

**TUMBA EL
BLOQUEO**

CUBA'S REPORT

March 2023 – February 2024



CUBA'S REPORT

*Under United Nations General
Assembly resolution 78/7
entitled "Necessity of ending
the economic, commercial and
financial blockade imposed by
the United States of America
against Cuba."*

July, 2024

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THE US BLOCKADE

THE COST OF 25 DAYS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the financing necessary to meet the requirements of the country's National List of Essential Medicines during one year (around USD 339,000,000).

THE COST OF 9 DAYS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the financing required to import the amount of medical disposables (cotton swabs, gauze, syringes, needles, sutures, catheters, serum equipment, among other inputs) and reagents necessary to cover the needs of the national health system during one year (USD 129,000,000).

THE COST OF 21 HOURS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the purchase cost of the insulin required to cover national needs during one year (USD 12,000,000).

THE COST OF 18 DAYS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the annual maintenance cost of the National Electrical Power System (with the exception of fuel and investments) (around USD 250,000,000).

THE COST OF 4 MONTHS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the financing required to guarantee the distribution of the rationed family food basket to the population during one year (around USD 1,600,000,000).

THE COST OF 38 HOURS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the cost of production or acquisition of the logistics required to cover the needs of the national education system during one year (around USD 21,789,000).

THE COST OF 8 HOURS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the cost of toys and teaching aids needed in all day-care centers of the country (around USD 4,500,000).

THE COST OF HALF AN HOUR OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the cost of the electric and conventional wheelchairs required to meet the needs of the special education system of the country (around USD 256,363).

AGAINST CUBA IN FIGURES

THE COST OF 44 HOURS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the financing necessary to supply personal computers to all the country's educational centers (around USD 25,200,000).

THE COST OF 15 MINUTES OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the financing necessary to cover the demand of hearing aids for disabled children and teenagers studying in the country's special education system (around USD 144,000).

THE COST OF 7 MONTHS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the financing necessary to buy the buses required by the public transportation system of the country (around USD 2,850,000,000).

THE COST OF 3 DAYS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the annual maintenance cost of public transportation in the country (around USD 40,000,000).

THE COST OF 9 MONTHS OF BLOCKADE

Is equivalent to the estimated financing needed to build new houses in the country (around USD 3,893,000,000).



INTRODUCTION

From March, 2023 to February, 2024, the government of the United States maintained a maximum pressure policy against Cuba and continued to fully implement the economic, commercial and financial blockade, which is the fundamental pillar of that policy. Unilateral measures remained unchanged, with a stronger impact on Cuba's economy and people. Such measures have continued to replicate and aggravate the demolishing effects of this unilateral coercive system, the most wide-ranging and longest-lasting in history.

Cuba's inclusion in the US State Department unilateral list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism; the possibility to take legal action before US courts and file lawsuits by virtue of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (the Helms-Burton Act); the sanctions or threat of sanctions against shipping, forwarding, insurance or re-insurance companies involved in the supply of fuels to Cuba; the intensive and thorough persecution of Cuba's financial transactions and the resulting obstacles to the supply of basic commodities; as well as the persistence of other equally unilateral lists have been confirmed as the harshest measures.

In May, 2024, the US government discontinued the arbitrary and unwarranted practice of designating Cuba as a State that does not cooperate fully with the antiterrorism efforts of that country. That unilateral designation was one additional

slander, which had, however, no concrete impact, since it did not lead to the imposition of unilateral coercive economic measures. Therefore, that action did not lead to a relaxation or the lifting of any of the measures that are part of the blockade or the additional coercive measures resulting from Cuba's inclusion in the US spurious and unilateral list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism. That was a decision limited in scope that makes Cuba's permanence in that list –where it should have never been– all the more inconsistent, confusing and unjustifiable.

The US government announcements on May, 28, 2024 about the introduction of some changes in the regulatory framework of the blockade, associated to the private sector, did not modify the essence of that policy either. Such changes do not eliminate or modify the most harmful coercive measures that currently affect Cuba's economy and public services and severely impair the wellbeing of the whole population. They are intended to fragment the Cuban society; pit the private sector against the Revolution for political purposes and in the interest of achieving their ultimate goal, which is to bring about a change of regime and punish the state sector of the economy. An analysis of the very structure of the blockade and its dissuasive effect makes it possible to anticipate that those provisions

could hardly be implemented, all the more so when Cuba is maintained in the unilateral list of State sponsors of terrorism.

In the course of last year, the US government has upheld the laws and provisions related to the blockade against Cuba as well as the traditional actions to ensure their implementation, aimed at pursuing the historical goal of depressing the Cuban economy and workers' salaries; generate material scarcities and damage public services; provoke dissatisfaction and desperation among the population and subvert the legally established constitutional order. This kind of behavior has been described in several official documents of the US government which have been declassified, such as the internal Memorandum drafted by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Lester Mallory, on April 6, 1960, which stated as follows:

“(...) every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba (...) a line of action which, while as adroit and inconspicuous as possible, makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government.”

During the period covered by this Report, the US actions were aimed at identifying and persecuting, with surgical precision, the main sources of income of the Cuban economy by strictly implementing the provisions of the Helms-Burton Act, including those of an extraterritorial character.

The offensive launched against tourism; the allegations about non-existing sonic attacks against US diplomats to justify Cuba's designation as an unsafe country; the persecution of international medical cooperation agreements, among others, are all part of an improved coercive design intended to prevent the country from receiving the incomes necessary to attend to the increasing needs of the population.

The US government and the anti-Cuban politicians in that country are determined to spread the myth that the blockade is not a major constraint on the performance of the Cuban economy. They deceitfully repeat that the difficulties experienced by our economy are the consequences of the distortions of a socialist model under construction and the mistakes of government policies.

The government of the United States, by resorting to systematic disinformation operations, intends to put the blame on the Cuban government for the consequences and damages caused by the blockade, which is a dishonest and extremely cynical allegation, even more so it comes from the very same government that deliberately implements a suffocation policy against Cuba's economy.

All the difficulties faced by the Cuban society are not exclusively due to the blockade, but it would be untrue for anyone not to recognize the blockade as the main obstacle to our development. No country in this world, not even those whose economies are much more prosperous and robust than the Cuban economy, would be able to cope with

such a ruthless, asymmetric and protracted aggression without a high cost on the living standards of their peoples, their stability and social justice.

That cost is being evidenced today in the shortages suffered by Cuban men and women, which include foodstuffs, medicines, fuels, means of transportation; as well as the deterioration of other basic services.

The US government cleared any doubt that might exist regarding the cruel and genocidal nature of the blockade when it chose the worst moment of the COVID-19 pandemic to impose additional coercive measures on all Cubans. It strengthened the ban on Cuban imports of several commodities, including ventilators; applied measures that affected the scaling-up of the Cuban vaccines against the virus and managed to prevent the import of oxygen from third countries. It refused to lift, even temporarily, the measures against Cuba so that the country could cope with the pandemic, as it did to other nations.

From March 1st, 2023 to February 29, 2024 the blockade caused material damages to Cuba estimated at **USD 5,056,800,000**, which represents an increase of USD 189,800,000 as compared to the figure that appears in the previous Report.

All of the above reflect the strengthened impact of the blockade on Cuban exports, particularly in the tourism sector; the ruthless persecution of the country's financial and banking operations as well as the comprehensive damages caused to Cuba's entrepreneurial system,

production and the services provided to the population.

This represents an impact of more than **USD 421,000,000 a month**, or more than **USD 13,800,000 a day**; or more than **USD 575,683 per hour** in damages as a result of the blockade.

At current prices, the damages accumulated during more than six decades of implementation of this policy, amount to **USD 164,141,100,000**. Taking into account the value of the dollar against the price of gold at the international market, the blockade has caused damages amounting to more than **USD 1,499,710,000,000**.

It has been estimated that, if the blockade did not exist, Cuba's GDP, at current prices, could have grown by around 8 per cent in 2023.

These data show that Cuba's current challenges would have been solved in an easier and better way if the country could have access to the numerous resources that the blockade deprives it from.

During the last few years, particularly in recent months, the aging of the Cuban population and the high rate of migration particularly among the youngest sectors of the society have become quite noticeable.

This situation would be quite different if there was not a blockade, which was further tightened after the implementation of the maximum pressure policy by President Donald Trump, which has been maintained by the administration of President Joseph Biden. The US counterparts have no arguments to deny this truth.

The blockade is a crime against humanity, an act of genocide and a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the human rights of more than 11 million Cubans. It is a cruel punishment policy. This Report provides objective information and valuable data that further substantiate the denunciation of this grave injustice.

01

PERSISTENCE AND TIGHTENING of the blockade policy

Effective implementation of the blockade laws

The government of the United States and its regulatory agencies, oblivious of the unequivocal stance adopted by the international community and the successive resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on this issue, fully apply all the legislations that are part of the intricate web of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba. These laws are listed in Annex 1 of this Report.

Annex 2 includes the main legal and regulatory blockade enforcement actions that were adopted by the US government from March, 2023 to February, 2024.

The so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, also known as the “Helms-Burton Act” is part of the legislative and legal framework that supports the blockade.

All the blockade provisions are codified in this law, which is contrary to the very US Constitution and the norms and principles of International Law. By virtue of this law, the US President is deprived of the faculty of lifting the blockade, a prerogative that now falls upon the Congress of that country.

No other nation is subject to a monstrosity of this nature, some of whose provisions call for the US government to put pressure on third countries to avoid having relations with Cuba. It also includes a system of political and legal reprisals against companies that maintain links with the Island. It requires the US President to inform every year to the Congress about Cuba’s commercial relations with other nations. It blatantly emphasizes that, even after the Revolution is overthrown and the country is ruled by a US puppet regime, the blockade would continue to be implemented until the properties that were nationalized after 1959 are returned to the “affected owners”.

Title III of this law allows former owners of properties that were nationalized in Cuba in strict compliance with International Law, including citizens of Cuban origin which later on became US citizens, to file lawsuit before US courts against those natural or juridical persons which somehow were in contact or had any relation with the aforementioned properties, which the law describes as “traffic”.

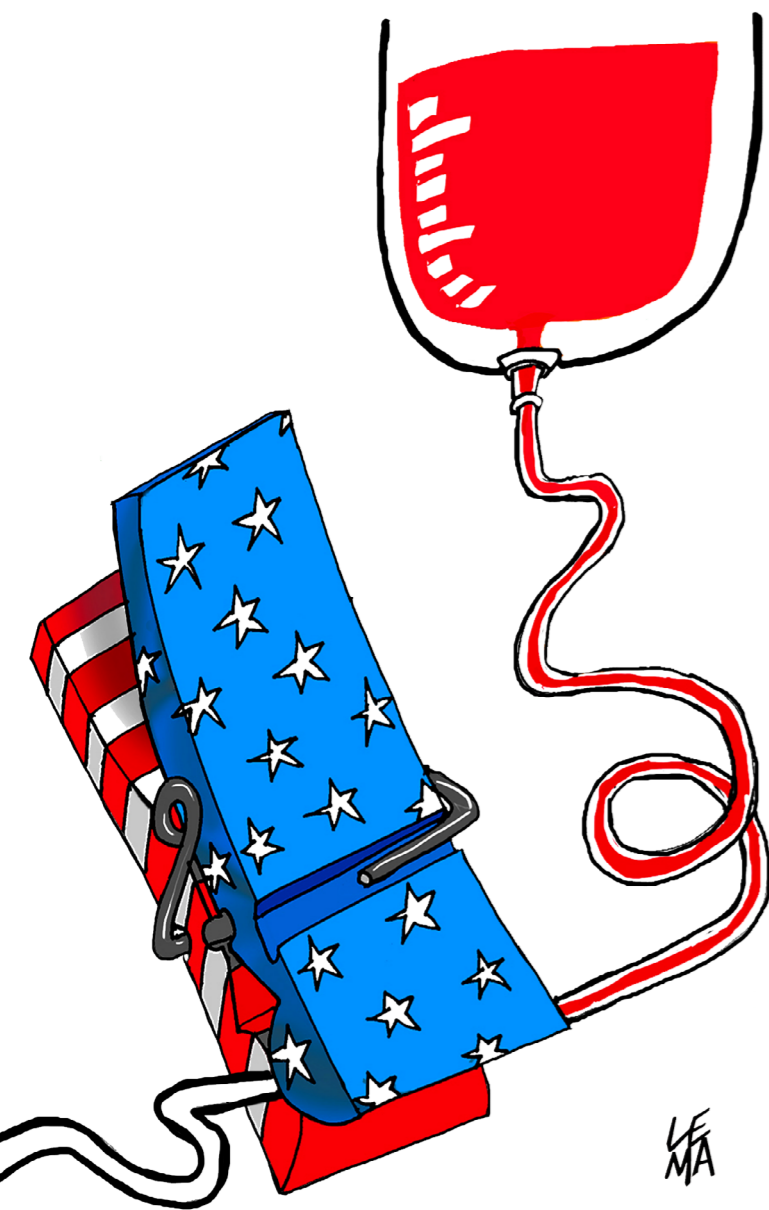
As of May, 2019, Title III of this law opened up the possibility to file claims before US courts. After successive US administrations had repeatedly suspended the implementation of this Title, such an action represents an escalation in the purpose of internationalizing the extraterritorial coercive design against Cuba.

Until May 31st, 2024, a total of 44 lawsuits had been filed before US courts by virtue of the aforementioned

Title. Two of them were withdrawn; another two were merged and 5 were rejected. In one case an agreement was reached between the parties, while 34 lawsuits were still under way.

While the Helms-Burton Act bestowed on the US Congress the prerogative of revoking the provisions that support the blockade against Cuba and proclaim its end, that same legislation provided the President of that country with far-reaching powers to substantially modify the implementation of that policy, allowing for the completion of certain transactions through the emission of licenses based on executive actions. *Annex 3* refers to these executive powers.

If there were a true will to adopt a policy to benefit the Cuban people as a whole and alleviate the undeniable pressure on the economy and other vital sectors of society, the US President would take concrete and immediate actions to modify the implementation of the blockade by making use of his executive powers. That would be an important step towards the removal of the biggest obstacle to Cuba’s economic, commercial and financial relations with the United States and the rest of the world as well as to the wellbeing of the Cuban people.



IMPACT RESULTING FROM CUBA'S INCLUSION IN THE US STATE DEPARTMENT UNILATERAL LIST OF STATES THAT ALLEGEDLY SPONSOR TERRORISM

On January 11, 2021, 9 days before concluding his mandate, President Donald Trump included Cuba in the unilateral List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, as a gift to the Cuban origin extreme right from South Florida intended to hamper any future progress in bilateral relations. This was a purely political move, with no evidence that could justify it.

The current government has maintained that decision unchanged, despite being fully aware that the pretexts used to approve that arbitrary designation were dishonest; that Cuba has been a victim of terrorist actions that for years have been organized and financed from the US territory; that Cuba has unmistakably condemned that scourge, and in spite of the concrete examples of cooperation between Cuban and US authorities to combat terrorism, in compliance with the bilateral instruments in force and International Law.

Cuba's arbitrary inclusion in that List is not a merely symbolic act, since it has serious economic consequences, for it strengthens even more the restrictions and prohibitions that have already been applied against our country by virtue of the blockade. Such designation has brought about serious difficulties to our country's financial and banking transactions, foreign trade, sources of income and energy, access to credits and to find suppliers of goods and inputs required by economic development.

Less than two months after its implementation, more than 45 banks from several countries interrupted their operations with Cuba. Our country lost traditional suppliers in Europe and Latin America in particular. Our capacity to purchase the inputs required to manufacture medicines at the most complex time of the combat of the COVID-19 pandemic was reduced by a half.

From January, 2021 to February, 2024, around 1,064 actions were reported by foreign banks, informing their refusal to offer services to Cuban entities, including transfers for the purchase of foodstuffs, medicines, fuel, spare parts for the national power system and essential consumer goods for the people.

After the US adoption of the "Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act" of 2015, it was established that the visa exemption program through the ESTA¹ system would not be valid for persons who may have visited Cuba, one of the countries arbitrarily designated by the US as a sponsor of terrorism. The punitive effect of this provision significantly affects Cuba's travels and tourism, which has been identified as one of the fundamental sources of income for our country.

Cuba's inclusion in that list has also increased the Country Risk status, which confirms the extremely disadvantageous conditions in which the Island takes

part in the international market. This discourages and undermines the interest of foreign investors to take part in the Cuban economy. It should not be forgotten that in 2015, in the context of the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States, the Moody's Investors Service increased the country's credit rating from "stable" to "positive" and recognized that one of the reasons for that was the US rapprochement to Cuba and our country's removal from that list.

Early on in 2024, five special procedures mandate-holders of the United Nations Human Rights Council², urged the United States to review its system of specific sanctions against countries designated as sponsors of terrorism, being Cuba one of them, claiming that the unilateral nature of said list undermines human rights and is contrary to International Law.

They affirmed that fundamental human rights, namely, the rights to food, health, education as well as the economic and social rights, the right to life and the right to development are being negatively impacted by the restrictions and prohibitions resulting from such designation³. They likewise recognized that the process whereby a country is designated as sponsor of terrorism is neither clear nor transparent⁴.

¹Electronic System for Travel Authorization. It is part of the US Visa Waiver Program, which allows citizens from countries that are part of said program to travel to the United States for tourism, business or transiting en route to another country and stay for up to 90 days in that country.

²Alena Douhan, Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food; Attiya Waris, Independent Expert on Foreign Debt, Other International Financial Obligations and Human Rights; Cecilia M. Bailliet, Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity; and Livingston Sewanyana, Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order.

³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/united-states-unilateral-designation-states-sponsors-terrorism-negatively>.

⁴See JAL USA 31/2023 at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TmSearch/Mandates?m=22>.

In May, 2024, the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, admitted at a Congress hearing in that country that Cuba does not protect terrorists, with which he disregarded the pretext supporting the unjust designation of Cuba as a State sponsor of terrorism. This confirms that the only purpose of maintaining Cuba in that list is to slander our country and use this as an excuse to strengthen the extreme measures of economic, commercial and financial siege against the Cuban people.

Specific examples of the impact of this unilateral measure for Cuba and third countries' nationals will be set out in this Report when addressing the damages caused to different sectors.

Implications of Cuba's removal from the unilateral List of Countries which allegedly are not cooperating fully with United States antiterrorism efforts

On May 15, 2024 the US Secretary of State discontinued the practice of the last few years to certify Cuba, under Section 40A of the Arms Export Control Act, as a country that is not cooperating fully with United States antiterrorism efforts.

This decision did not lead to Cuba's removal from the unilateral list of States

that allegedly sponsor terrorism or any modification in the web of coercive measures resulting from the inclusion in that list. The extraordinary damage that this slanderous designation is causing to the Cuban economy and its intimidating effect continue to be significant obstacles to the development of the country and the wellbeing of all Cubans.

It is not enough to recognize that Cuba fully cooperates with antiterrorism efforts, a truth that is well known all over the world and that the United States has just decided to admit. This is an announcement limited in scope which, in practical terms, is not associated to any relaxation or lifting of the measures that are currently supporting the blockade; and make Cuba's presence in the list of States that allegedly sponsor terrorism all the more inconsistent, confusing and unjustifiable.

Numerous governments, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as political, social and religious personalities and organizations within the United States, are calling for the White House to remove Cuba from that spurious list without further delay. The President of the United States has been entrusted with all the prerogatives to act with honesty and attend to this claim.

Announcements made on May 28, 2024 about the blockade's regulatory framework

On May 28, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the US Treasury Department published an update of the regulatory framework of the blockade against Cuba in order to put into effect the announcements issued on May 16, 2022 by the State

Department regarding authorizations for Internet-based services and financial transactions for the Cuban private sector.

The measures were very limited in scope, they did not modify the essence of the blockade against Cuba nor the additional provisions of the maximum pressure policy implemented since 2019. Once again, the US government's decision is based on its distorted view of the Cuban reality, by pretending to artificially separate the private sector from the public sector, when both are part of the same business system and the Cuban society.

All in all, the measures were aimed at authorizing the re-export, from the US to third countries, of software and mobile applications of Cuban origin; expanding training, installation and repair services; replacing telecommunications items; enabling the Cuban private sector to operate accounts in the US banking system and allowing U-turn transactions whose origin and destination were outside the US.

The US government policy is aimed at placing the Cuban private sector at an advantageous position and punishing the state sector, knowing that the latter provides essential services to all Cubans and is a guarantee of social justice and equity among citizens. This is part of a design to impose a regime change that seeks to fragment society and encourage a political opposition based on its hegemonic interests.

Several experts on financial and Cuban issues foresee it will be difficult to implement these provisions, due to the fears and dissuasive effects produced by the blockade and the presence of Cuba in the list of alleged State sponsors of terrorism, which affect both the public and private sectors in Cuba and the society as a whole.

The specific impacts caused by the blockade on the emerging sectors of the Cuban economy will be dealt with in paragraph 2.3 of this Report.

02

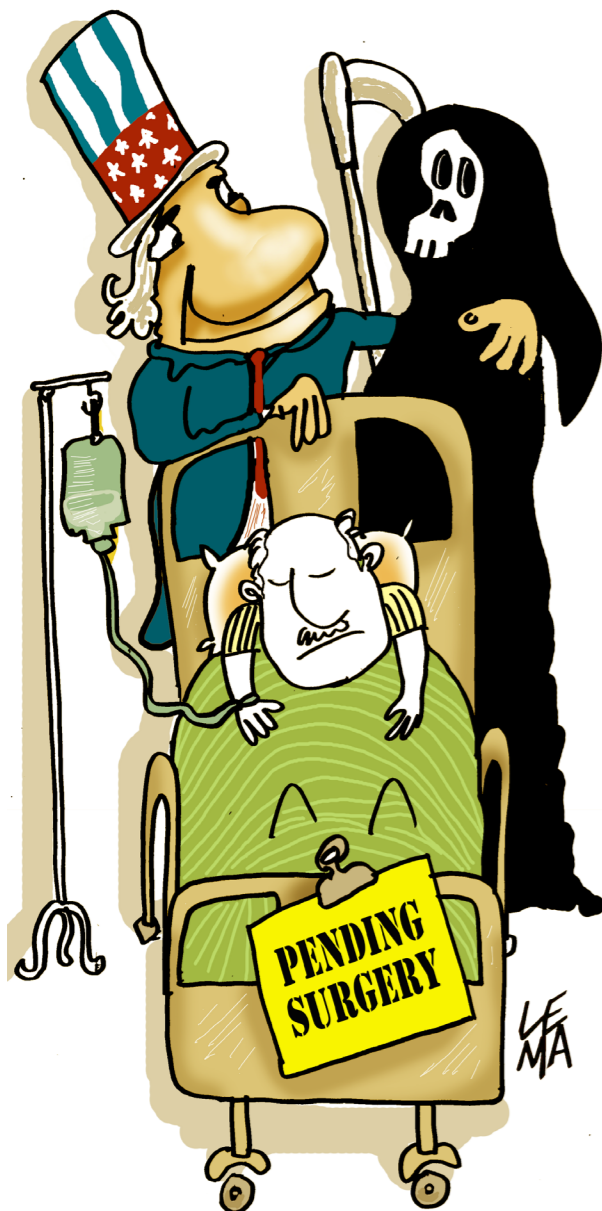
THE BLOCKADE VIOLATES THE RIGHTS of the Cuban people

pillars that the Cuban revolutionary process set out to guarantee since its early days, which is a free, universal and quality medical care for all citizens.

The cancellation of contracts; the refusal by shipping companies to transport any cargo to Cuba; the impossibility of using technologies with more than 10 per cent of US components and the increase in marketing costs have negatively impacted the purchase of the inputs necessary to ensure the sustainability of the health system. At the same time, the deliberate attack on the sources of income of the Cuban economy has prevented the country from having the necessary funds to make these purchases in other markets.

The increasing difficulties faced in this sector not only affect basic health care for the population; they also generate tensions among the health staff, medical institutions and the affected families and patients, as they impact services that have always been at the core of the humanist vocation of the Cuban Revolution which, under the current circumstances, are impossible to offer in sufficient numbers to meet the needs.

Dr. Jorge Juan Marinello, president of the Cuban Society of Oncology, Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine, has experienced this feeling in his daily work:



Impacts on highly sensitive sectors

The impact of the blockade on **the health sector** is real, significant and sensitive. It directly affects one of the

“The blockade has led us to face a tense economic situation that affects the availability and sustainability of the country’s radiotherapy network, which involves the application of sub-optimal treatments.”

The effects on surgical procedures and the availability of cytostatic products are equally severe. On many occasions, due to the shortage of diagnostic means and therapeutic products, patients and their families must continuously move around various medical institutions, depending on the availability of supplies. In many cases, these are treatments that make the difference between life and death. As physicians, who are also parents and grandparents, this situation affects us very closely and shocks us”.

Marilín Peña Pérez, a popular educator and sociologist at the ‘Martin Luther King’ Memorial Center, has suffered from acute myopia since she was 8. During the last 30 years, she has undergone repeated surgeries. Her cornea has flattened, it is no longer concave, so she requires advanced treatments with special equipment that the country has not been able to acquire, since they are US technology-intensive equipment and

their sale to Cuba is prohibited. As a result of that, Marilín must wear glasses with very high cylinders, which are difficult to grind in the country. After so many surgeries, she has developed glaucoma, which makes her dependent on three different types of eye drops to regulate her ocular tension. These medications have become scarce in recent years, due to the impossibility of acquiring them directly in the US, their high cost in far-away markets and the comprehensive effect of the blockade on the country’s purchasing power.

Following there is her testimony:

“Before 2019, I could buy these products quite regularly at my neighborhood’s drugstore and it was very reassuring to know that I had my treatment guaranteed every month. Today it is not like that; I have to manage to get them through different ways. I’ve had to look for them even outside the country and replace these medications all the time with similar ones.”

This affects my quality of life and the real possibilities I would have to maintain my ocular tension at a level that does not lead me to blindness more quickly. It is my daily concern to secure the next bottle of drops, so that when I finish the one I'm using I can already have a refill. That has become an obsession for me and my family."

During the period covered by this Report, the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur of the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, Ms. Alena Douhan, acknowledged the harmful effects of these measures on the right to health in Cuba, including mental health⁵. She also pointed out the special conditions under which the country had to face the COVID-19 pandemic.

The extreme cruelty of the blockade was brutally demonstrated when the main medical oxygen production plant broke down at the time when there was a pick number of COVID-19 cases in our country.

The attempts made by two US companies to supply medical oxygen to Cuba failed, for they required a specific license from the US government to do so, even in times of the pandemic. The maneuvers by US government agencies to prevent foreign companies from two Latin American nations from selling medical oxygen to our country were also known.

Among the main examples of the effects of the blockade on the health sector during the period covered by

this Report were the following:

- The company Novartis, based in Switzerland, has stated that, due to the blockade, it cannot offer Cuba the medicine Cabergoline, with which surgical treatments associated with tumors in the pituitary gland, an organ that regulates the endocrine system, could be avoided.
- Our country has had no access to the spare parts needed to repair the defective air conditioning equipment of the intensive care unit and operating rooms of the Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery, because the manufacturer, which is a French company, was acquired by a US transnational. Therefore, it is not authorized to sell to Cuba.
- The Cuban Neuroscience Center (CNEURO) was unable to execute two contracts that had already been signed with a Spanish company to purchase laboratory equipment and reagents, as well as accessories to ensure the operation of 'Infantix', a Cuban system for the detection of hearing and vision disorders among one-month-old children. Since the products were of US origin, European distributors refused to sell them to Cuba.
- It has been impossible to sign a contract to buy spare parts for the Bosch brand equipment used for the encapsulation of medicines and the filling of vials. Since 2020, the Bosch Packaging Technology firm was sold to the CVC Capital Partners group, with interests in the United States, which developed a new brand called

Syntegon Technology. Attempts were made to negotiate with this company but to no avail. This situation has led to continuous interruptions in the national medicines production plan.

- A European manufacturer, whose company was acquired by the US multinational Trane Technologies, cancelled a contract for the sale of 4 cooling machines for the company "Laboratorios AICA" and an additional one for the business base unit (UEB) Novatec, which is under the company "Laboratorios MedSol". Without them, it is not possible to manufacture medicines, as they ensure optimum climate in production plants.
- It has been impossible to purchase the blood gas analyzers manufactured by the company 'Radiometer' to treat patients in critical conditions in the intensive care units as well as patients who have undergone heart surgeries because this company is part of the Danaher corporation, based in the US and, therefore, it is not allowed to sell these inputs to Cuba.
- The blockade has prevented access to the devices manufactured by the US company 'Datex-Ohmeda' that are necessary to administer nitric oxide, which is a vasodilator gas used in cardiovascular post-operative care, neonatal care and patients undergoing lung transplants.
- Reagents manufactured by the US firm Beckman Coulter -required by the immunology laboratories of the country and the diagnosis of different types of immunodeficiencies-, continue to be blocked for Cuba.

- The US firm Intuitive Surgical has refused to sell to Cuba the Da Vinci Xi Surgical System Model IS4000 surgical robot, thus depriving Cuban patients of the possibilities offered by the safest, most accurate and minimally invasive robotic surgery.
- The US legislation has established a very cumbersome and lengthy procedure for US medicines imports by Cuba, with countless bureaucratic obstacles which, in practice, make pharmaceutical companies to refuse to sell to Cuba. The very deterrent effect of the blockade discourages relations in this sector.

The severe limitations resulting from the blockade have considerably impaired the services provided to the Cuban population as well as specialized medical care, which has had an impact on the situation described below:

- The National List of Essential Medicines in Cuba has 651 items; 51 per cent of them are not available. The national protocol is organized to guarantee a 120-day stock of all medicines to cover the national demand, but during the period covered by this Report, stocks have been reduced to 30 days.
- The shortage of medicines in the national health system has led to an increase of the informal market, whose high prices make it difficult to be afforded by the majority of the population.
- Over the last four years, surgeries have dramatically decreased in the country. Even with the recovery of the healthcare activity during 2022 and 2023, the number of surgeries

only reaches 65 per cent of the total achieved in previous years, when the country managed to perform 1 million surgeries. This has resulted in an accumulated demand for such services, with a waiting list that reached 86,141 patients by the end of February, 2024. Of all patients awaiting surgery, more than 9,000 are pediatric patients, and such situation brings about the consequent anguish for families and puts additional pressure on the health sector.

- The difficulties derived from the blockade for the purchase of the medicines that are used in the treatment of oncological diseases, even among children, have forced the country to resort to alternative therapies schemes for not being able to access first-line drugs. An example of that is Lomustine, a medicine used for the treatment of tumors affecting the Central Nervous System.
- A total of 44,408 patients are awaiting ophthalmologic surgeries, most of them for the removal of cataracts, a condition that seriously impairs their quality of life.
- More than 5,000 patients are awaiting surgery in the specialties of general medicine, urology and orthopedics. This has led to deterioration in health care quality indicators, despite the number of patients suffering from hip fractures who undergo surgeries during the first 24 hours after the occurrence of such fractures and the number of minimally invasive surgeries that are performed.

- In the specialty of neonatology and newborn care, there are more than 20 pieces of medical equipment that are technologically obsolete, including incubators, thermal cribs, and neonatal ventilators, among others. Despite the priority given by the Cuban government to this sector, it has not been spared from the multidimensional effects of the blockade on the country's purchasing power, including the access to more advanced technologies.

- Regarding cardiovascular surgery, 200 patients have not been able to undergo surgery during the period covered by this Report, due to the shortage of consumables, oxygenators, different types of drainage devices, mammary artery clips for myocardial revascularization and other basic medications and devices, such as catheters, diuretics, anticoagulants and hypotensive medicines.

- The country is facing shortages of contraceptives, condoms and medicines for pregnant women, particularly multivitamins, folic acid, as well as diagnostic means, early pregnancy tests and sexually transmitted diseases tests.

Besides, the US has unleashed a relentless persecution against Cuba's international medical cooperation, based on the ill-tended fallacy that Cuba promotes human trafficking. The US intends to discredit this laudable work and prevent the inflow of legitimate incomes from the cooperation that is offered as "compensated technical assistance", based on modalities

that have received the support of the United Nations (UN).

On June 24, 2024, Secretary of State Antony Blinken presented the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report, in which Cuba remained included under Level 3 for the sixth consecutive year. This rating includes countries that "do not fully comply with minimum standards and do not make significant efforts to reduce trafficking in persons." In the sections describing countries with which Cuba has signed medical cooperation agreements, the State Department resorted to the dishonest practice of referring to the existence of an alleged human trafficking scheme in those programs, as part of an intimidation strategy.

From March 2023 to February 2024, the pressures on the banks as well as the countries where medical cooperation is offered have become all the more evident. They have refused to transfer incomes to Cuba. One medical mission was cancelled during the period covered by this Report, after a decision of the recipient country, due to the persecution and intimidating effect generated by the US blockade.

All in all, the effects caused on the health sector during the period from March 2023 to February 2024 amounted to no less than **USD 268,515,210**, a figure that exceeds by **USD 28,700,000** the one reported in the previous Report. These discreet figures do not reflect the hardships and human damage caused to many Cubans who have been marked for life by the effects of this genocidal policy.

The negative impact of the economic

siege on the access to hard currency, inputs, raw materials, fertilizers, machinery, fuels, chemicals and technologies has also caused a considerable decrease in **domestic food production**. Additionally, the impossibility to hire vessels from a significant number of shipping companies has interrupted the arrival in the country of supplies that have already been paid for.

Lisette Fernández Páramo, president of the Cuban Association of Animal Production, attests to these effects:

"The blockade makes it impossible for cooperatives and farmers to have access to inputs, such as spare parts for machinery, tractors, harvesters and other means of transportation that remain paralyzed and are obsolete, as well as raw materials and other products that would otherwise make it possible to use idle land for production. Besides, the blockade prevents us from obtaining the fuels, oils and lubricants needed to operate the existing agricultural machinery".

Ramón Fabrè Fonseca, a farmer who works at the "Fructuoso Rodríguez" cooperative in the municipality 'Julio Antonio Mella' of the province of Santiago de Cuba, has suffered the effects of the blockade. He devotes himself to livestock production and the farming of various crops. Currently, almost one fifth of his land remains uncultivated because they are infested

with marabou trees and the products needed to spray and eradicate this species are in shortage. He has not been able to acquire the tractors that would facilitate his work, so he has had to rely exclusively on oxen. The lack of fuel has also led him to opt for planting using animals instead of machinery. Ramón does not have advanced irrigation systems either, which limits the number of months in a year when he is able to plant.

He further explains as follows:

“If the blockade had not existed, today I would be producing more milk, more meat, and more food. I would be offering three times what I produce today. What we, farmers, want is to be allowed to produce.

Last year we tried to export charcoal and we couldn't. The bank of the buyer with whom we were negotiating could not make transfers to Cuba because it would have been under sanctions if it did.”

The mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council's special procedures on the Right to Food (Mr. Michael Fakhri); the Right to Development (Ms. Surya Deva); Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (Mr. Olivier De Schutter); and the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights (Ms. Alena Douhan), sent a joint communication to the US government on January 25, 2024, in which they emphasized the negative impact of this policy on Cuba's capability to guarantee the right to food and an adequate standard of living to its citizens.

They were categorical in qualifying

the blockade as a serious violation of International Law, the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States as well as the human rights of the Cuban people, including the right to life. The communication also recognized that the blockade has restricted Cuba's access to foreign multilateral financing for the implementation of agriculture and rural development programs and the rehabilitation and modernization of agricultural equipment and infrastructure⁶.

All of the above is illustrated, for example, through the difficulties faced by the Cooperative Rural Development Project in the Eastern Region (PRODECOR), which was promoted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Cuba, whose implementation concluded in 2022. The project allowed for the construction of modern grain processing plants, but due to the limited access to fertilizers and pesticides, production was reduced. By December 2022, the plants were only operating from 15 per cent to 30 per cent of their production capacity.

During the period covered by this Report, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) attempted to purchase tractors for some small producers from a supplier in Puerto Rico for a total value of USD 1,500,000, but the manufacturer decided not to take the risk of selling them to Cuba, which showed the intimidating effect of the blockade.

In 2022, an agreement was reached with a Spanish company to purchase ice machines, refrigerators, meat processors and other equipment

for one fishing cooperative in the province of Santiago de Cuba. Given the impossibility of making payments in US dollars, it was not until 2023 that the equipment could enter the country, by which time many of them had already lost their warranty, thus making it impossible to file a claim against the supplier.

In November 2023, donations of agricultural equipment from Germany by the “Cuba Sí” organization took nearly four months to arrive in the country due to the transshipments and high tariffs that had to be paid to ensure that the cargo would arrive in Cuba without any entity being sanctioned by the United States.

In February 2024, the Cuban company LABIOFAM S.A. received a refusal from an exporting/importing company of Spanish origin for the purchase of chicken embryos, since the supplier, ATCC, of US origin, had noted that the final destination of such products was a country under the US government sanctions.

Several banks have claimed different reasons, particularly domestic political reasons, for refusing to process payments to traditional suppliers of the Cuban food importing company ALIMPORT. Such is the case of the Bank of Nova Scotia, which has refused to carry out operations with the supplier Induveca, for the exports of sausages to Cuba.

The effects of the blockade on the agricultural and food sector are also evident in the panorama described below:

- There is a deteriorated fleet of agricultural equipment. Several tractors have been operating, on

average, for 30 years, which reduces their yields and performance. Besides, part of the vehicle fleet used for marketing products has been operating, on average, for 40 years.

- In the poultry sector, laying hens have been affected by the shortage of antibiotics, antiparasitic medications, vitamin supplements, amino acids, fodder, among other inputs. Since 2022, it has not been possible to import medicines or any other essential inputs to guarantee poultry health. This situation has caused high mortality rates in poultry. As a result, there has been a deficit of almost one billion in egg production.
- Regarding fodder production, 214,700 tons of corn and 17,500 tons of soybeans could not be purchased due to a deficit in financing.
- Pork production has declined dramatically due to the shortage of the required fodder. Of the USD 42,600,000 earmarked for this sector, only 41 per cent was executed due to financial problems, cancellation of contracts, shipping companies increased prices, lack of availability of ships that would risk arriving at Cuban ports and the high prices applied to the offers of raw materials, due to the risk of negotiating with our country.
- Likewise, it has been necessary to modify pig farming systems by replacing specialized higher yields breeds with dark-skinned pigs which, although feeding on a more rustic diet, are less prolific and produce less meat.
- The company ‘Frutas Selectas’ could only receive 45 per cent of the

⁶See JAL USA 3/2024 at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TmSearch/Mandates?m=22>

1,642,800 liters of diesel it needed to carry out its economic activity.

- The historical yields of several crops have deteriorated by almost 40 per cent due to the lack of fertilizers and pesticides; almost 238,000 tons of viands, more than 171,000 tons of root crops and thousands of tons of fruits failed to be produced.
- The country has lost the capacity to refrigerate 26,360 tons of products due to the limited access to financing, which has increased the impact on the logistics infrastructure and the proper maintenance and recovery of cold storage facilities.

As a result of the foregoing, during the period covered by this Report, there were insufficient wholesale supplies and the deficit of products in the retail market remained, with instability in the basic commodities distributed as part of the rationed family basket and the fragmentation of its delivery to the population.

In 2023, the planned deliveries to the population of a group of products could not be met, with a remarkable decrease, as compared to 2022 figures, in products such as rice, beans, bread, coffee, cooking oil, soybean yogurt, meat products, powdered milk, sugar, as well as in medical diets.

As compared to 2019, the production of rice, egg and milk has decreased by 81 per cent, 61 per cent and 49 per cent respectively.

The main effects and limitations faced in the purchasing of goods are related to non-compliance with import plans due to the lack of financing for the

execution of payments; insufficient access to credits; increased cost of products and services; increased freight rates, as well as delays in the arrival of goods.

The country makes immense efforts to prioritize the delivery to the population of the rationed family basket products, the cost of which exceeds USD 1,600,000,000 per year. However, it has not been possible to meet all basic needs.

Under the blockade conditions, it is impossible to ensure a greater food supply in the country's markets by increasing food imports. To illustrate this reality, it would be sufficient to compare the prices of products imported in the year 2024 with the prices they had in 2019, which have increased by 76 per cent. This means that an additional USD 718,000,000 had to be paid for these imports, but the country did not receive more products in return.

Just to mention one example, the price of the coffee delivered as part of the family basket increased from USD 2,400 per metric ton in 2022 to USD 3,906 per metric ton in 2023.

The anti-Cuban ultra-right wing based in the US and the staunchest detractors of a civilized relationship between both countries claim that there is no blockade on the export of US foodstuffs to Cuba. To support these allegations, they refer to figures close to USD 300,000,000 in sales of US food and basic products.

This is obviously a derisory amount. When compared to the Dominican Republic, a country with approximately the same population as Cuba, in 2023 this nation imported USD 17,000,000,000

worth in goods from the US.

Certainly, there are few exceptions to the blockade that the US government intends to present as a form of commercial exchange, such as the sales of chicken and a small number of other items to Cuba.

As a result of the subsidies to the agricultural system in the US, the prices of these products there are lower, even lower than in the rest of the countries of the world, so Cuba has chosen to acquire some of them in that market.

However, in practice, these purchases are also evidence of the serious limitations imposed by US laws on our country. Not even those exceptional sales are made under international commercial standards.

They materialize only after meeting rigorous conditions, under specific licenses or permits issued by the Department of Commerce. Cuba must pay in cash and in advance, without the possibility of paying in installments, as is the practice in international trade. Besides, the country has no access to private or federal financing from the US.

Under the current operating conditions of the international market, it is practically impossible for a country or a company to operate under these restrictions. The sole purpose of this cumbersome process is to deter and discourage business with Cuba.

In general terms, during the period between March 2023 and February 2024, the economic damages caused by the blockade policy of the United States against Cuba in the agricultural

sector amounted to no less than **USD 441,122,320.38**.

The Cuban educational system has also suffered the devastating effects of this unjust and illegal policy. During the period covered by this Report, the blockade continued to hinder commercial operations and limited access to international credits for the purchase of raw materials and other resources used in the production of teaching aids.

In the opinion of Beatriz Roque Morales, National Director of Special Education, the blockade has a much more complex impact, because when special educational needs are associated to disabilities, they impair the intellectual performance but also the emotional and social performance of individuals:

“To me it is very shocking that something as elemental as a toy cannot be made fully available to our girls and boys. From early childhood, playing is the way through which they learn about the world.”

A total of 3,390 modules are required to meet the needs of toys in all the day-care centers of the country. These would benefit more than 67,135 boys and girls. The purchase of these supplies is estimated at approximately USD 4,500,000, which is equivalent to the cost of 8 hours of blockade.

Beatriz is aware of the omnipresent effect of this criminal policy, whose expressions are hardly quantifiable:

“The blockade is not only the impossibility of accessing a product, but all the limitations associated to the absence of that particular product.”

The botulinum toxin is a medication essential for the treatment of the spastic paralysis that affects several children requiring special education and that is difficult to acquire because of its high cost and because it comes from companies of US origin or that have commercial interests in that country. This medicine not only favors motor skills, but also helps students develop the bonds that guarantee their full insertion in society.

Journalist Jorge Enrique Jerez Belisario, a resident of the province of Camagüey, has suffered the effects of the absence of this medicine. As a child he suffered from infantile cerebral palsy, so he has less mobility in his right arm than in the rest of his limbs. To counter spasticity and relax the muscle, Cuba had to acquire the botulinum toxin in third countries, at a cost that was often five times its price in the US market. The country had to pay USD 470 per unit while in the US this medicine was available for less than USD 100. Jorge had to receive an injection of this medicine approximately every 5 months and at some point in time it became so difficult to purchase it that it was no longer possible to provide him with the medicine:

***“As a result of this, I had to have surgery on my right arm to improve its mobility. Today I can say that I owe a scar on my right arm to the criminal blockade of the US government against Cuba and its people. Today I have a daughter and the blockade has prevented me from carrying her in my arms, like other parents do.*”**

I dream of the day when good sense prevails in the US political class and these measures, which have not achieved their declared objective of overthrowing the Revolution, but have certainly had a high cost for the Cuban people, are lifted”.

From March 2023 to February 2024, the restriction in import plans and the partial or even total cancellation of contracts destined to the educational sector, had a significant impact on the resources earmarked for the development of education. These effects, resulting from the cross-cutting impact of the blockade on the country’s purchasing power, have been reflected as follows:

- For school year 2023–2024, a deficit of 436,984 school uniforms was reported. The Cuban State subsidizes 50 percent of the manufacturing cost, but the shortage of raw materials and the search for inputs in distant markets has increased their prices 4 to 5 times.
- For that same reason, in 2023, the production of 4,500,000 pencils, 40,264 units of 100–milliliter glue sticks and 279,924 sets of 190–gram play–dough was affected. The publishing house ‘Pueblo y Educación’ was not able either to complete the printing of the texts for the third curriculum improvement of the National Education System.

- The subject ‘Natural Sciences’ and its practical demonstration classes have been significantly affected by the impossibility of acquiring 700 didactic modules required by 695 schools throughout the country.
- In the year 2024, the national education system will require an estimated financing of USD 21,789,000 to cover the study materials demand and guarantee their production. Thirty–eight hours without blockade would make it possible for the country to have these funds.
- To cover the total needs of computers in educational institutions, more than 21,000 computers are required, the purchase price of which amounts to USD 25,200,000, a figure that is equivalent to the cost of 44 hours of blockade.
- To meet the needs of hearing–impaired children and adolescents, a total of 1,115 hearing aids are required, at a cost of USD 144,000. Fifteen minutes without blockade would make it possible for the country to have these funds.

The blockade is also an obstacle to cooperation projects in the field of education. The School of Architecture of the “José Antonio Echeverría” Technological University of Havana (CUJAE) had coordinated an international project with a university in the United Kingdom. For that reason, it was supposed to receive a donation consisting of computers and computer software for the creation

⁷Cuban platform of audiovisual contents.

⁸Cuban instant and collaborative messaging platform.

⁹Official and reliable service for the distribution of Cuban and foreign applications for mobile phones.

of a laboratory that was worth USD 315 783. It has been impossible to send the equipment to the country, since it contains more than 10 per cent of US components.

The Z17 Project, whereby the University of Information Sciences of Cuba pledged its commitment to technological sovereignty, developed the applications Picta⁷, toDus⁸ and Apklis⁹, whose progress has been slowed down by the technological blockade. Among the blockade direct effects are the impossibility of accessing virtual libraries and the prohibition to access more than 300 sites of interest on the Internet, which prevents the downloading of tools to install or update technologies and hinders academic development, research and production of the University.

In addition to the above, the deterioration of the country’s economic situation has had an impact on the increase of dropouts, especially among professors holding teaching and scientific categories, who have opted to engage in other more profitable economic activities. This has also had an impact on the education system at all levels.

In the case of sports, the limitations and costs for the acquisition of sports equipment, fabrics, footwear, technical means and teaching aids, technological support tools, among others, have increased, since the leading manufacturer of all of them is the United States. These items are

currently purchased in third countries. Therefore, costs have increased by more than 50 per cent, which imposes limits to their purchase.

Many of the training areas also show an obvious deterioration. As a result of that, our athletes must train amid unfavorable conditions, with very limited resources, which constitute a challenge to their performance and professional results. A notorious example of this is the equipment installed in muscle-building gyms. Seventy five percent of the equipment is obsolete, showing a visible deterioration due to prolonged use and lack of necessary replacement.

As in previous years, this period was also characterized by the non-payment of the contracts of Cuban athletes assigned to different clubs, due to the refusal by foreign banking and financial institutions to operate with the International Financial Bank (BFI).

Among the most significant impacts during the period covered by this Report are the following:

- Denial or untimely granting of visas to sport delegations.
- Impossibility to receive donations directly from institutions, firms or brands of US origin or that have more than 10 per cent of components manufactured by that country.
- Excessive and xenophobic controls on delegations of Cuban athletes at US airports.
- Encouragement of emigration of Cuban professionals trained in the country with the consequent

loss of the resources invested in their training.

- Prohibition of payment to Cuba for its participation in sporting events, arbitration, reimbursement of air tickets and prizes won by Cuban athletes. For example, in the case of athletics, the payment owed to Cuba for its participation in the World Relay Championship held in Poland in May 2021, and the World Athletics Championship, held in Budapest, Hungary, in August 2023, has not been effected.

During this period, the blockade also prevented three US athletes from delivering a skating tent during the Havana Skate Marathon as a donation. Likewise, the shipment to Cuba of sailing boats from the United States as a donation, whose estimated cost range from USD 7,000 to USD 16,000 per unit, was prohibited.

In the field of culture, the blockade hinders the search for market niches and business opportunities; it prevents the promotion, dissemination and marketing of our cultural talents; lowers sales prices and greatly curtails the enjoyment of our art by audiences from all continents.

It became impossible for the Cuban Recording and Musical Productions Company (EGREM), to receive direct payment from some clients, especially from Colombia, Mexico, the United Kingdom and Canada. Due to the extraterritorial character of the blockade, which targets bank transfers to Cuba, EGREM has ceased to receive all the income invoiced for the export of services (royalties on sales).

There is no direct access either to the distribution of Cuban music on international platforms, so EGREM must hire tertiary services, which are more expensive, for this purpose and this has had an impact on the decrease of up to 30 per cent of the incomes that the country could have otherwise received.

It is impossible for Cuban musicians to access Spotify, the main platform for consuming music, creating artist profiles, among other functions. Other sites, such as Vevo, which publishes music videos in high definition; and MySpace, which includes profiles of the world's top-ranked artists, are not available in Cuba either.

The National Circus of Cuba records an 8 per cent loss per every payment invoice they receive for their contracts to stage their shows abroad due to the difficulties they face with payment gateways.

As for literature, due to the deficit in raw materials, there has been an accumulation of approximately 1,266 unpublished titles, which represents 4,092,977 copies. This reality has forced the country to take the decision not to approve a new Publishing Plan for hardcopy books in 2024.

In November 2023, a contract was signed with the US educational company Savvas Learning for the inclusion of works written by the Cuban poet, storyteller and playwright Virgilio Piñera in Spanish-language text books. However, the legal team of the entity recommended not signing the contract, as a result of the dissuasive effect of the blockade and

the obstacles in the form of payment.

Cuba has been denied access to the web page of the directory of the Global Network of Schools Associated to UNESCO, for the explicit reasons of the US blockade. Nor has it been possible to access the platform indicated by UNESCO for the process of drafting the quadrennial periodic report of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

During this period, the cultural sector has also been the target of the subversive policy of the United States against Cuba, aimed at encouraging discontent, inciting emigration and deploying a ferocious media campaign against Cuban artists who have continued to work in the country, as well as against artists who wish to visit the Island.

An example of this was the incident occurred at the end of 2023 with the renowned American singer Norah Jones, who was unable to travel to Cuba and participate in a musical experience in the country due to the media boycott she suffered as a result of her announced visit to the Island.

Impacts on economic development, trade and finances

The Cuban economy, in 2023, performed poorly, which was a reflection of strong external shocks. Limited availability of hard currency, inputs and fuels were the reasons why it was not possible to achieve the projected 3 per cent economic growth of the Gross Domestic Product

(GDP) at constant prices, with an estimated contraction ranging from 1 per cent to 2 per cent by the end of the year.

Exports have continued to fall by more than USD 3,000,000,000 with respect to the figures achieved in 2019. Strategic sectors such as agriculture and the manufacturing industry have accumulated decreases accounting for more than 25 per cent during the last five years.

Due to Cuba's inclusion in the unilateral list of alleged State sponsors of terrorism, there has been an increase in the prices of foreign investment businesses. Commercial operations, cooperative actions and investment projects different levels of implementation have also been cancelled.

By law, the blockade prohibits shipping companies from other countries from touching a US port for 6 months if they have previously docked in a Cuban port. It is a measure that entails an additional cost for our country's maritime transportation and foreign trade, besides being a provision that is aggressive towards third parties.

During the period from March 2023 to February 2024, losses resulting from the geographical relocation of trade, given the need to resort to far away markets, have been estimated at around **USD 581,700,000**.

Likewise, the costs of freight, insurance and the use of commercial intermediaries, with the consequent increase in the price of commodities, amount to **USD 485,700,000**.

There is also a system of draconian fines to persecute Cuba's transactions from third countries, which makes our foreign trade even more expensive.

From March 2023 to February 2024, the number of foreign banks that for different reasons refused to carry out operations with Cuban banking entities was 48 (28 from Europe, 14 from the Americas and 6 from the rest of the world), with 155 operations involved. The decrease with respect to the previous Report is determined by the decrease in the country's foreign trade activity, including imports, due to the lack of liquidity and access to hard currency.

In spite of this decrease in commercial and, therefore, banking activity, during the period from March 2023 to February 2024, the impacts on Cuban banks was estimated at **USD 360,000,000**, 28.5 per cent higher as compared to the figures provided in the previous Report, due to the strong exchange variations derived from the use of third countries' currencies, the prohibition to use US dollars and the need to look for alternatives so that the corresponding financial flows can reach the country and other destinations.

Likewise, Cuba was only able to access very limited external financing under extremely onerous conditions. Cuban banking and business entities continue to pay high interest rates, above those established by the market, due to the "Country Risk" classification applied to Cuba.

This situation has increased macroeconomic imbalances, which

are expressed in a cumulative inflation that was estimated at 30 per cent at the end of 2023, with different types of behaviors according to the different markets (6.3 per cent in the state sector; 62 per cent in the non-state sector and 72 per cent in the agricultural sector).

These high inflation levels are influenced by the issuance of money by the State to finance the budget deficit; the contraction of supplies, mainly in the State sector; the imported inflation due to the high prices in the world market and, above all, the limited entry of hard currency into the country as a result of the tightening of the blockade.

Such influence has also resulted from disinformation campaigns and financial manipulation through virtual tools, such as "El Toque", which has the monetary backing of organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM), which granted USD 150,000 through the company Media Plus Experience Inc, a scheme created to launder the funds of said institutions. The purpose is to distort the exchange rates in the country, inciting the devaluation of the Cuban peso against the US dollar, in order to generate price instability, the reduction of the population's purchasing power and the consequent social discontent.

The shortage of goods and services in formal markets, the proliferation of the informal market and the increase in prices have deteriorated the purchasing power of salaries and pensions. Although State enterprises average salary was raised up to 4,856

pesos in 2023, this growth did not offset the increase in the consumer price index which, on average, reached, at the end of the first half of 2023, an increase of around 45 per cent as compared to the same period in 2022.

In spite of the firm willingness by the State to find ways to mitigate the effects of the blockade, the economic reality continues to be adverse. The main element that has prevented the economy from moving forward at greater speed and dynamism has been the impossibility of receiving the expected export incomes. During this period, the damages and losses caused only by the blockade in this economic activity amounted to **USD 3,161,700,000**, which represents 62.5 per cent of the total damages reported as a result of this policy in the period covered by this Report.

The US government has used **tourism**, the main source of income for the country, as a political weapon against Cuba. It is aware of the importance of this sector for the development of the Island, which is why it is determined to attack it. From March 2023 to February 2024, the blockade's emphasis on hindering the recovery of this sector caused losses amounting to **USD 2,499,700,000**.

The measures in force include:

- A ban on travel by Americans to Cuba for tourist purposes. Citizens of this country cannot visit Cuba normally. This is only possible by means of licenses established in the regulatory framework of the blockade, which includes numerous

- restrictions. Potential travelers have to apply for a travel category within the ones that have been authorized, which entails very strong dissuasive effects.
- The ban on individual travels under the people-to-people category. This was one of the punitive measures taken by President Trump, forcing Americans to travel to Cuba in groups and under the auspices, supervision and legal responsibility of a US organization.
- The permanence of the State Department's List of Restricted Cuban Entities and the List of Prohibited Accommodations has reported notable damages for accommodations at hotels, rental houses and operations with multiple Cuban entities. The first list includes 231 entities or companies, practically the entire Cuban business sector; while the second covers 422 hotels and lodgings, that is, almost all hotel facilities. The provision applies to US citizens, who are prohibited from being lodged at or dealing with the listed entities, but in practice, people from third countries also refrain from coming to Cuba because of the confusion and fear generated by these black lists.

As a result of Cuba's inclusion in the list of alleged State sponsors of terrorism, a traveler visiting Cuba would not be eligible to participate in the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) and must apply for a visa to enter the United States. It is known that several European governments, including Germany, Spain and the Netherlands

have warned their citizens about this restriction.

This measure has had a significant impact on the tourism sector. Suffice it to emphasize that the number of international visitors to Cuba coming from the seven main European Union issuing countries amounted to 730,211 in 2019. In 2023, the amount barely reached 324,032, that is, 44 per cent of the figure achieved in 2019.

During this period, the US government denied ESTA access to 300,000 Europeans who visited Cuba. This is a clear example of the unilateral imposition of restrictions that restrict freedom of movement.

As a result of this measure, for example, two participants of the Sixty Ninth Meeting of the UN-Tourism Regional Commission for the Americas were taken down from their flight on May 1, 2024, at Havana's 'José Martí' International Airport. Nicole Sigmaringo, co-founder of Quantum Temple; and Emilio Izquierdo, chief executive of Maraey, were informed by American Airlines that they could not complete their flying itinerary because it included a stopover in the US and it was impossible for them to arrive in the US with the ESTA after having visited Cuba.

Likewise, during the period covered by this Report, several airlines have cancelled their flights to Cuba, claiming a low demand and commercial unfeasibility of operations. Such is the case of tour operator TUI, which will not restart flights to Varadero from the Netherlands and Belgium by winter time 2024-2025.

In the case of the US airline Southwest Airlines, it announced the cancellation of its flights from some points in Florida to Havana, thus joining JetBlue, Delta and United which, in the second half of 2023, reduced or suspended their trips to the Island.

In order to get a real picture of the effects of the blockade on the tourism sector, it is necessary to contrast the Cuban experience with international trends and the progress achieved by other countries in this area.

In 2023, international tourism reached 88 per cent of the levels recorded before the COVID-19 pandemic. The Americas recovered 90 per cent of tourism. The Dominican Republic, a country whose population is similar to that of Cuba, received more than 10 million visitors in 2023. The main source of travelers was the United States, with approximately 4.4 million visitors.

Contrary to this trend, by the end of 2023, Cuba had received 2,436,980 international visitors, which represents 70 per cent of the established plan and 57 per cent of the figure achieved in 2019.

Of the total number of visitors who arrived in the Island during the period covered by this Report, only 163,455 were Americans, a figure that was far below the amounts during the peak periods, when the country came to receive a total of 638,365 persons from the US in 2018.

If it hadn't been for the blockade, Cuba would be a consolidated tourist destination in the US market, with its hotel chains, a wide offer

of commercial flights between its destinations and many US cities and a much more complete tourist product.

If it hadn't been for the ban on US nationals preventing them from traveling to Cuba as tourists, it has been estimated that the annual number of US visitors to the Island could reach 1,500,000 travelers, which would turn the United States into the main travelers issuing market for the Antillean nation. If we subtract from this figure those who did travel to Cuba during the period covered by this Report (163,455 travelers), it has been estimated that approximately 1,336,545 persons from the United States did not visit the country due to the blockade. Had they done so, it is estimated that the Cuban tourism industry would have earned USD 1,730,825,775 from the US market.

Cuba's hotel industry has continued to grow and improve, with more than 80,000 rooms, in addition to over 20,000 rooms available at private houses, which complement the national offer. Therefore, there are enough capacities to cover that eventual demand.

However, the launching of defamatory campaigns through digital platforms and social networks about the social climate in Cuba and, in particular, about the quality of tourist services, has also had a huge impact on the sector. Added to this is the closure of Havanatur's bank accounts abroad, which has affected the execution of commercial operations in third countries and the sale of tourist packages to Cuba.

The ban on US and European cruise lines preventing them from touching Cuban ports, which was aggravated by the fines and legal proceedings they have been subjected to for doing business with Cuba, has impaired further progress in the tourism sector.

The cruise company Swan Hellenic decided to cancel the itineraries initially planned for Cuba in 2024 and 2025, as passengers holding the ESTA visa would lose the opportunity to enter the US with this facility, if they previously visited the Island.

The company Sea Cloud Cruises also opted to cancel all itineraries to Cuba of its Sea Cloud II cruise ship, scheduled for the 2023-2024 season, since the companies based in the Caribbean in charge of supplying fuel to the cruise ships, are based in the United States and have ship refused to supply this vital resource to vessels if they touch Cuban ports.

Had cruise tourism been maintained, the country would have been able to earn approximately USD 56,000,000 during the period covered by this Report, a figure that would support the government's efforts to revitalize the national economy and the main social sectors of the country.

Besides, Cuba could be considered a US natural area for practicing and enjoying yachting and nautical tourism. Cuba's incomes from these sports would have been no less than USD 61,000,000. However, the number of US vessels received in the country has been minimal - only 113, with about 324 yachtsmen.

Cuban travel agencies are not able either to use the Global Distribution Systems (GDS) Galileo, Sabre, among others. Likewise, a large number of Cuban hotel facilities have been removed from Trivago, Expedia and Booking.com lists, which prevents the marketing of their tourism product.

The impact of these effects on the non-state sector associated with tourism will be discussed in the next section.

The biotechnology sector has also been impacted by the blockade. The "Cuban Democracy Act" (Torricelli Law) explicitly prohibits the sale of inputs and raw materials for the Cuban biotechnology industry.

In spite of this, the country has pledged its commitment to the advancement of this sector as a pillar of development and national sovereignty, which was demonstrated by the production of its own COVID-19 vaccines, of proven effectiveness at the national and international levels, even among pediatric ages.

The Cuban National Center for Scientific Research is working on a Cuban vaccine project against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). The company BioCubaFarma has rated this project as a "priority" considering that this infection is the main cause of cervical uterine cancer, which represents the fifth highest incidence in the mortality rate among women in Cuba and the second highest incidence among women between 15 and 44 years of age.

However, progress has been hindered by difficulties in access to analytical

tools and immunological assays, which were denied to Cuba in 2023 by the US company Addgene and the South Korean company Macrogen, among others. Despite their willingness to cooperate, researchers from the National Cancer Institute in the United States were informed that they could not send the reagents needed to Cuba due to the provisions of the blockade.

In the period under review, damages in this area amounted to approximately **USD 124,168,500**, mainly in terms of export revenues foregone, losses due to the geographical relocation of trade and monetary effects.

For the Finlay Vaccine Institute (IFV), producer of the Cuban vaccines against COVID-19, Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus, the blockade caused difficulties in 7 operations, 4 of them involving reagents and raw materials, 1 involving inputs and 2 involving equipment from US manufacturers.

From March 2023 to February 2024, the Cuban Digital Medical Technology Company, COMBIOMED, made transactions for the acquisition of invasive blood pressure measurement devices, kinography sensors, and high-performance computers, among others, which were denied.

In addition, on February 2024, a Central American company refused to sell special paints needed for the production areas of Cuba's Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center.

The economic damages caused by the blockade to **the communications and information technology sector,**

including telecommunications, from March 2023 to February 2024, were estimated at **USD 58,772,100.**

It remains impossible to buy from leading brands and/or high-performance equipment in the communications market that are patented by U.S. entities. For example, KLEIN and BOSCH specialized tools are no longer being sold to the Cuban company ETECSA by distributors that used to provide them.

Other suppliers have also decided not to provide Cuba with any more repair services due to the blockade, thus affecting receivers, amplifiers, satellite communications services, data transmission and the national television signal.

Blocking access to the Adobe website also prevents access to essential online resources. Similar situations are faced with other sites of interest, such as Source Forge, WeTransfer, and the DELL and Intel websites.

On July 17, 2023, the Correos de Cuba Business Group received a message from the Spanish airline Air Europa notifying the suspension of the Cuban postal package transfer service.

To justify their decision, they argued that they had to consult with their legal department as to whether the CARDIT/RESBIT message exchanges violated the blockade regulations. So far, despite the claims of the Cuban side, no information has been provided on the outcome of such consultation. This cancellation strongly impacts the quality of Correos de Cuba's service by depriving it of the direct postal

service route to Europe, Asia and part of Africa.

Cuban representatives continue to face many difficulties to participate in meetings and other online events convened by United Nations agencies, since Cuba has restricted access to several digital platforms used for these purposes, such as the Zoom platform.

In addition, access to broadband Internet links continues to be restricted, resulting in slower download speed for software, music, radio and TV programs that are broadcast in real time.

The global market for radio and television supplies is dominated by international corporations and conglomerates such as Sony, Panasonic, JVC, among others, that segment the distribution of their products by geographic regions.

For Cuba's Institute of Information and Social Communication, this means that resources must be procured through authorized distributors for Latin America, many of which are located in Miami. Therefore, Cuban purchase requests go unheeded because of the blockade, forcing the country to resort to intermediaries in Europe. This puts Cuba in a very unfavorable position to modernize its technology.

There is a design in the social digital platforms aimed at positioning the opinion matrixes that the United States uses today to justify its blockade against Cuba. Many of these sites, such as ADN Cuba, Ciber Cuba, Cubanet, among others, join the media crusade against our country in order to distort its reality. The purpose is to hold the Cuban government responsible for

the impact of the Leonine measures applied by the United States, as part of a permanent effort of disinformation, psychological warfare and discrediting, heavily financed with federal funds from the U.S. budget, part of which are publicly declared and amount to tens of millions of dollars annually, in addition to the covert funds that also support these platforms.

For fiscal year 2024 alone, USD 25,000,000 were approved for programs allegedly supporting democracy in Cuba and an equal amount for the Office of Cuba Broadcasting. These are federal funds earmarked for programs detrimental to Cuban sovereignty, which seek to promote changes in the political, economic and social system of the country. The radio and television broadcasts are illegal and violate international law and the Cuban constitutional order.

In the period under review, the damages caused by the blockade both to **the Cuban industry and to the business sector** are estimated at more than **USD 1,309,500,000**. These are mainly related to income lost from exports of goods and services, geographic relocation of trade, exchange rate fluctuations, the effects of the technological blockade and fuel shortages that have had a cross-cutting impact on the entire industrial and business system.

Some of the most noteworthy impacts in this sector during the period under review are listed below:

- The Caribe Retail Stores Chain received 2,247 containers of food

and toiletries; 40 per cent (898) of these products could have been purchased at a lower cost in the U.S. market, resulting in an estimated loss of USD 1,767,500. The delays in shipments led to defaults in the supply of merchandise to the commercial units.

- The hygiene and cleaning program has been affected by disruptions in the supply of toothpaste, chlorine bleach, and floor cleaning cloth, due to shortage of raw materials in the industry, in addition to the instability of supplies, which caused a severe stock out in the market.
- The Caribe Retail Stores Chain also wrote off a large amount of equipment in 2023 due to lack of repair parts.
- The telecommunications company COPEXTEL S.A. was only able to import from 75 suppliers out of a portfolio of 687. Of these 75 suppliers, 97.2 per cent are intermediaries, which illustrate the difficult conditions under which the company conducts its business.
- BRASCUBA discontinued production of 50.8 million cigarettes of the Rothman Fresh line, with a loss of USD 1,491,800 in sales, due to the impossibility of acquiring the raw material needed for the cigarette capsules, as a result of the supplier's decision to stop selling to Cuba.

As for the building materials industry, the year 2023 was one of the most challenging and with the lowest production levels in the last 60 years.

These results were due to limitations in the delivery of energy carriers and fuels, poor availability of cement to produce concrete, the impossibility of importing spare parts, raw materials and supplies for production, and the lack of financial sources for the fifth year in a row. All this is compounded by termination of contracts with foreign suppliers and problems with transportation.

As a result:

- At the end of 2023, supplies to the wholesale sector only reached 48 per cent. The company Acinox produced a limited number of steel bars for trade. Steel deliveries for construction only met 12 per cent of requirements.
- The materials industry delivered only 25 per cent of sanitary ware and 60 per cent of ceramic tile flooring.
- Empresa Comercializadora de Cemento (ECOCEM) met only 34 per cent of cement deliveries. Only 38,963 tons of the 115,290 tons planned were delivered.
- With regard to the prefabricated concrete plan, only 62 per cent of the plan for the housing program was delivered.
- In the case of tanks and roofs, deliveries met 24 per cent of the 2023 plan. Likewise, of the 586,000 liters of paint planned, only 125,300 liters were delivered, i.e. 21 per cent.
- According to conservative estimates, a total of USD 3,893,000,000 is needed to address the country's housing deficit for the construction of 467,149

new homes. Nine months without blockade would make this financing available.

Damages caused by the blockade to **the transport sector** in its four branches: maritime, automotive, rail and aviation, amounted to USD 167,163,090 during the period under review.

In the last four years there has been a progressive deterioration of all passenger transportation capacities and infrastructure, given the poor technical conditions of vehicles, the impossibility of accessing spare parts, illiquidity, the refusal of suppliers, as well as the measures adopted since 2019 by the U.S. government to hinder fuel supplies to Cuba, which has had a devastating impact in this area. This has resulted in a reduced supply of services and, therefore, in serious repercussions for the population.

The main difficulties are the impossibility of acquiring parts, pieces and spare parts, which has led to excessive deterioration of the transportation means in operation, as well as the shortage of lubricants, greases and special liquids, which jeopardize the use of such transportation means.

It is estimated that, in order to meet national transportation needs, 14 380 buses at a cost of USD 2,850,000,000 and 12 250 cars or minibuses, with a total value of USD 450,000,000, are required. Together, these amounts represent the cost of 8 months of blockade.

Currently, 38 per cent of the roads are in fair or poor condition. In relation to bridges, 17 per cent are in the same situation. The main cause of the

deterioration of the road network is the impossibility of timely pothole patching and paving actions due to the lack of material and financial resources for the production and laying of the asphalt mix.

Regarding maritime transport, restrictions remain in place for international ship owners on whose vessels Cuban crew members sail, as well as restrictions on access to U.S. ports under the Torricelli Act, passed by the U.S. Congress in 1992.

On the other hand, the interline agreements for cargo transportation remain cancelled, preventing the commercialization of this service with Cubana de Aviación air waybills and forestalling an upturn in multi-destination sales in commercial partnerships with Avianca, DHL, Air France, Air Caraïbes, LATAM, Air Canada and Aeromexico. The cancellation of these agreements affects the export and import cargo transportation services that can be offered to the Cuban business and non-state sectors, as they must use alternative routes with higher costs in cargo transportation.

Aviation, like all other transportation sectors in Cuba, has been hard hit over the years by blockade-related measures. This has caused Cubana de Aviación millions of dollars in losses due to the cancellation of aircraft leases, the closing of bank accounts and commercial operations and the inability to obtain loans from international banks for the maintenance and repair of its fleet.

It is also unable to purchase aircrafts

due to the regulation that prevents Cuba from purchasing means and equipment that contain more than 10 percent of US components, also affecting domestic air transportation. All this is aggravated by the arbitrary and unfounded inclusion of Cuba on the list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism, unilaterally issued by the US government.

Just to mention an example, in April 2024, the Bureau of Industry and Security of the U.S. Department of Commerce denied a license application submitted by a Spanish company to export to Cuba an ATR 72-212A aircraft for domestic flights. The notification received argued that such an operation could be detrimental to US foreign policy interests.

During the period, the purchase of aviation oil was also negatively affected, since Total S.A., a French-based company, cancelled the supply of aviation oil.

In March 2024, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales S.A. (YPF) of the Argentine Republic informed Cubana de Aviación of its refusal to continue supplying fuel to Cuban aircrafts, pursuant to the US blockade against Cuba. Consequently, Cubana de Aviación has been forced to suspend regular flights between the two countries that had been operating for 39 years.

The enforcement of this arbitrary measure by YPF Argentina is a clear proof of the extraterritorial nature of the blockade which, in addition, is contrary to the rules of international trade and Argentina's own national legislation.

From March 2023 to February 2024,

the effects on the energy and mining sector were also noteworthy and amounted to USD 388,239,830.

One of the most reprehensible actions, because of its cruelty and violation of international law, has been the prevention of fuel shipments to Cuba since 2019. That year alone, 53 vessels and 27 companies were penalized by the US government.

This is a new form of blockade, not previously applied, but directly in line with the efforts to threaten, coerce, instill fear and sanction anyone involved in the supply of fuel to Cuba, from shipping companies, to insurance companies, reinsurance companies, banks, individuals and governments. The damages resulting from this persecution are considerable.

The economic blockade has also exacerbated the financial and credit access constraints to repair the country's thermoelectric plants and to acquire the technologies and fuel required to guarantee a stable power supply to the population and to the strategic sectors of the national economy.

As a result, there have been constant interruptions in power supply generating stress, emotional exhaustion and anguish in the population; jeopardizing the cooling and cooking system in homes, while having a cross-cutting impact on productivity and hindering the proper functioning of the country.

Aleandris Guerra Peña, a self-employed worker in the "D' La Sierra" enterprise, in the province of Santiago de Cuba, engaged in the manufacture

of paints, has witnessed these effects on the performance of his business. In this regard, he states:

***“In the first two weeks of May alone, we were negatively affected by the loss of 800,000 Cuban pesos, as we stopped manufacturing 3,200 liters of paint due to the lack of electricity. This would have generated a total salary of 64,000 Cuban pesos to be distributed among the workers.*”**

All this production had its customers guaranteed, but we were not able to meet those orders. We are working to deliver the backlog of orders depending on the power supply. This has forced us to stop taking new orders, which would have represented considerable sales and, therefore, significant revenue foregone”.

In January 2024, it was not possible to receive a supply of spare parts from the Italian factory Termomeccanica for the Ernesto Che Guevara Thermolectric Power Plant, since it was purchased by Trillium, a company which has one of its main offices in the United States. The lack of these supplies has led, on several occasions, to stop the generating units of the Ernesto Che Guevara Thermolectric Power Plant.

Accelleron, the successor of ABB Turbocharging, from which the National Electric Union received the technology for its turbochargers, remains committed to not working directly with Cuba in order to comply with the US policy of unilateral sanctions on exports to countries included in the US government’s list of state sponsors of terrorism.

The Unión Nacional Eléctrica (UNE) has lacked the necessary financing to perform partial, extended and capital maintenance of the thermal units in the country, and as a result, 13 of the 15 units have missed the maintenance cycle - several of them for more than three cycles- due every five years. Consequently, there have been a considerable number of breakdowns.

These conditions of the thermal units also imply an increase in the fuel consumption rate of 319 thousand tons, with an additional cost for UNE in 2023 of USD 127,800,000.

As a result of the persecution of Cuban financial operations, fuel imports payments are done through irrevocable and confirmed letters of credit (payable at sight) with a single bank, the confirmation capacity of which is limited and often does not cover the value of the shipments to be imported in a given month.

In the mining sector, the procurement of equipment for the analysis and monitoring of the technological process associated with this activity has become even more difficult. During the period, an international manufacturer of this equipment did not accept to sell directly to Cuba because it is on the US government’s List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

In December 2020, an International Economic Partnership Agreement (IPA) for the Cajalbana mining project in the province of Pinar del Río was signed between the Cuban company Commercial Caribbean Nickel S.A. (CCN) and the Australian company Caribe Metals Corporation

Pty Limited (CMC), which came into effect on December 28, 2020, for a term of 3 years.

It was not possible for CMC to transfer the funds necessary to initiate the tasks and field work and carry out the planned Technical-Economic Feasibility Study, due to the express refusal of Australian banks to transfer funds to Cuba, citing the regulations of the blockade and the possible effects on their interests if they provided this service.

The term of the contract ended without the aforementioned problem being solved. This is a clear example of the effects of the blockade in the mining sector and its impact on the execution and conclusion of a contract that involved the studies, design, procurement, commissioning and operation of a factory to produce and commercialize nickel and cobalt products, which could have generated significant financial resources for the country.

Impact on the emerging sectors of the Cuban economy

As of the end of March 2024, there were 10,614 MSME’s in Cuba. Together with the rest of the non-state-owned entities, they represent about 15 per cent of GDP generation and account for about 35 per cent of employment in the country. They have been constituted and developed as a result of the actions taken by the Cuban government in recent years to favor and promote their necessary contribution to the country’s economy.

The restrictions of the blockade have significantly affected the activity of

numerous private entrepreneurs, business owners and cooperatives in Cuba. In 2023, 685 MSMEs recorded losses in their businesses, which represented 7.2 per cent of the total.

As is well known, last May 28 the US government announced a set of limited measures to supposedly “favor” this sector, by authorizing Internet services and financial transactions. However, any earnest analysis of these announcements, if one is aware of the intimidating and comprehensive effect of the blockade, casts many doubts.

How will the large technology and communications conglomerates discriminate between the Cuban state and private sectors and determine their access to web pages, tools and Internet sites that are currently blocked to any user from Cuba? How will on-line purchases of inputs necessary for private sector activities be facilitated without access to electronic payment cards used worldwide?

What shipping company will risk coming to Cuba to bring these supplies, without being able to touch a US port for the next six months?

Will a foreign company or bank be willing to accept transactions from a private Cuban company if the country remains on the US government’s List of State Sponsors of Terrorism and could therefore be subject to scrutiny and fines amounting to millions of dollars? Which bank abroad will be willing to open an account for a Cuban businessman knowing the obstacles to operate in U.S. dollars

or in view of the uncertainty caused by some new regulatory change that tightens the blockade against Cuba and third parties? How will a Cuban businessman be able to receive his or her profits in Cuba from operations abroad, if the national banks continue to be under the U.S. government sanctions?

The fact is that the blockade is so complex and encompassing, with an array of laws meticulously designed to block Cuba, that it is difficult for any sector of society and the economy to avoid it unless the set of restrictions and prohibitions that currently underpin this policy, which systematically and significantly affect all economic actors, are lifted.

The alerts and restrictions on travel to Cuba have affected income from tourism and lodging, a service provided by a majority segment of the Cuban private sector. The List of Prohibited Accommodations in Cuba, the inclusion of Cuba in the unilateral list of state sponsors of terrorism, the prohibition of people-to-people travel on an individual basis, among other US government measures already mentioned, have prevented further progress in this sector and have considerably reduced bookings in private rental houses. The main constraint for these actors is their lack of access to the US tourism market, which means that they compete on an unequal footing with other suppliers in the region.

Cuba has a total capacity of approximately 20,000 rooms in private rental houses. Between March 2023 and February 2024, 45.6 per

cent of the 163,455 US citizens who visited the country stayed in these accommodations, on average for one week. Should the current restrictions and prohibitions be lifted, and should the flow of US visitors to Cuba increase, it is estimated that the Cuban private sector could receive additional revenues amounting to USD 106,700,000.

Abdel Aguilar Galarraga, owner of Hostal Aguilar, located in Centro Habana, knows firsthand the effects of the blockade on the house rental business: ***“It makes it very difficult for us to access booking sites that offer our services, such as Booking.com. We are limited in terms of advertising our business worldwide.*”**

As an economic chain of services, not being able to provide our services also affects other businesses such as transportation, car rentals, restaurants, medical services, masons, cleaning personnel, and tour guides. By affecting tourism as our nation’s leading industry, the State’s ability to provide quality social services is also undermined.

***Labeling Cuba as a State sponsor of terrorism, the digital war, manipulation in the networks, the inability to be granted ESTA status if you have visited the country, generates fear and uncertainty among tourists who are faced with the dilemma of whether to come to Cuba or not.*”**

Aguilar points out that the flow of tourists to his business has decreased considerably: ***“Those of us who have opted to invest in our country to develop ourselves, find that the blockade affects us every***

***day and prevents us from offering competitive services.*”**

Moreover, the impossibility of processing non-immigrant visas in Havana has limited the ability of Cuban entrepreneurs to travel to the United States, which is their closest natural market, to purchase the supplies needed for their business.

The coercive measures applied by the US government against financial institutions in recent years have caused several payment and e-commerce platforms, such as PayPal, to refuse to provide services to these businessmen, just because they are Cubans, regardless of the private nature of the business they run.

Nor can they obtain Visa or Mastercard cards to supply their businesses, since these cards are forbidden to Cubans in any part of the world. Therefore, they do not have a secure means of online payment, not even through a third country. Consequently, bank branches do not execute their transactions and many clients decide not to continue their relations with private Cuban entities, a situation that has become worse as a result of Cuba’s inclusion in the unilateral US list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On the other hand, there are many examples of IT tools that are not accessible to domestic developers, just because they are Cuban. Moreover, it is difficult for them to access external financial mechanisms.

For engineer Carlos Miguel Pérez Reyes, founder of DOFLEINI Software, the first private Cuban MSME engaged in the development and export of

IT products, the blockade is also a constraint for the sector:

***“With U.S. customers, the closest geographically, but also the ones who concentrate most of the innovation and leading companies in the IT sector, we have not been able to close any deal, even though we have received dozens of requests.*”**

***There is no way we can receive payments, not even through a third country. Many clients eventually decide not to do business with Cuba, no matter how talented the team behind the business is. Not having access to digital payment platforms isolates us from the world’s technological ecosystem.*”**

The effect of the blockade is also evident in the procurement of the technology required to develop new projects: ***“When you try to purchase some of the professional services in some of these platforms, Cuba is even not listed in the country options to be selected,*** adds Pérez Reyes.

***There is this rhetoric that this policy does not harm the private sector and that we have certain advantages, but is not so. We private sector entrepreneurs do not want to be given a penny for free. We want to be allowed to do things on an equal footing with the rest of the world, because Cuba’s problems are solved by Cubans.*”**

Imports and exports of these stakeholders are also constrained by the high prices resulting from access to distant markets. In the province of Holguín, for example, private companies have halted imports due to the high prices of supplies such as cement, wood and plywood, in which the freight cost plays a decisive role.

The private sector is not exempt from the impact of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act either. The law makes no distinction between the state and private party managing the goods subject to claims and, therefore, a natural person may also be subject to the effects of this absurd legislation.

In the case of local development projects involving different economic actors, all it takes is for one of these actors, such as a state-owned company, to be sanctioned in order to directly affect its counterpart in the private sector.

Oliesky Fabre del Castillo is the founder of EnParalelo, a private MSME engaged in developing more sustainable, healthy, equitable, inclusive, resilient, local and sovereign urban food systems. To this end, it proposes the production, commercialization and transformation of agricultural products of high nutritional value.

EnParalelo was approved as one of the first 35 MSMEs in September 2021. It is an enterprise that also coordinates a local development project in Havana's Plaza de la Revolución municipality. Castillo explains: ***"Being a startup, we began from scratch. We had to face an investment process, and search for space and financing to develop***

everything we wanted. We were able to obtain financing from Cuban banks that allowed us to get started."

In late 2022, EnParalelo was selected by the Regional Innovation Hub of the World Food Program (HZero), headquartered in Colombia, as one of the 10 most innovative ideas to end hunger in Latin America. ***"This gave us access to new funding and to a 6-month accelerator program that prepared us to consolidate our business model,"*** says Castillo.

That's when we began to feel the effects of the blockade first-hand. The first obstacle we encountered was online communication for the preparation courses, as well as access to other knowledge-generating platforms of the academy. We often had to watch recorded lectures after they were held.

Having access to financing in Cuba was another odyssey. That money would be used in the investment process to import a series of inputs, equipment, and all suppliers required payments abroad. We faced several obstacles to identify suppliers that were registered in the country. We also knew of suppliers closer to us, in the United States, but it was impossible to negotiate with them."

Castillo also mentions the obstacles posed by the blockade for buying seeds in the United States, which is an essential input for EnParalelo: ***"Although we have identified US suppliers, we have not contacted them because we know the barriers we will face. Many of the inputs we need are found on e-commerce platforms, which are prohibited from shipping to***

Cuba. It would be very beneficial for us have a stable bilateral trade with the United States, due to the proximity and quality of their raw materials.

Now the Biden administration has announced some measures to "support" the private sector, but this does not change the essence of the blockade at all. Their real scope remains to be seen."

Lácteos Clamanta is also a private MSME, located in La Lisa municipality of the capital, which was created in a national context marked by the unprecedented tightening of the blockade. Its main activity is the production of probiotic yogurt and the Gustó brand ice cream.

Its owner, Martín Nizarane Araluce, bears witness to the constraints under which they have to operate every day as a result of this policy: ***"The extraterritorial laws of the USA have prevented us from operating under normal market conditions, preventing an adequate business environment. It generates unfavorable conditions and limits our negotiating capacity vis-à-vis foreign suppliers, who provide us with raw materials, inputs and equipment at high prices and with sometimes irregular forms of payment, since the blockade prevents MSMEs from having access to international banking."***

When MSMEs are linked to local development projects for the benefit of the population, as is the case of Lácteos Clamanta, they also begin to face media attacks from those who profit from the hate policy towards Cuba. Nizarane Araluce also

refers to this: ***"In the anti-Cuban media, including social networks, they try to discredit, discourage and halt the efforts of those who, under difficult conditions, contribute more to food production by harnessing the opportunities offered by the new economic policies implemented in the country."***

03

THE BLOCKADE IS A VIOLATION OF

International Law. Extraterritorial implementation of the blockade



As has been exposed throughout this report, the blockade not only damages the economic, commercial and financial ties between Cuba and the United States. It attempts to and succeeds in impairing the economic and commercial relations of the island in any part of the world, in contempt of the sovereign prerogatives of other countries and the rights of their citizens.

It is a mischievous purpose that is embodied in the aforementioned Helms-Burton Act.

In its attempt to prevent foreign investment in the country, pursue Cuban transactions and curtail the normal course of all Cuban operations abroad, the US government resorts to a multiplicity of instruments and forms of pressure through its regulatory agencies.

This policy of intimidation has hindered and even prevented the payment of Cuba's membership contribution in international organizations, due to the banks' refusal to process the transactions. Likewise, more than 50 Cuban diplomatic missions have faced difficulties with the banking entities that traditionally provided them with services, a situation that has affected the operation and sustenance of Cuban embassies and consulates.

In addition to the examples already mentioned in this report, the annex lists 4 additional cases of extraterritorial enforcement of the blockade between March 2023 and February 2024, including those involving Cuban embassies.

04

UNIVERSAL REJECTION of the blockade

The international movement demanding an end to the blockade has been very active, both in face-to-face actions and on digital platforms.

More than 2,000 public events, statements and documents adopted at international events condemning the blockade were recorded, as well as more than 880 statements against Title III of the Helms-Burton Act and the inclusion of the country on the unilateral List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, drawn up by the United States government.

Likewise, there were growing calls within US society to put an end to the blockade and the arbitrary classification of Cuba as a state that allegedly sponsors terrorism. Federal and state congressmen, academic, economic, political, religious, and scientific sectors, youth, and the solidarity movement undertook various initiatives to put pressure on the White House.

In May 2024, following the announcement by the US government of Cuba's removal from the list of states that do not fully cooperate with US efforts against terrorism, numerous governments, especially in Latin America and the



Caribbean, international and regional organizations, as well as political, social and religious organizations within the United States and several US politicians, remained firm in their call to the White House to remove Cuba from the unilateral List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

Of particular note are the statements by the governments of Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile,

China, Colombia, Dominica, Gambia, Grenada, Honduras, Mexico, Namibia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Russia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Serbia, Syria, Timor Leste, Vietnam, Venezuela, among others; as well as by the Puebla Group, the Peace Dialogue Table between the Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army, the Council on Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) of the Community of Caribbean States (CARICOM), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP), the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America (COPPPAL), the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China, the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, among others.

Annex 5 lists a group of actions against the blockade within US society and at the international level that took place during the period covered by this report.

CONCLUSIONS

The US blockade against Cuba violates International Law. It is contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It constitutes a violation of the right to peace, development and self-determination of a sovereign State.

It is, both in its essence and in its objectives, an act of unilateral aggression, a permanent threat to the stability of the country and a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cubans. It is an act of cruelty and has no justification.

It also violates the constitutional rights of the American people by infringing on their freedom to travel and interact with Cuba. It also violates the sovereign rights of other states, due to its extraterritorial nature.

Between March 2023 and February 2024, the US government continued its pursuit of fuel supplies to Cuba, the possibility of filing lawsuits in US courts under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, and the smear campaign against the medical cooperation programs that the island carries out in numerous countries. Furthermore, it set out to curtail the recovery of the Cuban tourism sector hardly hit during the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures aim at dealing a mortal blow to the country's main sources of income.

The financial persecution has been further reinforced by the arbitrary inclusion of Cuba in the State

Department's unilateral list of alleged countries sponsoring terrorism. It was a measure imposed, with no justification or evidence, by the Republican administration of President Donald Trump, just nine days before leaving the White House. The current President could reverse it with just a signature. The fact that the US government recently acknowledged that Cuba fully cooperates in the fight on terrorism, makes keeping Cuba in this spurious list even more absurd and unjustifiable.

The May 28 announcements on the regulatory framework of the blockade regarding the private sector did not modify the basic core of the blockade policy. These are limited measures, the practical implementation of which will undoubtedly run up against the dissuasive and comprehensive effect of the blockade, especially if Cuba remains on the unilateral List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

The blockade makes no distinction between segments of society or economic actors, since its main objective is to deteriorate the standard of living of the population, provoke discontent, desperation and irritation, as a means to bring about a change in the legitimately established constitutional order.

It is not admissible, legal or ethical to subject a small country to a criminal policy of asphyxiation for decades, with economic damages amounting to over **USD 164,141,100,000** at current

prices, and **USD 1,499,710,000,000** taking into account the value of the dollar in relation to the value of gold. Between March 2023 and February 2024 alone, the damages caused by the blockade to Cuba have been estimated to be around **USD 5,056,800,000**.

It is also unacceptable for the US government to ignore and disregard the call of the international community to put an end to this illegal and inhumane policy, as expressed in the 31 resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the need to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba.

Cuba's claim is that the blockade is lifted once and for all; that harassment to our economic and financial relations with the rest of the world cease; that the gazillion dollar funds to subvert the internal order and feed misinformation campaigns be eliminated; and that the country be removed from the spurious unilateral List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

Cuba maintains its willingness to build a civilized and respectful relationship with the government of the United States, despite our differences. We will remain open to exchange and collaboration with all counterparts and partners in US society who wish to work with Cuba for better relations.

As President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez has expressed, Cuba is prepared to continue facing the blockade and resist with creativity to overcome the injustice imposed upon us.

We will not stop denouncing the blockade, with the hope that this criminal policy will be eliminated once and for all. Present and future generations of Cubans have the right to live and prosper in a Cuba with no blockade.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: US blockade laws and regulations

- **Trading with the Enemy Act (1917):** Section 5(b) of the Act gave the President the power to enforce coercive measures in time of war or any other period of national emergency and prohibited trade with the enemy or allies of the enemy during wartime conflicts. Although in 1977 the International Emergency Economic Powers Act restricted the powers of the President to impose measures on the basis of "national emergencies", the enforcement of the Trading with the Enemy Act continued for Cuba, although there was no declaration of a national emergency.
- **Foreign Assistance Act (1961):** Authorized the US President to establish and maintain a total "embargo" on trade with Cuba and prohibited furnishing any assistance to the Cuban government. It establishes that U.S. government funds destined for international aid and delivered to international organizations may not be used for programs related to Cuba; prohibits granting any assistance provided under this law or to receive any other benefit under any law of the United States, until the President determines that the country has taken appropriate steps to return to U.S. citizens and entities not less than 50 per cent of the value, or equitable compensation for

property nationalized by the Cuban government after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

- **Presidential Proclamation 3447:** Issued on February 3, 1962 by President John F. Kennedy, proclaiming the total "embargo" upon trade between the United States and Cuba, in compliance with section 620(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act.
- **Cuban Assets Control Regulations of the Department of the Treasury (1963):** Stipulated the freezing of all Cuban assets in the United States; the prohibition of all financial and commercial transactions, unless approved by a license; the prohibition of Cuban exports to the United States; the prohibition of any natural or legal person of the United States or third countries to carry out transactions in US dollars with Cuba, among other provisions.
- **Export Administration Act (1979):** Section 2401(b)(1) "National Security Controls", "Policy Toward Individual Countries", establishes the Commerce Control List, in which the President of the United States maintains a number of countries to which special export controls may be applied for national security considerations. Cuba is included in this list.
- **Export Administration Regulations (EAR, 1979):** Establish the basis for general controls for items and

activities subject to the control of the EAR, in line with the measures imposed by the U.S. government. Provide for a general denial policy for exports and re-exports to Cuba.

- **Cuban Democracy Act or Torricelli Act (1992):** Prohibits subsidiaries of U.S. companies in third countries from trading goods with Cuba or Cuban nationals. Prohibits third country vessels touching Cuban ports from entering US territory within 180 days, except those licensed by the Secretary of the Treasury.
- **Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act or Helms-Burton Act (1996):** Codified the provisions of the blockade, extending its extraterritorial scope by imposing sanctions on foreign corporate executives who conduct transactions with US nationalized property in Cuba and threatening to sue them in US courts. It also limited the President's authority to lift the blockade policy as a whole.
- **Section 211 of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1999:** Prohibits the US courts from recognizing the rights of Cuban companies over trademarks associated with nationalized properties.
- **Trade Sanction Reform and Export Enhancement Act (2000):** Authorized the export of agricultural products to Cuba, conditioned on up-front cash payment and without U.S. financing. Prohibited Americans from traveling to Cuba for tourism purposes by defining "tourist activities" as any activity with respect to travel to, from,

or within Cuba that is expressly authorized in section 515.560 of Title 31 of the Code of Federal Regulations. In other words, it limited travel to the 12 categories authorized when this legislation was enacted.

Annex 2: Blockade measures adopted by the US government from March 2023 to February 2024

On March 31, 2023, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) announced a USD 72,230.32 monetary settlement with Uphold HQ Inc. (Uphold), a Larkspur, California-based money services company, in light of apparent violations of "sanction" programs against Cuba, Iran and Venezuela. The transactions involving Cuba totaled 25, for a total of USD 142,683.74, between March 2017 and May 2022.

On April 6, 2023, Microsoft Corporation, headquartered in Redmond, Washington, agreed to reimburse OFAC USD 2,980,265.86 and another USD 347,631 to the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) of the Department of Commerce for violations of several US coercive programs, including the one implemented against Cuba. The total penalty amounted to USD 3,327,896. Fifty-four of the 1,339 apparent violations were in connection with the Cuban Assets Control Regulations.

On May 1, 2023, Poloniex, LLC ("Poloniex"), a Delaware-based company with main operations in Boston, Massachusetts, agreed to remit USD 7,591,630 to OFAC for violations of various US coercive programs, including the one against

Cuba. The agency's statement said that the Poloniex trading platform apparently allowed clients located in "sanctioned" jurisdictions to engage in online transactions related to assets representing a total value of USD 15,335,349.

On September 29, 2023, by presidential memorandum, President Joseph Biden extended for one more year the restrictions on federal funding for cultural and educational exchanges with Cuba, among other measures. This action stems from the arbitrary and unjustified placement of Cuba in Tier 3 of the State Department's Annual Trafficking in Persons Report.

On November 6, 2023, OFAC made an official statement announcing a monetary settlement with daVinci Payments (daVinci), a US company that operates prepaid reward card programs, for apparent violations of various coercive programs, including the blockade-related laws against Cuba. DaVinci remitted USD 206,213 to the Treasury Department for allegedly engaging in the exchange of reward cards of individuals in sanctioned jurisdictions from November 15, 2017 to July 27, 2022.

On February 21, 2024, US President Joseph Biden issued a notice extending for one year the national emergency with respect to Cuba declared by President William Clinton on March 1, 1996.

Annex 3: Prerogatives of the US President to modify the implementation of the blockade against Cuba.

Modifications that the President of the United States could make to the web of laws underpinning the blockade, based on his executive powers and through regulatory announcements by the Departments of State, Treasury and Commerce include, among others, the following:

- Remove Cuba from the State Department's List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.
- Reverse the policy of financial persecution against Cuba, including in relation to fuel supplies to the country.
- Suspend the possibility of filing lawsuits in U.S. courts against US and non-US companies under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.
- Modify the permissible limit of 10 per cent of U.S. components in goods that Cuba may import from any country in the world.
- Request the State and Treasury Departments to eliminate the inclusion of Cuban entities in other unilateral lists, such as the List of Restricted Cuban Entities, the Prohibited Accommodations List and the Specially Designated Nationals List.
- Instruct US representatives in international financial institutions not to obstruct the granting of credits or other financial facilities to Cuba.

- Allow Cuban entities, including banks or companies, to open correspondent accounts in US banks.
- Authorize exports to Cuba of US products for key sectors of the economy, such as mining, tourism and biotechnology.
- Authorize the importation by the United States of any merchandise manufactured or obtained from products (nickel, sugar, tobacco, rum or others) grown, produced or manufactured in Cuba by state enterprises.
- Allow export to Cuba of medical supplies and equipment that can be used in the manufacture of Cuban biotechnological products.
- Relax the licensing policy for US companies to invest in Cuba.
- Allow US citizens to receive medical treatment in Cuba.
- Allow broader collaboration for the development, commercialization and supply of drugs and biomedical products of Cuban origin through direct investment by US companies and joint ventures, for example.
- Allow sales of raw materials that Cuba needs to produce medicines for the Cuban population and other developing countries.
- Authorize US subsidiaries to do business with Cuba not related to the import and export of goods (prohibited under the Torricelli Act.)

Annex 4: Some examples of the extraterritorial implementation of the blockade against Cuba from March 2023 to February 2024

In March 2023, due to the purchase of the Canadian company APOTEX by the U.S. company SK Capital, the purchase of medical supplies by MEDICUBA, including drugs for the treatment of cancer, allergies and other terminal diseases, was affected.

In May 2023, Banco Santander informed the board of directors of the Cuban company based in Spain IC Neuronic, the decision to cancel by June 2023 the insurance policy that this company held with the aforementioned bank since 2020.

In May and June 2023, Citibank Europe Bulgaria Branch withheld a transfer from the Cuban Embassy in Bulgaria for the payment of services to the telecommunications company Vivacom. In July, Citibank refunded payment of the invoice to the Cuban diplomatic office, which henceforth had to continue its operations with Vivacom through another bank.

In the first half of 2023, the MUFG Bank of Japan denied a transfer of the Chunichi Dragons franchise to the World Baseball and Softball Confederation account, a mechanism in place since 2018 to receive the revenues for the training of hired Cuban athletes. The reason was the link with Cuba and the possibility of infringing the US blockade laws.

On August 17, 2023 GSI Aisbl, developer of internationally accepted standards for communication and information

exchange between business partners in different global supply chains, informed Cuba that the latter would not be able to participate face-to-face in the GSI LATAM regional meeting, which was held in October 2023 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The organization claimed that Cuba was under a sanctions regime and its participation would pose a risk to GSI LATAM staff.

In August 2023, Swedbank started sending letters to its customers requesting them not to make transactions to or from Habanos Nordic and Cuba, stating that this entailed a risk that the bank could not assume due to the sanctions to which the country is subject. They informed that in case of non-compliance, they would be forced to restrict or close the customer's accounts and services.

In August 2023, the French association Cuba Linda, which promotes travel for bringing peoples closer, was banned from using the SumUp payment processing and risk solutions platform, a service it had requested to facilitate sales through bank cards at its stand in the Festival de l'Humanité. The association received a POS terminal, which was subsequently withdrawn under Article 13 of the general terms and conditions of the contract it had signed. The article stated the obligation to prevent involvement in "fraudulent activities, such as money laundering, the financing of terrorism or any other criminal activity."

In September 2023, Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB (SEB), in Sweden, refused to continue operations with

Habanos Nordic A.B., due to the risk of facing US penalties as a result of the blockade.

On November 21, 2023, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed a penalty of USD 968,618,825 on Binance Holdings, Ltd. ("Binance") a cryptocurrency company based in Caiman Islands, for violations of various US sanctions programs, including the blockade-related laws against Cuba. The company was required to pay additional amounts to the Department of Justice, the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) and the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), for a total of USD 4.3 billion.

On December 6, 2023, BMW Group Financial Services - BMW Leasing Switzerland informed the Cuban Embassy in Switzerland that they had to terminate their commercial relationship with the diplomatic mission because the Bank's legal department would not accept payments from the Cuban government, which left them with no other option but to cancel the contracts. In addition, BMW Group Financial Services cancelled the leasing contract for an official Embassy car by the AG BMW Marti dealership based in Berne, in the first week of December.

Also in 2023:

- Banco Comercial Português S.A. cancelled the transfer in US dollars made by the Cuba-Portugal Friendship Association to AMISTUR agency in Cuba. The Association has its account at BCP Millenium

and AMISTUR at Banco Financiero Internacional (BFI). The amount was USD 55,186, to pay for the solidarity brigade returning from Cuba.

- FRANSABANK FRANCE refused to process a transfer sent by the Cuban diplomatic office in Bonn, Germany, in favor of the Cuban Embassy in Algeria, invoking the “sanction and embargo risk policy” that clearly prohibits any direct or indirect transaction linked to Cuba.
- ING, New B, Argenta, Bpost and BNP-Paribas-Fortis banks did not accept transactions with the words “Aid for Cuba”, after the accident at the supertanker base in Matanzas. These non-accepted transactions were detected thanks to the “1 cent 4 Cuba” solidarity campaign launched by Associations of Friendship with Cuba in Europe.

In early 2024, Cuba’s voluntary contribution to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for 2023 was blocked. Despite the OHCHR’s efforts with the UBS bank, the latter never accepted the Cuban transfer. On several occasions, this institution alleged that since it was not a mandatory contribution that could mean loss of rights or financial default for the issuing country, they had no obligation to accept a transfer from one of the countries under US sanctions.

In January 2024, JCC Payments Systems Ltd, a third-party company working with the Bank of Cyprus for bank terminal payments and payment gateway transfers, informed the Cuban Embassy to that country that

they had proceeded to the immediate termination of the agreement with the Cuban Embassy, as they were prohibited from providing procurement services to the organization. As a result, the Cuban Embassy was left without the collection terminal service.

In January 2024, the Indian Axis Bank refused to make a transfer to Cuba by the Indian company Panacea as payment for the inputs acquired from CIGB for the production of the pentavalent vaccine. The bank alleged Cuba’s inclusion on the US government’s List of State Sponsors of Terrorism and demanded that Panacea be clear that the payment would not be addressed to any institution under the control of the Cuban army, security or intelligence corps.

In February 2024, the mail delivery company UPS denied a Slovenian citizen the delivery of a document, claiming that the recipient, which was the Cuban Consulate in Austria, did not comply with one or more governmental regulations for the countries/areas in which UPS operates.

On March 15, 2024, OFAC imposed a penalty of USD 3,740,442 on the Swiss-based banking company EFG International AG, for violating the Cuban Assets Control Regulations and other sanction programs. More specifically, between 2014 and 2018, 727 transactions to clients in Cuba, totaling USD 29,939,701, had been made.

Annex 5: Denunciations of the US blockade against Cuba from March 2023 to May 2024

Denunciations of the blockade within the United States:

On March 2, 2023, the Washtenaw County Commissioner in Ann Arbor, Michigan, adopted a resolution urging the U.S. government to lift the blockade and remove Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On March 6, 2023, US Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-Minnesota), Jerry Moran (R-Kansas), Chris Murphy (D-Connecticut), Roger Marshall (R-Kansas) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts) reintroduced the bipartisan Freedom to Export to Cuba bill, the text of which proposed to eliminate US regulations that prevent US exports to Cuba.

On March 8, 2023, the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America sent a letter to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Robert Menendez (D-New Jersey), requesting him to eliminate the coercive measures against Cuba. The bishops pointed out the damage caused by the economic blockade and said that the unjust inclusion in the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism had a negative impact on the lives of Cubans.

On March 14, 2023, twenty churches and denominational organizations, including the Presbyterian Church, sent a joint letter to President Joseph Biden, calling for a change in the policy on Cuba and its removal from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. Signatories include Church World Service, the Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society.

On March 15, 2023, Senators Ron Wyden, (D-Oregon), Cynthia Lummis,

(R-Wyoming) and Chris Van Hollen, (D-Maryland) sent a letter to President Biden calling for an easing of the economic and financial restrictions of the blockade that have an impact on the private sector in Cuba.

On March 21, 2023, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and the Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA) issued a joint statement welcoming the reintroduction of the Freedom to Export to Cuba Act. In the statement they referred to the blockade as the main obstacle to the development of the Cuban economy.

On March 22, 2023, CODEPINK activists interrupted Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s speech during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing to demand Cuba’s removal from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism and the lifting of the coercive measures in place.

In early May 2023, the group Puentes de Amor shared an initiative to collect signatures to send a letter to President Biden, with the request to ease the coercive measures affecting the private sector in Cuba. The letter was signed by self-employed Cubans and some representatives of the US business sector, and then sent to the White House through the Alliance for Cuba Engagement and Respect (ACERE).

On May 3, 2023, a delegation of 150 young Americans, including trade unionists, cultural workers, anti-police brutality activists, scientists and members of various organizations, reaffirmed their commitment to maintain the struggle to lift the blockade against Cuba, during a

visit to Havana to participate in the International Meeting on Solidarity with Cuba and Against Imperialism.

On May 10, 2023, 21 Democratic congressmen, mostly from southern border states, sent a letter to US President Joseph Biden demanding an easing of the maximum pressure policy affecting Cubans and Venezuelans. The congressmen identified the asphyxiating measures implemented by President Donald Trump's administration among the main causes forcing thousands of citizens of these nations to migrate to the United States. In the case of Cuba, they highlighted the measures aimed at tightening the blockade and the inclusion in the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On May 11, 2023, nearly 9,000 Cuban and US private business owners and representatives of some 270 business organizations comprising thousands of companies, sent a letter to President Biden requesting that Cuba be removed from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On May 16, 2023, the Washington D.C. City Council unanimously adopted a resolution to urge President Biden to lift the economic blockade against Cuba and remove the country from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. Initially introduced by Democrat Robert White Jr. and six other councilors, the text raised the constraints imposed by the blockade to the development of different Cuban sectors, such as health, education and the economy, as well as to cooperation between the two nations.

On May 24, 2023, Rep. Jim McGovern

(D-Massachusetts) expressed his disagreement with the Biden administration's policy on Cuba, during a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives.

In May 2023, the Executive Council of the Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific (IBU), a union representing seafarers on the U.S. West Coast, passed a resolution urging members of Congress in its jurisdiction and President Biden to remove Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On June 5, 2023, the Center for Democracy in the Americas, the Washington Office on Latin America and the Cuba Study Group issued a statement in which they called on President Biden's administration to take steps to improve the situation in Cuba. They called for greater support to the Cuban private sector and stressed that the State Sponsor of Terrorism designation imposes obstacles on the country.

On June 22, 2023, the New York City Council, by unanimous vote, passed a resolution urging the President and the US Congress to end the blockade and travel ban on Cuba and remove the country from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On August 31, 2023, Darrell Steinberg, Mayor of the City of Sacramento, issued a proclamation calling on the US government to review Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism.

On September 19, 2023, solidarity groups demonstrated in front of the Cuban mission to the UN to demand the end of the US blockade and the

removal of Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On September 23, 2023, an act of solidarity with Cuba and Venezuela was held at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, where the end of US sanctions against both countries was demanded. The event took place during the high-level segment of the United Nations General Assembly, in which Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel took part.

On September 28, 2023, Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Massachusetts), during a hearing on the House floor, called for an end to coercive measures against Cuba and its removal from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On October 14, 2023, the National Network on Cuba held its annual meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, where it reaffirmed its solidarity with Cuba and its commitment to fight against the blockade and the designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

On October 28, 2023, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) demanded the end of the blockade during a visit of several of its members to Havana, while calling for the removal of Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On October 30, 2023, a group of New York state legislators sent a letter to President Biden and US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-New York), in which they requested the reversal of the maximum pressure measures implemented by President Trump, the lifting of the economic blockade and the removal of Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On November 9, 2023, more than 120 Presbyterian churches in the United States addressed a letter to President Biden calling for the removal of Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. Grouped under the Cuba Partners Network, the churches referred to the tightening of the blockade under President Donald Trump's administration and the impact of the designation on the public health and other areas associated with the daily lives of Cubans.

On December 14, 2023, a group of legislators from the Massachusetts congressional delegation sent a letter to President Biden requesting the removal of Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. The letter was signed by Representatives James McGovern and Ayanna Pressley, Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, as well as State Representatives Seth Moulton, Lori Trahan and Stephen F. Lynch.

On January 11, 2024, House Representative Steve Cohen (D-Tennessee), sent a letter to President Joseph Biden, requesting the removal of Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. The legislator mentioned that for more than 60 years the blockade has caused enormous damage to the Cuban economy and people, while it has become a compelling factor for migration. He said that the arguments for maintaining Cuba's designation on the list are not sustainable.

On February 6, 2024, the City Council of the City of Medford, Massachusetts, adopted a resolution to request the U.S. government to remove Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. The text also called for actions aimed at

lifting the blockade.

On February 10, 2024, the Alliance for Cuba Engagement and Respect (ACERE), comprised by a coalition of U.S. and Cuban-American groups and activists, published an open letter to President Joe Biden, signed by more than fifty organizations and more than two hundred individuals residing in the United States, demanding the removal of Cuba from the List of countries allegedly promoting terrorism.

On May 16, 2024, the Center for Engagement and Advocacy in the Americas (CEDA), issued a statement in reaction to the State Department's decision not to include Cuba on the list of states not cooperating fully with US counterterrorism efforts. In the text, the organization acknowledged the decision, while calling for further steps, such as the removal of Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On May 24, 2024, the Communist Party of the United States issued an official statement following the State Department's decision not to include Cuba on the list of states that do not fully cooperate with U.S. counterterrorism efforts. In the text, it called on President Biden to remove Cuba immediately from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On May 28, 2024, the Latin America Working Group issued an official statement following the Treasury Department's announcements to favor the Cuban private sector. It indicated that other provisions in force, such as Cuba's inclusion on the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, continued to affect this sector. The text mentioned

the obstacles for the financial sector and tourism, derived from the designation, and the impossibility to use the ESTA system.

On May 28, 2024, the ACERE organization published an official communiqué in which it stated that, without removing Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, barriers that third-country banks and financial institutions face in providing services to Cuba's independent entrepreneurs would remain in place. The note pointed out that the country's rescission from the list was vital to encourage the resumption of European tourism to the island.

At the international level, the following actions are noteworthy:

On March 25, 2023, within the framework of the 28th Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, a "Special Communiqué on the need to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the government of the United States of America on Cuba, including the application of the so-called Helms Burton Act" was approved and issued, as well as a 'Special Communiqué supporting the fight on terrorism in all its forms and manifestations', which rejected the unjustified inclusion of Cuba in the unilateral List of State Sponsors of Terrorism and requested the removal of the country from this list.

On May 12, 2023, in the final declaration of the 9th Summit of the Association of Caribbean States, the Member States requested the United States to remove

Cuba from the spurious list of States that allegedly sponsor terrorism and reiterated their call for the lifting of the blockade against the country.

On July 5, 2023, during the 45th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Community of Caribbean States (CARICOM), held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, a final communiqué was approved emphasizing the need to put an end to the blockade against Cuba. The leaders of the Community made their pronouncement in the presence of US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken.

On July 18, 2023, the Third Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union (EU) adopted a final declaration reiterating the rejection of the blockade and its extraterritorial effect, while recognizing that the inclusion of Cuba on the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism hinders international financial transactions with the island.

In the Final Declaration of the Peoples' Summit that took place parallel to the 3rd CELAC-EU Summit in Brussels, a call was made to establish a road map that would include support for holding an International Tribunal against the Blockade. The removal of Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism was also demanded.

As a result, between **November 16 and 17, 2023**, the International Tribunal against the Blockade of Cuba was held at the headquarters of the European Parliament in Brussels. It was signed by the European Left Party, the International Association

of Democratic Jurists, the Left Group in the European Parliament and the National Lawyers Guild of the United States. The Court ruled that the blockade is a policy that violates international law and universal norms for peaceful coexistence. The course of action was to advocate for strengthening cooperation with Cuba by encouraging foreign investment and the entry of products from the Caribbean country into European markets.

On September 15-16, 2023, the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China on the current challenges of development: the role of science, technology and innovation was held in Havana, Cuba. Within this framework, a total of 38 countries denounced the blockade against Cuba.

Between September 19 and 26, 2023, during the general debate of the 78th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, the heads of delegations of 44 countries condemned the blockade against Cuba in their speeches. Twenty-one of these statements also denounced the inclusion of Cuba in the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On September 23, 2023, the 23rd Political Council of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP), held in New York within the framework of the 78th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, approved a declaration calling for the immediate and unconditional end of the blockade against Cuba and demanding the US

government to remove the country from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

In October 2023, the South African Communist Party passed a resolution against the blockade and the inclusion of Cuba on the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

In October 2023, the House of Representatives of the Jamaican Parliament passed a resolution condemning the blockade and the inclusion of Cuba on the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On November 2, 2023, the UN General Assembly approved by 187 votes in favor, 2 against and 1 abstention, the resolution on the “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. During the debate and adoption of the resolution, 53 speakers supported the lifting of the blockade and 34 of them spoke out against the inclusion of Cuba in the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. Both denunciations were joined by 10 regional consultation groups and organizations covering a large number of countries, namely: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Group of 77 and China, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the African Group and the European Union.

Throughout 2023, the Spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China made systematic statements calling for an immediate end to the blockade policy. More specifically, 12 statements were recorded in relation to this matter.

The 19th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was held in Kampala, Republic of Uganda, **from January 15 to 20, 2024**. Its final document denounced the blockade, criticized the inclusion of Cuba on the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism and called for the country’s removal from such list.

On January 21–22, 2024, the 3rd South Summit was held in Kampala, Republic of Uganda. Its final declaration called for the immediate lifting of the blockade against Cuba.

On February 18, 2024, at the 37th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the “Resolution on the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on the Republic of Cuba by the United States of America” was adopted for the fifteenth consecutive time. For the first time, the text requests the exclusion of Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On February 26, 2024, a motion against the U.S. blockade on Cuba was introduced for the first time on the floor of the Australian Federal Parliament.

On March 2, 2024, within the framework of the 8th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean

States (CELAC), held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, a declaration was adopted supporting the call of the United Nations General Assembly to put an end to the blockade against Cuba. Cuba’s removal from the unilateral list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism was also requested.

Additionally, a “Special Declaration on the need to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States of America against Cuba” and a “Special Declaration on support for the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations” were adopted. The latter reiterates the demand for the removal of Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On April 24, 2024, within the framework of the 23rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – Peoples’ Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP), held in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a declaration was adopted rejecting the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba and demanding the country’s removal from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On April 24, 2024, in the framework of the 4th Cuba–European Union Dialogue on Unilateral Coercive Measures, both parties agreed on four joint actions to oppose the extraterritorial enforcement of the US blockade against Cuba.

On May 13, 2024, the final declaration of the Second Meeting of National Coordinators of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, held in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, denounced the

negative impact of the blockade and called for its lifting. Furthermore, a call was made to remove Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

On May 24, 2024, the Final Communiqué of the 27th Meeting of the Council on Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) of the Community of Caribbean States (CARICOM) again included a condemnation of the blockade against Cuba and called for its immediate lifting. It welcomed the removal of Cuba from the List of countries that do not fully cooperate with US efforts against terrorism, while reiterating the call to remove the country from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

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