

May 1: Cuba's determination and resistance are on full display

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For Cuba Together We Create. Photo: Bill Hackwell

Havana, May 1 — The massive outpouring filled the emblematic Plaza of the Revolution in Havana this morning to show their resolve that they will not go back or give in to the maximum pressure that U.S. policy imposes on the Cuban people.

For the first time since 2022, when the scaled-back May Day celebrations gathered in other venues for economic reasons, today the march returned to the Plaza in an unmistakable response to the unrelenting extra-territorial starvation measures imposed by Cuba's rapacious neighbor to its north.

At exactly seven o'clock, as the sun broke into the plaza, the first notes of the National Anthem were heard. And the 25th anniversary, the speech given by Cuba's historic leader Fidel Castro Ruz, echoed across the people and the hundreds of international union and solidarity delegations attentively gathered there, defined what Revolution Is, "Revolution is a sense of the historical moment; it is to change everything that must be changed; it is full equality and freedom; it is to be treated and to treat others as human beings; it is to emancipate ourselves by ourselves and with our own efforts; it is to challenge powerful dominant forces within and outside the social and national sphere; is to defend values in which we believe at the price of any sacrifice; is modesty, selflessness, altruism, solidarity and heroism; is to fight with audacity, intelligence and realism; is to never lie or violate ethical principles; is a deep conviction that there is no force in the world capable of crushing the force of truth and ideas. Revolution is unity, it is independence, it is fighting for our dreams of justice for Cuba and for the world, which is the basis of our patriotism, our socialism and our internationalism."



Cubans wait for hours to begin May 1, march. Photo: Raul Capote

The celebrations were led by army general Raul Castro Ruz, and President of the Republic, Diaz-Canel Bermudez. In the major address by the Secretary-General of the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC), Ulises Guilarte said, “Cubans do not fear threats or blackmail.”

Guilarte went on to say, “We are celebrating the feast of the world proletariat in the midst of a complicated international scenario, the world suffers a renewed and dangerous imperialist offensive, with neo-fascist expressions that seeks to redesign

the international system, ignore the principles of peaceful coexistence and sovereign equality between states as well as to overturn the conquests of justice and human dignity achieved by the peoples. ... Without hesitation, we will continue the battle we wage for the consolidation of our freedom, independence and social justice; this is strongly being confirmed by the sea of people that are flooding the squares of the whole country today, with the slogan 'For Cuba together We Create.' The Secretary-General went on to add, "We reaffirm our most absolute rejection of the genocidal war waged by the Israeli government against the children of Palestinian land."



May 1, Havana. Photo: Bill Hackwell

Officially, 5.3 million Cubans turned out across the island, according to the CTC publication Trabajadores, including an estimated 700,000 in Havana alone., according to the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), which is celebrating its 65th anniversary this year. A thousand friends from more than 30 countries, including members of the May Day brigade, shared the revolutionary energy, dreams and commitment of struggle of the Cuban people.

The first contingent in Havana this morning was the doctors, health professionals, hospitals, research and pharmaceutical facilities providing improved outcomes by prioritizing human health needs instead of piling up profits for Big Pharma, corporate hospitals, and insurance companies.

Recently, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has upped the attacks on Cuba's medical missions by threatening to sanction individual leaders of countries for engaging in legal bilateral agreements with Cuba for medical support, which was widely rejected by Caribbean leaders.



Photo: Bill Hackwell

The U.S. has targeted the tens of thousands of Cuban doctors providing the health needs of under-served communities primarily in the Global South. The extraordinary example of Cuban doctors coming from this blockaded country is an embarrassment to the U.S., which is the richest country in the world that only identifies healthcare with profit. It is important to remember that we are approaching the twentieth anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, when President Bush ignored Cuba's offer to send 1,500 fully equipped disaster-trained medical professionals to save lives in New Orleans, as the majority Black population died in flood waters and on rooftops. That contingent was named the Henry Reeve Brigade for a U.S.-born hero who fought and died struggling for Cuba's independence from Spanish colonialism.

For those visiting Cuba for the first time, today's event provided a tremendous inspiration to fight along the lines of Fidel's words.

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