

NEWSLETTER Amistad



Issue 47.4

Jul/Aug 2026

★ Bi-monthly newsletter of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto ★

100 Years with Fidel



selflessness, altruism, solidarity and heroism; it is to fight with audacity, intelligence and realism; is to never lie or violate ethical principles; it 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."

CCFA Toronto, along with other solidarity organizations, will pay tribute to Fidel Castro Ruz at its Moncada event on July 25th at the Steelworkers Hall. Our understanding of Fidel's legacy is more important than ever, as Cuba is enduring the cruel, illegal blockade, further intensified by the Trump administration in a callous and illegal attempt to snuff out its revolutionary embers.

The Cuban government continues to stalwartly define its values and sovereignty in the face of this. Solidarity and support for Cuba is growing around the world, and CCFA Toronto pledges to continue to do everything we can to support Cuba. We will step up our activities to oppose the illegal US Blockade – rallies, information tables, letters, petitions, and material aid.

Viva Cuba! Viva Fidel!

Elizabeth Hill, CCFA Toronto

Fidel Castro Ruz, known around the world affectionately by his first name, would have reached 100 years of age on August 13th of this year. This is a special occasion to celebrate and honour the many defining contributions Fidel made to Cuba and the world. Below is a quote that sums up Fidel's vision from a speech he delivered on May Day in 2000.

"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 spheres; it is to defend values in which we believe at the price of any sacrifice; it is modesty,

Moncada Day
73rd Anniversary

Saturday
July 25
6 pm

BBQ
&
Music

Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil Street
Sponsored by: CCFA, LACSN, JGG

★ CCFA TORONTO UPDATES

Reflections on the Che Guevara Brigade



Brigadistas hanging the Che Guevara Brigade banner at the International Conference in Solidarity with Cuba

The past three years of genocide in Gaza, recent US imperialist escalations in Iran, and Trump's fortification of the blockade against Cuba in early 2026 have created a solemn backdrop for solidarity movements that continue to fight for justice. For myself, these international crises as well as issues closer to home have certainly taken a toll on my outlook and ability to continue showing up. When the opportunity to join the 32nd Che Brigade arose, I hoped this visit to Cuba and delivering critical aid would help return the spark in myself that drives my dedication to social movements at home and abroad. I was not prepared for the reality of how great an impact this trip would have.

Meeting Cuban people who are steadfast in their contributions to the revolution, folks from around the world who are committed to Cuban solidarity despite fighting their own battles at home, and of course my fellow Canadian brigadistas – these are connections I will cherish for the rest of my life. I left Cuba feeling energized to continue Cuban solidarity work through CCFA Toronto as well as with the organizations I work with across Turtle Island. Thank you to CCFA Toronto leadership and all who contributed toward the scholarship that allowed me to have this life-changing experience.

**Tia Wong, recipient of the
CCFA Toronto scholarship for the Che Guevara Brigade**

RALLY FOR CUBA



JULY 26 & AUG 30 1-2PM 361 UNIVERSITY AVE, TORONTO

Join our monthly protests against the US Blockade!



TMSU
TORONTO METROPOLITAN
STUDENTS' UNION



Canadian-Cuban Friendship
Association Toronto

STUDENTS SAY: END THE BLOCKADE!

The U.S. oil blockade has cut off Cubans' access to fuel since January 2026.

We stand in solidarity with Cubans in the ongoing blockade and fuel crisis.

Learn more and take action:



CCFA Toronto Statement: Against the US indictment of Raúl Castro

The Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto strongly condemns the U.S. Department of Justice's indictment of Raúl Castro announced May 20th 2026 over his alleged involvement in the downing of two aircrafts in 1996 which killed four. This indictment is not only spurious and hypocritical, but does not hold in terms of jurisdiction or international law.



Raúl Castro

The 1996 incident followed repeated violations of Cuban airspace by the organization Brothers to the Rescue, which the U.S. government was formally alerted to on numerous occasions and allowed to continue. The downing of the planes was in defense of Cuban airspace, after warnings that continued infringement would not be tolerated. As Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel wrote in Spanish on X:

“The U.S. lies and distorts the events surrounding the downing of the planes belonging to the narco-terrorist organization Brothers to the Rescue in 1996. It knows full well — given the abundance of documentary evidence — that no imprudent action was taken nor was international law violated.”

It is clear, however, that this is not the point of the indictment. Instead, it is a part of the recent escalations and aggression towards Cuba in particular and Latin America as a whole. This follows the similarly unwarranted indictment and illegal kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in January, an effort to access Venezuela's vast oil reserves and replace a government uncooperative with U.S. corporate interests. Raúl Castro's indictment will doubtless be used as a pretext to continue the policy of collective punishment of the Cuban people for the exercise of their sovereignty and self-determination in pursuing a socialist path of development. We echo the statement by Díaz-Cael:

“This is a political maneuver, devoid of any legal foundation, aimed solely at padding the fabricated dossier they use to justify the folly of a military aggression against Cuba.”

This also comes at a time when the US has killed nearly 200 people in extrajudicial strikes on fishing vessels in the Caribbean Sea, for which they have provided no evidence to

support the allegation that these were “drug boats.” As these strikes terrorize Caribbean waters, the U.S. continues to bankroll the Israeli genocide in Gaza, and carry out the Israel-U.S. war on Iran. It is intolerable that the U.S. government enacts despicable violence, economic siege, and collective punishment the world over in violation of international law, and then proceeds to bring trumped-up charges in domestic courts against world leaders who do not bow to their gun-boat diplomacy.

The Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto condemns the indictment of Raúl Castro as an escalation towards military intervention against Cuba. We call on the Carney administration to condemn the recent aggression, from the oil blockade, to the extraterritorial threat of tariffs which has bullied Canadian companies out of their business with Cuba, to this pretextual indictment. We call on the Canadian government to say NO to war with Cuba, and stand against further escalation by the U.S. administration. The Canadian government, along with all peaceable people, must stand up against U.S. imperialism and for Cuba's right to sovereignty and non-interference.



**Keyda Sloane and Elizabeth Hill, Co-Chairs,
Canadian-Cuban Friendship
Association Toronto**



Join the
**2026 Calixto Garcia
Solidarity Brigade**
NOV 29 - DEC 11

Calling all trade unionists, labour activists, students, educators, health and social service workers, community organizers, social justice activists, artists, writers, cultural workers and anyone committed to international solidarity and learning from Cuba's experience.

**Open to all ages and backgrounds - no
experience needed - just curiosity and
solidarity.**

Email: calixtogarciabrigade@gmail.com
Facebook: Calixto Garcia Solidarity

Cuba, the GAE and the United States: Anatomy of a State Slander



The Business Administration Group (GAE; Spanish: Grupo de Administración Empresarial) is not an opaque structure, nor is it parallel to the Cuban state; on the contrary, it has been a well-coordinated and proven effective response to the economic blockade that has historically sought to strangle the Cuban Revolution.

The United States government has once again acted with premeditated intent in its eagerness to create pretexts to discredit the Cuban Revolution, its historical leadership, and its leaders, thereby confusing both our people and international public opinion.

This is all part of a roadmap designed by ideologues of the Cuban-American far right, who pride themselves on being creative and unpredictable. Their strategy centers on the use of tools that drastically and unprecedentedly escalate the policy of maximum pressure.

The most recent sanctions against Cuba, announced on May 1st, are part of this plan. Executive Order 14404 targets the GAE, this time in conjunction with so-called secondary sanctions directed at any foreign actor that conducts any type of transaction with this Group, emphasizing pressure against financial institutions.

This is the most intense, disproportionate, and dangerous escalation in the recent history of relations between Cuba and the United States.

The deliberate aim is to isolate the country diplomatically, commercially, financially, and in terms of energy; to undermine the nation's sustainability; to condition dialogue; and to consider options for military aggression. They need to construct and consolidate a narrative of reputational discrediting against all the institutions that underpin our social project.

The GAE was born during the Special Period to confront the economic war, with a creative, unique, and genuinely Cuban vision. Its objective has always been to bring together companies with the capacity to generate the foreign currency and resources that the State requires to maintain and develop social achievements and contribute to the growth of various sectors and branches of national life.

The services rendered to the nation by the Business Administration Group are countless. The material and financial contributions of this organization can be seen in numerous examples: the construction of more than 10,000 homes in various provinces of the country, the creation of a Pioneer Camp and vacation programs for children, and the way in which the Cuban economy was sustained during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proceeds of this business activity have also been allocated to investments in the Lidio Ramón Pérez (Felton) thermoelectric plant in Holguín, and to the design and consolidation of major hydraulic works, including the East-West and North-South water transfer projects, for the benefit of millions of Cubans. Investments and repairs have also been made to polyclinics, family doctor's offices, and schools. All of these activities have been systematically reported to the leadership of the Party, the State, and the Government, and in every case, subject to the strictest oversight and auditing by the relevant authorities and mechanisms.

The GAE is not an opaque structure, nor is it parallel to the Cuban State; on the contrary, it has been a coordinated and provenly effective response to the economic blockade that has historically sought to stifle the Cuban Revolution.

As the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party and President of the Republic, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, stated at the 8th Party Congress, the business improvement process, initially developed within the Revolutionary Armed Forces, is a truly historic achievement. This experience later served the country, and its remarkable results contribute to the national economy.

Thousands of men and women, over the past 30 years, have been discreet guardians of the country's resources and deserve recognition. Although their work has not been sufficiently publicized, it speaks for itself, rising above the state-sponsored slander orchestrated from Washington.

Today, as the will of the Cuban people is expressed in a process of change, contained in the Government's Economic and Social Program, this organization is an active participant in the transformations of the country's business system.

The GAE is not the product of secrecy, nor of elites, and certainly not a means for the enrichment of a select few. On the contrary, it is one of the many examples that, along our path, have allowed us to resist the constant aggression of the United States government. Its history was built, in the words of the Leader of the Cuban Revolution, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, "without the slightest desire for the limelight, as serious matters are done."

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Cuba

Source: cubaminrex.cu. Published on June 2, 2026

Canadian Network on Cuba - Update from 1st Meeting of 2026-28 Executive Committee

Greetings to all Canadian Network on Cuba member organizations!

Last month, our network held a successful and unifying 12th Biennial Convention, where we welcomed guests from the Cuban Embassy and the Cuban Consulate in Toronto, Dr. Alex Carreras Pons (Director of Bilateral Relations with Cuba's Ministry of Public Health), La Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba (TCSQ-C), the National Network on Cuba (NNOC), CODEPINK, and many more observers, special guests and speakers from labour, peace, and solidarity organizations from across Canada. Our events on both evenings that weekend were packed and we drew enthusiastic audiences in solidarity with Cuba.

We also welcomed delegates from new CNC member organizations, the Cuba Solidarity Committee of Regina (CSCR) and the Cuba Solidarity Association of Hamilton (CSAH)!

We are pleased to provide you with a brief update following the first meeting of the CNC Executive Committee for the 2026-2028 term, which took place on June 23rd. Members of the Executive Committee decided to continue on with the existing roles and responsibilities as the previous term, and they are as follows:

- Julio Fonseca - Asociación de Cubanos Residentes en Toronto "Juan Gualberto Gómez" - Co-Chair
- Cikiah Thomas - Global Afrikan Congress (Scarborough) - Spokesperson
- Rob Crooks - Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association - Vancouver - Webmaster & Social Media Communications
- Tess Stuber - Young Communist League of Canada (Toronto) - Treasurer
- Cam Scott - Manitoba-Cuba Solidarity Committee (Winnipeg) - Campaigns Coordinator
- Isaac Saney - Nova Scotia-Cuba Association (Halifax) - Spokesperson
- Samantha Hislop - Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association - Toronto - Co-Chair

We will soon be sending out the final versions of the resolutions passed at the 12th Biennial CNC Convention, which will be posted on the CNC website as well.

The Executive Committee is eager to let you know that we are launching a renewed material aid and political campaign, under the canopy of "No War on Cuba!". Campaigns Coordinator Cam Scott will be sending communications

about this shortly, and a meeting for CNC members will be set to share the plans and details for the campaign, and discuss how CNC member groups can be supported in their local region.

The CNC Executive Committee looks forward to working with our member groups together, to continue the crucial work we have in front of us right now of defending the sovereignty and rights of the Cuban people, countering the ongoing manufacturing of consent for U.S. imperialist intervention in Cuba, and improving Canada's weak and deteriorated foreign policy on Cuba and lobbying for a stronger, better response from our country to support Cuba at this time.

Look out for more updates from the Executive Committee in the coming days and weeks!



**In solidarity,
Samantha Hislop
Canadian Network on Cuba**

Cuba resumes production of cytostatic drugs



In a context of severe economic limitations and a tightening of the blockade, Cuba takes a decisive step to support care for cancer patients. The AICA Laboratories cytostatic drug plant restarted its production operations after completing an investment process aimed at expanding its capacity, news that reaffirms the Cuban State's commitment to prioritizing the life and health of its people.

The president of BioCubaFarma, Mayda Mauri Pérez, welcomed the Minister of Public Health, José Angel Portal Miranda, to the facility during a visit that highlighted the integrated work between the biopharmaceutical industry, the Ministry of Public Health (Minsap), and the Cuban government—a key factor in achieving this reactivation despite the current complex situation.

Continued on the next page

According to a Facebook post by the biopharmaceutical group, during the tour, specialists explained that the restart is a phased and controlled process, in which each production phase is activated gradually to ensure technological stability and the quality of the medications.

The plant, now with increased capacity, is responsible for supplying 16 cytostatic drugs to the National Program for the Care of Cancer Patients. Production will resume prioritizing those medications of greatest clinical criticality, according to the schedules agreed upon with the Ministry of Public Health. Attending the restart of operations at the cytostatic drug plant of Laboratorios AICA, Portal Miranda noted that, despite economic constraints, its reopening will contribute to ensuring the availability of medications for cancer treatment. For her part, Mayda Mauri Pérez emphasized the current situation and highlighted the strong alliance between the biopharmaceutical and healthcare sectors as an essential pillar for maintaining the supply of cancer medications to the Cuban population, despite the intensification of the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the United States.

The visit also included the participation of oncologists, who exchanged views with management on therapeutic priorities, thus ensuring that production directly responds to the clinical needs of patients.

The reactivation of this plant is not an isolated event: it is a clear example of how the Cuban biotechnology industry and the public health system work in complete partnership, under a single objective: guaranteeing the availability of essential medications at the most critical time. In a country facing shortages induced from abroad, each drug produced in this plant represents sovereignty, hope and a commitment to the right to health for all Cubans.

Source: Granma

Published on June 5, 2026

A Letter from Charles Konkle, CCFA Toronto member

Hello Elizabeth and friends of Cuba,

Thank you for forwarding these reports and for continuing this important work in support of the Cuban people.

I would like to add a personal note in memory of my best friend, Ron Brydges, who has just passed away. Ron was a strong supporter of Cuba and a leading member of the CCFA. I know he would have been deeply pleased to hear that both China and Russia have recently stepped forward to

support Cuba during this difficult time.

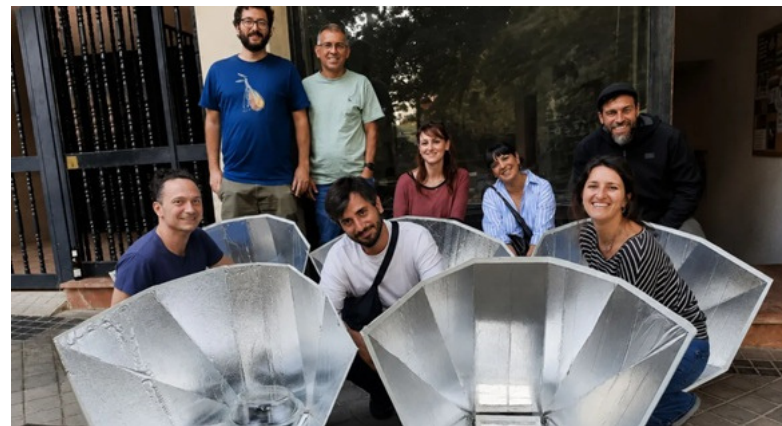
China's assistance with solar power, electrical support, and humanitarian aid is helping Cuba move toward greater energy independence, while Russia's recent fuel support has provided badly needed short-term relief during the current energy crisis. These acts of support deserve recognition and thanks from those of us who care about Cuba's sovereignty and the well-being of its people.

At the same time, I believe Canada should be doing much more. Canada has a long history of friendship with Cuba, and our response should be stronger, more visible, and more independent. Humanitarian support for Cuba should not be weakened by political pressure or hesitation.

In Ron's memory, and in solidarity with the Cuban people, I want to thank the CCFA and all those who continue to keep attention on Cuba's needs, dignity, and sovereignty.

**In solidarity,
Charles Konkle**

Solar cookers built in Spain for Cuba



Volunteer Spaniards learned how to build solar cookers using simple, low-cost materials

A workshop on the construction of solar cookers was held this Saturday, June 6, in the Madrid municipality of Torrejón de Ardoz, Spain, with the aim of sending them to schools in Santiago de Cuba in July, its organizers reported on the social network Facebook.

The workshop, attended by two monitors and 10 participants, led to the construction of 13 concentrating solar kitchens.

Solar cookers are mainly made of cardboard and aluminum foil; they are portable and easy to move. Operating it also requires a pot, preferably dark, and a glass bowl, or even the door of an old washing machine, elements that create a

Continued on the next page

greenhouse effect to concentrate solar heat.

At the end of the construction, two kitchens were tested in the courtyard, and it was shown that it reached a boil in a few minutes.

Thanks to this system it is possible to cook food using only the energy of the sun, without the need for electricity, gas or firewood. It is a simple, economical and environmentally friendly solution that can be easily replicated in different parts of the world.

This initiative, organized by Medicuba Spain and Sodepaz, combines sustainability, international cooperation and citizen participation.

Source: Cubadebate
Published on June 7, 2026

Teaching: A Vocation of Infinite Love



Laura María Lorenzo confesses that it's a very beautiful career, but also a very complex one

Embarking on a teaching career for the first time demands courage, a deep commitment to future generations, and unwavering devotion to shaping young minds.

Four recent graduates from Sancti Spíritus's Rafael María de Mendive and Vladislav Volkov pedagogical schools—Daniela de la Caridad Fernández, Lázaro Jorge Castillo, Laura María Lorenzo, and Melissa Laura Vega—are already embracing that challenge. They have begun their professional lives at the Julio Antonio Mella elementary school in the provincial capital.

"I trained here from preschool through sixth grade," says Daniela. "Now, it's incredibly rewarding to work alongside the very teachers who taught me. I turn to them for advice as I learn to give love to the children, just as they did for me. My mom is proud to see me become a teacher."

The recent culmination exercises for the 2025–2026 school year saw around one hundred young graduates ready to reinvigorate the territory's strained teaching coverage.

Among them is Lázaro Jorge Castillo, the municipality's only Music graduate. Drawn to art as more than mere entertainment from a young age—and combining that with his love for children—teaching was the natural path for him. "To those still training in my specialty, I urge you not to give up. Practice and study music relentlessly, because that is the foundation of our work as teachers," he advises.

Laura María Lorenzo now leads a class of 40 first-graders—a responsibility she initially faced with fear during her professional practice, but never backed down from. "That experience hardened me and gave me the confidence to tackle the courses ahead," she asserts. For Laura, teaching requires endless patience, constant study, and above all, love for children.

Melissa Laura Vega admits the toughest part of her training was "facing parents and getting the little ones to adapt to my teaching style—something that came with time, after a lot of dedication, patience, and affection."

All four are grateful for the support of the entire Julio Antonio Mella staff, who have been attentive to their needs and eager to welcome them into the school community. Director Alberto Pereira Díaz says: "Having them with us is an immense responsibility and an enormous privilege. We must guide them, support them in these early steps, and help them grow as educators."

Protected by Resolution No. 69 of 2025 and backed by local educational authorities, the director ensured these young teachers received a salary throughout their internships.

Far from believing their journey is over, they know the real work has just begun. They now look forward to earning their degrees and perfecting their craft day by day in the classrooms of Sancti Spíritus.

Source: Escambray
Published on June 7, 2026. Edited for style



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 August 15th (indicate "Amistad Submission" in the subject line). Please keep it under 1,200 words.

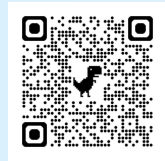
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CCFA Toronto Statement

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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