

Huge Memorial Rally Pays Final Respects to Historic Leader of Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro



Havana, November 29 (RHC) – Overwhelmed by one of the largest crowds that has ever assembled in this city, Havana's Revolution Square was the venue Tuesday night of the capital's last goodbye to Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro.

Presided over by President Raul Castro and attended by more than a dozen heads of state and official delegations from some 50 countries, the mass rally is part of the activities during the official 9-day mourning and tribute to the historic Cuban leader.

The President of Ecuador Rafael Correa was the first to address the huge crowd at the Plaza de la Revolución. He said Fidel's legacy lives on and his struggle continues in the efforts of young revolutionaries all over the world, who are fighting to change the world for the better.

Correa said: "Assessing the success of the Cuban Revolution, without taking into account the brutal U.S. blockade, the continued economic war that the country has endured by subsequent U.S. administrations, is hypocritical."

He expressed confidence that the Cuban people, followers of their historic leader, will never yield to imperialist dominance and foreign intervention.

The Ecuadorean president said: "Great leaders and great revolutions always had enemies. The Cuban Revolution and leader Fidel Castro are not the exception."

President Correa called on regional peoples to honor Fidel's legacy and unite to confront and overcome the huge challenges that lie ahead. And the Ecuadorean president concluded with the words: "Ever onwards to victory, Comandante!"

South African President Jacob Zuma was next to take the podium and he called Fidel "one of the greatest figures of the 20th century." He said his country joins progressive forces the world over to celebrate the life work of Fidel Castro. He commended Fidel and Cuba for their selfless support for the independence struggles of several African nations, including his country, South Africa.

He said that Fidel was a great fighter for the ideal that the poor have a right to live in dignity. And he noted that today, Cuba exhibits higher standards of living than many developed countries.

He praised Cuba's cooperation with his country, particularly in the health and education sectors. "Many South Africans have benefited from Cuba's advances in those and other sectors. Many young nationals from South Africa and from other African nations have been trained as doctors and as professionals in many other fields thanks to Cuba's cooperation programs."

The South African president vowed to continue to support Cuba against the U.S. blockade.

Jacob Zuma recalled that due to his firm resistance against imperialism, Fidel had many enemies, but he managed to survive many assassination attempts.

Roosevelt Skerrit, the Prime Minister of Dominica, noted that based on José Martí's ideas, Fidel liberated Cuba from the brutal Batista dictatorship and guided his people toward self-determination and full independence.

"For over 50 years, with the help of friends all over the world, Cuba has been able to resist a blockade that has cost the country billions of dollars in economic losses. CARICOM takes pride in the fact that four of its member states broke the isolation Cuba was submitted to under the U.S. blockade and established diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1972."

Prime Minister Skerrit said CARICOM will always be grateful to Cuba and Comrade Fidel for the many cooperation programs, which cover almost every sector.

He stressed that in recognition of Cuba's huge contribution to the development of other Caribbean states, CARICOM bestowed its highest distinction – the Caribbean Community Order -- on Fidel Castro in 2008.

"We share your sorrow because with Fidel's death we have lost a loyal, valuable friend."

For his part, the President of El Salvador Salvador Sánchez Cerén began his speech by expressing his deepest sympathy with Fidel's family and the people of Cuba.

He recalled the strong links of Fidel and the Cuban Revolution with El Salvador, their support for the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). He said: "A solid friendship was forged between Fidel, the Cuban Revolution and the FMLN during our struggle against the bloody dictatorship in El Salvador."

The Salvadorian president went on to say that Fidel's influence on and significance in the world has everything to do with the heroism that has always characterized the Cuban people throughout history.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras also spoke to the massive crowd on Tuesday evening in Havana. He noted that Fidel never surrendered, saying: "Fidel belongs to not only Cuba and the Cuban people, but also to the poor, the oppressed, all those who fight for their freedom and their rights."

The Greek prime minister said that under Fidel's leadership Cuba became a symbol of firm resistance against oppression.

"Fidel's legacy transcends Cuba's borders. He inspired today's profound political and social changes in Latin America and laid the foundations for mutually beneficial relations with Western countries, based on respect."

The Vice President of China Li Yuanchao, on behalf of President Xi Jinping and the Chinese people, expressed their deepest condolences. He said Fidel devoted his life to the struggle for independence and to building socialism. He said: "Fidel was A giant of our times, who will be forever remembered. The hearts of the Chinese people are with the people of Cuba."

Other leaders who addressed the huge crowd at the Revolution Square included the President of the Vietnamese National Assembly Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, the President of Iran Hassan Rouhani and Bolivian President Evo Morales, among others.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/nacionales/113816-huge-memorial-rally-pays-final-respects-to-historic-leader-of-cuban-revolution-fidel-castro>



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