

Freedom for Political Prisoners, Down with Repression in Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela

written by Mariano Rosa | June 15, 2025

Solidarity is the tenderness of peoples.



[The article below by Mariano Rosa is followed by the manifesto issued by the International Socialist League.]

We are going through a stage marked by Trumpist aggression against Latin America, and Mesoamerica in particular, in a sort of 21st century Monroe Doctrine. Undoubtedly, this element is an important factor to take into account when analyzing everything politically and constructing an orientation for intervention in the region. However, we cannot look the other way in the face of the reality experienced by the peoples of three countries where alleged political formations govern, with supposedly leftist, anti-imperialist, even socialist projects, which in reality have been transformed into real odious gendarmes and adjusters of their peoples. For this reason, organizations from the three countries in question, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba, as well as from Costa Rica, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico and other parts of the world, have agreed to promote an International Campaign for the Freedom of political prisoners and against the repression in these countries. This initiative arose as a campaign voted unanimously in Colombia, in November of last year, in a Mesoamerican and Caribbean regional meeting of the International Socialist League, with the purpose of being the starting point for a very broad call. From there we advanced towards the Forum that we held last week, where we carried out an exchange and defined the approval of a manifesto and an international call. This important and representative Forum was attended by organizations such as Socialistas en Lucha from Cuba, Marea Socialista from Venezuela, Alternativa Anticapitalista from Nicaragua, members of the articulation of social movements, human rights activists, intellectuals, critics from the countries of the region, who assumed the commitment to be promoters of this proposal. That is why the start of the campaign fills us with expectations that it will be transformed over the weeks and months into a highly convening confluence of collectives, organizations and personalities from all over the world.

Two precedents: campaigning for the freedom of political prisoners in Nicaragua and against the persecution of Jean Mendoza in Venezuela.

This initiative has two very important and successful immediate antecedents, which are an accumulation of experience to be taken into account, promoted by the International Socialist League

and the collectives and referents with which we carry them forward in common. On the one hand, the International Commission, with left-wing parliamentarians, social leaders, politicians and collectives of Latin America, with whom in 2022 we promoted the so-called International Commission for the freedom and health of political prisoners in Nicaragua, and the Caravan for Life that mobilized to the border by land from San Jose, Costa Rica to Peñas Blancas, on the border with Nicaragua in July of that year. This initiative, whose first merit was to unify the majority of Nicaraguan exiles in Costa Rica, had the support of groups such as the articulation of social movements, the Nicaragua Never Again collective, the Mothers of April and various organizations of relatives of people murdered, assisted or imprisoned by the dictatorial regime of Ortega and Murillo. In addition to a high regional repercussion that ended up leading to the decision to release a few months later more than 200 prisoners, and later several dozen more. A relative of a political prisoner summarized the experience with the international commission by saying textually *"that the International Commission and the LIS had done more for the freedom of his imprisoned relatives in one week than the so-called organizations of the international community had done in four years."*

The other positive experience that we have to take into account was the campaign, first for freedom and then against the persecution and criminalization of the labor leader Jean Mendoza of the Guayana region of Venezuela. Jean Mendoza is secretary general of the Union of Woodworkers and a worker of the MASISA factory, a multinational company of Chilean capitals that, invoking the so-called "Law of Hate" of the Maduro government and the protection of its justice system, has been criminalizing the union protest led by Mendoza for wages and working conditions for the workers in the wood industry. He was first imprisoned for a time and since then he has been persecuted and criminalized by the bosses who act in this way under the complicit silence of a regime that claims to be socialist, Bolivarian and anti-imperialist. The international campaign promoted by the LIS together with union, student, political and social leaders, intellectual, cultural and human rights collectives from different parts of the world, was decisive in the first place, to roll back the imprisonment and achieve the freedom of Jean Mendoza. And since then, at the same time that a trial is taking place against him, the campaign has been maintained to achieve his definitive acquittal and to defeat by putting a stop to the persecution of the workers' leader. Still today, according to Jean Mendoza himself, the campaign that won his freedom is remembered by the workers of the factory and the union, who made a concrete experience of internationalist solidarity with the LIS, recognizing the merit of that orientation. In short, that is what it is all about. To make practical internationalism, militant, not declarative, to achieve beyond borders, to take in our hands just causes, independently of any imperial interference or capitalist power, and at the same time deploying a broad unity of action in the field of mobilization to carry them forward.

We cannot be indifferent

Faced with the situation of a real open-air prison that the peoples and activism in Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba are living, we have decided, as we said at the beginning of this article, to promote a campaign for the freedom of political prisoners and against the repression of these three regimes. There are points of contact between the reality that these three peoples are living and in particular the repression exercised by the governments currently in power. They also have to endure the terrible economic and social situation of tremendous precariousness and poverty, as well as the concentrated privileges of rulers who profit under the protection of power. For all these reasons, beyond the nuances or differences that these countries may have in their recent or past histories, it is clear that anti-imperialists, anti-capitalists, true socialists, democrats and defenders of human rights around the world, we cannot look the other way in the face of the reality that they are living. That is why this campaign has a concrete purpose, which is to achieve the freedom of all political prisoners, and to exert international pressure to collaborate in the difficult, laborious resistance, in total clandestinity, in semi-clandestinity, or in conditions of enormous persecution, that the

courageous activism that still exists in the three countries is carrying out. And also to put on the agenda and unmask the complete falsehood and swindle of the leftist narrative with which these regimes cover up, trying to confuse, regimes that have absolutely nothing left-wing and are rather their negation. You cannot be a leftist and profit under the protection of power, be a leftist and persecute your own people, be a leftist and do business with local bourgeoisie and imperialists of different stripes. All this has nothing to do with socialism or with anti-imperialism or with the anti-capitalist identity that we do claim. So, although our starting point is to denounce and confront the global and regional ultra-right and the aggressive Trumpism that threatens the region, it is no less important to unmask this false left that does nothing else, in short, than giving arguments to the right wing all over the world to amalgamate the banners of socialism, anti-imperialism and the left to the worst expressions of privileged regimes, privileged bourgeoisies or bureaucracies reconverted into privileged bourgeoisies that repress their peoples, persecute and kill. That is why we rebel against the complicit silence of those who invoke the logic of the lesser evil and the repeated argument of not playing into the hands of imperialism. Thus, by action or omission, they are accomplices to the brutality that the peoples of these three countries are suffering. We do not remain silent, we do not look the other way, we are not indifferent.

Manifesto and international call

We are launching this campaign, expressed in the Manifesto which we reproduce below and which we call for adherence, dissemination and activation throughout the world. In trade unions, the student movement, intellectual and cultural collectives, human rights organizations, social movements and political forces. This is the first task that we propose as a stage of installation of the initiative, for several weeks we want to collect hundreds of adhesions that allow us to add critical mass, and then move to a second stage where with all these regional adhesions in Mesoamerica, the Caribbean and around the world, activate protests, actions and visits with representations of human rights referents, parliamentarians and political, social and civil leaders, to embassies and consulates of Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua. To request again to those governments the authorization to enter their countries and to be able to verify with a commission of personalities with international recognition and unsuspected of relations with any imperialism, to have access to visit political prisoners and to be able to meet with those who denounce systematic violations of human rights.

In addition, finally, we also propose to form an international independent investigative commission to which we invite independent jurists, personalities from the field of culture and human rights to be part of, to collect testimonies and information directly and to advance in substantiating or taking steps to substantiate what we consider essential: to set up an international tribunal of the peoples to judge in an independent and truly impartial manner, from below, what we are denouncing in relation to the persecution, imprisonment and systematic violation of the most elementary freedoms in Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela. We want, in short, to set up a true international movement, from a unitary, plural and broad position at the same time, that acts with total independence from the State Department and from any foreign power intervention. The freedom of prisoners and the cessation of repression in Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba, will ultimately be a task to which we can contribute with this type of initiatives across borders, and which the peoples of these countries will finally have to take in their hands, to self-determine and emancipate themselves completely, opening the way to a transition to a social model that reorganizes on new bases the economy, social relations and the political system, to truly realize social equality and democracy for the majorities for which we are fighting. This is our highest aspiration and the strategy that mobilizes us.

Freedom for Political Prisoners, Down with Repression in

Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela

We have always carried Nicaragua, Venezuela, and of course, Cuba in our minds and hearts. The rebellions of their peoples against sinister dictatorships in the past, against the subjugation of imperialism and the injustices committed by the privileged classes, were points of reference for entire generations around the world, where solidarity among peoples was the driving force behind victories small and great. Cuba in the 1960s, Nicaragua in the 1970s and 1980s, and the Bolivarian people rising up in the 2000s against the nefarious neoliberal decade of the 1990s. But today these peoples live under and suffer dramatic realities. And we cannot look the other way; on the contrary, we must activate the solidarity that has done so much good and continues to be vital to the peoples.

Governments and regimes that usurp a false leftist identity are, in reality, executioners of their people. They censor, persecute, repress, imprison, condemn to exile, or kill off every voice of opposition, regardless of ideological affiliation. In all three countries, activists who reclaim their rebellious and revolutionary past have faced and continue to face repression, imprisonment, and death. That past has been co-opted by the current leaders.

The governments of Ortega-Murillo, Maduro, and Díaz-Canel, beyond any differences or nuances that may exist between them, are not leftist, nor rebellious, nor anti-imperialist: they are executioners of their people. They represent economic privileges built under the protection of the power they maintain with repression.

The context is aggravated by Trump's aggressive interventionism, his threats to take over the Panama Canal and his brutal anti-immigration policy. Precisely, in the face of the threat posed by this global neo-fascist movement, whose apex is the current US president, regimes like the ones we denounce do nothing but fuel the repudiation and confusion they generate with their false leftist narrative.

Therefore, we reject all imperialist interference, which also includes all sanctions or blockades that always end up harming the people, not the dictatorships.

We call on human rights activists in Latin America, the Caribbean, and around the world, especially the youth, intellectuals, critical voices in the cultural field, and socio-environmental, territorial, labor, and political groups, to establish a broad international movement against repression and in favor of the freedom of all political prisoners in Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Cuba, as well as against all imperialist interference.

As part of the actions that express solidarity with the peoples of Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela, this International Movement raises the banner of truth, memory, and justice and promotes the construction of an Independent Investigative Commission to decisively judge these regimes for all the abuses and crimes reported in these countries through a People's Tribunal and human rights organizations.

This is the justice we believe in: the justice of the people, from below.

We call on you to join us, from wherever you are in the world, in saying with one voice: we accuse the governments of Ortega-Murillo, Maduro, and Díaz-Canel of censoring, repressing, imprisoning, forcing exile, and killing their own people. Solidarity is our banner, because we cannot remain indifferent in the face of injustice.

First published on June 9, 2025 here.