
The Anti-Rioting Law and the Double Standard of Anti-Cuban Mafia in Florida

By: M.H. Lagarde
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Last April 16th, at a ceremony held in Miami in memory of those mercenaries fallen in the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Florida governor, Ron DeSantis, stated:

“The members of the 2506 Brigade rose up against repression and an immoral ideology. They rose up for freedom,” the same “spirit”—he added— that *“encourage people worldwide to fight against any kind of totalitarianism.”*

According to EFE, the governor paired the “spirit” that defined the 2506 Brigade with the spirit that drove the protests against communism in Tiananmen (China) and led to a bloodbath after the fall of the Berlin Wall 31 years ago; or that spirit encouraging those Cubans who continue risking their lives every time they cast into the sea to flee the island.

“As long as I am governor in Florida, this state will be ruled with the same 2506 Brigade’s spirit,” said the governor, who also highlighted that such spirit of “fight for freedom” is fundamental for what is going on in the US where —he points out— *“we are fighting against political censorship.”*

Almost 72 hours, the same span of time the mercenary Brigade survived in the sands of Playa Girón, were enough to know the sort of “fight for freedom” and against “totalitarianism” in the US that DeSantis was referring to.

In Florida, an Anti-Rioting Law was passed. This law regulates the police actions in protests. @jpenalete, from #VozdeAmérica, reports that law experts believe that such state legislation is actually unconstitutional.

— Voz de América (@VozdeAmerica) April 21, 2021

To fight against “political censorship,” the governor in Florida enacted on Monday an Anti-Rioting bill for Florida, a measure that will give green light to the law enforcement agencies to suppress civil riots.

"If we take a look to the scope of this legislation in particular, this is the strongest legislation against riots ever and favors law enforcement in this country," DeSantis said in a press conference at Winter Haven. *"Nothing's even come close to it."*

The particularity of this *"libertarian"* legislation consists of silencing, or rather, censoring any kind of protests, like the ones some minorities had envisaged, in the event the police officer who killed George Floyd would have been acquitted.

Even though Florida was one of the least affected states concerning the anti-racist protests that shocked the country last summer, DeSantis' *"Anti-Rioting"* bill seeks to protect the police and private property against rioters. *"If you incite riots, loot, and hurt police officers in a riot, you go to jail,"* stated the governor.

Some civil rights groups are opposed to the law due to its racist, anti-American, and anti-Constitutional nature. This law violates the right of the First Amendment to protest peacefully, allowing the police to accuse the masterminds and any person involved in a protest, even if this person is not involved in any sort of violent act.

"The problem with this bill is that the language is so overbroad and vague ... that it captures anybody who is peacefully protesting at a protest that turns violent through no fault of their own," said Kara Gross, ACLU Florida Legislative Director. *"Those individuals who do not engage in any violent conduct under this bill can be arrested and charged with a third-degree felony and face up to five years in prison and loss of voting rights. The whole point of this is to instill fear in Floridians."*

In addition to protect Confederate monuments, statues and historical properties, the law also creates a broad category for misdemeanor arrest during protests, and anyone charged under that provision will be denied bail until their first court appearance. DeSantis said he wanted that to prevent people from rejoining ongoing protests.

The legislation creates a new felony crime of *"aggravated rioting"* that carries a sentence of up to 15 years in prison and a new crime of *"mob intimidation,"* defined as three or more individuals who *"act with a common intent,"* and force, or threat to force other individuals to take a different viewpoint against their will.

And what's more, among other *"anti-totalitarianism"* proposals, the law, already in force, in addition to turn roadblocks into a serious felony, grants civil immunity to people who run over protesters blocking with their presence a road, which according to naysayers, this could have protected the white nationalist who ran over and killed counter-protester Heather Heyer during Charlottesville's disturbance back in 2017.

That is a pretty weird way for Ron DeSantis to "fight against political censorship" by using censorship and oppression against the dissent of those victims of the everyday police crackdown.

The spirit of the *"libertarian"* law to *"fight public disturbance"* is another signature of the *"democracy"* that Republican neo-fascist hordes are seeking to impose in the US as well as another evidence of the double standard and cynicism of some of the members of the anti-Cuban mafia in Florida.

So far, as far as we know, the also sponsors and fans of failed 2506 Brigade, Marco Rubio and Mario Díaz-Balart—the ones who also encourage and fund protests in Cuba—have not introduced any resolution at the US Senate in solidarity with black people, Latin people, or independent activists in Florida who claim their right to protest for being vilely assassinated.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
