

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 760

Expressing solidarity with Cuban citizens demonstrating peacefully for fundamental freedoms, condemning the Cuban regime's acts of repression, and calling for the immediate release of arbitrarily detained Cuban citizens.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 1, 2021

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (for herself, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Mr. SIRES) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing solidarity with Cuban citizens demonstrating peacefully for fundamental freedoms, condemning the Cuban regime's acts of repression, and calling for the immediate release of arbitrarily detained Cuban citizens.

Whereas, on July 11, 2021, thousands of Cubans took to the streets to express their dissatisfaction with Cuba's continued repression of its people, its worsening economic situation, and shortages of food and medicine;

Whereas these demonstrations were the largest protests on the island in over 25 years, with courageous Cuban men, women, and youth taking to the streets in cities and towns across the country;

Whereas the Cuban regime arbitrarily denied a request to allow a peaceful demonstration on November 15, 2021, which the organizers have specified would be “against violence, to demand that all the rights of all Cubans be respected, for the release of political prisoners and for the solution of our differences through democratic and peaceful means”;

Whereas the Cuban regime also denied an earlier request for protests to be held on November 20, 2021, stating that date was off-limits because it would conflict with “national defense day” and claiming without evidence that “subversive organizations” with links to the United States Government were promoting the protest;

Whereas artists, academics, activists, and journalists have been long engaged in ongoing protests calling for an end to Cuba’s persecution, censorship, arbitrary detention, and other human rights violations;

Whereas expanded internet access is foundational for the Cuban people to be able to exercise their internationally recognized human rights of access to information and freedom of expression, creating opportunities for Cubans to communicate more openly with one another and for their voices to be heard around the world;

Whereas numerous public reports and first-hand accounts revealed that the Cuban regime deliberately blocked access to certain websites and messaging apps, throttled internet access, and launched targeted attacks to disrupt the internet connections of private Cuban citizens;

Whereas during the July protests, regime security officials physically assaulted domestic and international journalists, including Associated Press correspondent Ramon

Espinosa, and prevented dozens of reporters from leaving their homes to report on the protests, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists;

Whereas Cuba is among the most restrictive countries in the world for journalists, ranked 171 of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' 2021 World Press Freedom Index;

Whereas Cuban human rights groups report there were already at least 150 political prisoners in Cuba before the July 11 protests, and Cuba has reportedly been responsible for over 400 additional arrests or forced disappearances since then;

Whereas hundreds of Cubans who participated in the July protests continue to face unjust detention and other forms of retribution, including dozens who have been sentenced in summary trials without due process and dozens of others who remain unaccounted for;

Whereas United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet expressed concern about "the excessive force against demonstrators in Cuba and the arrest of a large number of people, including journalists" and noted "it is particularly worrying that these include individuals allegedly held incommunicado and people whose whereabouts are unknown";

Whereas, on July 25, 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the foreign ministers of 20 countries issued a statement to "condemn the mass arrests and detentions of protestors in Cuba and call on the government to respect the universal rights and freedoms of the Cuban people, including the free flow of information to all Cubans";

Whereas, on October 17, 2021, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Brian A. Nichols said “Denying the right of peaceful assembly to Cubans this November 15th shows the Cuban regime’s disregard for the human rights and freedoms of its people. This and other blatant attempts to intimidate their citizens is a clear sign the regime won’t listen to what Cubans have to say.”;

Whereas over the summer, Cuba has seen record numbers of COVID–19 infections and deaths, pushing hospitals and health centers to near collapse; and

Whereas basic medicines and common goods have become scarce throughout the country and economists estimate Cuba’s economic conditions will become even worse in the coming months: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) expresses strong solidarity with the Cuban
3 people who took to the streets throughout the coun-
4 try on July 11, 2021, and with those who plan to
5 peacefully demonstrate on November 15, 2021, to
6 once again express their desire to live in a free coun-
7 try with self-determination;

8 (2) condemns the Cuban regime’s violent re-
9 pression of peaceful protesters and journalists and
10 its other efforts to restrict the Cuban people’s right
11 to peacefully protest, freely express themselves, and
12 exercise their other universal human rights;

1 (3) calls on Cuba to end all efforts to block or
2 throttle the Cuban people’s internet access or re-
3 strict their access to certain websites or applications
4 and to permit them to freely communicate online, in-
5 cluding during future demonstrations and peaceful
6 protests;

7 (4) calls on members of the Cuban Revolu-
8 tionary Armed Forces, the Cuban Ministry of the In-
9 terior, and Cuba’s National Revolutionary Police
10 Force to not arrest or detain peaceful protesters,
11 provide due process to all individuals, and imme-
12 diately release all political prisoners and arbitrarily
13 detained individuals still in their custody; and

14 (5) urges the Biden administration to—

15 (A) work with Cuban activists, civil society
16 groups, private United States companies, and
17 the international community to expand internet
18 access for the Cuban people;

19 (B) support the Cuban people’s inherent
20 right to demonstrate peacefully in the name of
21 democracy and human rights;

22 (C) continue to stand behind the aspira-
23 tions of the Cuban people for freedom, for dig-
24 nity, for prosperity, and the basic rights that

1 they have been denied by the regime since
2 1959;

3 (D) assess whether the United States can
4 develop methods to allow remittances, medical
5 supplies, and other forms of support from the
6 United States to directly benefit the Cuban peo-
7 ple in ways that alleviate humanitarian suf-
8 fering without providing United States dollars
9 to the Cuban military; and

10 (E) rally the international community to
11 join the United States in condemning human
12 rights abuses and honoring the Cuban people's
13 demands for freedom.

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