



**Unified call to recognize the illegitimacy of the constitution  
that is being imposed in Cuba  
February 25, 2019**

The constitutional reform process, that culminated on February 24<sup>th</sup>, was corrupt from its origin because it was not born of popular consent but comes from a commission formed by the Communist Party of Cuba. This commission is led by General Raul Castro and is composed of members of the National Assembly, none of whom were chosen in free, fair and plural elections by the people of Cuba.

The constitutional text is designed to guarantee the power of the Communist Party permanently and directly prohibits citizen participation in the determination of the economic, political, and social system.

The new constitution, that the Cuban regime intends to establish, is in contradiction with the rules of democracy, and threatens, with the use of armed force, those who seek to change the system.

February 24<sup>th</sup> was marked by fraud, lack of transparency, and verbal and physical violence against members of civil society and the opposition by the regime's repressive forces, and in many cases by the electoral authorities.

Thus far Cuba Decide has been able to confirm:

- At least 100 arrests of people in order to prevent electoral observation activities (77 arrests correspond to members of UNPACU, 14 of which remain unaccounted for);
- Dozens of acts of physical violence in which special forces and agents of state security (G2) beat citizens when they went to polling stations;
- Hundreds of incidents of intimidation against observers and citizen promoters of the NO vote. Among these incidents were:
  - acts of repudiation against observers and activists upon arrival at polling stations;
  - persecution and warnings by agents of state security; and
  - the restriction of movement, with many activists being banned from leaving their homes.
- Thousands of reports of irregularities that confirm the invalidity of the process, such as:
  - the absence of conditions that allow for a secret vote;
  - propaganda in favor of the official option (Yes vote) placed inside polling stations and done so by the electoral authorities; and
  - Cuban citizens being prohibited from voting despite residing in the island and fulfilling all other necessary eligibility.



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In addition, in the weeks leading up to the referendum, the repressive forces carried out various acts of intimidation and violence against members of civil society who expressed themselves against the new constitution. At least 14 raids were confirmed on the homes of activists and civil society centers. In all cases, the police stole materials and work equipment, along with the information of 600 citizen observers. These incidents led 130 Cuban citizens to take up a hunger strike in protest to this repression.

The Cuban authorities flagrantly violated the minimum conditions of transparency and justice for the realization of this constitutional referendum.

- They did not allow people of opposing views the freedom to campaign in equal terms, violating the exercise of freedom of expression and association.
- They denied equal access to the census, the electorate, and the media, including all those that are owned or controlled by the state;
- They violated the independence and impartiality of the electoral body in charge of organizing the process, thereby preventing the votes from being counted in a precise, fair, egalitarian and transparent manner;
- They did not allow national or international observers to participate in any stages of the process.

We warn that the referendum that took place in Cuba on February 24<sup>th</sup> is not legitimate, did not comply with the minimum requirements to ensure recognition of the free expression of the will of the Cuban electorate, and therefore, we denounce the results that will be reported by the authorities of the Cuba government.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned facts and in support of the right to self-determination of the Cuban people, we call on the international community to:

1. Recognize the invalidity of the constitutional reform process and ignore the results delivered by the government and the fraudulent referendum carried out on the island.
2. To denounce the illegitimacy of the new constitution that is intended to be imposed in Cuba, and consequently to recognize the illegitimacy of the regime in power and its representatives.

**Joint message from exile organizations and internal opposition with citizens and organizations promoting the Cuba Decide platform**