Pastors for Peace launches campaign across the U.S. in support of Cuba

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Washington, June 26 (RHC)-- The U.S. organization Pastors for Peace, a special ministry of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO), has launched a ten-day caravan of vehicles, traveling across the U.S., as a prelude to its already traditional "Friendshipment Caravan" to Cuba in July, started in 1992 by the late U.S. Reverend Lucius Walker.

The caravan across 40 U.S. cities began over the weekend with public events in Seattle, Washington, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with IFCO representatives speaking about the U.S. blockade of Cuba and what needs to be done to achieve truly normal relations between Havana and Washington.

Addressing those present at the Bolivarian Hall of the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington D.C., Bill Hackwell, a U.S. activist with Pastors for Peace, said that besides bringing much-needed humanitarian aid to the Cuban people, the caravans travel through US cities to raise awareness about the effects of the US blockade policy.

“The caravans serve as an alternative people-to-people foreign policy, aimed at supporting the Cuban people's self-determination and the country's efforts toward

sustainable development.”

He said this year's 29th Caravan to Cuba focuses on the travel restrictions under Washington's nearly six decade-old blockade policy. He noted that U.S. citizens are today still forbidden from traveling to Cuba as tourists. And Bill Hackwell recalled that in order to travel to Cuba, U.S. citizens need permission, a license, from the U.S. government.

Although in his final years, former President Barack Obama made licenses very easy to get, as well as taking some steps to reduce the underlying U.S. economic blockade of Cuba, President Trump has adopted a very hostile stance towards Cuba, partially reversing Obama’s actions, and reduced the possibilities for individual-licensed travel.

Since 1992, Pastors for Peace has taken 28 Caravans of people to Cuba without a license as a conscious act of civil disobedience. Hackwell said some 40 people plan to travel to Cuba with the Caravan from July 16th through the 31st. During their stay, the caravanistas will have a packed agenda of activities, primarily in the eastern provinces of Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo.

Before its arrival in Cuba, the caravan has planned activities through July 1st in 40 different U.S. cities, including Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania; Portland, Oregon; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Albany, New York; Los Angeles, California; Chicago, Illinois, and in Atlanta, Georgia.

Edited by Pavel Jacomino