



FRESNO WILPF

Womxn's International
League for Peace & Freedom

*One of our members recently visited Cuba for a few weeks.
Read her first-hand account of what's going on there.*

While I was in Cuba:

The eastern part of the island had just been devastated by a hurricane. No lives were lost due to Cuba's excellent organization for evacuation. While many lost everything, an intensive effort of government and citizens alike have been working to replace necessities. Many volunteers have gathered and donated supplies, even amidst their own US blockade-caused hardships.

Cuba is currently suffering from a serious, widespread outbreak of the mosquito-borne viral disease chikungunya. This is a direct result of the US blockade, which has so damaged the country's economy that the systematic and universal mosquito-abatement programs previously in place are no longer possible. (When I first visited the Biotechnology Institute in Havana, they told us, "We have discovered that there are no 'tropical diseases'; there are only diseases of poverty.") This current epidemic is a disease of induced poverty, deliberately created by the US in order to promote regime change. At least 12 people whom I know well are currently suffering the effects or after-effects of this disease.

Lilia Rielo Rodriguez died on November 11. She was one of the founding members of the Mariana Grajales Platoon, the women's contingent of the armed struggle of the Revolutionary Army. She and her sister Isabel, who became the leader of that platoon, joined the revolutionary struggle in 1957; she was 22 years old at the time.

Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on Human Rights, was in Cuba. She said that the US's unilateral sanctions against Cuba have a huge impact on every aspect of life on the island and must be lifted. The UN expert heard testimonies about the consequences of tightening sanctions since 2018, and how these increasing pressures on third countries deepen the fear of doing business with the island. Douhan warned that these measures have "shaped the economic and social landscape of the country," undermining the fundamental rights to life, health, food, and development.

The 50th anniversary of Operación Carlota was celebrated. Operación Carlota was the Cuban military assistance to Angola as they struggled to gain and maintain their independence in the face of an invasion by the army of apartheid South Africa, supported by the US.

Operation Carlota crushed the South African troops who invaded Angola and played an essential role in the liberation of Namibia and the elimination of Apartheid in South Africa. It was named for an enslaved heroine who was believed to have been brought to Cuba from Angola. Carlota was a Black enslaved woman of Lucumí origin who led an uprising on November 5, 1843, together with many other enslaved people in the Triunvirato sugar plantation in Matanzas Province in Cuba. The uprising spread to other sugar plantations throughout Matanzas, as well as to coffee plantations and cattle ranches. After a fierce but unequal battle, Carlota and her fellow rebels were taken prisoner by the Spanish army of colonial occupation. She, while still alive, was then tied to four horses and her body pulled apart, in a cruel effort to frighten others.

-Leni Villagomez Reeves



Desde la izquierda: Teté Puebla, Eloísa Ballester y Lilia Rielo durante la entrada a La Habana, 8 de enero de 1959. / Cortesía de Lilia Rielo.

Action to take ASAP:

Write this letter to your congressfolk!

Find your congressperson & their contact info:
[www.house.gov/representatives/
find-your-representative](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative)

As a constituent, I urge you to co-sponsor H.Res.876, which would formally recognize Israel's ongoing genocide of Palestinians in Gaza and call on the US to fulfill its legal obligations to prevent and punish genocide.

A virtual legal consensus has emerged that Israel's atrocities over the past two years constitute genocide. In January 2024, the International Court of Justice found it "plausible" that Israel committed genocide. Since then, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, ten leading Palestinian human rights organizations, and Israeli NGOs B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights Israel have reached the same conclusion.

H.Res.876 calls on the US to: cease weapons transfers to Israel that have been or could be used to commit genocide; ensure US individuals and corporations are not involved; impose targeted sanctions on those responsible; cooperate with the International Criminal Court and lift sanctions on it; and restore UNRWA funding.

By providing Israel over \$30 billion in weapons, the US has failed its legal obligation to prevent genocide. It's not too late to fulfill our responsibility to punish genocide as legally required.

H.Res.876 is an important first step. Thank you for considering co-sponsoring this resolution. I look forward to your response.

Women in Black protest:
Wed, Jan 7 @ 11:30am-1pm
2500 Tulare St
For more info contact Sue:
skern@netptc.net
559-349-3777

WILPF Monthly Meeting:
Thurs, Jan 8 @ 6:30pm
Fresno Center for Nonviolence
1584 N Van Ness Ave
For Zoom link email
lenivreeves@gmail.com
Open to all! Please join us.

Stir It Up on KCFR:
Wed, Jan 28 @ 3pm
Tune in to 88.1 FM as Jean Hays
highlights people and events
important to our WILPF
community.

"Valley Voices for Peace"
Check out our podcast!
Find us on SoundCloud & YouTube
thanks to a grant from WILPF US.

Find us on
social media!
@FresnoWILPF
Email our
president, Cam:
FresnoWILPF@pm.me

Join or Renew Membership

Membership is \$35/year at the normal rate
and \$20/year for those with low income.

For questions/to be added to our email list,
please reach out to:
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