Mass rally in Cuba marks 'Che' Guevara's 50th death anniversary

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The Latin American revolutionary was shot dead by CIA-trained troops in a remote village in Bolivia on October 9, 1967.

More than 60,000 people took to the streets gathered to commemorate the 50th death anniversary of Latin American revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

Cuban President Raul Castro was present at a mass rally on Sunday at the Che Guevara Mausoleum in the town of Santa Clara, 300 km east of Havana, reports Xinhua news agency.

The rally capped a week of tributes to the guerrilla fighter that helped overthrow Cuba's dictatorship and bring Fidel Castro to power, before he was ambushed and killed in **Bolivia** on October 9, 1967.

On the ground floor of the memorial, a cavern-like enclosure holds the remains of Guevara and 30 of his comrades fallen in Bolivia. An eternal flame, lit by then President Fidel Castro, pays homage to the fighters.

On Sunday, Raul Castro and other Communist Party leaders paid tribute to

Guevara and his guerrilla partners inside the memorial.

Cuban First Vice President Miguel Diaz-Canel said:" Che is not dead, as his enemies wanted. His figure grows larger as time passes and younger generations recognize his revolutionary paradigm."

Guevara is now a "universal symbol" and inspiration in the struggle for the liberation of different nations "oppressed by imperialism", said Diaz-Canel.

"He had a very original way of facing life, and his comrades knew how to appreciate his simplicity, sincerity, naturalness, companionship, stoicism, reckless disposition to always face the most difficult situation."

His altruism and conscious revolutionary spirit have become an ideal to follow, said Diaz-Canel.

In Bolivia, President Evo Morales, accompanied by his cabinet and other leading figures, completed a 2-km pilgrimage to La Higuera, where Guevara was killed by CIA-backed mercenaries.

Born in the Argentine city of Rosario in 1928 and trained as a doctor, Guevara joined Fidel Castro's insurgency in 1956 to overthrow Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, and played a leading role in the rebel victory.

With **Cuba** under new leadership, he left the country to continue his struggle against oppression, first to Congo and then to Bolivia, where he was ambushed and killed by mercenaries.