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**Protest in Nigeria against U.S. 'economic blockade' on Cuba**

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More than 500 delegates from 29 African countries and around the world have protested the 60-year economic sanction imposed on Cuba by the United States government.

The protest march which was initially scheduled for the U.S. embassy in Nigeria was later held at the Unity Fountain, Abuja, on Wednesday.

It was a concluding part of the 3-day activity of the 6th African Continental Conference of Solidarity with Cuba, hosted by the Nigeria Movement of Solidarity with Cuba.

Owei Lakemfa, the spokesperson of the movement, said at the beginning of the protest that the change of venue was to ensure the safety of foreign delegates.

“Ordinarily, if anybody has anything about us marching, we can confront them because the Nigerian constitution has given us the right to movement and we don’t have to take permission from anybody. But when we have invited people from 29 other countries among us, we need to be more careful.

“And so if the Americans are already jittery and the Nigerian security are not sure of what will happen; it is better we resolve it in that symbolic way, just through some streets in Abuja, go to the Unity Fountain, have a rally there and that will be all,” he said.

## **Movement**

The movement comprises the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and a coalition of civil societies and outfits.

They called for international support for Cuba against the U.S. economic blockade that stops it from accessing international market freely.

Cuba is a Latin American country that has been subjected to restrictions on its economic activities by the U.S.

### **Condemnations**

Condemning the blockade on Cuba's economic activities, Imani Na Umoja, a delegate from Guinea Bissau and leader of African Party of Guinea, said that the U.S. government must not be allowed to kill humanity, and it could be done by standing with Cuba against 'imperialism.'

"As Africans, we cannot allow Cuba to be sacrificed by the interest of the few greedy capitalists. We hope the world reunite with the message of solidarity with Cuba. The American government represents the evil forces that are trying to destroy humanity, particularly their 60-year blockade against Cuba. Cuba has helped Africa in many areas and every phase of our struggle including healthcare."

He added that Africa must show the world the example of what freedom and humanism mean, "through solidarity with Cuba".

"We are here because we are human beings. We believe in humanism and that human beings should be free and and not have any form of exploration or injustice," he said. "When there is no struggle, there is no progress; our struggle is to have a free world where people eat the fruit of their labour. The world must be free and Africa will show the example."

Similarly, James Harris, an American delegate and leading member of U.S. Socialist Workers Party, said that supporting Cuba in the struggle for economic freedom from 'American imperialists' was a favour to self.

He condemned the 'action' of the U.S. embassy for altering the venue of the protest for their fear of 'harmless protesters.'

"If we cannot support Cuba, we cannot support ourselves. If we don't understand the sacrifices of the Cubans to the world, we cannot emulate them and that is what imperialism imposes. That is why they go to the length of treachery to stop us from demonstration the (US) embassy."

Meanwhile, the Cuban Ambassador to Nigeria, Carlos Trejor, commended the organisers and delegates of the event for giving much support to Cuba when it needed it.

He said that the country would continue to be friends with Africa as a partner in progress, noting the cultural affinity the country shares with Africa.

"We sincerely thank our friends, the organising committee. The most important achievement that we have acquired is that a big solidarity movement is solidly behind us. We thank sincerely our friends who came for the meeting. It happens that those people in solidarity with Cuba are not the rich ones.

"When we talk about Cuba; we talk about solidarity, dignity. You cannot be free or sovereign if

you don't have dignity. The capitalist world can steal their wealth but they cannot steal their dignity because that is the most important thing," he said.

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