



Sinn Féin



COVID-19

INTERNATIONAL
SOLIDARITY

April 2020



One of numerous medical brigades sent by Cuba to Italy to assist in battle against Covid-19

‘Solidarity is precious.

It does not have a price tag.’

SINN Féin’s National Chairperson, Declan Kearney MLA, has called for international solidarity in the global fight against Covid-19.

Declan Kearney said:

“Covid-19 will be devastating for the poor, the impoverished and exploited of capitalist and underdeveloped countries across the northern and southern hemispheres.

“In Palestine, the Israeli and Egyptian governments continue to maintain a blockade on Gaza, the most densely populated area in the world.

“The Palestinian Authority has expressed deep alarm at the real threat to the health of over 5,000 Palestinian political prisoners detained in Israeli jails because of a Covid-19 outbreak among



Declan Kearney MLA

prison warders.

“While international economic and financial sanctions are still being imposed by the US against Cuba, which has shown such inspirational practical international solidarity, and other countries, the newly appointed UN rapporteur on human rights, Alena Douhan, has called for all unilateral sanctions to be lifted which obstruct the humanitarian response of sanctioned states, in order to help their health services to fight Covid-19 and to save lives.

“Coronavirus has disrupted all our social and relational norms. Its economic and social consequences will be far reaching. Current economic forecasts are now predicting deep economic recessions across the world.

“What we face must not be allowed to become our new ‘normal’. People, life and wellbeing are too important.

“Solidarity is precious. It does not have a price tag.”

Sinn Féin discuss Covid-19 emergency with Palestinian and Cuban Ambassadors

SINN Féin MLA Declan Kearney and Junior Minister in the Executive Office has spoken with the Palestinian and Cuban Ambassadors in Ireland to discuss the Covid-19 global emergency.

The Sinn Féin National Chairperson said it was an international

scandal that the Palestinian people continue to endure the Israeli blockade of Gaza and occupation of the West Bank while having to fight the battle against Covid19.

After speaking with Ambassador Jilan Wahba, Declan Kearney said:

“The Ambassador briefed me that to date there have been 134 confirmed cases of Covid19 and one death in Palestine. Twelve of these cases are in Gaza.

“It is an international scandal that the Palestinian people must simultaneously struggle against the unjust Israeli blockade of Gaza and occupation of the West Bank while also battling against the spread of Covid19.

“Overall 7,553 community tests have been carried out to date in Palestine. The Palestinian Ministry of Health is grateful for the support of the World Health Organisation in particular, for the supplies of testing kits provided to date.

“Efforts are currently ongoing to increase intensive care capacity through access to additional ventilators, oxygen and other essential medical equipment.

“However, the Palestinian Authority is very concerned for the health and wellbeing of over 5,000 political prisoners being held in Israeli prisons, due to an outbreak of Covid19 among prison staff and the removal of cleaning products from prison



Cuban Ambassador to Ireland, Hugo Ramos



Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland, Jilan Abdalmajid

canteens.

“The Ambassador asked for the international community to intensify pressure upon the Israeli government to meet its international obligations and protect the health of the prisoners which it detains. I am now calling on the Irish government to use its influence to address this humanitarian priority.”

Shortly afterwards Declan Kearney spoke with Cuban Ambassador Hugo Ramos and discussed the measures being taken against Covid-19 in Cuba and Ireland, he added:

“The Ambassador reported on the blanket community testing being used in Cuba and the comprehensive isolation measures in place where required. I briefed him on the challenges we face in Ireland, particularly in the north.

“I thanked the Ambassador for the inspirational international solidarity being demonstrated by the Cuban government at this time.

“There are currently 14 Cuban medical brigades deployed across the globe, comprising 593 professionals with specialist experience in international disaster situations and health epidemics.

“It is a travesty that while Cuba provides such unconditional international support to countries struggling with the effects of Covid19, including in Italy, that this US administration persists with its economic blockade and financial sanctions against the Cuban economy and its people.

“The Ambassador and I will remain in regular contact about our efforts in Ireland and Cuba to combat the spread of Covid19 during the immediate future.”

Cuban Communist Party Central Committee responds to Sinn Féin support

In response to Sinn Féin’s gratitude for the inspirational international support being demonstrated by the Cuban government in the global fight against Covid-19 and our demand that the US lift the illegal blockade against the Cuban people the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee send the following reply:

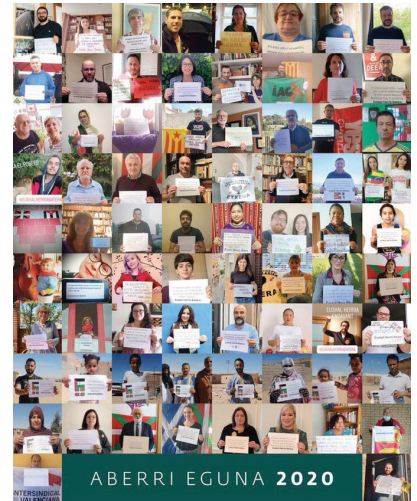
‘Dear Friend

We are very grateful for your recognition of the effort made by our health collaborators to offer their solidarity help to various countries of the world, in order to contribute to stopping and eradicating the Covid-19 pandemic, which keeps the planet in suspense and has claimed so many lives.

In effect, the genocidal policy that represents the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States government on our Country, damages the Cuban people and constitutes the main obstacle to their development. This unjust sanction is doubly cruel, by preventing Cuba from obtaining the aid and resources to combat this disease.

We appreciate your heartfelt and committed support, while reiterating our willingness to work together to continue to expand and strengthen the excellent ties between our parties.

- Department of International relations, Central Committee Communist party of Cuba.’



Sinn Féin support for Basque National Day and Euskal Herria Batera initiative

ON Sunday April 12 the Basque people celebrated the ‘Aberrri Eguna’, day of the Basque Homeland.

Due to the exceptional circumstances imposed by the Coronavirus, a group of individuals also promoted the Euskal Herria Batera initiative (Euskal Herria United) that has called for the Aberrri Eguna to be “united” on balconies and windows with the aim of defending the right to decide of the Basque people, while we pay tribute and show our condolences to the victims of the crisis and express our gratitude to those who are taking care of us.

To do this, they created a photographic mosaic “in which each person or family expresses their wishes” and singing in chorus on balconies and windows.

In support of the Basque peoples ‘Right to Decide’ their future and in condolences to the victims of the Covid-19 crisis a number of senior Sinn Féin representatives assisted this international initiative by adding their photos and a solidarity message to the mosaic including Michelle O’Neill (Vice-President), Eoin Ó Broin TD, Martina Anderson MLA, Deirdre Hargey (Minister for Communities) and Gerry Adams (former President and TD).

Sinn Féin supports Palestinian Prisoners petition

Sinn Féin President, Mary Lou McDonald, has written to the Tánaiste & Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, requesting that he raises the issue of Palestinian prisoners as a matter of humanitarian concern.

This action is in line with Sinn Féin's support for a petition on the issue of the rights of Palestinian prisoners calling for:

- a. The release of approx. 1,000 of the most vulnerable Palestinian political prisoners from Israeli prisons.
- b. The immediate cessation of nightly raids and detaining of Palestinians across the occupied territories.
- c. The immediate ending of arbitrary detentions and Administrative Detentions, interrogations, and transfers between prisons and detention centres.
- d. An increase in the number of ICRC staff working in the Occupied Territory in response to the pandemic.

Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin President



Sinn Féin supports Nicaraguan international Petition and Tweet storm

SINN Féin has added our voice to the following international Petition organised by the Sao Paulo Forum directed to António de Oliveira Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, against illegal blockade of countries and for solidarity among peoples:

1. We are experiencing an alarming health situation worldwide with the SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Today April 6, almost one million people are infected, with thousands of deaths in several countries. Nobody had prepared for a situation on that scale! Health systems in general were not prepared and few countries were able to minimally contain the initial number of infections and thus prevent the collapse of their own system.
3. The general reaction was to order quarantines and isolations to reduce the spread of the virus, measures that have catastrophic consequences for economies, which are not yet fully defined.
4. There is also an increase in xenophobic positions, blaming a culture or country for the emergence and spread of the virus.
5. In response to these positions, the Chinese government's attitude was exemplary in cooperating with Italy and other European countries to help them contain the epidemic locally.
6. In the midst of these problems, some nations that have already been the victims of unilateral coercive measures



António de Oliveira Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations

have unsuccessfully requested the lifting of sanctions in order to purchase supplies, medical equipment and medicines for their health system.

7. Nicaragua has suffered these sanctions for years and now it does not even have the right to obtain humanitarian aid.
8. In Venezuela, the government was willing to buy supplies, but international companies refused to sell it for fear of suffering some kind of penalty or fine.
9. Cuba remains subject to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States, exacerbated by the current aggressive escalation of that country's government, which

constitutes the main obstacle to its development. In its constant example of humanity and solidarity, Cuba once again offered cooperation in the area of health to face the pandemic and, upon request, sent Medical Brigades to more than a dozen countries.

10. In view of the above, we, the undersigned, request that the blockade, the unilateral coercive measures and the sanctions applied against the countries be completely lifted.
11. We hope that our voices can represent that of millions of people who suffer unfairly in their daily lives the political persecution against their countries promoted by some governments.

Sinn Féin has also supported the Nicaraguan international 'Tweet storm' **#BloqueoNoSolidaridadSi - 'No to Sanctions, Yes to Solidarity'**

Sinn Féin's approach guided by best international guidance and practice - Kearney

THE Sinn Féin approach to dealing with Covid-19 has been informed by best international guidance and practice as provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Nothing else should take away from the overriding objective of saving lives.

The WHO has advised that the world needs access to China's experience in responding to Covid-19.

Beijing has a population of 22 million. When the first cases were confirmed there, radical measures were invoked, making use of population lock down, universal temperature testing, the wearing of face masks, and hand washing.

As a result, and to date, there have only been eight deaths in Beijing and a total of 585 confirmed cases, according to the Beijinger Magazine.

The WHO further reported that within a 14-day period China successfully reduced the ratio of newly confirmed cases from 2478 to 409 per day.

It said that the Chinese government has adopted a truly all of government/all of society approach, which has been uncompromising in its approach to enhance the reach of case detection, isolation and early treatment.

Similar urgent and swift community testing and lock down action has been taken by the government in Cuba.

In recent weeks, when eight cases were confirmed in the Carmelo neighbourhood within the Plaza de Revolucion municipality of Havana, the government acted decisively.

Carmelo is an area of 1.2 km with a population of 27,000. However, when these eight cases were detected, the Department of Health locked down and isolated this entire neighbourhood. It then carried out 100% community testing of the whole population. An intensified public health focus was also introduced to Carmelo by the government.

Progress is now being made in the north against spread of the virus. But I believe we need to be going even further.

None of our people should become collateral damage as a result of our regional approach being fettered by a flawed British government policy, overseen by Tory ideologues. They will have to account at a later date for their inaction and slowness.

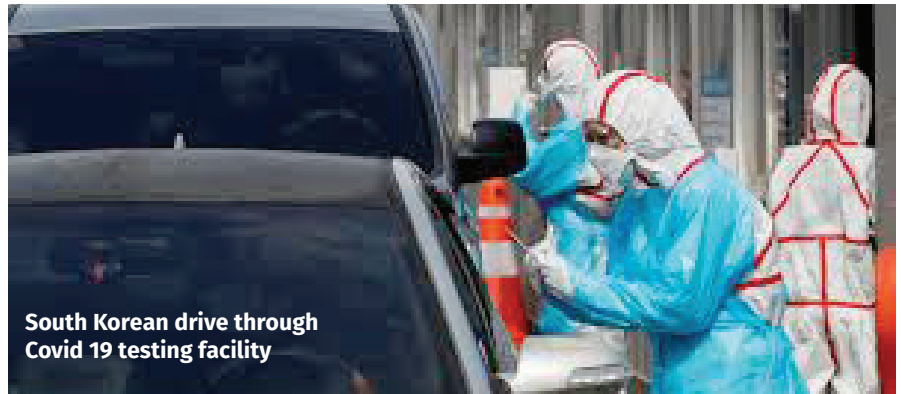
We must be prepared to do whatever is required and that means maximum cooperation and coordination on decisions across the land mass of Ireland.

No options should be discounted.

A radical expansion of community wide testing and contact tracing needs taken beyond frontline workers.

That is key to isolating concentrations of infection.

The corollary to that must be the use of targeted



South Korean drive through Covid 19 testing facility



Cuban doctors arriving in Brazil

None of our people should become collateral damage as a result of our regional approach being fettered by a flawed British government policy, overseen by Tory ideologues. They will have to account at a later date for their inaction and slowness.

and also comprehensive lock down measures if necessary, modelled on the Chinese and Cuban approaches, to keep the healthy separated from the sick, and ensuring that the proper medical care is given to those infected.

Ultimately, when Covid-19 passes, let none of us as politicians, physicians, journalists, civil servants, or others look back and reflect on whether there were questions we should have asked, or more that we could have done to save lives.

It is time for change not only in Ireland, but with respect to the conduct of multi-lateral relations.

It is a travesty that while Cuban doctors travel to Italy to try and save Italian lives, the US government persists with an economic blockade and financial sanctions against their country.

Narrow, conservative ideological and political agendas focussed on maintaining the status quo are the opposite of what is required domestically and internationally at this time.

Covid-19 presents an acid test for the political

systems north and south, and particularly for political unionism

Old conservative mindsets must be put to the side, and allow for the interests of citizens to be put first by recognising the need to fight the war against Covid-19 on an island-wide basis.

The yet to be fully realised, and unintended consequence of Covid-19 is that Ireland is a single island unit. Increasingly these catastrophic circumstances show, we must adopt and use common health and economic policies.

As an island we are also just one of the many global villages of citizens on either side of the northern and southern hemispheres.

Covid-19 has ushered in a new reality and benchmark for managing international relations and cooperation.

It requires that we all adapt to a new world order of solidarity and interdependence, and accept the need for respectful multilateralism and collective peaceful co existence.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa outlines response to Covid-19 crisis

Thursday, 9 April 2020

South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa



My Fellow South Africans,

At midnight tonight, it will be exactly two weeks since our country entered into an unprecedented nation-wide lockdown to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

During the course of these last two weeks, your lives have been severely disrupted, you have suffered great hardship and endured much uncertainty.

We have closed our borders to the world, our children are not in school, businesses have closed their operations, many have lost their income, and our economy has ground to a halt.

And yet, faced with such daunting challenges, you, the people of South Africa, have responded with remarkable patience and courage.

You have respected the lockdown and largely observed the regulations.

You have accepted the severe restrictions on your movement and many of the daily freedoms that we all take for granted.

You have done so because you have understood the devastating effect that this disease will have on the health and well-being of all South Africans unless we take drastic measures.

You have also understood that we must do everything in our power to prevent the massive loss of life that would occur if we did not act.

For your cooperation, for your commitment and above all for your patience, I wish to thank you personally.

I wish to thank you for reaffirming to each other and to the world that we South Africans are a people who come together and unite at moments of great crisis.

Since I announced the lockdown just over two weeks ago, the global coronavirus pandemic has worsened.

Two weeks ago, there were 340,000 confirmed coronavirus cases in the world.

We now have over 1.5 million confirmed cases worldwide.

Over 90,000 people across the world have died from this disease.

The health systems of many countries have been overwhelmed.

Even the most developed economies in the world have not had the means to treat the many thousands who have fallen ill.

They have struggled to find the medical supplies and personnel necessary to deal with the pandemic.

The devastating effect of this is that many people have died.

The global evidence is overwhelming.

It confirms that our decision to declare a national state of disaster and to institute a nation-wide lockdown was correct and it was timely.

Our strategy is made up of three parts:

- ▶ Firstly, an intensified public health response to slow down and reduce infections.
- ▶ Secondly, a comprehensive package of economic support measures to assist businesses and individuals affected by the pandemic.
- ▶ Thirdly, a programme of increased social support to protect poor and vulnerable households.



South African health workers conduct door to door community screening for Covid-19 in the Bo-Kaap district of Cape Town

As government, together with our many partners, we have used this lockdown period to both refine and intensify our public health strategy to manage the coronavirus.

Our approach is to screen in communities and test people in hospitals, clinics and mobile clinics, to isolate those who are infected, and to care for those who are ill in our health facilities.

We need to do this intensively and systematically.

An essential part of our response to this emergency is the principle of solidarity.

From across society, companies and individuals have come forward to provide financial and other assistance.

In support of this effort, we have decided that the President, Deputy President, Ministers and Deputy Ministers will each take a one-third cut in their salaries for the next three months.

This portion of their salaries will be donated to the Solidarity Fund.

We have reached out to world leaders, even as they struggle with the pandemic in their countries, to assist the continent with essential medical supplies and to support a comprehensive stimulus package for Africa.

As we confront this disease in our country, we

are part of a great global effort that is bringing humanity together in ways that many never thought possible.

For billions across the world, and for us here in South Africa, the coronavirus pandemic has changed everything.

We can no longer work in the way we have before.

As government, as NGOs, as political parties, as large corporations and small businesses, as financial institutions, as community organisations and as South Africans we will need to adapt to a new reality.

As we emerge from this crisis, our country will need to undergo a process of fundamental reconstruction.

To do so, we will draw on our strengths: our abundant natural resources, our advanced infrastructure, our deep financial markets, our proven capabilities in information and communication technology, and the depth of talent among our people.

We will draw on our proven capacity for innovation and creativity, our ability to come together in a crisis, and our commitment to each other and our common future.

We will learn from global experience and the best scientific evidence, but we will craft a uniquely South African response that uses our own capabilities as a nation.

This weekend is a sacred time for many South Africans.

For many, it will be difficult to spend this time without their friends and family.

I ask that you keep in your thoughts tonight all in our land who are vulnerable, destitute and alone.

I ask that you give what you can to alleviate their burden.

To contribute to the Solidarity Fund in any way you can.

This is a difficult time for us all.

Yet the message of Easter is one we carry in our hearts tonight.

It is the message of hope, of recovery and of rebirth.

As we walk this road together, as we struggle to defeat this pandemic, we remain strong and united and resolved.

Much is being asked of you, far more than should ever be asked.

But we know that this is a matter of survival, and we dare not fail.

We shall recover.

We shall overcome.

May God bless South Africa and protect her people.

I thank you.

ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA