



## Challenging an Immoral Law

### Why We Refuse a License to Deliver Aid to Cuba

With your support IFCO has brought broad-based public attention to the mean spirited blockade against Cuba. Every time the US Treasury Department backs down in the face of our challenge, and allows one of our caravans to cross the border with unlicensed aid for Cuba, we know that our message is being heard at the highest levels in Washington - and that even Washington understands that its blockade of Cuba is indefensible.

We cannot allow the government to license our conscience. Our faith and humanity demand that we provided "a cup of cold water" (Matthew 25:35) to our brothers and sisters in need. We cannot surrender to Caesar the right to decide who are our brothers and sisters. We cannot accept a law that commands us to treat them as "the enemy" when our faith commands us to love them as members of our own family.

The US government uses its licensing process to create legitimizing exceptions which put a more human face on their brutal blockade. The small amount of "licensed aid" that is allowed to go to Cuba is used by the US government to enhance its public relations image. The US Treasury Department has sent out thousands of letters telling people that the US government is the largest contributor of humanitarian aid to Cuba. In other words, the US is shamelessly taking credit for the very aid it arrested IFCO/Pastors for Peace for delivering without a license. We insist - as a matter of principle - that Cuba needs the US trade barrier lifted; Cuba is not asking for charity, but normal trade relations!

The US government uses licensing to maintain control over the flow of aid - for its own political purposes. By granting some licenses and not others, the government attempts to control which US organizations can send aid to Cuba and which cannot.

While allowing a few licenses but denying commercial trade the US prevents Cuba's access to the volume of commodities essential to meet the needs of the nation. This is one way our government implements the Helms Burton law- by allowing small amounts of aid instead of normal trade.

US government control of churches' prerogative to give aid and charity violates the separation of church and state, which is guaranteed under the First Amendment. Our religious partners in this work rigorously voice their concern about this issue - just as US journalists have protested that our government has no right to license US news agencies going to Cuba.

We reject the unconstitutional and immoral efforts to require a license for acts of common humanity. Our faith and international law do not permit us to behave in such an immoral, unjust and inhumane way. The Declaration of Independence and the First Amendment of the Constitution were written by men and women who refused to submit their conscience to licensing. We must remain true to the spirit, in spite of the law. By so doing, we will challenge the unjust law and eventually change it. We

#### 2005 Cuba Caravan

##### Alerts & press

- Press releases
- Action alerts
- Photos
- International alert
- Caravan blog

##### En español

- Comunicados de prensa
- Alertas urgentes
- Llamado internacional

##### Fliers / volantes

- Return the aid!
- Support the Vigil

##### Online petitions

- Pastoral letter
- Cuban-American letter

#### from last year's Cuba Caravan



*mothers-to-be at a maternity house in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba. More details »*

- The return home
- Press releases
- Photos
- Caravan slideshow

#### Support our work

- Make a donation

#### 2003 caravan to Central America



*Volunteers preparing*

hope we can count on you to join us!

*donations for people in Central America. [More details »](#)*

#### **Links and resources**

*Contact your government officials*  
find your US Senator  
find your US Representative

#### *Initiatives*

Free the Five!  
antiterroristas (Cuba)  
Plan Puebla-Panama

#### *Organizations*

Global Exchange  
Witness for Peace  
TecsChange  
CALPI (Nicaragua)  
Rhizome Collective  
Beehive Collective

#### *News and analysis*

Cursor  
Democracy Now!  
Left I On The News  
AlterNet  
Common Dreams  
La Jornada (Mexico)  
Granma (Cuba)  
Chiapas Indymedia

"Let us not love in word: but in deed and in truth." 1 John 3:18  
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