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Cuba: EFA MEPs demand Human rights guarantees and condemn the U.S. Blockade

EFA MEPs Diana Riba i Giner and Ana Miranda, intervened on the plenary debate on the situation in Cuba. The EFA MEPs criticised the right-wing and far-right for their selective approach to human rights, particularly concerning Cuba. The debate centred on both the U.S. blockade and Cuba's human rights record, but the EFA elected members made it clear that the discussion must address both issues with equal weight.

Diana Riba I Giner, President of the EFA Group, delivered a strog critique of the right-wing factions, accusing them of only caring about human rights when it suits their political agenda. "We always want to discuss human rights because they are at the core of our political action," Riba declared. However, she was quick to point out that many right-wing members of the Parliament do not share this commitment.

"The problem," Riba said, "is that some groups in this Parliament, especially those seated on the right, are only interested in discussing human rights when the government supposedly violating them is of an opposing political colour." The Catalan MEP did not hold back from naming examples, calling out the silence from these groups in the face of authoritarian regimes with whom they share ideological sympathies: "They were silent about Uribe. They were silent about Bolsonaro. They are silent about Milei. They are, and will remain, silent about any autocrat of their political persuasion."

Riba MEP argued that this selective indignation is not only hypocritical but deeply cynical. "This is cynicism. Because for you, the lives of Cuban men and women are the least of your concerns," she said. For her, the right-wing's concern over human rights in Cuba was less about genuine care for the Cuban people and more about exploiting their suffering for political gain.

Riba also highlighted the inconsistency in the right's refusal to address the U.S. blockade against Cuba, a policy she argued is equally responsible for the suffering of the Cuban population. "If we want to take steps forward to improve the lives of the Cuban people, we cannot close this debate without addressing

what is severely suffocating them,” she said, referring to the blockade and Cuba’s designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. These measures, she argued, are meant to suffocate the regime but, in reality, they suffocate “an entire population.”

Ana Miranda Paz, EFA MEP, built on Riba’s critique, tying the discussion back to her home region of Galicia and its historic connection to Cuba. “We are a people of emigrants,” she explained, “and the majority of our emigrants in the 19th century went to Cuba.” This history, Miranda said, has fostered a deep sense of solidarity between Galicia and Cuba, giving her a personal stake in the debate.

Miranda took a direct aim at the hypocrisy of the right-wing members who, despite their condemnation of Cuba, remain silent on the impact of the U.S. embargo. “To come here and once again exploit the suffering of the Cuban people caused by a tragic embargo is, frankly, a joke,” she said, accusing the right of using the embargo as a political weapon rather than addressing the real humanitarian crisis it causes.

The Galician MEP also made a pointed reference to the right’s own ideological forebear, Manuel Fraga, a conservative Spanish leader who had established relations with Cuba. “Even your historical leader, Manuel Fraga, had relations with Cuba,” Miranda said, suggesting that the right’s current stance not only lacks empathy but is also inconsistent with its own history.

Miranda condemned efforts to undermine the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between Cuba and the European Union, arguing that dialogue, not embargoes, was the key to progress. “To support institutions sheltering in Miami that are working to overthrow a government is unacceptable,” she added, criticizing right-wing support for Cuban opposition groups based in the U.S.

Both Riba and Miranda emphasized that the right’s interest in human rights appears to be driven more by political convenience than genuine concern. While they are quick to condemn the Cuban government for its human rights abuses, these same groups remain silent when regimes aligned with their political ideology engage in similar actions.

The Greens/EFA, by contrast, have committed themselves to defending human rights universally, whether in Cuba or anywhere else. MEP Riba made it clear that her group will not remain silent on any injustice: “The Greens/EFA never remain silent in the face of injustice.”

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