

Ceren Uysal, Co-General Secretary of the European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights, ELDH

Dear members of the press, dear friends,

Today, on behalf of the European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights, ELDH, we are here to express our solidarity with the Cuban people.

Cuba has been the target of economic, and financial sanctions for many years. These sanctions cannot be seen merely as a matter of interstate tension or foreign policy preference. They constitute a mechanism of pressure that directly affects the living conditions of the people, from access to healthcare and medicine to energy and trade.

We know that these sanctions are neither legitimate nor lawful. The punishment of a people for their political choices, their economic strangulation, and the obstruction of their access to basic needs are unacceptable. These practices are incompatible both with the fundamental principles of international law and with the most basic values of humanity.

With their sanctions, the USA is violating the principle of territorial sovereignty (UN Charter). The sanctions are leading to a humanitarian crisis that disproportionately affects the civilian population. In doing so, the sanctions violate the right to health and development (e.g., the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). Economic sanctions are a collective measure taken by the UN Security Council, not a tool of a single power. Through their unilaterally imposed sanctions, the USA is violating the rules of the UN system.

The UN Human Rights Council has also repeatedly and emphatically condemned US policy as illegal and a violation of human rights (e.g., in June 2026). For over three decades, the UN General Assembly has condemned the US embargo against Cuba. In October 2025, 165 countries voted in favor of the annual resolution calling for an end to the blockade. While these resolutions are not legally binding, they represent the consensus of the international community regarding legal and moral principles.

Another dimension of the blockade and sanctions against Cuba is the pressure imposed on third countries. The threat of punishment against institutions, banks, companies and individuals that seek to establish commercial, financial or diplomatic relations with Cuba is an intervention not only against Cuba, but also into the sovereign sphere of other countries. This shows how broad and arbitrary the sanctions policy has become as a tool of coercion. The threat of sanctions against companies from third countries that trade with Cuba violates their sovereignty.

The EU shares this legal view and has reinforced it with a "Blocking Statute" regulation. This regulation renders US extraterritorial sanctions null and void within the EU and prohibits European companies and courts from complying with them. The aim is to protect the sovereignty of EU member states and shield their

companies from US penalties. The EU has also repeatedly initiated WTO proceedings against the US over this practice.

Today, we also condemn the indictment that targets Cuba's historical and political leadership and seeks to criminalize the name of Castro. Such initiatives are political rather than legal. Their aim is not merely to judge the past, but to discredit Cuba's will for independence, its support for the solidarity of peoples, and its stance against imperialist pressure.

For us, the issue is not limited to Cuba alone. Standing in solidarity with peoples subjected to imperialist aggression, blockade, occupation, sanctions and collective punishment is a shared responsibility. For this reason, solidarity with the Cuban people and solidarity with the Palestinian people cannot be separated from one another. In both cases, there is imperialist aggression targeting the right of peoples to self-determination and attempting to break their political will.

With their sanctions, the USA provides another example of their disregard for the international legal order and continues the destruction of this legal order, which was achieved over the course of decades.

As ELDH, we once again emphasize:

The blockade and sanctions against Cuba must be ended immediately.

The policies of siege targeting the economic and social life of the Cuban people must cease.

The ELDH calls upon all states that voted against the US sanctions policy in the UN General Assembly to defend the international legal order against its adversaries.