

# **Statement on death of Fidel Castro - “The message of Fidel and the Cuban revolution has never been more relevant than it is today”**

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The Awami Workers Party mourns the passing of Comrade Fidel Castro, one of the greatest revolutionary icons in history. We extend our condolences to the Cuban people today on their immense loss, and assure them that they do not bear this alone, for Fidel Castro was a beacon of hope to countless oppressed peoples around the world. His legacy will continue to inspire millions around the world in the enduring struggle against colonialism, exploitation and injustice.

What comrade Fidel achieved in Cuba with the collective efforts of the Cuban people was remarkable enough - in a society staggering from the burdens of decades of colonialism & military dictatorship, the Cuban revolution led to a radical transformation that brought about the elimination of absolute poverty, free public education and universal literacy, and a health system that would become the envy of the world. Fidel's Cuba accomplished all this under the crippling weight of American economic sanctions and unending attempts at imperialist sabotage including hundreds of assassination attempts on his life.

But Fidel's accomplishments were not limited to his country alone. He was a genuine internationalist who committed himself and his country's hard-won resources to national liberation struggles across the world. From supporting Latin American revolutionaries fighting brutal dictators like Pinochet, to helping anti-colonial resistance in states like Ghana and Zimbabwe to supporting the Palestinian struggle for statehood against Israeli settler-colonialism, to leading the international coalition against South African apartheid, there was scarcely a fight for justice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Fidel failed to throw his weight behind. In his undying commitment to revolution, anticolonialism, liberation and equality, Fidel's was a peerless example of a genuine radical internationalism that transcended all the prejudices of race, religion or nationalism that are so endemic today.

Beyond his commitments to revolutionary struggle, Fidel also turned Cuba into an invaluable source of humanitarian assistance to the world in times of need. Whether it was the disaster in Haiti, the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, or the Ebola crisis in Africa, Cuba's doctors became a symbol of selfless humanitarian aid that was freed of the conditional and exploitatively corrupt trappings of the aid industry so endemic in the capitalist world.

Despite these enormous achievements, there is no doubt that Fidel, like all other men, had his shortcomings, whether exemplified in the failures of centralized planning or the repression of political opponents. Fidel, who never had so much as a street named after him in Cuba, would doubtless not have wanted hagiography to replace a critical appraisal of his legacy; those who follow in his footsteps must learn from his mistakes as they do from his towering achievements. But his emancipatory imprint on the oppressed peoples of the world and his defiance to the established structures of imperial power leave no doubt about the truly radical nature of his legacy.

Many will try to paint Fidel's passing as part of the demise of socialism, but nothing could be further from the truth. The message of Fidel and the Cuban revolution has never been more relevant than it is today. The unending crises of neoliberal capitalism have brought the world to the brink of catastrophe. Inequality is increasing at a frightening pace. Fascism and neo-nazism is raising its ugly head from the United States to Europe. Authoritarianism, ultra-nationalism and fundamentalism is tearing apart the social fabric across Asia, the Middle East and Muslim-majority societies. Global war is once again an impending possibility even as the rampant exploitation of the natural world has pushed the earth's climate to breaking point.

In these reactionary and bleak times, comrade Fidel's example of revolutionary defiance against all odds is critical to remind us of not only the possibility but the absolute necessity of resistance when the hour is darkest. As Fidel defied imperial might to create a social and economic alternative that inspired the world, so must we now gather our resources anew for the struggle ahead.

*Hasta la Victoria siempre!* Long live Fidel!

Awami Workers Party  
Pakistan

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