
Religious leaders of Cuba and the World Reject US Blockade Against Cuba

29/09/2014



Religious organizations and their leaders, from Cuba and abroad, are rejecting the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba for more than half a century. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba released a report on Resolution 68/8 of the General Assembly of the United Nations that provides examples that attest to the rejection of Washington's policy.

Titled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba," the document states that the executive director of Church World Service (SMI), Rev. John L. McCullough, called in a public letter for the elimination of travel restrictions on his fellow citizens' visits to the island.

The text, released by the Cuban Foreign Ministry recalled that the letter, also signed by the President of the Council of Churches of Cuba, Reverend Joel Ortega, urges excluding the island from the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

In another letter, dated May 7, 2014, 16 US religious leaders asked President Barack Obama to encourage a dialogue at the highest level and create opportunities for US citizens to support the emerging Cuban private and cooperative sector.

Other requests in the May letter were focused on normalizing bilateral relations and discussing the differences in the context of respect for the dignity of both nations, said the report.

Also, on September 26, 2013, the Rev. Richard Pates, chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States, sent a letter to Susan Rice, National Security Adviser to the White House, calling for the Obama administration to lift the blockade, stated the report released in Havana.

Since last year, several Protestant leaders have pushed for an end to that US policy, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who visited Havana and declared that the Church, as an institution, should fight against that body of law.

The World Council of Churches also joined the call, approving a resolution in November 2013 calling for the normalization of relations between Washington and Havana.

The blockade against Cuba, launched in 1962 by the administration of President John F. Kennedy, is already the longest recorded in world history.

Since 1992 Cuban diplomacy has raised the question at the U.N. about the policy.

The number of votes in favor of lifting the blockade has been increasing, and in 2012 and 2013, 188 of the 193 UN members supported the cause.
