

Evangelical Lutheran Church in the U.S. calls for ending the blockade

March 8, 2023

The Honorable Robert Menendez
210 Hudson Street
Harborside 3, Suite 1000
Jersey City, NJ 07311

Dear Senator Menendez:

As the Conference of Bishops for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), a body of 3 million members, we appeal to you on behalf of the Lutheran churches in Cuba, religious people across Cuba, indeed all Cuban people. Whatever the faults of the Cuban government, we know from the firsthand accounts of colleagues that most Cubans suffer greatly under the economic sanctions imposed by the previous U.S. president's administration. We call upon you to help relieve the collective suffering of the Cuban people.

Havana, March 14 (RHC) On Monday, the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (LCA) in the United States called for the lifting of the economic, financial, and commercial hostile blockade imposed by the U.S. on Cuba for over 60 years.

In a letter sent to Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Evangelical Lutheran Church attributed all hardships faced by the Cuban people to the unilateral blockade and all measures imposed.

The cumulative effect of actions taken by our government results in the collective suffering of all Cubans: this is neither moral nor justified.

The letter detailed a series of restrictions that seek to stifle Cuba's economy including its inclusion in the list of states sponsoring terrorism, obstacles to access energy resources, and over 240 measures issued under former President Donald Trump's administration. At the moment, the organization's Florida-Bahamas Synod is working with partners from the Norwegian church to send

a container of medical supplies to Havana, but the New York bank has funds frozen and requires a license from the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control.

The only restrictions on our work come from our government, the letter read, while adding that Cuba is not a state sponsor of terrorism but contributes to securing peace, referring to its role as guarantor in talks between the Colombian government and the country's guerrilla groups. Cuba also supports all international agreements to fight off terrorism and cooperates with the U.S. military in drug interdiction, as well as in other areas.

The document called for Menendez to reverse current punitive economic and international policies towards Cuba and initiate a path toward normalization of diplomatic relations. (Source: PL)

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