Cuban government receives UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures

Havana, May 6, 2023

During the first week of May, Dr. Alena Douhan visited Cuba in her capacity as UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures. In a keynote lecture at the University of Havana (UH), within the event "Academic Dialogue on the impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights in Cuba", Douhan advocated lifting the sanctions imposed against Cuba. In his speech, he affirmed that unilateral sanctions have a very negative impact on all sectors of the population, beginning with economic, educational and health rights, as well as the right to life and development.

In FMP we understand that the economic embargo has a harmful scope for the populations, even though they are not the direct addressees of the embargo. However, FMP recalls:

- The fundamental weight of Cuba's multi-sectoral disaster lies in its policy of statified control, in the non-liberation of its productive forces and in its high dependence on exports and reliable partners subject to high perks. For example, in the last decades Cuba entered into clientelist agreements with governments such as the Venezuelan one, which guaranteed a financial flow mostly destined to political campaigns such as "La Batalla de Ideas" (The Battle of Ideas). With the disappearance of this support and with the latest economic measures decreed (Monetary Reunification, Task Ordering), inflation and shortages have increased with a serious impact on the quality of life of Cubans.

- The most recent official statistics point to an alarming redistribution of total state investment, with a peak of 33% in the real estate, business and rental sectors compared to a considerable reduction in spending on public health, education, culture, sports, assistance and social security. [1]

- In the face of the retreat of the guarantees of the socialist project at the domestic level, it is noteworthy that the United States is precisely the largest and most regular supplier of chicken meat to Cuba, delivered through the subsidized rationing network and sold in foreign currency with an import tax of up to 120%. In 2022 alone, Cuba imported $328.5 million dollars in food and agricultural products from the United States.

Given these obvious imbalances, FMP urges the Rapporteur to a broader reading of Cuba's precarious reality. If it remains merely a condemnation of the U.S. embargo against Cuba, this narrative could be counterproductive and even justify the Cuban government's own food policy.

[1] See: "Inversiones. Indicadores seleccionados," Enero-Junio 2022, ONEI, at: http://www.onei.gob.cu/node/14246