



FIRST CARIBBEAN PEACE CONFERENCE

THE BRIDGETOWN DECLARATION

RESISTING NUCLEAR AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER: BUILDING PEACE IN THE CARIBBEAN

**A Declaration from the 1st Caribbean Peace Conference
Bridgetown, Barbados, Oct. 6-7th, 2017**

Introduction

The Peace Organizations existing in the Caribbean -- the Caribbean Movement for Peace and Integration (CMPI), the Cuban Movement for Peace and People's Sovereignty (MovPaz), the Jamaica Peace Council (JPC), the Guyana Peace Council (GPC), and the Caribbean Chapter of the International Network In Defense of Humanity (NIDOH-C), as well as several national delegates of other progressive organizations (all together representing eight sister nations of the Caribbean-- Barbados, Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela) and the USA Peace Council met in Barbados over the period of 6th and 7th October 2017 to discuss critical matters relating to world peace and to adopt the Declaration inscribed hereunder.

Background

At a meeting of the World Peace Council held in São Luís, Brazil from November 18-19, 2016 and hosted by the Brazilian Center for Solidarity of the Peoples and Struggle for Peace (CEBRAPAZ), and meeting under the theme "Strengthen the peoples' solidarity in the struggle for peace, against imperialism" it was determined that "strengthening the World Peace Council is a key task in this solidarity", and to this end the Peace Councils of the Caribbean were requested to stage a pan-Caribbean Conference in the year 2017.

Given the call from the World Peace Conference in Sao Luis, the Caribbean Peace Movement moved to organize its first Caribbean Peace Conference in the island of Barbados between October 6th and 7th, 2017.



The delegates of the First Caribbean Peace Conference view with concern, the neo-liberal counter-offensive of imperialism, which is impacting Caribbean societies largely through the installation of retrograde capitalist forces, which have opened the countries to private sector dominance and the reversal of the social gains in health, education, public housing and transportation, adversely impacting the quality of life of the Caribbean working people.

The First Caribbean Peace Conference also recognizes that climate change poses a major threat to the countries of the Caribbean region, as it impacts negatively on our ecological and economic systems and increases the risk of natural disasters that can wipe out Caribbean economies by wreaking havoc on infrastructure and by causing significant loss of life.

The Conference notes with alarm the extra-ordinarily intense and violent current hurricane season which has resulted in billions of dollars in infrastructural damage, destroyed entire islands, crippling their economies and has resulted in scores of deaths. It has not escaped notice that these natural events that have been exacerbated by the effects of human activity, have occurred following denials by the leadership of the USA -- the world's most eco-unfriendly nation -- of the need for any global agreements to combat global warming. From that perspective, the failure to build global consensus around climate change and the necessary responses represents a tremendous threat to Peace in the Caribbean region and militates against the stability and the proper functioning of Caribbean institutions and societies in general.

We also recognize the presence of foreign military bases in the Caribbean as contributing significantly to further environmental degradation and as an erosion of the security and stability of the region. We therefore denounce the military maneuvers and exercises which destroy the environment and undermine the health of the populations residing in proximity to those military bases.

But in addition to their environmental costs, the First Caribbean Peace Conference also views the presence of the large number of foreign military bases and facilities in the Caribbean region as a serious threat to the peace and stability of all the nations given their warlike and interventionist purposes. We consider it to be both, urgent and necessary, to resolutely



join in the actions of the international campaign against foreign military bases and for a world of peace without nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons.

The First Caribbean Peace Conference acknowledges the 1967 Tlatelolco Treaty which established our region of Latin America and the Caribbean as a nuclear free zone, and to this end, we demand the immediate cessation of the transshipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea.

We also recognize the significance of the fact that 122 United Nations member states have adopted the Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, the first and only international legal instrument that declares illegal all nuclear weapons. However, we forcefully condemn the fact that the superpowers possessing such weapons that can wipe out humanity have deliberately and arrogantly avoided signing this essential treaty.

We also note with alarm that a specific threat to Caribbean peace resides in the proliferation of firearms in the Caribbean, in an environment of economic and social collapse occasioned by neo-liberal capitalism and the corrupt activities of drug trafficking, money laundering, and human trafficking. When coupled with the intense foreign media penetration that the Caribbean has been subjected to, the phenomenon of imported values eclipsing our local values of respect and human decency, and with movies and films perpetuating greed, violence, opulence and selfishness, then the rise in senseless killings and gang warfare, presents itself as a direct threat to our Caribbean civilisation.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, the 1st Caribbean Peace Conference hereby:

1. **Dedicates** the work, results and outcomes of the conference to the memory and honour of the eternal Commanders Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro Ruz, and in recognition of both the 50th anniversary of the fall-in-combat of Commander Ernesto Ché Guevara and the 1st anniversary of the passing of Dr. Fidel Castro on November 25th 2016. We pay homage to these two world visionary leaders, who made extra-ordinary contributions to peace and to the liberation struggle of African, Latin-American and Caribbean countries.



2. **Demands** the end of the foreign military presence that MINUSTAH represents in Haiti and its replacement by a civilian and humanitarian support mechanism. In addition, the Conference rejects the notion of a “failed state”, which is a concept that is used by the forces of imperialism as a justification for interference in the internal affairs of sovereign nations and as a motive for military intervention for regime change.
3. **Affirms** our determination to safeguard peace in Latin America and the Caribbean in keeping with the Havana Declaration approved by the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) at the second CELAC Summit held in Havana, Cuba in the year 2014-- a Declaration which establishes our region as a Zone of Peace.
4. **Re-Affirms** our commitment to the principle of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, and our profound respect for the principles and norms of international law, the inalienable right of every State to freely choose their political, economic, social and cultural system without interference of any kind, and the sovereign equality of states.
5. **Recognizes** the role played by women in advancing the peaceful and sustainable future of the planet, and acknowledges that the achievement of peace and an end to violence are dependent on respecting cultural, racial, religious, and sexual diversity.
6. **Commits** to fight against imperialism, neoliberal policies, and foreign military actions which seek to undermine and defeat the progressive and democratic governments and movements of the region.
7. **Rejects** the prevailing hegemonic concept of the “ideal western state”-- a concept which encourages racism, white supremacy, and discrimination. Instead, we recognize and accept a broader and more inclusive concept of human development, participation and democracy.



8. **Rejects** the interventionist actions, the threat of military intervention, the media campaigns, the psychological threats, the economic war, and the financial blockade orchestrated and directed by the government of the United States of America (USA) and by sections of the national and international conservative oligarchy, which undermine the peace and stability of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as they attempt to destroy the Bolivarian revolution and its positive influence on Latin America and the Caribbean.

9. **Recognizes** the sovereign right of the Venezuelan people to undertake reform of their nation's Constitution, and accepts the National Constituent Assembly elected by over eight million people as a legitimate expression of the will and sovereignty of the Venezuelan people: and we also remind the world that the National Constituent Assembly is provided for within the Venezuelan Constitution.

10. **Supports** the efforts made by the revolutionary government of Venezuela to establish dialogue with the Venezuelan opposition -- with the aim of achieving a lasting peace -- within the framework of the discussions that are being held in the Dominican Republic with the support of the International Community.

11. **Expresses** the broadest solidarity with countries and peoples under colonial rule in the Caribbean and South America who have been denied the right to self-determination and sovereignty, and in particular we demand the end of French colonialism in Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana and commits to giving active solidarity to the people of those countries in their struggle for independence, sovereignty and self-determination.

12. **Demands** an end to foreign military presences in Latin America and the Caribbean in general, and in Puerto Rico, the Malvinas, Georgia and South Sandwich Islands in particular. We also reaffirm that the Malvinas, Georgia and Sandwich Islands are part of the territory of Argentina and must return to the sovereignty of the Argentine nation.



13. **Condemns** the refusal of certain Caribbean countries to recognize the legitimate right of the people of Palestine to sovereign statehood.

14. **Condemns** the government of the Dominican Republic for its mass deportation of persons described as “Haitians” and carried out from the year 2015 to the present. The Conference demands the cessation of such deportations, and calls for an internationally supervised determination of the nationality and legal status of the remaining dark-skinned residents of the Dominican Republic in order to remove the anxieties of this group. The Conference also calls for the establishment of an international committee to determine compensation for persons illegally displaced by the mass deportation carried out directly or encouraged by the government of the Dominican Republic.

15. **Demands** the return to Cuban national sovereignty of the territory illegally occupied by the US Naval Base in Guantanamo; and further demands that the US government accept the formal proposal made by the Cuban government to include this issue in the bilateral agenda as being a key factor in the process towards the normalization of the relationship between the two countries, as well as a key issue in the quest for regional peace and safety.

16. **Supports** the struggle of Cuba in all fora for the unconditional removal of the illegal economic, financial and trade blockade, which is the longest one in known history, and which not only qualifies as an act of genocide in International Law but is also a fundamental violation of the Sovereignty of third nations in that it is based upon the extra-territorial application of national or domestic USA legislation.

17. **Rejects** the nasty, unfounded and unjustified decision taken by the Donald Trump administration against Cuban diplomats in the USA, and evidently aimed at erasing all the constructive steps recently achieved towards the normalization of the bilateral USA / Cuba relationship, and which is-- by extension-- a new obstacle to the development of normal relations with the rest of the Caribbean.



18. **Condemns** all acts of terrorism as the anti-thesis of peace, and in particular we recall and condemn the terrorist act committed on October 6th 1976 when a bomb was planted on a Cuban commercial aircraft which resulted in the deaths of 73 persons within the territorial space of the island of Barbados. And to this end we demand that the Government of the USA extradite Luis Posada Carriles, the mastermind of the terrorist act, to Venezuela in order that he may stand trial, and we also reiterate our support for the campaign of the Caribbean Chapter of the International Network in Defense of Humanity to have the United Nations declare October 6th as “International Day Against Terrorism”.

19. **Supports** the people from several Caribbean islands in their struggle to overcome the aftermath of the repeated natural disasters which have destroyed much of the country's infrastructure and to achieve the necessary political and social stability that will enable them to overcome the current situation.

20. **Expresses** solidarity and encourages concrete actions to alleviate the suffering of the victims of recent natural phenomena, which have led to devastation, destruction and loss of life in the Caribbean, and in this regard the Conference demands the creation of global institutional responses that are morally, economically and politically commensurate with the crises which have befallen these countries.

21. **Insists** that global climate change discussions be re-engaged in order to reduce the possibilities of such disasters that have befallen the Caribbean in the 2017 hurricane season.

22. **Condemns** the policies that produce the indiscriminate deportation of Caribbean prisoners from North American prisons, human trafficking and arms trafficking in the Caribbean, and that help to generate high crime rates that threaten the stability of several Caribbean nations.

23. **Rejects** the Media Penetration and the Media Propaganda which dull the senses of Caribbean populations to violence, crimes against



the person, the assassination of leaders, invasion and war, and we encourage our governments to create the conditions for local media practitioners and cultural activists to advance our own aesthetics, feelings and concerns.

24. **Supports** the right of the nations and people of the Caribbean to pursue and demand reparations from the colonial powers for the centuries of vassalage and exploitation founded on the genocide of the indigenous people, African enslavement and colonialism.

25. **Identifies** the United States, NATO and the great powers of the European Union and their allies, in their ambition for world domination, as the main threats to peace and the happiness of the peoples of the entire planet and we demand an end to all wars of imperialist aggression.

26. **Demands** the elimination of nuclear weapons and an end to the threat of their use, and further demands that our respective governments and the nuclear-weapon possessing states promptly sign and ratify the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

27. **Celebrates** the renewed commitment to the founding or reactivating of the Caribbean movements and associations of Peace and their linkage to the World Peace Council, and recognizes that it is vital to articulate and engage upon such collective work in favor of Peace in the region and in support of the sustainability and validity of the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

28. **Expresses gratitude** to the hosts, supporting institutions and personalities, and to the Barbadian people as a whole for the warm welcome given to the participants in the meeting, and for supporting all the logistical arrangements of the 1st Caribbean Peace Conference in Barbados.

29. **Supports** and undertakes to -- individually or in a collective manner -- pursue the actions and initiatives contained in the Plan of Action approved by the Conference.



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30. **Reminds** the Caribbean people of our unique history of race and class based oppression, and of our historic struggles to resist, overcome and transcend such oppression and denial of human dignity, and re-affirm that our history has bequeathed to us a sacred mission to advocate and defend the principles of freedom and human dignity, and to stand with and give active solidarity and support to all peoples who are legitimately fighting against oppressive forces, and for freedom, dignity, respect, sovereignty, self-determination and peace.