

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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UN once again calls for end to United States embargo against Cuba

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- The United Nations General Assembly today once again urged an end to the commercial, economic and financial embargoes imposed on Cuba by the United States for nearly half a century.

For the 16th year in a row, the Assembly adopted a resolution – with an overwhelming 184 votes in favour – reiterating its call to all States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures not conforming with their obligations to reaffirm freedom of trade and navigation.

Four States – Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau, US – voted against the resolution, while the Federated States of Micronesia abstained.

The 192-member body also called on States to repeal or invalidate such laws and requested the Secretary-General to report on the matter at the Assembly's 63rd session.

Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque denounced the long-running blockade imposed on his country, calling it the main obstacle to the development and well-being of the Cuban people, and a “blatant, massive and systematic” violation of their rights.

“Anyone can understand the level of socio-economic development that Cuba would have attained had it not been subjected to this unrelenting and obsessive economic war,” he told delegates.

The US has not only ignored, “with both arrogance and political blindness,” the 15 resolutions adopted by the Assembly calling for the lifting of the blockade, but has over the last year adopted new measures, further tightening the sanctions, he added.

Reiterating that the embargo is a bilateral issue between his country and Cuba that should not come before the Assembly, US delegate Ronald Godard said that “Cuba's problems derive not from any decision of the United States but from the embargo on freedom that the Cuban regime has imposed on its own people.”

Stating that the Cuban people are denied information, access to the outside world, the right to travel and opportunities to better their lives economically, he urged countries to oppose the Cuban government's embargo on freedom – “the real cause of the suffering of the Cuban people.”

“Now more than ever we invite the Member States considering this resolution to reject the arguments of the Cuban government and focus on effecting a transition in Cuba that would restore its people's fundamental rights,” he stated.