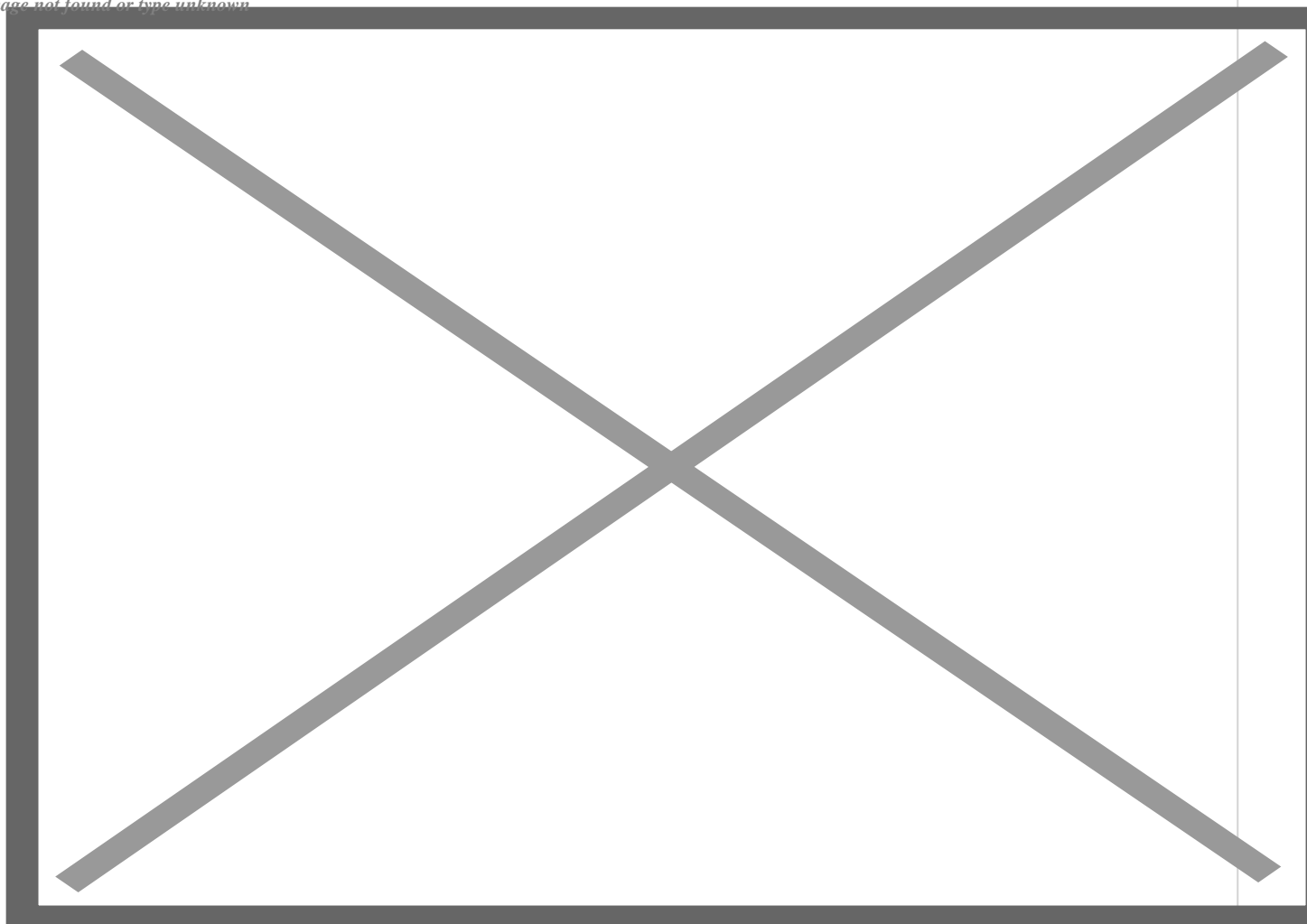


The negative impact of the blockade against Cuba

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By María Josefina Arce

Cubans demanded the end of the U.S. blockade throughout the length and breadth of the country in the May Day parades and events in the streets and squares, which on this occasion had special characteristics due to the existing complex economic situation.

A panorama in which the hostile policy of the United States has a strong influence and which Alena Douhan, Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the Negative Effects of Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, who is visiting Cuba, has been able to confirm.

Invited by the University of Havana, the official, a few hours after her arrival in the archipelago, was able to learn about the obstacles imposed by the U.S. economic siege and the efforts made by the Cuban government to maintain prerogatives such as free and universal access to health and education.

His tour of the Solidarity with Panama School for children with physical and motor disabilities, the first of its kind in Cuba and inaugurated 34 years ago by the historic leader of the revolution, Fidel Castro, was emotional.

Since its inception, the center has suffered the onslaught of the unilateral U.S. measure. With much love, professionalism and creativity, its workers have continued to prepare these infants to live on an equal footing with others.

The task has not been easy; there are many obstacles that complicate this beautiful work. The hostile policy of Washington prevents the purchase of prosthesis, electric chairs and other fundamental materials in special education, as well as to maintain the vitality of those that are in use.

But it is not only the Solidarity with Panama School that is affected by the blockade; its damage extends to other centers of these characteristics, such as those that provide attention to blind and visually impaired children and young people, and to education in general.

The damage is reflected in all spheres. Health is one of the hardest hit, as it not only limits the acquisition of modern equipment, but also of reagents and raw materials for the production of medicines.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, the genocidal nature of the blockade was extremely evident. Access to the nation of pulmonary ventilators, oxygen plants and other health supplies was prevented.

The Special Rapporteur has learned first hand of these limitations in exchanges with various authorities and visits to institutions in our country, which in recent days was the scene of an International Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba, which was attended by more than a THOUSAND activists who demanded an end to the economic siege.

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