

July 14, 2021

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As we have seen in recent days, the Cuban people continue their courageous and peaceful struggle for freedom against the repressive Marxist Castro-Díaz-Canel regime. Unlike free people worldwide, Cubans are regularly denied access to uncensored and open communications channels, including the internet. The regime cruelly uses its grip on the flow of information to monitor and repress its own citizens. Now, as historic protests for freedom take place across Cuba, the regime leverages its stranglehold on the internet to silence key voices of dissent, shut down the ability to coordinate protests, and restrict the capacity of the Cuban people to share with the world scenes of their brutal treatment at the hands of the regime.

In my letter to you on July 12 outlining steps to be taken to support the historic protests, I urged you to facilitate open and free internet for the people of Cuba. Without it, the Cuban people, who yearn for basic political and economic freedoms, can more easily be monitored, suppressed, detained, and brutalized by the regime without accountability. Bringing free and open internet will help the Cuban people communicate with one another without censorship and repression and show them that the world stands beside them in their quest for liberty.

In recent years, American firms have made significant strides in telecommunications technologies, including fiber-less solutions that can be deployed to remote regions at relatively short notice. For example, in 2017, during the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, the island of Puerto Rico received emergency connectivity through balloon-supplied internet. American technical capacity, coupled with the physical proximity of Cuba to the United States and its interests, make providing unrestricted access to the island an attainable and morally imperative goal. Today, U.S. companies stand ready and willing to support this effort with the support of the federal government.

I urge the administration to immediately authorize and allocate additional funding to provide internet to Cuba using the existing capacity of innovative American firms and readily available funding sources. In addition, the administration should move to shore up democracy broadcasting, internet access and programming through the Office of Cuba Broadcasting

I am also requesting that you instruct Secretary Blinken to convene a meeting of the permanent council of the Organization of American States to address the ongoing situation in Cuba. Furthermore, the United States should undertake robust diplomacy to secure:

- A condemnation of, and call for, an immediate end to the violence and repression against the people of Cuba, as well as the ongoing violence, abductions and forced disappearance of Cubans;
- A statement of support for the people of Cuba's call for liberty, freedom and democracy;
- Support for the rights of the Cuban people to peacefully protest and a call to restore access to the internet and cellular service; and
- A petition to the the InterAmerican Human Rights Commission to travel to Cuba and document the ongoing violations of civil and human rights committed by the Cuban regime.

Additionally, in compliance with Article 54 of the United Nations Charter, the United States must convene an emergency meeting of the Security Council to "be kept fully informed of activities undertaken or in contemplation under regional arrangements or by regional agencies for the maintenance of international peace and security."

Lastly, I urge you to clearly and publicly communicate that it will be the policy of the United States to regard the weaponization of mass migration by the Cuban regime as a hostile act against our national security which would be met with a swift and appropriate response.

We are facing the very real prospects of a humanitarian calamity as a result of the Cuban regimes violent response to the Cuban peoples demand to live in a country free from repression, torture and communism. It is a moment that calls for a decisive and meaningful response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator