NEWSLETTER
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CCFA Annual General Meeting 2025





Top: Co-chairs Elizabeth Hill and Keyda Sloane
Bottom: Performers Erdwin Vichot, Fidel Díaz, and Raúl Torres

CCFA held its Annual General Meeting on November 3rd at the Shevchenko Museum. The meeting opened with approval of the agenda and last year's minutes, followed by reports and updates from the Executive. The Co-Chairs' Report reflected on a busy year of activities and the ongoing challenges faced by Cuba, including its continued placement on the U.S. State Sponsors of Terrorism list and the impact of Hurricane Melissa. CCFA members reaffirmed our solidarity with the Cuban people and looked ahead to our organization's 50th anniversary in 2027.

Over the past year, CCFA hosted two successful Café Cuba events, participated in numerous rallies and celebrations, and continued building connections through joint initiatives with Juan Gualberto Gomez Association of Cubans in Toronto and Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Network. Our Membership Report noted steady growth and ongoing efforts to digitize our records and strengthen member engagement, while the Amistad Report marked the magazine's 46th year in publication and invited members to contribute articles and reflections.

The Financial Report showed healthy activity, with donations supporting Brigade scholarships and CNC campaigns. Plans for the 2026 Che Guevara Brigade are already underway, and we plan to continue to expand our scholarship program.

Several thoughtful proposals were discussed for the coming year, including building stronger ties with other solidarity movements, expanding our involvement on university campuses, and reviving cultural exchange programs between Canada and Cuba.

The meeting concluded with the election of our new Executive Committee: **Elizabeth Hill**, **Keyda Sloane**, **Adam Kendal**, **Olga Filiushkina**, **Brien Young**, **Sara Sutcliffe**, **Brandon Earnest**, **Miguel Figueroa**, **Natalie Escalante**, **Sophia Ilyniak**, **Nicolas Avendaño Ruiz**, and **Samantha Hislop**.

We were also joined by three visiting Cuban musicians—Erdwin Vichot, Fidel Díaz, and Raúl Torres—who closed the meeting with a beautiful performance. As renowned Cuban artists, their music was a true highlight of the evening and a fitting celebration of the friendship between our peoples.

Adam Kendal, CCFA Toronto

> "What has Capitalism resolved? It has solved no problems. It has looted the world. It has left us with all this poverty."
>
> **Fidel Castro**



★ CCFA TORONTO UPDATES

Report on Cafe Cuba: The History and Politics of Cuban Sports



Anna Ragamas and Enrique Valdez Cardenas

On October 3, CCFA hosted a Café Cuba educational on The History and Politics of Cuban Sports, presented by Enrique Valdez Cardenas, who worked for many years with the National Institute of Sport, Physical Education and Recreation (INDER).

The presentation explored the central role that sport has played in Cuba since the Revolution. We learned how the Cuban socialist project has made athletics accessible to all, with sports programs integrated into public education from an early age. Mr. Valdez explained that this universal access has allowed Cuba to become a global leader in athletics, achieving remarkable results across wrestling, boxing, track and field, swimming, and many other disciplines.

Cuba's success on the world stage is particularly striking: the country ranks among the top medal earners in the Summer Olympics on a per capita basis and has even surpassed Canada in total medals earned. We also learned about the incredible achievements of Cuban women, who have won an astonishing 77% of the country's Olympic medals.

When asked why the Revolution places such emphasis on sports, Mr. Valdez emphasized that it is not for reasons of profit, prestige, or even public health, but because sport is seen as essential to the development of the human being. This deeply humanist perspective reflects the broader values at the heart of Cuba's socialist project.

We would like to express deep gratitude to Mr. Valdez for his insightful presentation, and to Anna Ragamas for her excellent translation.

Adam Kendal, CCFA Toronto







CCFA submission to People's Hearings on Military Spending organized by Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity

The Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto (CCFA Toronto) is pleased to endorse and participate in the September 21, 2025 People's Hearing about prioritizing government spending differently.

Our organization was founded in 1977 and has consistently campaigned against the more than 60-year-old United States blockade of Cuba. The US blockade is an economic war against Cuba. Cuba has chosen its own socialist path based on prioritizing people's needs over profit and war. Cuba's sovereignty must be respected. This means ending the US blockade and returning Guantanamo Bay to Cuba.

The US economic war on Cuba is extraterritorial and has impacted many countries in their trade and exchanges with Cuba. Huge fines have been imposed against businesses who have sold needed materials to Cuba. The blockade places limitations on Cuba's ability to sell on the world market, or to get much needed medicine and equipment. The recent breakdowns of Cuba's electric system are mainly due to the immense strain from the U.S. blockade, which restricts access to fuel and replacement parts. Cuba is working hard to expand renewable energy.

In spite of the blockade's impact of billions of dollars taken from the Cuban economy, Cuba's is renowned for public health and education that it has developed and maintained over the years. We can only imagine how much Cuba could achieve without having to endure the immoral, illegal blockade.

Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Cuba's Minister for Foreign Affairs, speaking at the United Nations General Assembly in October 2024, stated "The damage done to Cuba since the blockade was imposed some 62 years ago amounts to $1.499 trillion." The 193-member U.N. adopted its annual resolution on the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" by a recorded vote of 187 in favour and 2 against (United States, Israel).

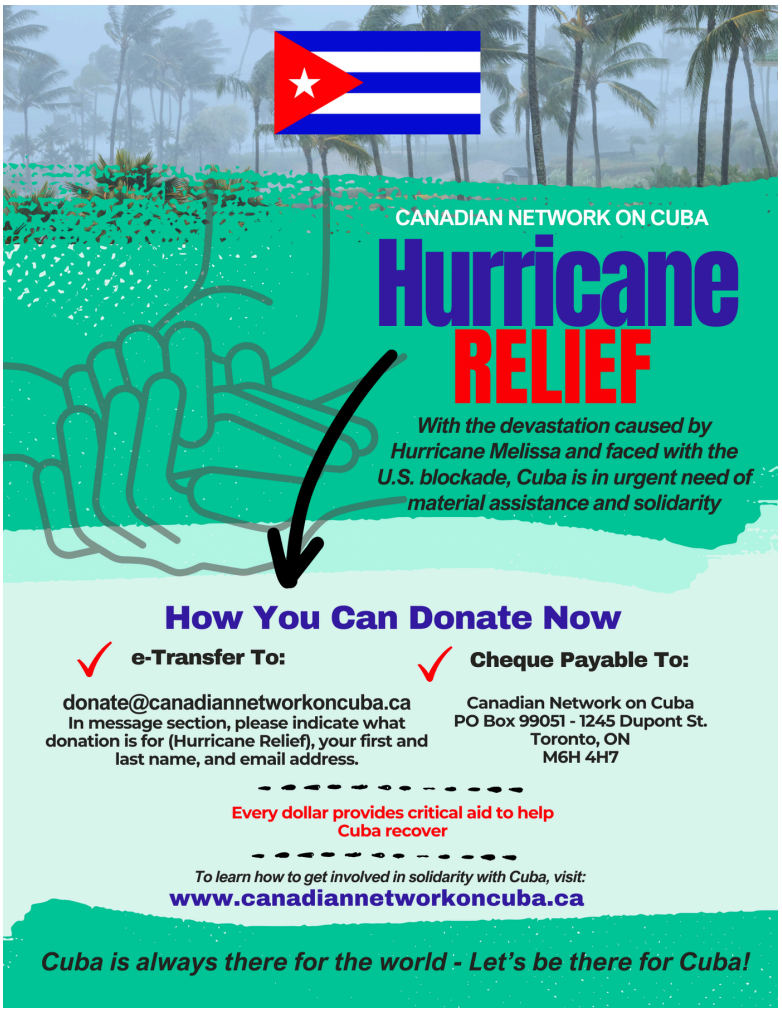
A small country of Cuba, while fighting an illegal blockade and enduring devastating hurricanes, but still sends humanitarian medical brigades to dozens of countries. It is able the achieve these major accomplishments because it prioritizes people's needs in its economic and social policies.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in 2014 meeting in Havana, Cuba. Formally declared the Caribbean and wide Latin American region a zone of peace. The US war on Cuba is not just economic, it threatens the sovereignty of Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama.

Skyrocketing military spending takes enormous amounts of money and resources from Canada's significant social needs. These resources would be much better spent to resolve the housing crisis, end poverty, make childcare and higher education free and accessible, properly fund health and mental health services, provide for cultural and recreational needs and much more.

Despite Trump's tightening of the economic blockade, a small country like Cuba allocates its limited resources, to prioritize education, health and social needs. Canada, a large country, rich in resources, needs to follow this example of and start to cut its large economic pie to meet the growing social needs, not wasteful military spending to satisfy US interests.

Elizabeth Hill, CCFA Toronto



New Cuban Report Confirms US Blockade is War

Cuba's foreign ministry on September 17 released the nation's annual report on adverse effects of the lengthy U.S. economic blockade of Cuba. It does so ahead of the yearly vote in the United Nations General Assembly on a Cuban resolution stating the "necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba." Voting takes place on October 28-29. For 32 years, member states have overwhelmingly approved Cuba's resolution. At times recently, the U.S. and Israel have been alone in rejecting it.

The 55-page Report called *Informe de Cuba sobre la resolución 79/7 de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas* (published in May 2025, accessible on cubaminrex.cu), is remarkable for its detailed and far-ranging description of disarray and distress caused by the blockade…

This year's version … [shows] that the blockade kills people, it casts the blockade as war. Struggle against the blockade might gain new strength with a new focus on the issue of peace over war.

The idea of the U.S. as war-maker is not new. Beginning with the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, the U.S. government has relied on military power as well as economic and political pressure to work its way in Latin America and the Caribbean area. Even now the U.S. wages war on Venezuela, Cuba's close ally and fellow victim of U.S. economic sanctions.

A recent study … [in]…the Lancet medical journal in August 2025 reported that economic sanctions imposed in 152 countries between 1971 and 2021 caused so many deaths annually as to exceed battle-related deaths and, often, to equal the annual toll of battlefield deaths plus civilian casualties. …Awareness of that reality would be a big step toward recognition of the blockade as war against Cuba...

Big picture

The Report records damage affecting various sectors of Cuban society between March 2024 and February 2025. It surveys financial losses, shortages, and consequences. It shows that adverse effects themselves lead to far-ranging difficulties for individual Cubans and Cuban commercial and production entities.

…The Report is a story of institutions, production units, private enterprises, schools, healthcare entities, government agencies, and service organizations having to cope with frustrations and failed improvisations. A section appears on solidarity activities on Cuba's behalf taking place in the United States and in the world.

The Report outlines two general categories of requirements under the blockade. Measures relating to Cuba's finances make for low salaries, diminished flow of remittances, obstacles to investments from abroad, and inability to re-finance accumulated debt. Other measures block access to materials and commercial products. These include: food, hospital supplies, medicines, raw materials, new machinery, miscellaneous devices and tools, construction materials, replacement parts, fuel, chemicals, fertilizers, and more.

The categories overlap. According to the Report, "Dozens of banks suspended their operations with Cuba, including transfers for the purchase of food, medicines, fuel, materials, spare parts for the national power system, and other essential goods." The Report identifies the U.S. instruments that created regulations governing Cuba's access to money and goods, among them:

- Designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism, whereby Cuba loses access to international loans and payments due from abroad.
- Lawsuits filed in US courts under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act. These seek damages from those foreign businesses making use of nationalized properties. The effect is to discourage future investments.
- Hundreds of U.S. measures devised for weakening Cuba's tourism industry, that until recently was the country's leading source of income.
- New sanctions aimed at foreign officials who enable Cuban doctors to work in their countries. They block income that formerly supported Cuba's own healthcare system.
- Threats and sanctions mounted against "shipping companies, carriers, insurers or reinsurers involved in supplying fuel to Cuba."
- The 1992 U.S. "Torricelli Law" that requires third-country enterprises affiliated with U.S. corporations to never sell goods to Cuba containing more than 10% U.S. components.
- The legacy of 1996 Helms-Burton Act stipulating that the blockade would be altered or ended only by Congress and not by the U.S. president.

Money talks

The Report records monetary data relating to shortages. The term "damages" … signifies a combination of costs, loss of income due to the blockade, and potential gains stymied by the blockade.

Damages recorded for various sectors are:

- Biotechnology – $129.3 million
- Energy and mining – $496.1 million
- Information and communication – $78 million

Continued on the next page

- Industry (goods and services) – $5.1 billion
- Construction – $161.9 million
- Transportation – $353.0 million
- Tourism – $2.5 billion
- Education – $89.9 million
- Sports – $4.1 million
- Culture – $195.1 million
- Healthcare – $288.8 million
- Food supply and processing – $932.3 million
- Agricultural production – $51.9 million

Total damages during the period under study were $7.6 billion. That amount exceeds damages by 49%. The total since the blockade's onset is $170.7 billion. With inflation, "quantifiable damages" over the years become $2.1 trillion.

There are these additional realities:

- Cuba's GDP was down 1.1% in 2024. "The economy … has recorded an 11 per cent downfall since 2018."
- Exports of goods and services achieved 92.5% and 101.6%, respectively, of anticipated goals. Export income was $770 million less than expected. Domestic revenues were down $900 million from 2023.
- Food production was so reduced during the year that 100% of the food provided under the rationing system was imported food.
- The term "geographic relocation of trade" refers to trade displaced because of the blockade. That necessity leads to elevated transportation costs and inflated prices. Added costs are $1.2 billion.
- The year's inflation rate of 24.9% stems from shortages of supplies, diminished access to hard currency, and state spending to finance its budget deficit.
- Overall spending on tourism was $2.5 billion in 2024; tourism was down 9.6%.

Sanctions as war

Presenting the Report to the press on September 17, Cuban chancellor Bruno Rodríguez observed that, "It is impossible to quantify the emotional damage, anguish, suffering, and deprivation that the blockade causes Cuban families. This has been the case for several generations, with more than 80% of Cubans on the island born after the blockade began."

According to the Report, "The unprecedented tightening of the blockade in recent years has had a particular impact on the public health sector… [It has] hampered the ability of our health system to obtain … supplies when needed and provide quality service to the population. This has, in turn, led to the deterioration of several health indicators, including those related to mortality."

Indeed, the "blockade imposed by the US government against Cuba is an act of genocide."

Hospitals and doctors have trouble finding, or may not find, "first line medicines," cancer drugs, specialized drugs, key surgical supplies, respiratory therapy equipment, imaging equipment, diagnostic agents and test kits, dialysis machines, anesthesia gear, endoscopy equipment, insulin pumps, pacemakers, defibrillators, and pediatric ventilators. According to the Report, 94,729 people are on surgery waiting lists, including 4507 cancer patients and 9913 children.

A benign treatment device for aortic stenosis is available elsewhere but not in Cuba for 158,800 unstable patients. Survival rates for childhood cancer have fallen.

…Cuba's infant mortality rate (IMR), the number of babies dying in their first year of life per 1,000 births, was 4.2 in 2014 and presently is 8.2.

Cuban economist and demographer Juan Carlos Albizu-Campos, writing in 2023, notes that Cubans' life expectancy registered a "decrease of 5.39 years" from 2012…"

Food scarcity, mentioned in 2024 by Granma, the Cuban Communist Party's newspaper, contributes to excess deaths. Blockade effects extend to food production…

…The U.S. blockade of Cuba is a weapon of war and manifestation of war.

What accounts for U.S. warmaking against Cuba? …As chief honcho of the world capitalist order, the U.S. government must stick with capitalist rules… Poorer and under-developed nations must cooperate and be subservient. Their job is to provide cheap labor and access to natural resources – and allow their wealth to be transferred to the centers. An outlier like Cuba is surely due for punishment.

Source: W. T. Whitney Jr, People's World
Published on September 30, 2025
Shortened by Susan Hurlich, CCFA Toronto member



We'd love to hear from you! If you have articles, editorials, or letters you'd like us to share, send them to **canadiancubanfriendshiptoronto@gmail.com** before December 15th (indicate "**Amistad Submission**" in the subject line). Please keep it under 1,200 words.

Campaign to Support Cuba in Vietnam Raises Over $21 Million



The campaign to support Cuba launched by the Vietnam Red Cross successfully concluded with the raising of over $21 million, according to preliminary figures released Friday in Hanoi.

Launched on August 13th on the occasion of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro's 99th birthday and in the context of the Vietnam-Cuba Friendship Year and the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. The initiative officially concluded at 11:59:59 p.m. (local time) on Thursday, October 16th.

According to the latest report from the Vietnam Red Cross, as of 8:00 p.m. (local time) yesterday more than 2,090,000 individual and collective contributions totalling approximately 555.8 billion dong (over $21,100,000) had been received.

In a post on its Facebook page, the humanitarian social organization recalled the beginning, just over two months ago, of what it described as a special trip filled with compassion, gratitude, and a deep mutual understanding between the two nations.

Referring to the imminent conclusion of the campaign, it noted that "the good emotions it leaves behind will surely resonate for a long time in the hearts of all Vietnamese."

On the same social network, user Pham Tran Hoa described the affection shown by the Vietnamese toward the people of Cuba as "incredible and impressive." While Dinh Lan noted that "if it weren't for the last two historic floods (which affected Vietnam), the number would have exceeded 650 billion VND."

The official closing ceremony of the campaign, whose goal of raising 65 billion dong (approximately 2.4 million dollars) was achieved in just 30 hours will take place tomorrow, Saturday (October 18th), when the winners of the music composition contest "Vietnam-Cuba: A Song of Friendship That Resounds Forever" will also be honoured.

Source: Radio Angulo, edited for style
Published on October 17, 2025

CNC Statement: 2025 UN General Assembly Vote to End the U.S. Blockade Against Cuba

The result of the October 29, 2025 vote in the United Nations General Assembly, in which 165 countries stood with Cuba and against the United States' criminal economic blockade, represents a resounding victory for Cuba, for international law, and for the moral conscience of humanity. This triumph is all the more remarkable amidst the blatant and unprecedented campaign of pressure, intimidation, and coercion waged by Washington in the lead-up to the vote—an effort that sought to bend the will of sovereign nations through deceit, threats, and diplomatic blackmail.

For over three decades, the world's nations have consistently rejected this illegal and immoral policy of economic warfare that the United States has imposed on Cuba since the 1960s—a blockade designed to suffocate, isolate, and punish a small nation for daring to chart an independent, socialist path. The United States has weaponized hunger and deprivation as instruments of regime change, causing more than $150 billion in economic losses and untold suffering to the Cuban people. Yet despite this sustained assault, Cuba has endured, upheld its dignity, and continues to stand as a symbol of human solidarity and resistance to imperial domination.

That 165 countries defied U.S. pressure and reaffirmed their solidarity with Cuba is a powerful testament to the moral isolation of the United States and the growing rejection of imperial arrogance in global affairs. The handful of nations that voted with Washington—led, as always, by Israel and a few client states—only underscores the overwhelming consensus of the world: the blockade must end.

As Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez affirmed, Washington's desperation—its lies, threats, and manipulation—reveals its fear of the truth: that the world stands with Cuba, with justice, and with the principle that no nation has the right to strangle another into submission. The vote of October 29 is not merely a diplomatic victory; it is a reaffirmation that freedom, sovereignty, and justice cannot be blockaded.

In the face of empire's coercion, the world has spoken clearly and courageously. Cuba's victory at the United Nations is humanity's victory—a declaration that even in an age of domination and deceit, the ideals of equity, justice, and international solidarity endure, undiminished and undefeated.

Canadian Network on Cuba

Executive Committee,
Canadian Network on Cuba
October 30, 2025

65 Years of Power: The Explosive Legacy of the CDR in Cuba's Revolutionary Defense



On September 28, 2025, Cuba commemorated a historic milestone: the 65th CDR anniversary, celebrating six and a half decades of one of the most enduring and influential mass organizations in modern political history. Since its founding in 1960 by revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR) have served as the backbone of Cuba's grassroots democracy, transforming neighbourhoods into hubs of political awareness, social action, and national defence.

More than just a surveillance network, the CDR has evolved into a dynamic engine of civic participation, uniting over 8 million Cubans through 133,000 local nuclei spread across every municipality on the island. This CDR anniversary is not merely ceremonial — it reflects a living tradition of collective responsibility, resilience, and revolutionary continuity in the face of decades of external pressure, economic blockade, and internal challenges.

From fighting epidemics to organizing literacy campaigns, from defending against sabotage to rebuilding after hurricanes, the CDR has proven time and again that organized people can shape history.

Origins of a Revolution: How the CDR Was Born in Fire and Resistance

The story of the CDR begins on the night of September 28, 1960, under dramatic circumstances. In front of the Presidential Palace — today the Museum of the Revolution — Fidel Castro addressed a massive crowd of Havana residents, announcing the creation of a new system of revolutionary collective vigilance.

At the time, Cuba was reeling from escalating attacks by counter-revolutionaries backed by foreign interests. Bombings, sabotage, and espionage were destabilizing the young revolutionary government. In response, Castro declared:

"We are going to implement, in the face of imperialist aggression, a system of revolutionary collective surveillance so that everyone knows who lives on the block, what they do, and what ties they had to the tyranny."

These words laid the foundation for a decentralized but highly effective network of neighbourhood watch groups — the CDR — designed to protect the revolution from within while fostering unity among citizens.

Despite provocations — including explosive devices detonated near the rally — nearly one million Habaneros took to the streets that night, demonstrating unwavering support for the revolutionary process.

The CDR emerged not as an instrument of repression, but as a shield forged by popular will. From the outset, the organization operated on principles of inclusivity: open to all citizens over 14 years old, regardless of gender, race, or religion. Its structure became deeply embedded in daily life — each block electing a president and assigning responsibilities for ideology, health, security, and volunteer work.

"La Revolución se defiende" — "The Revolution must be defended" — became both slogan and mission.

CDR Anniversary Highlights: Six Decades of Social Transformation

As Cuba celebrates this CDR anniversary, the scope of the organization's impact becomes clear. Far beyond its original role in monitoring suspicious activities, the CDR has grown into a multi-functional pillar of Cuban society, driving progress in education, public health, disaster response, and food sovereignty.

One of its earliest triumphs came during the National Literacy Campaign of 1961, when thousands of CDR members — many of them youth volunteers — traveled to rural areas to teach reading and writing. This effort helped eradicate illiteracy in just one year, earning UNESCO recognition.

In public health, the CDR has played a critical role in nationwide vaccination drives, disease prevention programs, and vector control. During outbreaks of dengue, Zika, and chikungunya — all transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito — CDR brigades conducted house-to-house inspections, eliminating breeding sites and educating families.

Their door-to-door approach proved essential during the COVID-19 pandemic, when they coordinated quarantine enforcement, distributed medical supplies, collected data, and organized blood donations. Local CDR nuclei also led efforts to renovate neglected neighbourhoods, repair infrastructure, and maintain green spaces — turning urban decay into community pride.

In agriculture, the CDR promotes urban farming initiatives, supporting family gardens, rooftop cultivation, and cooperative plots that contribute to food security amid the U.S. economic blockade. These programs have become

Continued on the next page

increasingly vital as global supply chain disruptions affect imports.

When natural disasters strike — as with hurricanes Ian and Oscar in recent years — CDR networks activate immediately, assisting in evacuations, distributing aid, and leading reconstruction efforts.

They function as Cuba's first line of civil defence, operating with minimal resources but maximum solidarity.

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, national coordinator of the CDR and one of the Cuban Five Heroes imprisoned in the U.S., recently reaffirmed the organization's core purpose:

"Our main mission remains the defence of the Revolution at the neighbourhood level. Any fundamental change to this would mean the end of the CDR as we know it."

Political Mobilization and National Unity: The CDR Beyond Vigilance

Beyond its practical roles, the CDR has been instrumental in shaping Cuba's political culture. It serves as a conduit between the government and the people, facilitating dialogue, disseminating information, and encouraging civic participation.

During constitutional debates — such as those leading to the 2019 Constitution of the Republic and the Family Code referendum in 2022 CDR nuclei hosted forums where residents could discuss proposed laws, ask questions, and voice concerns.

This bottom-up approach ensured broad public understanding and ownership of major legal reforms.

Even today, CDR leaders emphasize that their work is not about suspicion or denunciation, but about building trust, accountability, and shared purpose.

Structure and Function: How the CDR Operates Today

The CDR maintains a simple yet effective organizational model. Each nucleus covers a city block or small rural area, typically comprising 20 to 40 families. Members elect a president and assign coordinators for key areas:

- Vigilance and security
- Ideological education
- Health and hygiene
- Voluntary labor and community improvement

Meetings are regular and participatory, often held in homes, schools, or community centers. Tasks range from organizing recycling drives to monitoring energy use, supporting elderly residents, or reporting safety hazards.

No professional salaries are involved — participation is voluntary and rooted in civic duty. While the CDR collaborates with other institutions — including police, health clinics, and schools — it remains autonomous, answering directly to its members and higher CDR leadership structures.

Moreover, in a country with limited digital connectivity and widespread resource constraints, the CDR provides a low-tech, high-impact model of governance that ensures no one is left behind.

Conclusion: 65 Years of Defending the Future

As Cuba marks the CDR anniversary, the significance of these six decades cannot be overstated. What began as a defensive measure against sabotage has matured into a comprehensive model of popular protagonism, blending vigilance with service, politics with compassion, and revolution with daily life.

The CDR has helped Cuba achieve remarkable outcomes with minimal resources:

- Near-universal literacy
- World-leading doctor-to-patient ratios
- Rapid disaster recovery
- High levels of civic participation

None of this would be possible without the quiet, constant work of millions of cederistas. Their legacy is not written in grand monuments, but in clean streets, vaccinated children, rebuilt homes, and empowered communities.

In honouring the CDR anniversary, Cuba reaffirms a fundamental belief: that sovereignty begins at home — on the corner, in the building, in the heart of the barrio.

And as global inequalities deepen, climate crises escalate, and democracies falter, the Cuban example offers a compelling alternative: a future built not by distant elites, but by organized, vigilant, and caring communities.

TeleSUR will continue covering the evolution of this emblematic organization, recognizing its vital role in sustaining Cuba's revolutionary project and inspiring popular movements worldwide.

Source: TeleSUR

Published on September 28, 2025, shortened by Elizabeth Hill

CANADIAN NETWORK ON CUBA



TELL TRUMP: HANDS OFF CANADA, HANDS OFF CUBA!

WRITE AN EMAIL TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AT

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Mexico Rejects U.S. Pressure on Cuba Fuel Shipments

Mexico's president Claudia Sheinbaum last week defended her country's oil shipments to Cuba: “[They] purchase oil just like other countries do.”

Rep. Carlos Giménez (R.FL) recently accused Sheinbaum of “propping up” the Cuban government with oil shipments, which have increased this year. Giménez said her "pathetic actions" could jeopardize the free trade agreement between Mexico, Canada and the U.S., which is currently being renegotiated.

Sheinbaum dismissed Giménez’s comments: “The U.S. knows that Mexico is an independent, free and sovereign country and that our decisions are sovereign.”

Mexican oil has become a lifeline for Cuba as it navigates a deep economic and fuel crisis.

Sheinbaum also praised the Cuban doctors serving on a mission in Mexico despite a U.S. pressure campaign to coerce foreign governments to end this type of medical cooperation with Cuba.

Sheinbaum’s comments come on the heels of her recent announcement that she would not attend next month's Summit of the Americas in the Dominican Republic, following the news that Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua would be excluded as a result of U.S. pressure.

Colombian president Gustavo Petro also announced he will boycott the summit.

Source: Belly of the Beast
Published on October 24, 2025

Multiculturalism and context from Gibara Low-Budget Cinema Festival

The 20th Gibara International Low-Budget Film Festival (Festival Internacional del Cine Pobre de Gibara in Spanish) is now accepting submissions until January 5, 2026. The call for entries opened on October 6 and is open to works of any nationality, provided they were completed between 2024 and the submission deadline, are in their original language, and include Spanish subtitles.

Filmmakers will be considered for the Lucía Awards, in addition to other related awards. Competition categories include: fiction feature and short film, documentary feature and short film, and animation and experimental audiovisual works.

The event—scheduled for April 14-18 next year—will also feature the "Films in Progress" and the "2026 Low-Budget Film Factory" competitions. The Festival's return to its original date and name (as founded by Humberto Solás in 2003) was not a coincidence, but a deeply contextual decision. Sergio Benvenuto Solás, the current president of the initiative, explained this to Granma:

"We considered two key factors. First, the Festival continues to be known as a 'Low-Budget Film Festival,' both in Gibara and internationally. Second, it's becoming increasingly difficult for filmmakers everywhere—not just in Cuba or Latin America, but worldwide—to secure funding. We're not in a context of prosperity for film, but rather one of vanishing funding and shuttered support organizations."

He also clarified that in all other aspects, the Festival maintains a clear continuity: "It has always been a multicultural event with different sections; we are building on existing elements, but its core hasn't changed."

A defining characteristic of the festival is its nature as a local development project that seeks to connect with its host town. "I think the most important thing is the quite explicit transformation," Solás noted. "For example, the current hotel construction in Gibara was unthinkable back in 2003, when the town was little known."

"Of course, there are historical precedents. Gibara was a city of significant prosperity at the end of the 19th century and the first 40 years of the 20th century. When Humberto rediscovered it after filming Lucía in 1968, and when we shot Miel para Oshún there in 2001, it was a city that was practically paralyzed, yet cultured, a place where families passed down a thirst for knowledge."

"So, this entire festival process not only created the dynamic of the April event but also opened up a world of new possibilities for the people of Gibara. It's a multicultural festival with a theoretical forum. Today, as a result, Gibara has since gained two additional festivals and a Telecenter, and has produced renowned filmmakers. It is a place with real potential for growth."

As this year's call for entries affirms, Cine Pobre (Poor Cinema) is not just a name; it is a philosophy, a banner, and a movement that has transcended borders, establishing Gibara as the epicenter of committed, plural, and profoundly human cinema.

The commitment is also to "authentic, diverse, and transformative cinema," as Solás called for in his Manifesto of Poor Cinema—a rallying cry for unfettered creativity and the democratization of cinematic expression.

Source: Yeilén Delgado Calvo, Granma
Published on October 10, 2025
Translated by Walter Lippman, edited for style and clarity

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CCFA Toronto Statement

The Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto is active in promoting friendship, respect, and co-operation between Canadian and Cuban peoples. We work with other Canadian groups and international organizations.

Our activities aim to:

- Provide information and organize events related to Cuba for the public and media, focusing on culture, health, education, sports, and Canada-Cuba relations
- Counteract the deliberate misinformation about Cuba spread by the U.S.
- End the illegal U.S. blockade of Cuba and defend Cuban and Canadian sovereignty from U.S. interference

About Amistad

Amistad is the newsletter of the CCFA Toronto, posted six times a year with volunteer labour. The Editorial Committee reserves the right to edit submitted material. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editorial Committee.

We encourage everyone interested to submit media articles, editorial ideas, and letters.
Email canadiancubanfriendshiptoronto@gmail.com
Deadlines are the 15th of even months.

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