

Raul Castro calls for effective mosquito campaign

HAVANA, Cuba, Mar 7 (acn) Cuban President Raul Castro called for more discipline and effectiveness in implementing the current anti-mosquito campaign island wide as he headed a meeting on the effort to prevent the spread of diseases transmitted by that vector.

According to Granma newspaper, during the meeting at the Health Ministry, the President called for strong actions within the frames of the law against those who do not abide by established measures and he also called for constant efforts to guarantee the sanitations of Cuban cities.

The epidemiologic situation in The Americas continues to be complicated with 31 countries reporting local Zika transmission.

Cuba has thus far detected two Zika cases imported from Venezuela and keeps on the alert and studies all unspecific fever cases.

During the meeting, a videoconference with health, government and communist party authorities, members of the armed forces and the interior ministry and community organizations, revealed that by the end of the second stage of the campaign more than 12 thousand homes were not open to fumigation actions, though the figure is lower than the previous week, Granma reported.

Inappropriate planning of actions, failure to announce dwellers about the fumigation days and other subjective factors were main causes to fail in the fumigation of those homes, the paper explained.

The meeting reported a decrease in mosquito presence in labor centers and advancement in sanitation work in risky areas.

Raul Castro was interested in the collection of solid waste in the capital, which generates 23 thousand 800 meters a day, out of which some 6 thousand meters of solid waste remain on the streets uncollected, due to the lack of collection trucks.

This is not just one more campaign, said Raul Castro and insisted in making the effort successful, on time and in a comprehensive manner.

Cuba condemns attacks against Brazil democracy

HAVANA, Cuba, Mar 7 (acn) The Cuban Foreign Ministry condemned the attack against the constitution and democracy in Brazil, which has made former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva a target for unjustifiable and disproportionate judicial and parliamentary actions.

A statement by the Ministry on Sunday reads that the manipulation of the fight on corruption is aimed at discrediting and demonizing Lula da Silva and toppling the legitimate government led by Dilma Rousseff, thus overthrowing the progressive process in this region.

Lula and Dilma have proven their admirable braveness and determination to counter these actions against them, reads the statement.

The Government of the Republic of Cuba has no doubts that truth will prevail and that the working people of Brazil will close ranks in their defense and the safeguarding of their political and social achievements under the Workers Party.

People of Cuba and Venezuela pay homage to Hugo Chavez

HAVANA, Cuba, Mar 7 (acn) Cuban and Venezuelan people paid homage on Friday in Havana to Commander Hugo Chavez “the best friend the Cuban people has ever had” as defined by Fidel Castro, on the occasion of the 3rd anniversary of his death on March 5th.

Before the Simon Bolivar Monument on the Avenue of the Presidents in Havana, a number of renowned figures, representatives of social and grass roots organization and friendship with Cuba associations remembered the ideas of the Venezuelan leader in favor of integration and changes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The ceremony with the presence of Alicia Corredera, Vice President of the Cuban Institute of Friendship Among the Peoples, ICAP, the General Director of the Foreign Ministry’s Latin American and Caribbean Division, Manuel Aguilera and Venezuela’s ambassador in Havana, Ali Rodriguez began with the people singing “El Regreso del Amigo (The Return of the Friend) dedicated to Chavez by the island’s singer songwriter Raul Torres.

Rodriguez Araque spoke about Chavez who shared bad and glorious moments and followed the ideals and practice of El Libertador after spending long periods of time studying and carrying out Bolivar’s thoughts aimed at working for the unity of Our America.

The Venezuelan leader’s project went beyond the borders, said the ambassador of the South American nation and ended by shouting Viva Chavez por Siempre, (Long Live Chavez Forever).

Also recalling the rebelliousness and human character of Chavez were Julio Marcelino Chirino, General Consul of the Venezuelan embassy in Cuba; Coronel Ramon Barza, attache of the Bolivarian National Guard in Havana and Graciela Ramirez, Coordinator of the International Peace, Justice and Democracy Committee.

Venezuela will continue to be a nation of glory, said the participants, ratifying a firm solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution, with the government of Nicolas Maduro and absolute loyalty to the memory of Hugo Chavez Frias.

India condemns the US economic blockade against Cuba

HAVANA, Cuba, Mar 7 (acn) The Northern Indian Church of Protestant denomination with over 1.5 million followers condemned on Friday the US economic, financial and commercial blockade against Cuba. According to Prensa Latina News Agency, during a religious ceremony in a temple in New Delhi on the occasion of the World Prayer Day which is dedicated to Cuba this year, the church's Communications Secretary Sushma Ramswami demanded an end to Washington's unjust blockade against Cuba.

Ramswani highlighted the island's social achievements, especially the defense of woman and children after the triumph of the Revolution in 1959.

During the speech, she gave a brief explanation on the history of Cuba, its people, struggle and symbols.

On its part, the Cuban ambassador to Cuba, Oscar Martinez thanked all those present in the prayers and positive thinking in favor of the Caribbean island and highlighted the importance in putting an end to the US blockade.

We share the sentiments of solidarity, said the Cuban ambassador, our objective is to fight in favor of children and the most vulnerable.

During the liturgy promoted by the Council of Christian Women of All of India, the participants denounced the unjust blockade affecting the Cuban people for over half a century, endangering the people's health and growth of the children.

Cuba Reaffirms Commitment to Peace and Social Justice

HAVANA, Cuba.- (acn) Cuba reaffirmed in Geneva on Wednesday its commitment to the struggle for a world of justice, freedom and equality for all in the context of the 31st regular period of sessions of the Human Rights Council.

In his speech, the Director General of Multilateral Affairs and International Law of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pedro Nunez, said that while marking this year the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Human Rights Council, in that international organization political manipulation and double standards that put paid to his predecessor persist.

Nor has the fact that the realization and enjoyment of human rights continues to be an illusion for hundreds of millions of people in the world changed, when many human beings don't have right to development, although 30 years ago a declaration on the matter was approved.

The huge gap between the richest and the rest of the population continues to increase, considered the Cuban representative.

In the international context, the diplomat recalled the conflicts that NATO carry out in the Middle East and Europe, causing destruction and death, as well as the emergence of forms of international terrorism never seen, which pose additional threats to peace and security, he said.

Although there are numerous international instruments, the same powerful countries that have signed them, in practice, intensify abuse and violation of human rights of hundreds of thousands of refugees, forced to flee their countries of origin as a result of conflicts that others stoked or of the exacerbation of poverty.

Rich nations present their views on democracy and governance as the only ones valid; and they try to give them supposedly universal scope, when in fact it is the exclusive right of only one part of humanity, considered Nunez.

The Cuban representative also referred to the countries that conceive the market, the multi-party system and the formulas of electoral alternation as the most accurate way and the paradigm of governance, while ignoring the fact that this should focus on the conduction of public affairs efficiently, people's participation in decision-making and proper exercise of integrity and social justice.

In contrast to the bleak international prospect, the Cuban diplomat referred to the example that in terms of peace the historic decision of the leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean at the Second Summit of the CELAC, held in Havana in 2014, to proclaim to the region as a zone of peace, represents.

Nunez reiterated the support of Cuba of the cause of the Palestinian people and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the government and people of which deserve the widest international solidarity in their fight against destabilizing actions encouraged and supported from the outside.

He also expressed the island's rejection of unilateral sanctions against Russia and reaffirmed the right of the Syrian people to find a dignified solution to their problems without external interference, and preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Cuba strengthens its commitment to genuine international cooperation, based on the indivisibility of human rights, non-selectivity and non-politicization, he said.

With regard to the U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, he said that the government of that country has acknowledged not only its failure as a policy, but also its negative impact on the exercise of human rights of the Cuban people.

We hope that the recent demonstrations of the highest authorities of that country of their interest in contributing to improving the lives of Cubans, have as their center to continue adopting measures that allow to actually realize the end of this harmful policy for Cubans and U.S. persons and lead to its final lifting, the Cuban diplomat stressed.

It is particularly important to proceed without delay to end the blockade that my country has suffered for more than five decades and that is the main violation of human rights of all Cubans, which remains intact. and the extraterritorial nature of which has been exacerbated by increasing sanctions for banks and financial institutions from third countries, with the purpose of intimidating them and eroding Cuba's exchanges with other nations.

Finally, Nunez highlighted the willingness shown by Cuba to discuss the differences of views on human rights with any other party on the basis of equality, respect and reciprocity, without imposing any vision or accept that those of others are tried to be legitimated as the only ones valid.

We believe that the true commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights on a global scale should have as a starting point a genuine willingness to contribute to the realization of these rights, stripping them of political expediency, media manipulation, selective vision or double standards, he concluded.

Cuba Solidarity Campaign Bank Accounts Closed in UK

HAVANA, Cuba.- The bank accounts of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) were closed in Great Britain, following the acquisition of the Co-op Bank by hedge funds based in the United States.

According to the Granma newspaper, other organizations with links that could be considered contrary to the foreign policy of the United States are the Campaign of Solidarity with Palestine, which suffer the close of their accounts since the Co-op Bank was rescued by US funds.

Rob Miller, director of the CSC, the main organization of solidarity with the Caribbean nation in the UK, stressed that "it is not pure chance" that the close occurred after the rescue, but "that it was made unilaterally".

"All accounts of the national campaign have been closed. We believe it is unethical and unacceptable," Miller said, asserting that "we have consulted lawyers and they have not ruled out taking legal action."

The CSC wrote to the bank on several occasions asking for an explanation, but the answer by the Co-op Bank was that "it is changing its assessment of risk"; thus, it is indicated that the institution now considers Cuba as a country of "high risk".

Recently, the British newspaper Daily Mirror referred to the "secret international black list" that can leave users blocked to access their bank accounts. One of the examples given by the newspaper was the case of the CSC, citing its director: "The Co-op Bank has finally admitted that the close of the bank accounts of the Campaign of Solidarity with Cuba is a direct result of the policies of the U.S. blockade against Cuba."

Miller also added that "the fact that a British institution as historic and proudly independent, recognized for its ethics, has been forced to adopt policies imposed by the United States is an affront to us all."

Despite the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S., in addition to the ongoing process of normalization of bilateral relations, the blockade and its extraterritorial nature continue to hamper Cuban economy and entities seeking to approach the island.

This extraterritorial implementation also ignores the fact that the British government has diplomatic relations with Cuba, promotes trade with the island and has signed a series of bilateral cooperation agreements.

The persecution of organizations only interested in working in solidarity with Cuba, for the benefit of the Cuban people, shows, once again, the scope of the blockade and the need to end this criminal policy once and for all.

