

Message on Cuban Independence Day
May 20, 2026

Today we commemorate Cuban Independence Day—the 124th anniversary of a once free nation's birth, forged through sacrifice, courage, and an unbreakable desire for liberty. Like the American patriots who cast off tyrannical rule 250 years ago, Cuba's founding generation rose against the Spanish Empire's subjugation to claim the same birthright our citizens enjoy today: the right of a free people to govern themselves. Their journey echoes our own, and their dream of freedom remains as vital today as it was when they first dared to fight for it.

Across generations, the Cuban people have demonstrated an unyielding devotion to the cause of freedom and a resilience of spirit that no regime, past or present, has been able to extinguish. On May 20, 1902, that defiant vision was realized when the Republic of Cuba was established, marking the beginning of self-government for our island neighbors. The Cuban people's love of liberty, ingenuity, hard work, and great faith in God carried them through the first half of the 20th century—and to this day, these time-honored values continue to live on in their hearts.

The regime in Havana today is the direct betrayal of the nation their founding patriots bled and died for. For nearly seven decades, the island's communist government has violently dismantled political freedom, denied its people fair elections, viciously silenced dissent, and strangled the Cuban economy into a state of collapse. While the people suffer, the regime's kleptocratic elite have hoarded the island's remaining resources for themselves and their lavish lifestyle. In the way of all radical leftist ideologies, the regime has quashed any hope of prosperity, banished the notion of human dignity, and starved the hopes and dreams of its people. Its military leaders have demonstrated zero care for ensuring the prosperity of the Cuban people, channeling their attention instead only towards maintaining control and the regime's *raison d'être* of violently exporting communism and despotism abroad.

As President, I am taking decisive action on behalf of this long-suffering corner of our hemisphere, and to address threats to our national security emanating from the region. Under my leadership, our Nation is severing the financial lifelines that, for too long, have sustained brutal regimes across Central and South America and funded their transnational criminal and terrorist operations that threaten the United States. In January, our Nation's incredible Armed Forces carried out one of the boldest, most impressive special operations in generations—the capture and extradition of the Venezuelan narcoterrorist, Nicolás Maduro. The indictment and removal of Maduro sent a clear message to his socialist allies in Havana: this is our hemisphere, and those that destabilize it and threaten the United States will face consequences.

Following the Maduro raid, I have enacted powerful new sanctions on Cuba's military and intelligence apparatus, and those who provide it with material and financial support, depriving the regime of resources and its elites from the opportunity to profit from the people's suffering. My commitment is ironclad: America will not tolerate a rogue state harboring hostile foreign military, intelligence and terror operations just 90 miles from the American homeland, and we will not rest until the people of Cuba once again have the freedom their forefathers fought so valiantly to establish over 100 years ago.

On this Cuban Independence Day, our Republic stands in solidarity with the Cuban people and with the millions of Cuban Americans who have so profoundly enriched the life of our Nation. Many of them came to these shores with nothing, built extraordinary lives, and embraced with their whole hearts the constitutional way of life that makes America the greatest country on

earth. Today, we salute them and remember all those who have sacrificed for a free Cuba, and we look with confidence toward a new golden age for the island and its people.

NOTE: The message referred to former President Nicolás Maduro Moros of Venezuela, who was captured, along with his wife Cilia Flores, in a U.S. military operation in Caracas, Venezuela, on January 3 and exfiltrated to the U.S. for criminal processing in New York City.

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