

May Day in Cuba: Solidarity with Palestine and criticism of the US blockade



The "Tribuna" is located just a few meters from the US embassy in Havana (Source: Cubaheute)

On May 1, hundreds of thousands of people once again gathered in the central squares of socialist Cuba to celebrate May Day. According to state media reports, four million people took part throughout the country.

In Havana, around 200,000 people gathered before sunrise for the central rally on the "anti-imperialist tribune" on the Malecón promenade. The president of the CTC trade union umbrella organization, Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento, gave the usual central speech at the two-hour rally, which was framed by a music program. In it, he condemned the US economic blockade, the consequences of which were having a "negative impact on consumption, the supply of food and medicine and the purchasing power of wages". The blockade also "restricts access to materials and raw materials for our industry" and puts "financial institutions and companies that want to trade with Cuba under pressure worldwide".

There is "no sector that is not affected by these consequences", said de Nacimiento, who also criticized home-made shortcomings. The Cuban workers, as "owners of the most important means of production", should exercise better control and "fight corruption, indiscipline and illegalities relentlessly". State-owned companies should be strengthened and the range of goods and services should be expanded through cooperation with the private sector. However, de Nacimiento called for more attention to be paid to the issue of workers' rights.

Solidarity with Palestine was also a topic at the rally. Cuba's President Miguel Díaz-Canel appeared with Kufiya alongside Raúl Castro and other veterans of the revolution. Several Palestinian flags could be seen in the crowd, some of which were carried by Palestinian doctors who are studying medicine for free in Havana. De Nacimiento sharply criticized the "complicity of the USA" in the face of the "crimes of the Israeli government against the Palestinian people".



Demonstrations were held in all Cuban cities on May Day, here in Holguín (Source: [Ahora](#))

"We will not remain indifferent to these serious violations of international law," said de Nacimiento.

At least acoustically, the message to Washington has been received. The US representation in Havana is only a few meters away from the "anti-imperialist tribune" erected in 2000. As May Day is not a public holiday in the USA, some offices were probably occupied during the rally.

May Day rallies also took place in other cities. The largest were in Santiago de Cuba and Santa Clara, each with 300,000 participants. According to the local newspaper "Ahora", 200,000 people were counted in the eastern Cuban provincial capital of Holguín, the same number as at the event in Havana.

According to official figures, four million people took to the streets nationwide, one million less than in 2022 and around 40 percent fewer than in the record year of 2018, when 6.6 million participants were counted.

The traditional parade in Havana's Revolution Square was moved to the waterfront for the second year in a row due to the ongoing fuel crisis. Instead of organizing buses as usual, this year only the residents of five neighbourhoods within walking distance were invited to take part. ([Cubaheute](#))