

We, the members of Latin America Association of Hungary would like to share our opinion about the human rights' situation of Cuba with the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights ahead of the Universal Periodic Review.

First of all, we would like to lay down, that we think there are real human rights in Cuba, and that is expressed many ways. Cuba is striving to achieve the fullest enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all its citizens, irrespectively of gender, race, nationality, religious beliefs, political opinion etc. The Constitution of the Republic of Cuba establishes the fundamental rights, duties and guarantees of citizens, as well as the basis for their respect, realization and protection. If there was this kind of complaints the systems of the Attorney General's Office for people's attention, complaints and claims have been strengthened and actions have been taken to consolidate the recognition of sexual, racial, ethnic and gender diversity. Above its own laws, the country has ratified 44 international human rights instruments out of the 61 internationally-recognized instruments.

Until 1959, the involvement of citizens in political life was nothing but a chimera, in a society marked by violence and political corruption. Now the political system provide direct participation of the people in the exercise and active control of the organs of power, even though their political and civil institutions, and within the framework of the existing legal provisions. The Cuban State recognizes and encourages mass and social organizations, which bring together different sectors of the population, represent their specific interests and involve them in the building, consolidation and defence of the society. The Law provides, as in most countries, the mechanisms and forms in which public participation becomes effective. Recently, the proposals of the Conceptualization of the Cuban economic and social model and the Bases of the National Development Plan until 2030 were discussed by 1.6 million Cubans (over 47,000 meetings), from which over 200,000 proposals emerged, aimed at ensuring a more just, free, independent, equitable, democratic, collaborative and participatory society.

Contrary to what many disinformation media try people to believe, in Cuba there are periodic elections in which people are highly involved. The vote, which also has a voluntary nature, is one of the ways to participate in the conduct of public affairs and access the public service with broad participation in Cuba, having historically exceeded 90% of all voters. In Cuba's election process, all citizens have equal access to the highest public positions, based on their capabilities and merits and not dependent on their economic or financial capacity. People's direct nomination of nominees is applied, not through the party system. The mandates of all members of the representative bodies of state power are eligible, renewable and revocable. Cuba does not have a "presidential system". In Cuba, as in many countries, for example Hungary, the President is elected in an indirect way. The President is chosen from among the deputies and the deputies are elected by the citizens.

Cuba promotes religious freedom. The Cuban Revolution, since 1959, has respected all churches and religious beliefs, without any discrimination. The Cuban Constitution establishes the separation of the Church, validates the separation of religious institutions from the State and confirms that different beliefs enjoy equal consideration.

However under the Cuban Law there is death penalty at present, no person is sentenced to this penalty. The sentences of all persons who were in that situation were changed to 30 years or perpetual deprivation of liberty. Death penalty has not been applied in Cuba since 2003. The Cuban State has developed a penitentiary system that complies with international standards, including the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and ensures access of

prisoners to equal health care services than the rest of the Cuban population. The Cuban penitentiary system has a preventive, re-educational and social reintegration approach, implemented through a number of social programs. In prisons, the involvement of prisoners in professional training and cultural advancement programs, including university studies, is encouraged and facilitated. In Cuban prisons there is no discrimination. All prisoners receive the same treatment, and have access to the same living conditions. The practice of solitary confinement to the arrested or penalized person is absolutely contrary to Cuba's criminal procedural law. The inter-institutional human rights system has been strengthened also through measures for higher performance in the delivery of justice, focused on preserving procedural guarantees in oral hearings and during the regular process, including the pretrial investigation stage. This also includes actions for more effective interaction between the defendant and his/her lawyer.

In addition of civil rights, in Cuba there is a priority for the state to provide the elementary economic human rights. All Cubans, without discrimination, have access to the provision of basic quality services such as education, health care, social security and welfare. Cuba has a very low child mortality rate, very high life expectancy and very high literacy rate, which are such factors, that show the conditions of a society. This is an achieve what Cuba made despite huge external obstacles, first of all, the economic blockade of the United States, which have been maintained for more than 50 years, and which constitutes a serious and systematic violation of their human rights.

To conclude this, we, the members of the Latin America Association of Hungary, think that Cuba is showing an example for the other countries of the world. Of course, neither this society is perfect, but we think that the all-time Cuban government continuously trying to make better the living conditions of the people of Cuba, and correct the haphazard errors. We would like to ask the honoured UN High Commissioner of Human Rights take our remarks into account during the Universal Periodic Review.

Budapest, 3rd October 2017