
Fighting Scalpers

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In his most recent meetings with Party and government's authorities in several territories of the country, President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez has insisted on fighting a real plague: that of the scalpers, hoarders, and *coleros* (people who are paid to stand in line for someone else).

It has been a longstanding phenomenon, but in recent times, and facing the serious shortcoming in the supply chain of the commercial network, its impact has amplified.

In times of major challenges, the behavior of these people notoriously affect the fair and equitable distribution of staple items before an evident undersupply.

And this situation gets worse with the current sanitary crisis. Shopping centers cannot take over the usual dynamics of customer service and therefore, lines become longer, with the consequent growth of areas favorable to contagion of Covid-19 pandemic.

The National Revolutionary Police has carried out a strong preventive effort in the organization of lines and the implementation of effective mechanisms so people can have access to the products.

However, the situation is not under real control: scalpers have managed to find new ways to keep their business afloat to the great astonishment of citizens.

There is a black market offering a wide variety of products doubling, tripling and even quadrupling the official prizes.

These goods come, predominantly, from the commercial network. Based on the quantity and availability of the offer, it is obvious the mismanagement in several administrations.

Too much money behind the scene.

Scalpers shield behind the wage increase to augment the prices. And people who can avoid lines by paying, do not ask about the origin of those items.

It is a snake swallowing its own tail by profiting off the need of people. The ruling of circumstances.

Until the distribution of goods can be back to normal —or at least people perceive a notable improvement— we must face the exacerbation of such wrongdoing.

The administrations and authorities bear responsibility in this regard. And it is evident that, in terms of consumer protection, there are too much unsolved demands.

As long as the current gap exists between supply and demand (with direct impact of several aspects such as insufficient national production, the US blockade, lack of hard currencies, impact of the pandemic in the international trade, problems in the distribution mechanism...) there will exist scalpers and hoarders.

But remaining idly and giving up will never be the solution. It is imperative to find protection under the law. We must protect vulnerable individuals.

The behavior cannot be that of “every man for himself.”

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