

New Yorkers say: ‘Lift the U.S. blockade of Cuba, now!’

written by Stephen Millies
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New York City Council members and activists denounce U.S. blockade of Cuba.

From left: Rosemari Mealy, Councilperson Ydanis Rodriguez, Councilperson Inez Barron, Barron's staffer Joyce Simmons. SLL photo: Stephen Millies

Oct. 17 — People chanted “¡Cuba sí, bloqueo no!” as activists stood on the steps of New York City’s City Hall today to denounce the U.S. blockade of Cuba. A news conference was held to announce that a resolution against the blockade would soon be introduced in the City Council.

[Cuba’s foreign ministry reports](#) that the blockade has cost the Caribbean country \$134.5 billion. Every year since 1992, the United Nations General Assembly has voted to denounce the blockade by overwhelming majorities.

Councilperson Inez Barron read the resolution, which pointed out that the blockade deprives both countries of cultural exchanges and scientific research. It keeps people in the United States from access to Cuban-developed vaccines for meningitis, hepatitis and advanced lung cancer, as well as monoclonal antibodies for kidney transplants.

Barron is one of the three sponsors of this resolution, along with council members Ydanis Rodriguez and Jimmy Van Bramer. Rodriguez called the blockade “a crime that we have to fight against.”

Longtime Cuba solidarity activist Rosemari Mealy announced that she had just come from Cuba. “I saw what this blockade is doing to the people of Cuba,” she said. “At the same time, I saw the resilience of the people.”

Mealy talked about the meeting between Malcolm X and Fidel Castro at Harlem’s Hotel Theresa at midnight on Sept. 19, 1960. Malcolm told the Cuban leader, “You have done everything in your country that we want here.” Mealy, who was a member of the Black Panther Party, wrote “Fidel & Malcolm X: Memories of a Meeting.”

Joan Gibbs, a leader of the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí coalition that organized

the news conference, said that both Detroit and Hartford, Conn., have passed resolutions against the blockade. In Chicago and Washington, D.C., activists are working to pass similar resolutions.

The 12 U.S. cities already on record are Richmond, Berkeley, Oakland and Sacramento in California; Seattle; Helena, Mont.; Minneapolis; St. Paul; Detroit; Pittsburgh; Brookline, Mass.; and Hartford, Conn. APALA, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, passed a significant union resolution in August. For information on how to pass a resolution in your city, contact the National Network on Cuba at ICanGoToCuba [at] nnoc.info

Watch the press conference on [YouTube](#)

<https://youtu.be/Q8f9bS2SQcs>

