

Urgent call for US administration to cease impending punitive actions and to instead act consistently for normalized relations with Cuba

The NLG welcomes the recently announced policy of the US government to normalize relations with Cuba, pursuant to simultaneous declarations by President Barack Obama and Raul Castro. This includes mutual openings of embassies and full diplomatic recognition, the release of the Cuban five and other prisoners, and the subsequent removal of Cuba from the unilaterally maintained US list of nations that supposedly support terrorism.

Despite this, the US economic blockade of Cuba still continues. While full repeal of the statutory authority for these economic sanctions can only be done by Congress, the Obama administration has so far not used its expansive authority to allow Cuba to sell to the US, or to generally allow US suppliers to sell or provide goods and services to Cuban entities, including urban and rural cooperatives. We call for an immediate end to these restrictions, by both administrative and legislative action.

We also call on all levels of the administration to act consistently with the announced policy of President Obama, and accordingly to cease all obstructive and punitive actions, specifically:

1) The Internal Revenue Service should cease all attempts and proceedings to revoke the 501(c)3 non-profit status of IFCO, the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, based on its long history of using civil disobedience to challenge US restrictions on travel to and trade with Cuba;

2) the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) should cease all impending threats and prosecutions of US persons based on their previous travel to Cuba, including the threatened re-institution of "trials for travel" in Washington DC; and

3) the US State Department should immediately cease its continuing practice of unreasonably withholding or delaying issuance of non-immigrant visas to mainstream Cubans invited to visit the US by academic and professional organizations including the NLG and for this convention.

Implementation will be done by the NLG Cuba subcommittee, which will forward copies of this resolution and background information to all chapters and relevant committees, requesting supportive action on their part.

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