

“The US Appears to be Destined by Providence to Plague the Americas with Misery in the Name of Freedom.” - Simón Bolívar, 1829

Latin America Between Hope and Danger



Photo: Resumen Latinoamericano-English

By Randy Alonso Falcón, Cuban Journalist,

The massive and emotional inauguration of Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva in Brazil, on the first day of the year, and the announcement in Colombia of the beginning of a ceasefire with five armed organizations in that country is the news that illuminates with hope the beginning of the new year in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Lula assumes for the third time the presidency of a Brazil harshly isolated and battered by the Bolsonaro years. The former union leader now leads a very different country from the one he received in 2003, in his first presidency. It is economically weakened by inflation and debt, with exponential growth of poverty and inequalities, extremely polarized and with a right-wing Congress, heavily influenced by the Bolsonaro regime.

Lula said, “It is necessary for people to know what has happened to this country. They emptied the accounts of the health resources, and dismantled education and culture. They destroyed the environment.

They left no resources. They disorganized the governance of the economy, public financing, support for businesses and entrepreneurs. They squandered state-owned companies and public banks. They handed over the national patrimony. They left a budgetary disaster”, he asserted in his speech at the presidential inauguration ceremony.

For Colombia, hard hit by decades of conflict, the step taken to start 2023 is very significant. “We have agreed on a bilateral ceasefire with the ELN, the Second Marquetalia (a movement within the FARC-EP), and paramilitary groups such as the AGC and the Self-Defense Forces of the Sierra Nevada from January 1 to June 30, 2023, extendable depending on the progress of the negotiations,” President Gustavo Petro tweeted. “Total peace will be a reality,” the president promised. “This is a bold act. The bilateral ceasefire obliges the armed organizations and the state to respect it. There will be a national and international verification mechanism,” added the president in another publication.

These are two testimonies of what the political left and progressivism can bring of change to a Latin America that in recent years has experienced a period of neoliberal restoration by the hand of right-wing governments such as Macri, Bolsonaro and Duque.

Lula’s inauguration completes an electoral cycle that has allowed the arrival or reaffirmation of progressive governments in Mexico, Bolivia, Chile, Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru, Honduras, and Brazil. Each one of them has its own characteristics and different radicalism, but all of them have the projection of greater social justice and an integrating vocation.

They are joined by the governments of Cuba and Venezuela, whose political processes are being maintained against all odds, despite enormous pressure from Washington.

Thus, the main economies of Latin America are governed by left-wing parties, which strengthens the possibility of greater regional integration and joint efforts to face the difficult international economic situation and the inevitable hegemonic plans of the US in the region. These are the two main problems to be faced in this rebirth of Latin American progressivism.

Continued on page 2

CONTENTS

Latin America	1
Hebe de Bonafini Presente	2
ALBA	3
Lawfare	3
Peru	4-5
Brazil	6
Nicaragua	8
Mexico	9
Haiti	10
Honduras	10
News Briefs	11
Peace Boat to Cuba	12

LATIN AMERICA

The latest progressive wave comes in the midst of an economic context that threatens governability and the extension of social programs. An uncertain international scenario with a combination of factors including economic slowdown, inflation, financial volatility, and lower capital flows has slowed growth in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2022 and will further deepen this downward trend in 2023, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) recently predicted.

In its latest report, Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC said the region will grow 3.7 % in 2022, almost half the 6.7 % recorded in 2021; and only 1.3 % next year.

If the projected outlook for next year materializes, it would be the second lost decade since the 1950s, with meager regional growth of 0.9 % since 2014. In the so-called “decade of the debt crisis” in the 1980s, the economy advanced two percent. That was so far the lowest performance since 1951.

Under these circumstances, there will be fewer resources to pay for the social programs required by these nations and

proposed by the governments that came to power with popular welfare agendas.

Another concrete danger for progressive governments is that in some cases, as in Brazil, Peru and Chile, parliaments are dominated by the right wing, which seeks to hinder government plans and sabotage proposals that imply a significant change in the status quo of capital domination. The rejection of the new Constitution in Chile, the defenestration of Castillo as President in Peru and the manipulated judicial condemnation of Cristina Fernandez are examples of the power retained by conservative forces in the region.

The efforts of reinforcing regional integration are a direct confrontation to US domination as clearly stated in the Biden administration’s National Security Strategy. The strategy asserts that no region impacts the United States more directly than the Western Hemisphere and states that the US will continue to build “regional security” by supporting efforts to confront both domestic and organized crime threats, as well as external threats from “malign actors” seeking to establish a military or intelligence

presence in the region, in clear reference to China and Russia. China is today the main trading partner of several Latin American economies and has an alliance with CELAC that has been deepened in recent years.

Added to this is the role played by the OAS, under Washington’s mandate, to divide the region and sabotage popular processes in several countries.

Beyond these threats, there is no doubt that there is a hopeful political correlation in Latin America and the Caribbean, which can put integration processes back on track, give strength to the regional voice and attenuate the harsh impact on the popular sectors of the international economic crisis and the exclusionary policies applied by right-wing governments in the region.

Skill and political determination will be decisive. The leadership of Lula, Lopez Obrador, Fernandez and Petro, together with the strength of the ALBA governments can make the difference.

Source: *Al Mayadeen*, 01/04/23

ARGENTINA: Hebe de Bonafini, Presente!

By *People’s Dispatch*

Hebe de Bonafini, the eminent Argentine human rights activist and co-founder of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, and a tireless fighter against the human rights violations committed during the country’s last military dictatorship, died on 11/20/22 at the age of 93. Bonafini played a crucial role in defending human rights in the country during the US-backed military dictatorship, as well as ensuring the expansion of rights following the return of democracy.

In March 1976, the military junta of Gen. Rafael Videla launched a brutal crackdown on suspected leftwingers. In February 1977, Bonafini’s oldest son was arrested and disappeared. In December her second son was also captured and disappeared. In May 1977, Bonafini, along with 14 other mothers in a similar situation, founded the Association of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, aimed at finding their children kidnapped by security forces. The mothers, wearing white cloth nappies which were later replaced by white scarves, be-



(Photo: *LaRepublica.pe*)

gan demonstrating at the Plaza de Mayo in front of the presidential palace, demanding the return of their children. They held these protests at a time when the government prohibited gatherings of more than three people.

They began gathering every Thursday, walking counterclockwise around a clocktower in the center of the Plaza. The military government broke up the early demonstrations and killed the first leader of the association, but the group persisted. The mothers continued after the end of the dictatorship, demanding justice for the crimes

against humanity committed by the State in the form of punishment of the military officials responsible for seizing and killing their loved ones.

It is estimated that over 30,000 left-wing activists, trade unionists, academics, students, writers, journalists, artists and suspected dissidents were kidnapped, tortured and disappeared by security forces during the seven years of dictatorship and state terrorism that is known as the Dirty War. Bonafini’s two sons were never found and are presumed dead like the others.

“The only struggle you lose is the struggle you renounce,” Bonafini was fond of saying. She also insisted that direct language be used: “Bread is bread, wine is wine, a killer is a killer.”

Bonafini made her last public appearance ten days before her death, participating in Thursday’s traditional demonstration. In her last words in that Plaza, she condemned judicial impunity in the cases for crimes against humanity and warned how these practices damage democracy.

Source: *People’s Dispatch*, 11/21/22

ALBA Denounces Coup in Peru and Lawfare in Argentina

By **Ben Norton**, *journalist*
Ed. Note: Edited for length

The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the left-wing economic and political bloc uniting countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, has forcefully opposed the coup d'état in Peru and expressed its support for the country's democratically elected President Pedro Castillo. At their 18th annual summit in Cuba on December 14, 2022, ALBA member states released a joint declaration calling for the defense of national sovereignty without any foreign interference. "We reject the colonialist and interfering postulates of the Monroe Doctrine, used to justify destabilizing and interventionist practices in Latin America and the Caribbean."

They stated: "[We] express our solidarity with the brotherly Peruvian people that has been subjected to a continuous institutional crisis, resulting in a series of events that threaten the stability and the welfare of the majority. We reject the political trap created by the right-wing forces of that country against the Constitutional President Pedro Castillo,

forcing him to take measures that were later used by his adversaries in parliament to oust him from office; we repudiate the repression by the law enforcement agencies against the Peruvian people who are defending a government democratically elected at the polls and we call for dialogue, understanding and maturity of all political, economic, and social actors of the Republic of Peru, as well as we raise our voices to guarantee the fundamental rights of this brother people."

The Alliance also declared: "[We] denounce the use of unconventional warfare strategies against democratically elected governments and leaders in the region using the politically motivated and legally unsubstantiated judicial processes (lawfare), to defeat political and ideological opponents while condemning manipulation for political and destabilizing purposes of human rights, the disinformation and propaganda campaigns; the malicious use of the information and communication technologies; and cyber-attacks, among other methods undermining the sovereignty and will of the peoples. In this regard, we express our firmest rejection of the politically motivated judicial actions

against our fellow Vice President of Argentina, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, a key leader of the integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean."

Attending the conference were Cuba's President Miguel Díaz-Canel, Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro, Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega, Bolivia's President Luis Arce, Prime Minister of Dominica Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Grenada Dickon Mitchell, Foreign Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Everly Chet Greene, and Finance Minister of Saint Lucia Wayne Girard.

ALBA also called for Caribbean nations to receive "reparations for the damages caused by native genocide, colonialism and slavery" and urged "to increase international solidarity with the brotherly people of the Republic of Haiti." It praised the peace talks being held between Colombia and the armed socialist militia the ELN.

Source: *Multipolarista*, 12/15/22

Lawfare and the Destabilization of Latin America

By **Brian Mier**, *TeleSur - Brazil*
Ed. Note: Excerpted for length

Lawfare is the weaponized use of the law to annihilate a political or business enemy. Common tactics used in Lawfare include: forum shopping, as when public prosecutors transfer a case to a jurisdiction with a friendly judge; excessive use and abuse of coerced plea bargain testimonies which are often the only evidence presented; suppressing evidence beneficial to the defense; and close collaboration with the media to create a public spectacle.

There are indications that Lawfare was piloted in the US before being rolled out through Latin America. In July, 2008, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) filed corruption charges against Senator Ted Stevens (R/AK) for allegedly receiving illegal reforms on a vacation property, damaging his reputation and causing him to lose his first election in over 36 years. Like future cases in Latin America, no material evidence was presented, just a coerced plea bargain testimony by a man who was trying to get out of jail. Months after the election, Stevens was ruled innocent.

Originally described as a weaponized

use of international human rights law, the Pentagon's 2005 National Defense Strategy referred to law as "the weapon of the weak who use international legal cases and terrorism to usurp America." Military strategists soon began suggesting that Lawfare could be more than just defensive, it could also benefit national security, being preferable to expensive and destructive forms of war. More neutral definitions of the term began to emerge. Gen. Charles Dunlap later wrote that Lawfare could be converted into a "strategy of using or misusing law as a substitute for traditional military means to achieve military objectives."

Lawfare can be used against any political enemy from across the political spectrum. Three right wing former Presidents of Peru were sentenced to prison due to coerced plea bargain testimonies by corrupt, imprisoned Brazilian businessmen, with former President Alan Garcia committing suicide on the day they were coming to arrest him.

In April 2020, an Ecuadorian kangaroo court sentenced Rafael Correa to eight years in prison and barred him from future office based in part on coerced plea bargain testimony. With Ecuador currently in chaos, the

former President has been living in political exile in Belgium since 2017.

In June 2018, a judge in El Salvador issued a warrant for former President Mauricio Funes and 30 top members of the FMLN, based on coerced plea bargain testimony from corrupt businessmen who received sentence reductions and partial retention of their illicit assets in exchange. Already living in Nicaragua, they were unable to arrest Funes; he lives there to this day.

Although frivolous criminal investigations against politicians and business leaders as tactics to gain an upper hand has certainly been engaged in as long as politics and business have existed, the concept of Lawfare as a hybrid war tactic really began after 2008. The toxic legacy of this imperialist strategy is seen in the local initiatives that use similar Lawfare tactics to annihilate political enemies such as Argentina's Vice President Cristina Kirchner. With a new round of electoral victories of the working class left in Latin America, it is more important than ever to develop defense strategies against Lawfare.

Source: *Kawsachun News*, 1/25/23

PERU: What Lies in the Balance?

By *Gustavo A Maranges, author*

The political situation in Peru appears to be spinning out of control with no end in sight as violent repression escalates on an angry population who feel their democracy has been pulled out from under them. An imprisoned president, the military and the police swarming on the streets, road blockades, increasing protests against Dina Boluarte and the Congress, and 25 deaths have been the balance of a parliamentary coup d'état, whose gestation began even before Pedro Castillo won the elections 17 months ago.

The mainstream media coming from the corporate world is that the situation in Peru is the result of Castillo's attempts to dissolve the Congress, but that is nothing but a cover; the reality is much more complex than what we've been told. The fact is that Castillo didn't have a single day off since the legislature declared war on him even before day one of his presidency. Three attempts to terminate him based on "moral incapacity", two trips to international summits denied, corruption charges only months after taking office, and judicial persecution of his family members, have been some of the ammo used in this war by those who claim to defend "democracy" in Peru at gunpoint.

As a Latin American, I would like to say all this is new, that it has never happened before in our region mostly because it would mean thousands fewer dead and much happier stories. However, history has gone oppositely

What is happening today in Peru is something sadly common in Latin America. It is the solution of the extremist oligarchies when they feel threatened after being defeated by the weight of the popular vote. In the past, it was the military who stood up for them. Nowadays, the front line is made by parliaments or courts, which are backed by the military and instigated by the same old power with their trainers from the North creating the script and the training.

It is impossible to avoid déjà vu when analyzing the situation in Peru since only three years ago something similar hap-

pened in Bolivia, illustrating this is not a matter of luck but the confirmation of the new modus operandi of the regional right-wing in coordination with its northern sponsors.

13 days after the coup d'état against Castillo took place, the repression unleashed by his former Vice President Dina Boluarte resulted in the death of 25 people (five of them in a traffic accident related to the road blockade), all of them civilians. Seven victims were between 15 and 18 years old, while only six were over 30.

On the other hand, about 80% of these deaths, as well as the strongest protests, have taken place in the Andean south, the country's poorest region. This is no coincidence, since these areas were Castillo's stronghold, as he represented poor people's only hope for change.

There is not a 100% match between rejecting the parliamentary coup d'état and standing by Pedro Castillo. However, the links are strong since demonstrators' demands match the ousted president's intentions, namely: dissolution of Congress, ousting Dina Boluarte from the presidency, and a new Constitution away from the backward one that came into existence in 1993 under the Fujimori regime.

The police and the army continue to repress the demonstrators with real bullets. So, it seems like some sort of sadistic joke when Defense Minister Luis Alberto Otaola claims not to be responsible for the murders or when the coup president Dina Boluarte calls to respect human rights while allowing the population to be massacred. Regarding this, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) began a visit to the country to investigate the facts, as if 20 deaths, several of them with army bullets, were not enough to determine who is responsible.

Likewise, there are 300 injured law enforcement officers, and there have been acts of vandalism against public and private property. These things happen but they are in no way comparable to the violence unleashed by the government. The statistics speak for themselves of the great asymmetry in this war.

Surely, the police have started their own investigations to look for those who burned and destroyed things, while showing indifference towards the 20 civilians killed during the protests. Evidently, it is less urgent to look for criminals if they are on the government and police side.

The regional denunciation against the break of the democratic order in Peru has been led by Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, and Bolivia. They signed a letter condemning the harassment that forced Pedro Castillo to make a wrong decision. Faced with these statements, the coup president said she did not accept foreign interference. Such a curious thing! She apparently forgot to include the United States in the list, especially their current ambassador in Lima and former CIA agent Lisa Kenna who appears to now be Washington's chosen puppeteer after she met the then-Minister of Defense the same day of the coup and seemingly was the last one to talk to Pedro Castillo before his arrest.

In this context, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) extended his offer of political asylum to President Pedro Castillo and all those suffering from political persecution in Peru. For his part, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, expressed his concern for the political crisis in the South American country. It seems like the UN has only recently become aware of this 17-month-old crisis.

The future remains uncertain, and it is very unlikely the situation will improve in the short term. Just recall Bolivia's case, where it was necessary to send repressive armament from Argentina (under Macri's government) and Ecuador (the Guillermo Lasso administration) to pacify the people while leaving dozens of dead and wounded along the way.

Source: *Resumen Latinoamericano* – US, 12/20/22

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SOUTH AMERICA

PERU: Security Forces Massacre Protesters

By Tanya Wadhwa, journalist

On January 9, Peruvian security forces brutally repressed an anti-government protest in Juliaca, a city in southern Peru's Puno region, killing at least 17 protesters and leaving at least 68 others severely injured. The dead included at least two teenagers.

According to reports from local media, Peruvian police and military officers opened fire on thousands of protesters who had occupied the Juliaca airport as a part of nationwide protests demanding the release of former left-wing President Pedro Castillo, the resignation of de-facto President Dina Boluarte, the dissolution of the right-wing dominated unicameral Congress, fresh parliamentary elections, and a new constitution through a Constituent Assembly.

Photos and videos shared on social media networks showed victims bleeding from their heads, with pellet wounds on different body parts, people carrying people with severe injuries on their backs and in their vehicles to help them get to hospitals.

This was the second massacre at the hands of Peruvian security forces in one month of social protests demanding structural changes to the country's political system. With the latest victims, the death toll from state repression of anti-government protests rose to 46. Peru's Ombudsman Office requested the public order forces to comply with international standards in using force against protests and urged the Prosecutor's Office to carry out a rapid investigation into the deaths.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) condemned the death of people in Juliaca, and urged the Peruvian State to take immediate measures to pre-



Peruvian families mourn the dead after the worst violence in decades. Photo: EPA/Stringer)

vent and punish the excessive use of force in social protests; and to continue generating effective mechanisms of dialog to address social conflict and prevent violence. IACHR announced that it would send another delegation to Peru to evaluate the situation.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Peru expressed its "deep concern over the escalation of violence in Peru," and called for the adoption of urgent "measures to prevent more violence and ensure respect for human rights in the context of peaceful demonstrations."

Since January 4, tens of thousands of people, mainly from Indigenous and peasant communities, have been taking to the streets and organizing roadblocks in different parts of the country to express their rejection of the Boluarte government, demanding re-

spect for their vote and reinstatement of their democratically elected president.

Castillo was overthrown in a legislative coup carried out by the right-wing opposition majority Congress on December 7, after he tried to dissolve Congress and rule by decree. He was swiftly arrested following his dismissal for allegedly "breaching constitutional order." On December 15, the Peruvian judiciary extended Castillo's preventive detention to 18 months on the Prosecutor's Office's request, which is investigating him for the crime of rebellion, among others. Puno, Arequipa, Cusco and Tacna are among the regions where massive anti-government protests have been taking place following the resumption of an indefinite national strike after the New Year break.

Following the massacre in Juliaca, the Indigenous and peasant communities along with several popular movements, social organizations, student associations, and trade unions called for the intensification of protest actions against the Boluarte government, and a march to the capital Lima to press for her resignation. In the evening, thousands of people demonstrated in the streets in Arequipa, Apurimac, Cusco, Puno and San Miguel.

Source: *The Real News Network from the People's Dispatch*, 01/10/23



Puno citizens mourn dead in front of donated coffins.

(Photo: AP)

BRAZIL: Lula's Return

By Michael Fox, freelance journalist and host of the podcast: *Brazil on Fire*

Editor's Note: In the aftermath of the storming of several government buildings, Lula said he suspected collusion by "people in the armed forces" and said that he would purge hardcore Bolsonaro loyalists from the security forces. In mid January he dismissed the country's army chief General Julio Cesar de Arruda. To date 2000 people have been arrested in connection with the riots.

On Sunday, January 8, Brazilians sat glued to their TV screens or frantically refreshing the feed on their phones, as thousands of supporters of the far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro swarmed past security forces and pushed their way into government buildings. They ransacked Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Presidential Palace. Cheering. Commemorating their breach, just as their compatriots did in the 2021 US Capitol raid.

This was Brazil's January 6th. Videos shared over social media showed scenes of chaos. Majestic government offices wrecked. Windows broken. Nothing like this had ever happened before.

"This is going down in history," shouted a man off-camera, who filmed from the top of Congress. He pointed the cell phone camera out over a sea of yellow and green—the colors of both Brazil and Bolsonaro—streamed up the ramp toward him. "This is a story that will be retold by my grandchildren. By my great-grandchildren," he said. "This house is ours."

But their euphoria lasted only a few hours. Lula, who was traveling in the countryside of São Paulo State to assess the damages from major rains there, responded a couple of hours into the attack. "All those people who did this will be found and punished," Lula said in a live address. "They will realize that democracy guarantees freedom, the right of expression, but also demands that people respect the institutions."

He ordered a federal intervention into the Brasilia security force until the end of the month. Within the hour, shock troops swept Bolsonaro supporters from the buildings.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ordered nine measures including the three-month suspension of Brasilia



Lula, marching up the ramp to receive the Brazilian Presidential Sash

(Photo: Tania Rego/ Agencia Brasil)

State Governor Ibaneis Rocha and the removal, within 24 hours, of all encampments of Bolsonaro supporters that had been stationed outside of military barracks for the previous two months. The Supreme Court and the Senate have now launched investigations into the invasion.

Bolsonaro is more isolated than ever. The former president has been in Florida, since even before Lula's inauguration. According to polls released days after the attack, Bolsonaro's online support is at an all-time low. More than 90 percent of Brazilians condemn the capital invasion.

That includes even staunch Bolsonaro allies, like the head of the lower house Arthur Lira and department store billionaire Luciano Hang. "We have a new president. We have a new government," says Hang in a video he released following the attack, in which he denounces the violence and vandalism in Brasilia. "Let's support the pilot, so we have a great flight, because I'm inside the same plane."

It's a sign of this rare moment of unity that has swept Brazil since the capital attack. The day after the invasion, the heads of the Senate and Lower House, plus all 27 state governors met Lula and his cabinet in Brasilia. They walked across the esplanade and surveyed the damage of the attack.

"This is an extremely important scene," said a CNN reporter. "We rarely ever see these people together like this and we see them united. United for the country. United for democracy."

"I think the invasion has strengthened the position of Lula's government," said Sean T. Mitchell, an anthropologist at Rutgers University. "Also, the similarity of Brazil's January 8th to the United States January 6th, I think, helps consolidate Lula's international support."

All of this comes less than two weeks after Lula's inauguration on January 1, which ushered in a wave of hope across Brazil. 200,000 people had amassed for the ceremony. They chanted and cheered as Lula rode through the streets of Brasilia to be sworn in before Congress.

"I drove two days to get here to see Lula," one supporter said. "Lula means freedom. I want to see my daughter be able to go to school and be able to retire. And that's not possible right now," she said.

Traditionally, the outgoing president hands over the presidential sash in front of the presidential palace. But since Bolsonaro had left for Florida two days before the inauguration, the passing of the sash was delegated to a group of people chosen to symbolize Brazil's diversity. They included a cook, a Black trash collector, an Indigenous leader, a disabled activist, and a child.

"It's so exciting," said social scientist Helga De Almeida. "It's the return of our democracy. The inauguration was so representative, with a diversity of people. We haven't seen anything like this in the last four years."

Lula has kept his promise to bring

SOUTH AMERICA

diversity and inclusion into his government. Almost thirty percent of Lula's cabinet ministers are women, the highest number, ever. He's created 14 new cabinet seats, including separate ministries of labor, Indigenous Peoples, and racial equality. The new minister of racial equality is Anielle Franco, the sister of slain Black lesbian Rio de Janeiro city councilwoman Marielle Franco, whose 2018 killing unleashed a wave of protests across Brazil and the world.

During his presidency, Bolsonaro pushed to roll back social programs and privatize state companies. In Lula's first 24 hours in office, he set out to undo all this.

He blocked eight state privatizations, including Brazil's national oil company and the post office. He rescinded Bolsonaro measures that had facilitated gun purchases. He also restarted his famous conditional cash transfer program, *Bolsa Familia*, promising poor families a monthly stipend. It's a first step in a package of reforms to fight rising hunger and inequality once again.

This, for Lula, is something that hits home. He broke down and cried during his inauguration speech on Sunday, as he spoke about poverty in Brazil. He himself was born poor in Northeastern Brazil.

De Almeida says Lula has a Herculean job ahead. And only someone like him, a popular leader who can negotiate across the political spectrum, would be up to the task. "Lula now has to begin to reconstruct Brazil," she says. "That's the challenge: bringing together his governing coalition, and re-establishing the most basic principles, like that the poor have a right to eat."

The Amazon is also at the top of his agenda. Amazon deforestation is at roughly a 15-year high. About half of the current destruction is happening on Indigenous territories, conservation areas, and public lands. Indigenous peoples and environmental activists point the blame squarely at former president Bolsonaro. His government gutted the agencies and the polices that once protected the forests and the Native peoples living there. His administration allowed illegal settlers to act with impunity, pushing onto Indigenous territories and conservation areas like never before.

I witnessed the deforestation and fires first hand, in October, on the land of the Karipuna people in the state of Rondônia.



Chief André Karipuna surveys destruction of rainforest.

(Photo: Michael Fox)

Chief André Karipuna walked me through the jungle to see the latest destruction of their land.

"This was all just burned," he said, staring out over the charred remnants of a once pristine stretch of jungle. "You can still see the smoke. Less than a week ago, this was all green forest."

Land invaders are clear cutting and burning areas of their territory to sell off, largely to cattle ranchers. Lula has promised to stop the land invasions and the deforestation. It's something he's done before. During his first term, in the early 2000s, deforestation was even greater than today. Lula rolled out a series of landmark measures that cut deforestation in half within two years. Brazil hit its 2020 goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation ahead of schedule.

Lula has brought back his former Environment Minister Marina Silva to help him do the job. In his first days in office, Lula made good on a series of promises to defend the Amazon. He signed seven executive orders aimed at environmental protection. Among them was the relaunch of the billion-dollar Amazon Fund, where foreign governments can contribute to forest protection. He also took steps to empower Brazil's Indigenous peoples.

"The indigenous peoples need to have their land demarcated and free from the

threats of illegal and predatory economic activities," Lula said during his inauguration speech. "They're not obstacles to development. They are guardians of the rivers and forests and a fundamental piece of the greatness of our nation."

Prominent Indigenous activist Sonia Guajajara was Lula's first cabinet minister to be sworn in on inauguration day. She is now the head of the country's first Ministry of Indigenous Peoples. She wore a feather headdress and carried an Indigenous shaker in her right hand. Lula embraced her when she reached the podium. "It's a moment of such great emotion," she said in her first speech to supporters. "I've been telling a lot of people that I've never felt this excited. Never in my life."

Guajajara and her new team are hoping to take action fast. At the top of their agenda is restructuring the new ministry, removing land invaders and demarcating new Indigenous land. That was something Bolsonaro refused to do.

This month, the Brazilian government is expected to recognize 13 new Indigenous territories.

"This is an historic moment," says Indigenous rights defender Ingrid Sateré Mawé, "This is a moment to rewrite the history of the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil."

Nicaraguans Join Migrants Crossing the Border

By John Perry, journalist, Nicaragua



John Perry

Ed. Note: This article was edited for length

After two years of Joe Biden's presidency, four times as many undocumented migrants are trying to cross the border into the United States and the administration discovered a new narrative: that migrants are fleeing "communism." The White House ignores the fact that in the fiscal year just ended, migrants coming from the three countries he labels "communist" formed less than a third of the total: of the 2.7 million people "encountered" at the border, only a fifth came from Cuba, Nicaragua, or Venezuela. Half of all migrants still come from the four countries closest to Texas: Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

If Biden blames migration on "repression" he has an excuse for renewed attacks on governments, his administration demonizes. But the real reason for the growth in numbers is jobs. The US has an acute labor shortage. Take the case of Nicaraguans heading north: their numbers have grown from a handful in 2020 to 165,000 in the last 12 months. "There aren't enough people to fill the jobs being advertised," said one economist. With a shortage of people to do low-paid work, getting them from countries with lower wages are the obvious solution. Stories of people moving north and sending \$500 each month to their families are plentiful in Nicaragua. Remittances make up a big proportion of Nicaragua's national income and the share of them coming from the US grew by nearly two-thirds in the first nine months of 2022.

Nicaragua is on the transit route for migrants heading to the US, so in the past two years "coyotes" have appeared to arrange passage and loan sharks to arrange the finance. Buses take people as far north as the Mexican border. Once Nicaraguans reach Texas, they can expect better treatment than migrants from neighboring countries like Honduras. Often, they are

allowed in and even given bus or plane tickets to cities where they have family. Unlike Hondurans, few are deported.

There are also formal routes attracting educated Nicaraguans. Young people from wealthier families, who often speak good English, also find an open door. Those on student visas are now allowed to stay once their studies end and migrants who can afford to fly to the US, perhaps on tourist visas, seem able to regularize their stays more easily. Nicaraguans with smartphones see advertisements offering guaranteed jobs. The message "everyone is heading north" is all about the supposed opportunities, not about fleeing from "repression."

Nicaragua is the third-poorest country in Latin America and its economy was hit not only by the pandemic but by the US-supported coup attempt in 2018. The country was just recovering when Covid-19 struck. It handled the pandemic well with virtually no help from Washington.

US sanctions on Nicaragua are less severe than those on Cuba and Venezuela but have disrupted flows of development finance and even of vital imports like medical supplies. Washington recently began to tighten the screw, targeting the gold mining industry which is Nicaragua's biggest export earner.

Biden's nominee for ambassador to Nicaragua, Hugo Rodriguez, promised the US Congress that he would "support using all economic and diplomatic tools to bring about a change in direction in Nicaragua." In 2023, Nicaragua will continue to be treated as a pariah while Biden is forced into limited negotiations with Venezuela and may even shift his position on Cuba. In November, he repeated Trump's ridiculous assertion that Nicaragua is an "extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the US" and in December put it on a list of countries guilty of religious suppression, bizarrely choosing a period in which streets in every Nicaraguan city are filled with religious processions.

Nicaragua's real threat to the US is a very different one. Despite the double blow of the coup attempt in 2018 and the pandemic in 2020, the country is recovering. It was more successful than adjoining countries in tackling Covid-19, and

now has one of Latin America's highest vaccination rates. The list of government achievements in the 15 years that the Sandinistas have been in power is impressive: 24 new public hospitals completed, maternal mortality cut by two-thirds, electricity coverage up from 50 % to 99 % of households, with three-quarters generated from renewables, and public investment creating the best roads in Central America. Perhaps its singular achievement is in women's rights, with Nicaragua ranked seventh in the world for gender equality.

Now, people's biggest concern is the state of the economy and the cost-of-living crisis. Nicaragua has advantages here, too: it has a dynamic small business sector with limited dependence on multinational companies; it's agriculture is dominated by small farmers and offers 80 % self-sufficiency in basic foods. Prices have been controlled because the government is capping the cost of fuel (for vehicles and for cooking). Nicaragua's economy grew by more than 10 % in 2021, and by 4 % in 2022. Government debt (46 % of GDP) is lower than its neighbors.

If the US were serious about curbing migration, it would treat Nicaraguans crossing the border in the same way as it treats other Central Americans. The US may see a win-win situation here: Nicaraguans help boost the US economy while depleting their home country of talent, and their favorable treatment at the border can be disguised as help for those freeing repression. Demonizing Nicaragua's government, sanctioning key officials, blocking loans from the World Bank, providing less medical and other aid than goes to neighboring countries and, finally, threatening to cut Nicaragua's access to the US market, are all weapons in a hybrid war.

After the Sandinista revolution (1980s), Oxfam said the country offered "the threat of a good example." The US may still feel the same threat and is determined to punish a country which defies it politically yet is surviving and prospering with an economic model that is completely contrary to the one followed by US administrations. This only benefits six million Nicaraguans; if others see it, they may like it, and Washington can't take that chance.

Source: *Morning Star*, 12/24/22

AMLO and Mexico's Fourth Transformation

By *Adalberto Santana, journalist*

Ed. Note: This article was excerpted for length

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) called for a mass rally which took place on November 27th. AMLO led a march through the main avenues of Mexico City, culminating in a huge rally in the Plaza de la Constitución, better known as the Zócalo. The turnout was estimated at approximately 1,200,000 people. The main purpose of the rally was to highlight a report on the administration's performance in the fourth year of the López Obrador government.

In this context, the opposition parties on the right, such as the National Action Party (PAN), Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), Citizen Movement (MC) and Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), as well as corporate media analysts that hold ample space (98 %) in the written press, radio and television, have not managed in four years to weaken support for the government of the so-called Fourth Transformation (4T). On the contrary, the anti-AMLO propaganda seems to have led broad popular sectors to strengthen their adhesion to the government of the Workers' Party. The polls are quite favorable for the Mexican president and for the political parties that support him: Partido del Trabajo (PT), Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (MORENA) and Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM), as well as (within) the multiple social groups that are the main support of the AMLO administration.

After four years of the López Obrador government, the political opposition has experienced little growth in support, unable to consolidate forces capable of weakening the broad Mexican social left. This is in line with prevailing winds in Latin American, of which Mexico is an essential part. The most recent electoral triumphs of progressives, in Brazil and Colombia this year, confirm the dominant regional trend. But also the many electoral wins of the Mexican left in state governments, municipalities, deputies and senators at the local and national level are examples of a growing progressive tide. In this context, AMLO's mass rally showed his capacity to mobilize popular contingents in support of his policies. It also indicates that the pro-

gram of the so-called 4T is seen as being carried out for the benefit of the Mexican people, as expressed in his 2018 electoral campaign slogan: "For the good of all, first the poor".

That slogan and the resulting social policies were not in the framework of the opposition parties, which were more oriented to the middle and upper classes. In the current reality of the Mexican social structures, those social groups are a minority and have lost some of the power that they held in previous governments, where neoliberal programs were promoted, to the exclusive benefit of minority groups located in the upper echelons. This hegemonic neoliberalism survived for almost three decades but has reached its inevitable collapse.

In four years of government, the López Obrador policies have managed to reduce the prior social polarization, and drastically reduce the corruption that dominated large spheres of public power. This has made it possible to expand social justice as a reform model, of a more inclusive capitalism. According to AMLO: "of 35 million families in the country, 30 million (85 %), directly receive at least a small portion of the public budget; and the remaining 15 also benefit from development conditions, paying less taxes, lower electricity and fuel rates, without suffering from corruption, influence and with business options, work, justice and peace". The model of the Fourth Transformation, in sum, is a proposal of a reformist regime that seeks to strengthen social participation and reduce social polarization. For example, an increase in workers' salaries is proposed to reach 100% by the end of 2024. In this model, there is a dialogue between the business sector and the workers' organizations, with the government as mediator. This is a traditional formula of Latin American reformist governments such as those of Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico, Getúlio Vargas and Lula da Silva in Brazil, Juan Domingo Perón and Néstor Kirchner in Argentina, among others.

In his fourth report, the Mexican president also highlighted the creation of more than 1,200,000 jobs and 145 free public universities. Also, the reduction of poverty and extreme poverty in Mexico has been a fundamental achievement for the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC. This was due in large part to the reduction of corruption

and the increase in economic support for the most vulnerable groups, especially marginalized young people without employment and education opportunities who otherwise might have joined organized crime.

If the Mexican right-wing opposition were less ideologically biased, less racist and classist and less accustomed to corruption, it would have a more inclusive political discourse and practice. If so, Mexico would undoubtedly make even more progress towards the path of the broad social and economic reforms being carried out by the so-called Fourth Transformation.

Source: Telesur US, 11/29/22

Issues that have not been addressed by 4T include:

First, the investigation into the 2014 disappearance of 43 students in Ayotzinapa led to the Mexican military and remains suspiciously unresolved. The lead prosecutor of the government's Truth Commission released a new report last summer that lacked fact-checked evidence. A special prosecutor had been assigned by AMLO in 2019 but was later sidelined by AMLO's attorney general. More than a dozen arrest warrants against military officers were reversed, citing a lack of evidence. The special prosecutor then resigned and was replaced by one with little experience. The committee of experts from the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights expressed concern that the resignation of the special prosecutor represented a "serious risk" for the case. They concluded that the most recent Truth Commission report was unreliable, with numerous inconsistencies. In December 2022, police in Guerrero again fired on a bus of students returning from a protest.

Second, the Megaprojects, such as the Mayan Train, which will carry tourists and commercial goods across the Yucatan peninsula and the Interoceanic Corridor are loudly criticized by indigenous groups and environmentalists. The trains will crush or contaminate the network of caves and sink-hole lakes around the resorts of Tulum and Playa del Carmen. Indigenous people have not been consulted as required by law for projects which cross their land.

Additionally, many are concerned that

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

southern Mexico has witnessed an ongoing plunder of its natural resources; a humanitarian crisis of migrants and refugees; an explosion of violent organized crime, and paramilitary activity with forced displace-

ment or criminalization of individuals in resistance.

It is problematic that AMLO has given control of the construction and operation of the megaprojects to the military. There was a significant replacement of the Federal Police by the National Guard in 2019. Police

functions were formally transferred to the Ministry of Defense in 2022, while an additional reform ensured that soldiers carrying out policing duties are subject to military rather than civilian law.

HAITI: “The Truth Speaks for Itself”

By Robert Roth, Haiti Action Committee

On December 16th, 2022, Fanmi Lavalas (the people’s party of Haiti) released a statement commemorating the 32nd anniversary of the first democratic election in Haiti’s history. In that election, the Haitian people chose Jean-Bertrand Aristide as their president, only to see their historic victory overturned seven months later as the result of a bloody US-orchestrated coup d’état.

Drawing on the lessons of that period, the Lavalas statement connected the events of 1990-1991 with the crisis facing Haitian society today:

“The truth speaks for itself. If there had not been a coup d’état, today many of the beautiful dreams of the Haitian people would have already materialized. With justice, transparency, participation, there would be food for everyone, housing for everyone, schools for all and health care for all.” “Thirty-two years after the victory of December 16, 1990, we are witnessing how the anti-democratic forces have failed. They have failed because the country has become a hell on earth. Everywhere is kidnapping, insecurity, misery, hunger, excessive cost of living, corruption, economic crimes, political crimes in a hell that is called a country.”

As Haitians celebrated their Independence Day on January 1st, the situation in the

country could not be more dire. The regime of unelected and illegitimate de facto prime minister Ariel Henry remains in power despite continuous mass protests demanding his ouster. Henry was hand-picked by the US and its allies in the so-called Core Group of foreign occupiers that exercises colonial control over Haiti. Like the series of US-imposed governments that have infected Haiti since the 2004 coup against the second Aristide administration, the Henry government has proven to be a disaster for the Haitian people. Following the dictates of the IMF with its structural adjustment policies, the Henry regime removed government subsidies on fuel prices, resulting in dramatic hikes in the cost of gas, food and other basic necessities. With collapsing infrastructure and a defunded health care system, Haitians are once again confronting a cholera epidemic. Government-supported paramilitary groups continue to terrorize opposition neighborhoods. To top it all off, the US Government, fearful that the Henry regime is on its last legs, has been lobbying other countries, including Canada, Mexico and the CARICOM nations, to become the face of yet another round of military intervention to ensure that Haiti’s popular movement is kept from power.

As his government teeters on the brink, Henry has rolled out his own hand-picked transitional council, which would suppos-

edly organize elections in 2024. The Henry plan, supported by the US State Department, would keep in power the same dictatorship that has created the terror now engulfing Haiti. Fanmi Lavalas and other opposition parties immediately rejected the plan, with Lavalas calling for an authentic popular transition:

“The transition that the Haitian people want cannot take us from bad to worse. No. The transition that the Haitian people want is a complete break with this system of corruption to put an end to this ever-boiling cauldron of misery.”

To make matters worse, the Biden Administration has just announced that it will extend the use of Title 42, the Trump Administration vehicle to block refugees from seeking asylum in the US. Haiti was one of four countries targeted by the new directive. More than 25,000 Haitians have been deported since Biden took office and those numbers will surely swell. So, as the US stokes the flames of terror and dictatorship in Haiti, it will have the Border Patrol stand guard to make sure that Haitians cannot flee the fire. Enough is enough. As the New Year begins, let’s turn up the heat on the Biden Administration and recommit to our solidarity with Haiti.

Source: www.haitisolidarity.net, 1/12/2023

HONDURAS: State of Emergency Extended

By Karen Spring, TFA board, podcast Honduras Now

On Jan. 7 the Honduran government extended the partial state of emergency, in place since Dec. 6, for 45 more days. It was originally focused on fighting criminal gangs, cartels, and high levels of violence in Honduras’ two major cities, Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.

The decision to declare such an emergency comes shortly after a US-funded non-government organization Association for a More Just Society (ASJ) campaigned against the

Castro administration raising concerns about the growing levels of extortion around the country. The day prior to the declaration, ASJ released a report that cited extortion rates primarily during the previous administration of accused drug trafficker, ex-President Juan Orlando Hernández.

Although extortion and gangs certainly are a serious issue that need to be addressed by the new Xiomara Castro administration, it is important to connect the insecurity, violence, and organized crime to the 13 years of US-backed post-coup governments. From 2009 to 2022, the US poured millions of dollars

into “improving citizen safety and security” while arming, training, funding, and politically supporting two governments, and the Honduran military and police, that grew to be deeply involved in drug trafficking, corruption, and assassinations. In some cases, drug cartels linked to the previous President worked alongside gangs to target enemies of his drug cartel. In addition, the ability for the Castro administration to address extortion and violence is limited because the judiciary and Attorney General’s office are still under the control of the narco-dictatorship.

NEWS BRIEFS

HONDURAS: Guapinol Environmentalists Assassinated

Guapinol environmental defenders Aly Domínguez and Jairo Bonilla were shot dead in broad daylight as they returned home from work, triggering renewed calls for an independent investigation into the persecution and ongoing violence against a rural Honduran community battling to stop an illegally sanctioned open pit mine. Local police and prosecutors immediately ascribed the deaths to a botched mugging. Relatives and lawyers question the official version, pointing to the ongoing threats and harassment faced by the community. Domínguez and Bonilla were co-founders of Guapinol's grassroots resistance against an iron ore mine owned by one of the country's most powerful couples. Domínguez was among 32 community leaders falsely accused of crimes by the mining company and local authorities.

Source: *Latin American Working Group* 01/17/23

IMMIGRATION: Title 42 Expanded

In January, President Biden announced new immigration policies including the expansion of controversial Trump-era Title 42 to migrants from Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Haiti, in addition to continuing the refusal of asylum to those who crossed the US/Mexico border between official ports of entry and to those who traveled through another country but did not seek asylum there. These expanded policies promise more death and suffering to people forced to flee their homes due to violence, economic privation, and climate change (of which the US is a primary contributor).

A special "humanitarian parole" provision was included for asylum seekers from Nicaragua, Haiti, and Cuba. The border rights group *Al Otro Lado* notes that the eligibility requirements of this provision are more demanding than those for white Ukrainian migrants. Last November a lawsuit brought against Title 42 by the ACLU and other immigrant's rights groups prevailed, when a DC Appeals Court struck down the law. The Supreme Court later stayed the ruling, but Title 42 remains in place pending the Court's consideration, scheduled for March 2023.

Source: *Truthout*. 01/09/23

VENEZUELA: Saab Still Detained by US

In 2020 the Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab was on a mission from Caracas to Iran to procure items denied to Venezuelans by sanctions imposed by the US. His plane was diverted to the island nation of Cabo Verde where he was arrested and in 2022 extradited and imprisoned in Miami. As a special envoy of the Venezuelan government, he was supposed to be immune from arrest and detention under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

An evidentiary hearing began in Dec.2022. His bid for freedom under diplomatic immunity was rejected on Dec.23 by a federal judge, on the grounds that he was appointed as a special envoy by a government that the US does not recognize (that of Nicolás Maduro). Saab has denied the crimes of which he has been accused, including conspiracy to launder money. The Saab defense team has appealed the decision. The Caracas government continues to treat Saab as a national hero.

Source: *www.blackagenda.com*, 12/14/22

BOLIVIA: 2019 Coup Architect Detained

On 12/30/22, a Bolivian Court sentenced the far-right governor of Santa Cruz, Luis Fernando Camacho, to four months of pre-trial detention while an investigation is underway into the 2019 Coup d'état against Evo Morales. The prosecution seeks to formalize the charge of terrorism against Camacho, who was one of the key architects of the coup. During anti-coup protests, 38 Bolivians were killed in military and police repression. Camacho is one of the most reactionary, racist, pro-imperialist politicians of Bolivia.

Since October 2022, Camacho and his separatist clique have been maintaining a "bosses" strike against the government of Bolivia, costing severe economic losses. The strike is a road blockade and mandatory closure of businesses but has hardly any popular support. In fact, those sectors of society are demanding that the intentions to destabilize the national government of Luis Arce and David Choquehuanca, be stopped.

Source: *Peoples Dispatch*, 12/30/22, *Orinoco Tribune*. 11/14/22, *La Jornada*, 10/27/22

GUATEMALA: Human Rights Under Attack

The Guatemalan government is dismantling the gains made after the 1996 signing of the Peace Accords. In the 21/2 years of the Alejandro Giammattei administration, more attacks on human rights defenders have occurred than during the terms of any other administration in post-conflict Guatemala. More than a dozen prosecutors and judges have fled into exile in 2022. A journalist and two leading female prosecutors have been jailed on spurious charges. With elections next year, the Guatemalan congress is considering a bill to broaden the use of force in demonstrations.

Egregious attacks against women defenders have included: assassination, disappearance, imprisonment, criminalization, and rape. Abortion was already illegal but in March 2022, legislators passed a bill to further restrict women's rights and threaten LGBTQ rights. President Giammattei declared his country the "pro-life capital of Ibero-America." The far-right Christian fundamentalist movement that has existed for decades is now substantial in Guatemalan churches. The views of the evangelical and economic elite along with US funding continues to strengthen the corrupt government.

Source: *GHRC/USA. Winter 2022; The Progressive*, 12/22-1/23

ECUADOR: Progressives Win Elections

On February 5, over 10 million Ecuadorians participated in local elections, electing mayors, councilors, and prefectures, as well as members of the Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control (CPCCS). When 98% of the votes were counted, progressives emerged victorious in crucial regions of the country.

The Citizen Revolution Movement (RC), led by former president Rafael Correa, won the prefectures in nine of the 23 provinces. The RC also won mayor's offices in sixty cities, including the capital Quito, and the country's largest city, Guayaquil.

The RC thanked the people of Ecuador for their support. "After more than six years of persecution, of taking away the legal status of our political organization, of unjustly imprisoning our comrades and forcing others to live in exile, in these 2023 sectional elections we demonstrated that we are the main and largest political force in Ecuador. We are more alive than ever...It is a historic victory..."

Source: *Peoples Dispatch*, 02/07/23

US Veterans Sail Historic Peace Boat to Cuba, Call for End to US Blockade

The historic Golden Rule anti-nuclear sailboat returned to Miami harbor after completing its momentous voyage to Cuba. The wooden boat, which had sailed in 1958 to interfere with US nuclear testing, belongs to Veterans For Peace (VFP). Its mission: “to end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons.” It is on a 15-month/11,000 mile educational voyage around the “Great Loop”, and it determined to go to Cuba because the world almost came to a nuclear war over Cuba in 1962.

“Without the US hostility to an independent, socialist Cuba, we would not have come so close to nuclear war in 1962,” says Gerry Condon, former president of VFP, TFA Board member and part of the crew who sailed to Cuba. “There are a lot of lessons to learn from the Cuban Missile Crisis. But have they been learned? The US seem to be making the same mistakes in Ukraine today. This time it is the US that has moved hostile military forces, including nuclear weapons systems, close to Russia’s borders.”

For many years Veterans For Peace has been calling for an end to the US blockade of Cuba. Now some in the US are calling for at least a temporary suspension of the



The Golden Rule sails into Havana’s Marina Hemingway 12/30/22

blockade, to allow Cuba to rebuild after Hurricane Ian, which destroyed as many as 10,000 homes in the western province of Pinar del Rio. “We carried humanitarian aid and delivered it to Pinar del Rio,” said Condon. “We also witnessed the economic suffering that is being caused by the cruel 60-year US blockade of Cuba, and we will now be telling people about this wherever the Golden Rule sails. When people learn about the suffering that the US government

is causing normal Cuban citizens, they will join Veterans For Peace in calling for the US blockade to finally end.”

The Golden Rule was sailed to Havana under a General License issued by the US Treasury Dept. that allows US residents to travel to Cuba for educational and people-to-people purposes.

Source: Peace & Planet News, winter 2023; www.ufpgoldenrule.org

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