IMUN 2026 Research Report

Security Council Issue #2: The question of sanctions on Cuba

Currently, Cuba is facing a plethora of problems in living standards, including frequent blackouts, overflowing rubbish, increased infant mortality rates, increased numbers of mosquito transmitted diseases, and a lack of medicines among other things ("Cuba accuses"). These ongoing dilemmas have been attributed to the sanctions placed on Cuba by the United States (U.S.), which according to the white house was ordered by President Trump to have Cuba held "accountable for its support of hostile actors, terrorism, and regional instability that endanger American security and foreign policy" ("Fact Sheet"). On the other hand, Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodriguez stating that "the government of the United States is carrying out against Cuba a multi-dimensional, non-conventional warfare". Altogether, Cuba is not only facing sanctions, but also socioeconomic turmoil and diplomatic isolation. These conditions have set the stage for hard times to engulf the Cuban people and has led to the United Nations (UN) to begin talks on the future of these sanctions ("At UN, Cuba").

The "embargo" on Cuba has shifted drastically over the century in its way of execution. The embargo began in 1962 following the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, when President Kennedy banned all trade to inflict economic hardship and destabilize the government, turning into an international effort in 1964. With this, President Johnson also prohibited food sales and travel to Cuba. Conversely, President Jimmy Carter, in an effort to improve relations with Cuba, lifted the embargo travel, however decided to maintain the embargo on food and medicine to deny Cuba the ability "to resume sugar sales," as it would have given "a major boost to its economy." In the 1980s, the U.S. tightened travel bans and designated Cuba a state sponsor of terrorism, but

Soviet aid continued until the Soviet Union's collapse. This made Cuba enter a decade-long depression known as the "Special Period." Congress would go on to pass the Cuban Democracy Act in 1992, which "reimposed the ban on trade between Cuba and subsidiaries of U.S. companies in third countries, cutting off some $700 million in trade, mostly in food and medicine. It restored the prohibition on ships trading with Cuba docking in the United States for 180 days and gave the president the authority to cut foreign aid to any country aiding Cuba." It also specified that "the embargo should only be lifted when Cuba had become a democracy, and authorized U.S. government support for Cuban dissidents to bring that about." Between 2015 and 2016, the Obama administration temporarily eased restrictions on travel, trade, and banking. However, subsequent Trump and Biden administrations reversed these policies by banning cruise ships, blocking access to state-owned hotels, reintroducing banking restrictions, and sanctioning Cuban security officials for human rights violations ("Cuba Embargoed"). In early 2026, the U.S. escalated pressure through Executive Orders 14245 and 14404. These measures targeted Venezuelan oil imports to force foreign partners to stop supplying energy to Cuba, while extending secondary sanctions to any foreign financial institutions providing material assistance to the regime. With this, on 7th, May, 2026, by the powers given by EO 14404, the U.S. state department was able to sanction Grupo de Administración Empresarial S.A. ("GAESA"), which is "the Cuban military-run conglomerate that The New York Times estimates controls between 40 and 70 percent of the Cuban economy." The EO also allowed the President to sanction anyone operating within Cuba's key economic, defense, and industrial sectors ("Trump Administration"). According to ABC new, the results of this embargo are devastating, with Cuba having their third blackout of 2026 and eighth of the year due to a lack of resources for Cuban power plants to create said energy. With this, the infant mortality rate grew by 148% (the highest Cuba has seen

in 30 years), with an additional 100,000 people are on elective and reconstructive surgery wait lists due to a lack of medical supplies ("Cuba accuses"). Additionally, not only due to the embargos placed by President Trump, but also other past embargos, all sectors have seen a downturn, with inflation reportedly reaching 200%, stores found to be empty, a drop in the number of visitors by 20.5%, failures in seven of the country's sixteen thermoelectric units, 90% of medicines being scarce, Outbreaks of dengue, Zika, and chikungunya, with at least 20,000 being reported for chikungunya, among other things ("Cuba's Internal"). Last year was the 33rd consecutive time the General Assembly voted on and adopted the resolution titled "the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba", with 165 votes in favour, 7 against, and 12 abstentions ("Amid shifting"). The resolution is resolution A/80/L.6 which calls for the end of the embargo on Cuba ("General Assembly").

For this issue, delegates should look into the United States's reasons and justifications for their embargos, along with the Cuba's wishes to remain with their current system of government. Some options that could be beneficial to both sides could be a trade agreement regarding assistance in countering corruption and oversight of human rights in Cuba in exchange of alleviated embargos and open trade for oil and medicines necessary for Cuba. Altogether, delegates should aim to successfully present their nations' stances on the matter, with the knowledge that without a resolution that pleases and plays to the benefit of everyone, a resolution could face a Veto, however delegates must also remain dedicated to maintain their nations' positions and getting what their nations want across to others in the room, with the overall goal to take the initiative to propose ideas that a nation believes to stabilize the situation but also take into account the needs and desires of both sides of the argument.

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