

Cleveland City Council says: End U.S. blockade of Cuba

written by Cheryl LaBash
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Medical brigades from Cuba assisting the fight against COVID-19 overseas as for April 2020. Graphic: MINREX

On July 1, the City Council of Cleveland in the state of Ohio unanimously [adopted a resolution](#) calling for “an end to the U.S. economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.” The body, which represents 383,000 residents, urges the current administration to renew negotiations with the Cuban government. The vote was 14-0 with three council people absent, as published in The City Record on July 3.

This is the 14th such municipal resolution. Cleveland joins Richmond, Berkeley, Oakland and Sacramento, Calif.; Seattle; Helena, Mont.; Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn.; Detroit and Meridian Township, Mich.; Pittsburgh; Brookline, Mass.; and Hartford, Conn.

To confront the COVID-19 pandemic, city councils are now calling for medical collaboration with Cuba. On May 5, the [Richmond City Council](#) cited that the U.S. “has placed restrictions on access to Cuban goods and knowledge,” and therefore it supports lifting the restrictions on the Cuban-developed medicine Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant and medical collaboration with Cuba in the fight against COVID-19.

On June 16, the [Berkeley City Council](#) went further, explicitly adopting the three goals of the [Saving Lives Campaign](#). Those goals are:

1. Allowing U.S.-Cuba-Canada medical, clinical and scientific collaboration, including inviting Cuban medical brigades to provide direct medical assistance and/or to provide advice and guidance in treating COVID-19.
2. Incorporating Cuba’s Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant in clinical trials in the U.S., Canada and the World Health Organization, and for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to grant approval for Cuba’s Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant.
3. Ending U.S. economic and travel sanctions against Cuba, including attempts to stop all other countries from accepting Cuban medical brigades and assistance, and ending all ongoing measures that prevent Cuba from accessing and importing medical equipment and medicines to confront

COVID-19.

Join Saving Lives Campaign

In articles about the devastation of the pandemic in Latin America, the corporate media studiously avoid mentioning how Cuba has tamed the virus and saved lives. Caring for 11.3 million people, Cuba has only suffered 86 deaths. But from the Bronx to Detroit, from Chicago to [Miami](#), Oakland and South Central Los Angeles, the death tolls are rising. These hit Black, Indigenous and Latinx workers disproportionately harder.

More information is available at the [Saving Lives Campaign website](#), including data on Interferon Alfa 2B Recombinant and how it has been used to save lives in China and Cuba.

Add your name to the [list of endorsers](#). Ask your organization to sign on to the statement. [Print it out](#) and take it to your doctor. Have a friend who works in a hospital or health care facility? Ask them to sign on and take it to their union. Even while social distancing, there are many things we can do in the fight for “Saving Lives.”

The U.S. government is using the pandemic as a weapon against Cuba and Venezuela. Washington uses unilateral sanctions and its domination of international trade in dollars to interrupt trade between sovereign countries. In real terms, these sanctions deny fuel, medicine, personal protective equipment, food and raw materials needed for producing materials that are needed by people.

In April, the [Associated Press reported](#) that a donated planeload of virus-fighting equipment — face masks and testing kits — was blocked when the airline refused to land in Cuba out of fear of possible fines for sanctions violations.

Not a week goes by without the administration in Washington leveling a new

slandorous attack against Cuba, particularly aimed at Cuba's international medical solidarity brigades, but also the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America's cooperative relationship with Venezuela.

Now Cuba and Venezuela have been included on a new list of "foreign adversaries," issued by the U.S. Department of Energy and just published in the Federal Register, [according to the Miami Herald](#).

The hostility from Washington and a few elected officials in Florida doesn't represent the will of the people in the U.S. or around the world.

The blossoming of creative campaigns like the municipal resolutions noted in this article; the nomination of [Cuba's Henry Reeve Brigade](#) of doctors for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize; and a two-day [International Concert for Cuba](#) to be broadcast live on July 18-19 reflect the desire for peace, friendship and cooperation between people in the U.S. and Cuba.

