

## **Statement in honour of Maria Hilario RIP**

### **by participants in the monthly Cuba anti-blockade protests**

With the deepest sadness we honour the passing last week of María Hilario, a long-term supporter of Cuba's socialist revolution. For a decade María was co-organiser of the Sydney vigils held on the seventeenth of each month in opposition to the sixty-plus year long and crippling U.S. blockade of Cuba. The vigils also demand the return of Guantanamo Bay to Cuba, an end to U.S.-sponsored terrorist activities against Cuba, and the removal of Cuba from the U.S. regime's list of "terrorists". We honour María's vital solidarity work and humbly salute the fact that she continued to organise and participate in the vigils even when she was struck by – and indeed dying of – cancer. We are people and groups who have participated in those vigils.

For María, defence of revolutionary Cuba was part of a broader commitment to socialism, the struggle against imperialism and the liberation of all the exploited and oppressed. Thus she included in her calls for the monthly vigils such slogans as: opposition to the U.S. blockade of Venezuela and the Zionist blockade of Gaza. It was this view of the Cuban Revolution as part of a worldwide struggle for liberation that caused María to withdraw in August last year from the Australia Cuba Friendship Society (ACFS), of which she'd been an active member for many years. María was incensed that the ACFS leadership knowingly permits Zionist supporters of Israel's genocidal war on the Palestinian people to remain members. In this, María acted similarly to her closest collaborator and co-organiser of the monthly vigils, Amador Navidi, and both withdrew from activity in the ACFS in mid-2024. As María said in a message last August: "I think Ahmad resigned, too. I will ask others, and yes, I will do the same, we can't accept Zionist, fascistas y nazistas en la solidaridad con Cuba".

Comrade María understood that allowing Zionists or Nazis or other fascists into a Cuba solidarity group went against socialist Cuba's entire history of strong support for the Palestinian liberation struggle, the anti-Apartheid struggle and the U.S. black liberation struggle. As far as she was concerned, supporting the Palestinian liberation struggle was not something one could "agree to disagree on" and then happily co-exist in the same organisation. María proved her unflinching commitment to the Palestinian struggle by also marching in the weekly pro-Palestine rallies in Sydney during these last several months – even as she was dying of cancer. We salute her great courage in doing so and seek to emulate it.

María's death comes at a critical time for socialist Cuba. The intensification of imperialist sanctions and other hostile measures by the U.S. regime have caused profound hardship in Cuba and emboldened counterrevolutionary forces there. Cuba now faces new dangers with the advent of the second Trump administration and its extreme overt hostility to Cuba. The new secretary of state, Marco Rubio, is the son of anti-communist Cuban expats and a fanatical opponent of socialist Cuba.

Supporters of the Cuban Revolution and Palestinian liberation everywhere need to strengthen solidarity with Cuba and emulate Maria's tireless work for both. End the U.S. blockade! Long live the Aboriginal people's struggle for liberation from racist white Australia capitalism! Long live the Palestinian people's struggle against occupation and genocide! Long live socialist Cuba!

**Signatories:**

Amador Navidi

Connie Villano

Judith Dark

Nagendra Subramaniam

Viviana Canibilo Ramírez

Wayne Sonter

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Australia-DPRK Friendship Society - Sydney Branch

Supporters of the Iranian People's Fadaee Guerrillas

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