

UN General Assembly strengthens call for end to US embargo against Cuba, with record vote

The United Nations General Assembly has overwhelmingly voted in favour of condemning the United States economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba – a call it has made every year since 1992.

A record total of 189 UN Member States voted in favour, with Israel and the US voting against the resolution, urging all States to “refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures” which among other things, in the case of the embargo, interfere with the freedom of trade and navigation. There were no abstentions.

The Assembly [called](#) upon States “that have and continue to apply such laws and measures to take the steps necessary to repeal or invalidate them as soon as possible.”

Through the resolution, the General Assembly also decided to include the agenda item entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba,” in the provisional agenda of next year’s session.

The vote on the resolution is unenforceable, but the Cuban-sponsored resolution shines a spotlight on the relative isolation of the US regarding the embargo, which was first imposed in 1960, when former leader Fidel Castro came to power, following the revolution.

Speaking ahead of the vote, Cuba’s Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla outlined the impact of the embargo on Cubans, especially due to restrictions on lifesaving medicines. “Incalculable human damage has been caused by the blockade, which is qualified as an act of genocide” he said, referring to the convention on the prevention of genocide. “It is also a violation of International Humanitarian Law, if it were a conflict,” he said.

Before the resolution was adopted, eight amendments, relating to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), human rights and rule of law, proposed by the US, failed to pass ([see here for voting details](#)).

Introducing the amendments, US Ambassador Nikki Haley said that the draft resolution “changes nothing” in terms of addressing the problems faced by Cuban citizens. “The United States will continue to stand with the Cuban people, until their rights and freedoms are restored. We won’t back down,” she said.

Member States who [spoke](#) on the resolution over two days, overwhelmingly called on the US to end the embargo and other punitive measures against Cuba.

National representatives said that the nearly six-decades-long blockade imposed on the Caribbean island by Washington impeded its right to development and its ability to participate fully in the global economy. They also urged the US to heed the Assembly's repeated calls to lift its restrictive policies.