

Canadian and US Humanitarian Aid Arrives in Cuba

– Breaking US blockade against Cuba The Friendship Caravan arrived in Cuba this July weekend with 100 tons of humanitarian aid

after overcoming some impediments at the US-Mexico border where

US

customs agents seized 35 computers from them

. These computers were destined for classrooms, clinic and hospitals in Cuba

. These are 31 classrooms, clinics and hospitals that now will not have the opportunity to have computers." Smith vowed to "maintain a demonstration until we get the computers back"

The U.S. government has forced the issue by turning back on previous actions and understandings" said Rev. Lucius Walker, Executive Director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace. "They have intentionally provoked and harassed us, he continued. "We will not be intimidated. We have made every effort to be cooperative and they have responded with aggression. These computers are the same type as the hundreds we have taken in the past", said Rev. Walker. Members of the Pastors for Peace caravan quickly launched an emergency outreach campaign to their elected representatives, local community networks, and local media. They demonstrated in the Customs compound, chanting

" *Si se puede*"

and "

Cuba si, bloqueo

no."

The Caravan brought a humanitarian donation of computers, vehicles, medical equipment, and educational, artistic and sports equipment.

The members of Pastors for Peace, which is a project of the US's Inter-religious Foundation for the Community Organization, with numerous other non religious organizations **from Canada**

and the

US

collected the aid during a tour of 12 cities in

Canada

and 125 in the

United States

The caravanistas are challenging an inhumane US law by delivering aid and traveling to Cuba without a license. They range in age from 8 to 86, and include Irish, British, German, and Canadian citizens as well as US citizens. Seven members of the caravan are Cuban-Americans. The Caravan also includes a contingent of hip hop and spoken word artists who will be meeting up with their fellow artists in Cuba. Although they come from a broad variety of ages and backgrounds, the caravanistas are united in their determination to bring an end to the immoral and unjust blockade against Cuba. Explaining why they are participating in this year's Friendship Caravan, caravanistas said:

"A person does not need an ancestral connection with Cuba in order to believe that what America has done and continues to do is not only immoral but also denies us [US citizens] our right to travel as Americans."

"It is our obligation as citizens to be informed about what is happening 90 miles off our shores; I am addressing this by witnessing it with my own eyes."

Pastors for Peace is a project of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO), an ecumenical agency with a 40-year history of work for social justice.

Rev. Walker added that during this tour they explained the case of the Cuban Five – as they are internationally known – who were arrested in 1998 for infiltrating anti-Cuba right-wing groups in South Florida that were organizing and carrying out terrorist actions against the Caribbean nation.

On Monday, the solidarity group will participate in a workshop on the Cuban economic development and its electoral system. Later, they will pay tribute to Rev. Martin Luther King and will also attend a rally in solidarity with Cuba at the Jose Marti National Library in the Cuban capital. **More information and photo images of the caravan are available at www.pastorsforpeace.org** .F

or more info about the Cuban Five:

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**Website in
USA**

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<http://www.freethefive.org>**