

This is a submission on behalf of Australia Solidarity with Latin America.

As Latin Americans now living in Australia, we want to live in a peaceful country. We believe it is our right. We also believe it is possible but we need to make it possible.

We realize how much the Australian government is spending on weapons and its alliance to the United States government. A government that is considered the number 1 enemy of the world and the main producer of weapons that cause mass destruction. The Australian government being a complicit of a government that disregards human rights is an issue of great concern and not a pathway to peace in our country. How can the Australian government be considered a democratic government when it is participating in the violation of human rights in other parts of the world and supporting a government that violates those rights to keep control and domination over world natural resources?

As Latin Americans, we would like to mention the situation of Cuba. The United States government has been imposing an illegal and immoral economic blockade against Cuba for more than 60 years now. This criminal blockade has been condemned by the UN General Assembly every year and yet, the US disregards this all the time. This genocidal blockade produces shortages of food, medicines and power to the Cuban people. It makes life very hard for a people who has chosen to live peacefully and build a better society free from US domination, control and exploitation. In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, the US has been blocking purchases by and deliveries to Cuba of medicine, ventilators and other health supplies. This is criminal. This is the government the Australian government is supporting and buying weapons from. History shows us that allying with the United States only brings war and economic hardship for the people. The money they spend on weapons is badly needed in health care, education, income support, jobs, showing solidarity to others such as the Cuban people. It is impossible to show international solidarity when money is being spent on arms and war.

A similar situation is happening in Venezuela where the majority of the people are supporting the changes made by the government of Hugo Chavez and are being continued by the Maduro government. The United States government is imposing economic sanctions such as the blockade of purchases of medicine that save lives. This is because the Venezuelan people want to build a better society free from US interference. Once again, this is the government the Australian government is supporting. Millions and millions of dollars are being spent to support a government that continues to violate human rights around the world, buying weapons we do not need and taking funds from the people.

It is vital that the Australian government stops supporting the United States government in their wars of conquest and channels the money they spend on wars and weapons towards meeting the needs of the people and international solidarity.

History does not absolve anybody because history tells the truth and does not have defence lawyers. We call on justice loving people to take a stand.

Thank you.

ASLA

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