

Indigenous Peoples and Nations Coalition (IPNC) of Alaska

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Submission 117th Session CERD on Cuba

1. Cuba has a turbulent history of colonization, foreign occupation and still struggles to maintain itself as an independent nation against a hegemonic superpower that threatens imminent invasion. Approaching the 117th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Cuba must continue to weigh the balance between maintaining its independence and promoting and protecting human rights in a hostile environment of assault on its national sovereignty, national character, right to development and right to self-determination by the neighboring superpower United States of America (USA). States must consider and balance what started as a struggle to rid itself of economic and political aggression facing an economic blockade that has criminal elements in the violations that can be traced to the Nuremberg principles, international criminal law of responsibilities and obligations for diplomatic and public officials and international humanitarian law and of international law. Further, the Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs), deny free trade, economic paralysis through the hegemonic military blockade instigated by the global neighboring power, riddled corruption and democratic despotism by the mainland USA.

2. The United States of America continues to suppress the Cuban economy and territorial sovereignty by recruiting Cuban nationals and diaspora to undermine its national pride and sovereign existence in the name of democracy and freedom. USA desires to open itself for its own foreign development and exploitation as it does in Iraq and Libya. IPNC continues to view the same rationalization and framework of democracy and freedom that has led to the subjugation, domination and exploitation of other Nations such as Alaska and Hawaii and other peoples', denying fundamental rights globally; Alaska and Hawaii remain under occupation. Reviewing the records of the adoption of GA 1469 of 1959, for example, the EU is accused of democratic despotism for granting Alaska and Hawaii as a gift to the USA for freeing them after WWII. Some EU countries are complicit collaborators and others freely exploit Alaska and Hawaii with impunity. Cuba's free voice tells the truth of economic aggression and foreign occupation and oppression in subjugating, dominating and exploiting peoples. As any other peoples, the Cuban peoples have the right to its self-determination as enunciated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and common Article I of the international Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

3. Cuba has heroically mounted a historical defense and ideological offense in response to the "Breckenridge Memorandum" dispatched by the U.S. Undersecretary of War from the United States Department of War on the 24 December 1897. In this memorandum the United States had its provocative eye on Cuba, the Hawaiian Islands and others. For Hawaii Breckenridge states it was, " **more complex and dangerous, given the diversity of races and...the Japanese interests there are on the same footing as ours**". As for Cuba, the Undersecretary was very direct: "**[We] must clean up the country, even if this means using the methods Divine Providence used on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. *** We must impose a harsh blockade so that hunger and its constant companion, disease, undermine the peaceful population and decimate the Cuban army. *** [W]e must create conflicts for the independent government. *** To sum up, our policy must always be to support the weaker against the stronger, until we have obtained the extermination of them both [Cuba and Puerto Rico], in order to annex the Pearl of the Antilles.**" The elements of the Breckenridge Memorandum have become a prophetic summary for what Cuba has endured despite the superpowers efforts to overthrow its Government and independence. As any other State, Cuba desires a better standard of living, a free economic development for its economic and political security, yet it must brace itself for a continuing struggle to defend its sovereignty, by Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs), the genocidal blockade and other acts of aggression,

in what IPNC will call international economic apartheid, the same measures we face. The activities of the USA with Cuba is rooted in violations of the Nuremburg principles and now the International Criminal Court.

4. Until Cuba is freed from economic and political aggression, it will continue to struggle to put together a comprehensive human rights framework to address the needs of its peoples. It must be allowed relief from its defensive mode of existence with a balance between development opportunities that respects its national sovereignty and right to self-determination. It is still under pressure to defend itself by the diaspora in the United States who are more willing to yield its desires of a superpower who seeks ways of exploiting foreign nations, then for entering honorable trade agreements, or to offer Cuba its own right to development without perpetuating colonialism and aggression. Other nations and peoples such as Alaska and Hawaii have fallen prey to the foreign occupation of the USA. Again we ask, what mechanism can we put into place to relieve any State from its burdens so it can more effectively to serve its own peoples? Address the UCMs.

5. According to UN General Assembly report A/77/358 of 21st September 2022, the blockade violates the right to life and health of all Cubans. This blockade denied and intimidates international banks and other institutions that could have provided medicines, pharmaceuticals and accoutrements for health of Cubans were denied to the Cuban population during the Covid-19 crisis. Recent GA resolutions reflect similar international violations.

6. The blockade constitutes a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban peoples. The blockade is an act of economic warfare in times of peace. It is the primary impediment to the country's economic and social development, and to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals. Recognizing the illegitimate aggression against Cuba, the international NGO's gave Fidel Castro a standing ovation as he entered to deliver his speech for the high-level roundtable event at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa.

7. After the United States of America suffered the attacks of 9/11, repressive laws and policies were instituted in the name of national security; its own citizens were denied travel at times, and unrecognized retired judges and law enforcement officials working off duty experienced and complained of oppressive measures by their own law enforcement officials. The events of 9/11 changed the laws and policies so that those who rendered justice had to take repressive measures in the name of national security, as does Cuba with USA aggression.

8. Cuba has had to sacrifice to maintain its sovereignty; the Americans did the same in the heat of the battle of World War II. That war ended. The political and economic war of attrition did not end for Cuba since the beginning of its revolution or since the Breckenridge Memorandum. Remember the measures that were taken by the United States of America after 9/11; are they not reminiscent of what Cuba is sometimes accused of, in order to simply maintain its independent dignity? Covid-19 and the world economic crisis compounds this.

9. Ironically, Alaska and Hawaii commiserate with Cuba since in 1959, the revolution liberated itself from the political and economic control through puppet accoutrements of the USA, while Alaska and Hawaii, under apartheid laws and policy, were annexed without our consent under GA 1469 of 1959 through political manipulation by the USA. Congratulations, Cuba maintains control over its territory and resources today.

10. As we move into the 21st century, IPNC and Koani recommends an immediate halt of the economic blockade against Cuba. The USA needs to stop lying about "freedom and democracy"; truthfully, the root of democracy and prosperity is the subjugation, domination and theft of Indigenous territory and resources. Cuba must never cease to call out the USA on its treatment of Indigenous Peoples through the Miguel Alfonso Martinez principles, without political horse-trading its ability to promote addressing Alaska, Hawaii and other cases. Address the double standards in human rights and to address the human rights violations equally. Allow the Cuban people's right to development and to open trade and commerce and to fully engage in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. Immediately address the financial blockade and pressure from foreign banks.