

From the Acropolis to support The Five

The executive of the Hellenic-Cuban Friendship Association and Solidarity (AHCAS) visited nearby the famous Acropolis from there to demand the unconditional release of the Cuban Five Heroes.

The action included the distribution , to the hundreds of tourists visiting the Acropolis daily, a statement denouncing the injustice committed against The Five and demand the immediate release of the Cuban Heroes, and the lifting of the criminal blockade imposed on Cuba by the USA.

Below the text of the Declaration distributed:

FREEDOM FOR THE 5 CUBAN PATRIOTS IMPRISONED IN THE USA

For the past 15 years five Cuban patriots have been held in US prisons for the sole reason that, based on specific facts, they uncovered sabotage, the planting of bombs in hotels etc. being planned and orchestrated by anti-Cuban organizations established in the US, enjoying US state support. Sentenced to serve lengthy prison terms on the basis of false charges at a trial that was a travesty of justice, as no evidence was provided to back up the accusations. These patriots are Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and Antonio Guerrero. Only René González has been released, having served his sentence and returned to Cuba, where, together with the Cuban people, he is struggling to obtain the immediate and unconditional release of the others.

We protest their unacceptable conditions of detention, the fact that they are forbidden to or hindered from meeting with their families and lawyers and the attempts made by the US authorities to break their morale.

We demand their immediate and unconditional release and return to their homeland.

We demand that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the

USA be lifted and that the “Common Position” of the European Union to the detriment of Cuba be abolished.

We stand by the side of the Cuban people in their struggle to live in a sovereign country and to build a society with free healthcare, education, sport and culture for the entire people.

Cuba Provides Services for Latin American Visually Challenged

Havana.- Nearly 100 Latin American patients have received services at Cuba's National Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, it was reported during the 7th Congress of the National Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, which ends Thursday in the Cuban capital.

Those 100 were part of more than 1,600 blind and visually impaired people who have been served at the center in the city of Bejucal, in the western province of Mayabeque, according to the association's president, Dr. Jose Blanch.

Blanch highlighted Cuba's achievements in integrating blind and visually impaired people into society with actions such as the Braille literacy campaign, which has benefited more than 4,000 people.

He also highlighted the creation of special schools in all regions of the nation, and continuing education for visually impaired Cubans, as evidenced by a growing number of university graduates in careers such as psychology, law, and physical rehabilitation, among other.

Meanwhile, during the final day of the Congress, the Latin American Union of the Blind will grant the Cuban association a special recognition for its achievements and contributions to other countries of the region.

US Blockade Threatens Prensa Latina's Work at UN

Havana, (Prensa Latina) The refusal of M&T Bank to continue providing services to the Cuban diplomatic missions in the United States has also affected the office of the Prensa Latina Latin America News Agency based at the United Nations.

Since March 2010, the bank has held the account for the Prensa Latina office at the headquarters of the world organization in New York, where the agency has worked for more than five decades.

However, on July 12, the agency's correspondent received a letter signed by Peter Senica, vice president of M&T Bank, headquartered in Baltimore, announcing the decision to "close the division that provides services to diplomatic entities and all related accounts, included that of employees and relatives."

Headquartered in Havana and nearing its 55th anniversary, Prensa Latina is recognized worldwide as an international news agency specializing in Latin America and the Caribbean, with 30 offices worldwide.

It is also a founding member of the Latin American Union of News Agencies and has been an active participant in the context of the World Congress of News Agencies, the most recent of which was held in Saudi Arabia this month.

The Prensa Latina representation at the U.N. renewed and received in January this year, a special license granted by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Treasury Department, effective until 2015.

That document, framed as "regulations of Cuban assets control" (blockade), authorized M&T Bank to "open, maintain, and operate the account on behalf of Prensa Latina," "solely to cover its personal expenses."

Three days ago, the Cuban Interests Section in Washington denounced "the existing

restrictions resulting from the U.S. Government's policy of economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba."

Cuba: an Example in Rehabilitation

HAVANA, Cuba, (acn) The members of the National Association of the Blind (ANCI) gave on Friday the Baston de Cristal award to Army General Raul Castro, president of the councils of State and Ministers.

The ANCI gave the Baston de Cristal to Army General Raul Castro during the closing ceremony of its 4th Congress, which was received by Salvador Valdes, member of the Politburo and Vice-president of the Council of State, the Granma newspaper reported on Friday.

Also during the closing ceremony, Jose Blanch was ratified as president of the National Council of the ANCI, while the Latin American Association of the Blind (ULAC) gave the Cuban organization the Enrique Elizalde award for its notable work, already turned into a referent for the region.

Cuba's achievements in the reincorporation of blind and visually impaired persons into society as well as in rehabilitation were highlighted in an inclusive interview with ACN by Brazilian Volmir Raimundi, president of the ULAC, who attended the Congress.

Latin American Association of the Blind Acknowledges Cuba's Work

HAVANA, Cuba.- (acn) The Latin American Association of the Blind (ULAC) gave on Thursday in this capital the Enrique Elizalde Award to the National Association for the Blind (ANCI), for the notable of this organization, already turned into a referent for the region.

The achievements of the Caribbean island in terms of the reintegration of blind and visually impaired persons into society are part of this work, highlighted Brazilian Volmir Raimundi,

president of the ULAC, during an exclusive interview with ACN. Raimundi participated in the 7th Congress of the ANCI, which wound up on Thursday, attended by over 200 delegates from around the country.

The executive also underlined the incorporation of these persons with special needs into education and the guarantee for the continuation of studies until university level of several blind persons in degree courses of Psychology and Law, among others.

In contrast to other states, where realities are very different, Raimundi stressed the attention received by the almost 32,000 members of the ANCI, an organization that has national coverage and gets to the smallest and most isolated parts of the island.

Vietnam Ratifies Willingness to Expand Cooperation with Cuba

HAVANA, Cuba.- (acn) Vietnam's Prime Minister (PM) Nguyen Tan Dung ratified his country's willingness to work hard with Cuba in a more practical way for mutual benefit.

While meeting with Cuba's ambassador to that Asian country, Herminio Lopez, Dung expressed his appreciation for the valuable support received from the Caribbean island during Vietnam's struggle for its national liberation, as well as for his country's current development, the Prensa Latina news agency reported.

He urged the recently accredited diplomatic representative to continue boosting bonds between organizations and ministries of the two countries, in an effective implementation of agreements reached and in the speeding up of new cooperation programs.

The PM placed particular emphasis on the economy, trade and investment, as well as on potentials in education, pharmacy, science and technology, to which he added the wish that companies of telecommunications and agriculture also contribute to Cuba.

Cuban Anti-terrorist to Hearing of International Commission in London

HAVANA, Cuba, Dec 4 (acn) An international investigation commission will hear in London the testimony of Cuban Rene Gonzalez, one of the five anti-terrorist fighters who were given unfair and extremely long sentences in the United States in 2001.

At the initiative of the Voice for the Five Campaign, the commission will open sessions March 7 and 8 next year at the prestiged Law Society in London, according to media reports from Washington.

Rene Gonzalez, the only one of the Five to have returned to Cuba after having met his prison sentence, will take part at the hearing along relatives of victims of terror actions undertaken against Cuba, lawyers and politicians, according to the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five.

The international campaign for the Cuban heroes was launched October 30 with the participation of renowned personalities in the world of arts, communications, law, politics and representatives of social organizations.

Some of the figures with the Voices for the Five Campaign include US political analyst Noam Chomsky, German writer Gunter Grass, former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Nobel Peace Laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel and British actress Emma Thompson, among many others.

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González were arrested September 12, 1998 in Miami after they infiltrated Florida-based violent organizations that planned terrorist actions against Cuba. In 2001, they were submitted to a biased Miami trial that gave them unfair sentences amidst a hostile atmosphere raised by local journalists and media outlets paid by the US government.

Cuba is willing to Talk Alan Gross Case with Washington

HAVANA, Cuba, Dec 4 (acn) Cuba reiterated its willingness to hold a dialog with the United States aimed at finding a solution on reciprocal grounds to the case of US citizen Alan Gross, who is serving a prison sentence for having violated Cuban law.

The general director for the United States at the Cuban Foreign Ministry, Josefina Vidal, made it clear that such dialog must include Cuba's humanitarian concerns related to the four anti-terrorists held in US prisons.

Gerardo Hernandez, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González are currently serving prolonged and unfair prison sentences for crimes they did not commit and that were never proven, the diplomat said in a statement on Tuesday.

Their incarceration is having a high human cost for them and their relatives. They have not seen their children grow; they have lost parents and siblings; they are facing health problems and have separated from their relatives and their nation for over 15 years.

Vidal referred to a communiqué issued on December 2 by the spokesperson's office with the US Department of State insisting in the immediate and unconditional release of Gross, by saying that his incarceration has no justification.

Alan Gross was arrested, legally processed and punished for having violated Cuban law after he introduced a US-sponsored plan aimed at destabilizing Cuban constitutional order by setting up illegal and covert communications systems based on non-commercial technology, the diplomat explained.

Vidal said that such actions constitute serious crimes, which are severely punished in most countries, including the United States, and she added that Gross has received respectful and humane treatment since he was arrested.

Cuba understands the humanitarian concerns related to the Gross case, but also considers that

the US administration is directly accountable for Gross' situation and that of his family, and that Washington must jointly work with the Cuban government to find a solution, she noted.

The statement also refers to US media reports on a letter sent by 66 US democratic, republican and independent senators to President Barack Obama about the case. The senators called on the President to give humanitarian priority to the Gross case and to take any step in the national interest and in an expedite way to achieve his release, which would have their support.

Nordic Solidarity Brigade Visits Cuba

ARTEMISA, Cuba, Dec 3 (acn) Activists from Sweden, the U.K., Finland, Denmark and Russia make up the 57 contingent of the Nordic Brigade in Solidarity with Cuba, which arrived Monday in the western province of Artemisa.

The activists come to take a first-hand look at Cuban reality, which is being distorted or silenced in their own countries. The visitors, who will visit several community projects on the island, are scheduled to pay a visit till December 22, said Swedish activist Lars Oberg.

They will also meet with relatives of the five Cuban anti-terrorist fighters who were given extremely long sentences in the United States after they infiltrated Florida-based terrorist organizations, said Luis Marron, an official with the Cuban Friendship Institute.

The solidarity brigade is also scheduled to visit several sites of interest in the provinces of Pinar del Rio, Villa Clara and Havana and they will also do voluntary work in citrus fruit plantations and in ongoing reconstruction of the Julio Antonio Mella international camp, where they are currently staying.

British citizen Jacn Haninaton said he was interested in having a closer look at the cause of the five anti-terrorists, whom he has learned of on the Internet, while Swedish Tara Alden said that since this is her first visit to Cuba, she is interested in learning about Cuban culture and the humane solidairty and hospitality of the Cuban people. She said that she expects to make

friends here in Cuba to return each year for new experiences.

Cuba with the Lowest Infant Mortality Rate in its History

HAVANA, Cuba, Dec 4 (acn) Cuba celebrated Latin American Medicine Day on Tuesday as the country has the lowest infant mortality rate in its history, according to Health Minister Roberto Morales.

In statements to local television, Doctor Morales said that the country registered a 4.2 infant mortality rate, an indicator keeps stable in all Cuban provinces within a range going from 3 to only 5.5 percent, he said. The result proves the sustainable work underway in the Cuban health sector.

Book on Cuban Educational System Presented in Berlin

HAVANA, Cuba, Dec 4 (acn) Doctor Jürgen Kupfer presented in the city of Berlin his book Cuba: Education and School for All, during a meeting attended by friends of the Caribbean island and German professors interested on this topic.

The text, the first of its kind in that European nation, is the result of several years of research work carried out by this German pedagogue and answers questions on Cuba's educational system, the www.cubaminrex.cu Web site reported on Tuesday.

Likewise, the book shows, with objectivity, the island's achievements in the field of education and states the negative effects of the U.S. blockade against Cuba.

The author underlined the importance of Jose Marti's thinking in the conception of Cuban education and stressed the efforts of the revolutionary government to expand education to all

places in the country as a basic right of the people.

The meeting was organized with the support of the Berlin-Cuba Friendship Association and the society Education for Peace and Policy for Peace, of Berlin's Education and Science Union.

Cuba and Japan Sign Bilateral Accord in Medical Technologies

HAVANA, Cuba, Dec 3 (acn) Cuba and Japan reached a bilateral accord to set up a collaboration framework in advanced medical technologies with the participation of Japan's private sector.

According to PL news agency, the accord was penned by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency and a Cuban delegation from the ministries of foreign trade and investment, and health.

The Cuban delegation met with Japanese government officials from the ministries of Economy, Trade and Industry, and with representatives of the Japan-Cuba Friendship Parliamentary League, as well of the recently created Medical Excellence Japan organization.

The mission was headed by Rigoberto Enoa, director of economic policies for Asia and Oceania with the Cuban Foreign Trade Ministry, and it also included eminent doctors with the National Health Committee at the Cuban Parliament.