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CUBA

**FOSTERING OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES
IN THE FIELD OF CHEMICAL ACTIVITIES**

Difficulties and obstacles encountered by Cuba affecting the full implementation of Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention

The economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of America (the United States) is the most complex and prolonged system of unilateral coercive measures ever imposed against any country.

The blockade is a massive, flagrant, and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cubans. In a ruthless act of cruelty, the United States has imposed during this period, with surgical precision, measures aimed at affecting the most sensitive sectors of Cuban society to foment despair among the people.

In a globalised international economy, it is not only absurd, but criminal, to continue prohibiting the export to Cuba of articles produced in any country, when they comprise 10% or more of components from the United States.

Since 2019, the United States Government has escalated the siege against our country to an extreme and even more perverse and harmful dimension, by adopting wartime measures to try to prevent fuel supplies to Cuba, increasing attacks against Cuban international medical cooperation, and multiplying the harassment of commercial and financial transactions in third markets. Furthermore, the extraterritorial application in US Courts of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act was proposed in order to intimidate investors and commercial entities from other countries.

The intensification of the blockade against Cuba to extreme levels has presented a substantial challenge for our country and has generated significant shortages for the Cuban people. The considerable extraterritorial effects have hindered the country's economic and technological development.

The persecution of Cuba has been further reinforced by the arbitrary inclusion of our country on the State Department's unilateral and illegitimate list of countries supposedly sponsoring terrorism. The United States Government lies and does enormous damage to international efforts to combat terrorism when it accuses Cuba without any basis.



There is not a single valid or reasonable argument for Cuba's permanence on that spurious list. Such action is inadmissible, particularly against a nation that is a victim of terrorism and, whose conduct of firm rejection and persecution of any form or manifestation of terrorism is impeccable and internationally recognised.

The blockade generates distrust in and uncertainty surrounding the financial institutions, businesses, and suppliers of the United States due to the real fear of being penalised for any connections with Cuba.

The extraterritorial restrictions and laws of the Government of the United States against Cuba violate Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention), which stipulates that the States Parties are to commit to "... facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment and scientific and technical information relating to the development and application of chemistry for purposes not prohibited under this Convention" and to "not maintain among themselves any restrictions, ... which would restrict or impede trade and the development and promotion of scientific and technological knowledge in the field of chemistry for industrial, agricultural, research, medical, pharmaceutical, or other peaceful purposes ...".

It is neither conceivable nor acceptable, and it is contrary to international law, for the United States to limit, restrain, and even prohibit in many cases, the free exchange of chemicals, equipment, and scientific and technical information in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes between Cuba and other States Parties, which constitutes, without exception, the right of all.

What effects does the blockade have on Cuba's national implementation of Article XI of the Convention with regard to the economic and technological development of the States Parties?

The damages accumulated in over 60 years of the blockade against Cuba are reaching USD 170,677,200,000 at current prices; against the value of gold, they are rising to more than USD 2.103 trillion.

The economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed against Cuba continues to hinder the development of all the potential of the Cuban economy, for the implementation of the National Plan for Economic and Social Development of the country, as well as for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals set in the 2030 Agenda.

The blockade significantly limits and restrains the maintenance, sustainability, development, and modernisation of the country's industrial chemistry sector. The most substantial effects include the supply of raw materials, fertilizers, fuels, chemicals, technologies, equipment, and spare parts destined for industrial use, as well as the development of export operations. Additionally, the impossibility to hire vessels from a significant number of shipping companies has interrupted the arrival in the country of supplies that have already been paid for. This policy has also generated losses related to geographical relocation for businesses, as well as monetary and financial effects.

The following are among the examples of damages resulting from the blockade policy within the field of chemistry in Cuba between 2023 and 2025:

- Between March 2024 and February 2025, the monetary and financial damages to the Chemical Industry Business Group amounted to USD 29,992.91.
- Foreign trade activity, particularly the management of imports, is fundamentally affected by the constraints imposed by the extraterritorial measures stemming from the economic blockade. This impacts the materialisation of business opportunities with suppliers, be they intermediaries or manufacturers of raw materials and spare parts for the chemical industry.
- There are very specific examples, such as spare parts for the automated system of the chlorine production plant from the manufacturer Yokogawa, and parts for the Aerzen water treatment unit. Both companies have expressed their intention not to sell products to Cuba, even through third countries. At this same plant, we are also facing challenges and delays in obtaining requested estimates for critical spare parts such as ion-exchange membranes. The suppliers have mentioned that they are negotiating with manufacturers regarding issues related to the blockade. This currently constitutes a disruption in the quantities of chlorine to be produced, due to the lack of these membranes, which was valued at approximately USD 155,000.
- The economic blockade on access to foreign currency, supplies, raw materials, fertilizers, machinery, fuel, chemical products, and technology has also led to a significant decrease in food production. Additionally, the inability to contract a significant number of shipping companies has interrupted the arrival of supplies to the country that have already been paid for.
- For example, the agricultural and livestock activities of the Agroforestry Group were impacted during this period due to a fuel deficit, a lack of tires for specialised transport, and disruptions in the supply of fertilizers and pesticides. These factors have resulted in the failure to meet certain production targets for various crops and livestock, particularly in milk and meat.
- In the particular case of the health sector, the blockade made it more difficult to obtain consumables and supplies, reagents, medicines and medical instruments, to purchase equipment and spare parts, to gain access to technologies and specialised sites related to medicine, and directly affected the increased cost of the acquisition, marketing, and transportation of goods for the sustainability of the health system. From March 2024 to February 2025, the economic impact amounted to approximately USD 288,833,610.
- Due to the blockade, Cuba cannot normally access (or must do so through third-party markets and at significantly higher prices) advanced United States-manufactured technologies and pharmaceuticals, as well as medical equipment for which more than 10% of the components are of United States origin. Examples include first- and second-line drugs for the treatment of lung cancer, colon cancer, and sarcomas, and reagents necessary for the correct diagnosis of patients with neuroblastoma, among others.

- Between 2023 and the first two months of 2024, the blockade caused difficulties in seven operations for the Finlay Vaccine Institute, a producer of the Cuban COVID-19 vaccines Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus; four of these involved reagents and raw materials, one involved inputs, and two involved equipment from United States manufacturers.
- The Cuban Neuroscience Center (CNEURO) was unable to execute two contracts that had already been signed with a Spanish company to purchase laboratory equipment and reagents, as well as accessories to ensure the operation of “Infantix”, a Cuban system for the detection of hearing and vision disorders among one-month-old children. Since the products originated in the United States, European distributors refused to sell them to Cuba.
- Reagents manufactured by the United States firm Beckman Coulter—required by the immunology laboratories of the country and the diagnosis of different types of immunodeficiencies—continue to be blocked for Cuba.
- The Cuban National Center for Scientific Research is working on a Cuban vaccine project against human papillomavirus. However, progress has been hindered by difficulties in access to analytical tools and immunological assays. Despite their willingness to cooperate, researchers from the National Cancer Institute in the United States were informed that they could not send the reagents needed to Cuba due to the restrictions of the blockade.
- Ammonia, a fundamental chemical reagent for the extraction of nickel and cobalt in ammonia carbonate technology, has been repeatedly affected in the supply to the company “Ernesto Che Guevara”. For this reason, 95.75 tonnes of ammonia, 92.56 tonnes of nickel and 3.18 tonnes of cobalt were not packaged in 2023, for an impact of USD 1,720,473 due to irregularities in the supply of ammonia, because payments could not be made to the supplier as agreed in the contract, due to financial restrictions against banks in Cuba.
- From March 2023 to February 2024, the Logistics Business Group GELMA recorded damages related to specialised technical services, agricultural production, and energy carrier shortages of approximately USD 4,633,242 throughout the GELMA system.
- Of the main items that GELMA must sell to agricultural producers, the decrease has been very strong due to the lack of its own sources of financing to access markets for basic inputs such as fertilizers, chemical products (herbicides, insecticides and fungicides), urea, and a shortage of raw materials for their production, with a consequent negative impact on agriculture.

Why should the States Parties get involved in guaranteeing an end to this type of unilateral measure, which is contrary to the Convention?

The OPCW has an important mandate to promote the economic and technological advancement of the States Parties, especially those that are less developed. Within this context, the Organisation and its States Parties have the important responsibility of guaranteeing the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of the Convention.

The extraterritorial impact of the blockade harms the sovereignty of all States Parties to the Convention, violates their national laws, subjects their companies to the decisions of United States courts, damages their interests, sanctions their businessmen, and restricts the freedom of their citizens, all in violation of international law.

The unilateral prohibitions and restrictions stemming from the blockade against Cuba are clearly incompatible with the provisions of the Convention. It is the obligation of the States Parties to achieve its object and purpose, including the elimination of these kinds of measures. Cuba reiterates its strong commitment to the strict implementation of all of the aspects of the Convention and calls for the unilateral and unconditional lifting of the United States blockade—which includes the field of chemistry—in compliance with the 33 resolutions approved by the international community at the General Assembly of the United Nations, where the overwhelming majority has asked to put an end to this absurd policy.

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