

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500

July 28, 2021

Dear President Biden:

While there has been much attention paid to the unprecedented social protests that erupted in Cuba in the last weeks, there has been far less attention paid to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Cuba that was one of the drivers of the protests.

As news reports and studies have made clear, Cuba is currently facing severe shortages of basic medicines, syringes for vaccination, food, and other vital materials as they battle COVID-19. These shortages are causing needless suffering and deaths.

We are writing to urge you to put saving Cuban lives ahead of all other priorities by suspending U.S. regulations that endanger the lives of Cuban people by preventing humanitarian aid from reaching Cuba.

In making this request, we do not wish to minimize the political significance of either the protests themselves nor of this moment for Cubans and Cuban-Americans.

However, we believe that at this moment of acute global danger, U.S. policy towards Cuba should be governed by one overriding principle, irrespective of political considerations: that we should do everything possible to ensure the health and well-being of the Cuban people by removing all obstacles to the flow of vital medical aid and food.

While Cuba's economic crisis has been caused by numerous factors, U.S. sanctions are clearly contributing to the worsening humanitarian situation the island is facing, and your administration should take the necessary steps to alleviate the suffering of the Cuban people.

Specifically, we urge you to:

- 1) Lift all restrictions and caps of family and donative remittances that could help Cubans purchase food and medicine on the island;
- 2) Remove the requirement for specific licenses to send medical supplies to Cuba and the "end-use verification" requirement for humanitarian imports, both of which vastly increase the red tape in sending aid to the island from the U.S., and which discourage both donors and sellers; and

3) Lift all restrictions on banking and financial transactions related to humanitarian aid as well as restrictions on the percentage of U.S.-made material used in foreign- produced medical supplies that inhibit the purchase or distribution of humanitarian aid internationally.

We hope your administration can act on this request urgently.

Yours truly,

Caribbean Agroecology Institute

Center for an Urban Future

Center for Democracy in the Americas

Christopher Reynolds Foundation

Cuba Educational Travel

CubaOne Foundation

Environmental Defense Fund

Foundation for a Civil Society

Friends of Havana eV

Fund for Reconciliation and Development

Global Health Partners

Havana Preservation Initiative

MEDICC

mediCuba

Ocean Doctor

Project Por Amor

The Marti Project

The Nature of Cities

WOLA

Academics and policy experts signing in an individual capacity:

Anthony M. Tung (New School)*

Belmont Freeman (Architect)*

Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas (Rockefeller Brothers Fund)*

Carlos Fernandez-Aballi (Entrepreneur)*

Carlos Pomares (Essex County Board of Commissioners)*

Carlos Rodriguez (Pratt Institute)*

Claudia Castillo (Pratt Institute)*

David Burney (Pratt Institute)*

Debra Andreades (Urban Planner)*

Esther da Costa Meyer (Princeton University)*

Gabriel Vignoli (New School)*

Jill Hamberg (Pratt Institute)*

John Kirk (Dalhousie University)*

Katrin Hansing (Baruch College, City University New York)*

Michael Cohen (New School)*

Peter Orris (University of Illinois, School of Public Health)*

Ron Shiffman (Pratt Institute)*

Rosa Lowinger (Conservator) *

**Institutions and affiliations included for identification purposes only.*

