the U.S. government, under President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, increased the intensity and cruelty of the blockade. Medical supplies used to combat the coronavirus, like syringes and masks, were extremely difficult to access in Cuba as the U.S. tightened the screws on the economic details of the blockade by adding numerous new sanction regimes.

Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love)

Cuban-American activist Carlos Lazo, who heads the Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love) organization in Miami, came up

with a new form of protest in the time of pandemic: a car caravan for Cuba against the U.S. blockade! Vehicles lined up behind one another, covered with Cuban flags and banners condemning the blockade, are peacefully driven through the streets of Miami.

Within a few months, this protest caught on around the world, and now, every last Sunday of the month, activists from across Cuba, the U.S., Canada, and the world form car caravans to defend Cuba against the U.S. blockade!

In Vancouver, Canada, Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade have organized monthly car caravans to coincide with these international days of action against the blockade. These actions have been supported by 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).

Leading up to the May 29, 2022 car caravan, Cuba solidarity activists in Miami were threatened by right-wing anti-Cuban forces. These anti-Cubans posted on social media calling for their supporters to attack, intimidate and stop the Caravan from proceeding. Their goal was to sabotage the peaceful car caravan and destroy the democratic rights of the caravan supporters.

Puentes de Amor issued a call out to solidarity activists from across the United States and Canada to come to join the Miami car caravan on May 29 to counter these right-wing threats of violence. Two organizers from Vancouver, Tamara Hansen and Alison Bodine, joined the call out and headed to participate, support and defend the Miami car caravan for Cuba



against the U.S. blockade!

Tamara and Alison joined other activists from across the U.S. to support a large Miami car caravan. The right-wing anti-Cuban forces showed up as well to intimidate and threaten the peaceful caravanistas. Miami has traditionally been a hotbed of right-wing anti-Cuban activity, but this attempt to sabotage the caravan failed miserably as many Cuban-Americans joined the car caravan. The strength of Cuba solidarity activists completed a dynamic and large car caravan against the blockade!

The united effort of Cuba solidarity activists in Miami was a huge defeat for the U.S.-backed right-wing forces in Miami. It showed the significance of what working people fighting for human rights and against oppression can accomplish when we stand together in a united front.

As the world continues to battle the Covid-19 pandemic, the U.S. government has cruelly and unjustifiably intensified its blockade on the people of Cuba. Cubans have endured and stood up to six decades of this inhuman policy of hate and blockade from the U.S. We encourage peace-loving people from around the world to join the monthly car caravan for Cuba against the U.S. blockade! Cuba has a right to exist without a blockade attempting to strangle it!

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