

The blockade, the real disaster

Statement on the political instrumentalisation of the hurricane "Irma" against Cuba

"Irma", one of the most powerful hurricanes since records began, has hit a number of Caribbean islands, parts of Cuba and the US-state of Florida.

Hurricanes are natural phenomena, but the catastrophic impact on those affected is due to social and international circumstances. In countries of the so-called Third World, natural catastrophes increase the already existing relations of power and injustice.

Cuba is known both internally and externally for its "potentiation of solidarity" - not only, but especially in the case of natural catastrophes, despite intensified adverse conditions. For more than half a century, Cuba has been threatened by a commercial, financial blockade by the USA, which has been condemned annually since 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly. Despite the alleged rapprochement between the two countries, the blockade policy under US President Obama has not been changed in the crucial points.

In previous cases of hurricane destruction in Cuba, US presidents temporarily suspended the blockade in parts to allow the supply of medicines, food and building materials. US President Donald Trump, on the other hand, under the impression of the catastrophic effects of "Irma", announced, that the blockade would be exacerbated.

The governments of this world, including those of the European countries, vote against this US aggression policy every year before the United Nations, but in many cases without following the practical consequences. In view of the current catastrophe, it is time to name the blockade, including its tightening, as what it is: a massive violation of international law. The international community has finally to draw conclusions.

The US blockade against Cuba is not a bilateral issue. It has a worldwide impact and affects not only the Cuban people, but also aid organizations, companies, citizens and governments outside Cuba and the USA. In the context of Hurricane Irma, hundreds of thousands of euros have already been donated to the Cuban people affected by the hurricane. But even this initiative of European non-governmental organizations is affected by the blockade imposed by the USA. The Dutch ING bank für example refuses to carry out transfers with the keyword "Cuba" to a German collective account because it fears punitive measures from the USA. Similar cases are known from Switzerland. The banking institutions concerned thus participate in the violation of human rights and international law. This co-operation, which is also against European law, must finally end.

We demand from the governments of our countries:

- The imposition of penalties - for example according those of the EU "Blocking Regulation" of 1996 - against banking institutions which refuse to carry out Cuba related transfers, especially in the field of disaster Relief.

- Immediate offer of aid deliveries for Cuba.
- A clear commitment against the United States' human rights violating blockade policy

and concrete measures for ending it.

We demand from the US administration:

- Enable immediate delivery of urgently needed products from the USA to Cuba.
- The cessation of the blockade against Cuba, which is against international law.
- The end of the interference in the internal affairs of Cuba

Hands off the self-determination right of the Cuban people!

First signatories:

Friendship Society FRG-Cuba
Association of Switzerland-Cuba
Netzwerk Cuba (Germany)
Cuba Sí (Germany)

We invite further organizations and groups to support this declaration.

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