

SPEECH DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. BRUNO RODRIGUEZ PARRILLA, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA, AT THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL. GENEVA, MARCH 3, 2010.

Mr. President;

It took 60 million deadly casualties during World War II to develop the concept of human rights, particularly the right to life and human dignity.

Much progress has been made in developing the human rights concept; very little has been done to guarantee its implementation. This issue has become one of the fundamental pillars of the United Nations, as well as international development, peace and security. However, this is the area where the ideological manipulation, political hypocrisy and double standards of industrialized countries have caused most ravages.

Those who take upon themselves the role of watchdogs of human rights and attempt to question others, are precisely the ones who are directly responsible for the most serious, systematic and flagrant violations of human rights, particularly the right to life.

They were the ones who masterminded the colonial system that was imposed to plunder the countries of the South and doom them to live in underdevelopment. They are the ones who bear responsibility for the present international economic order that silently murders tens of millions of human beings who fall victims of starvation, poverty and preventable and curable diseases. They are the ones who impose the modern wars of conquest that kill millions, mostly civilians, whom they amazingly call "collateral damages."

They are also the beneficiaries of single thought, exclusive models and values, media warfare, the creation of immanent truths, the subculture of commercial advertisement, the imposition of conditioned reflexes, the deceitful, docile, stultifying embedded press that justifies or conceals massacres.

The US and its European allies resorted to the manipulation of terrorism to launch the wars whose aim was to control and conquer the energy resources in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have taken a toll on two million human lives and also served to justify involuntary disappearance, torture, secret renditions and detention centers where there is no recognition for International Humanitarian Law or the human being condition. It was the pretext to pass laws such as the "Patriot Act" whose implementation has just been extended by the US government, which encroaches on the liberties and guarantees conquered by the civil rights movement after several centuries of struggle.

Who will take responsibility for the brutal acts committed in Abu Ghraib, Bagram, Guantanamo and other centers of torture and death? When will the responsible face trial, thus putting an end to impunity?

Who will take responsibility in European countries for the secret renditions, the clandestine prisons in these territories and their involvement in acts of torture?

This morning, the Deputy Foreign Minister from Sweden made a curious and arrogant speech that included critical judgments about nine countries. However, he did not say a word about the complicity of the Swedish government with secret renditions that made a stopover in his country while transferring kidnapped persons. We hope that his prolonged investigation of the matter would conclude some day and that he would deign to share the results with this Council.

What has been happening in Palestine for years is a true genocide. Thousands of Palestinians have lost their lives as a result of the indiscriminate military attacks and the tight sieges and blockades that deprive them from the most elemental means of subsistence.

The military dictatorships in Latin America, which have been imposed and propped up by the US for decades, have murdered hundreds of thousands of persons. Only in Cuba they caused the death of 20 000 people.

The right to life is continuously violated around the world. The very existence of the human species is being seriously jeopardized by climate change. The ones who have historically been and still are responsible for it are the same who unleash and conduct the wars of conquest. The shameful Copenhagen meeting, with all its deceitful and exclusive practices, was an act against the right of humanity to life and survival.

Mr. President;

For half a century Cuba has been a victim of US aggressions and terrorist actions. Five thousand five hundred and seventy seven Cubans have either lost their lives or have been left maimed.

The perpetrators of the blowing up in mid-air of a Cubana de Aviacion airliner in 1976 enjoy impunity and are being protected by the US government. A dengue epidemic that resulted from a bacteriological attack caused the death of 101 Cuban children. One of the several bombs that were planted in Havana in 1997 killed an Italian youth.

The so-called Cuban Adjustment Act and the “wet foot/dry foot” policy encourage illegal migration and take a toll on human lives.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba is an act of genocide, defined as such in subparagraphs b) and c) under Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and is a mass, flagrant and systematic violation of human rights.

The US policy against Cuba, that the Government of President Obama has kept unchanged, is taking a toll on the lives of Cubans.

A new escalation of subversion, with broad media coverage, has been launched against Cuba. In no way has there been any respect for any ethical principle. An attempt is being made to make the mercenaries appear like patriots and make the US paid agents in Cuba appear as dissidents.

The powerful machinery of the empire did not hesitate to use a reoffender inmate, who was tried in court in accordance with due

process of law for having committed common crimes -and later on recruited while in prison- to make him appear as a human rights fighter. In order to obtain spurious political dividends he was thrust into death, despite the thorough medical assistance offered to him. It was an unfortunate event, as was expressed by President Raul Castro. He was yet another victim of the subversive policy of the United States against Cuba.

Since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, there has never been in Cuba a single case of assassination, torture or extrajudicial execution; there has never been a “death squad” or an “Operation Condor”. When it comes to the protection of the right to life, Cuba’s slate has been meritorious and impeccable, which includes its altruistic cooperation beyond its borders.

Mr. President;

I would have wished to refer to concrete aspects related to the serious work carried out by this Council; I would have liked to address this agency’s review, which is due to take place next year, in order to condemn the attempts to subdue it, modify its composition and procedures with the aim of forcing on the Council certain political interests. I would have wished to refer to the Universal Periodic Review, which proved to be a useful exercise, despite its imperfections and the lack of self-criticism on the part of the powerful who were showed up. I would have liked to defend the Council and outline the importance of preserving it free from politicization, discrimination, selectivity and double standards.

I can assure you that Cuba will continue to contribute its efforts and determination so that the Human Rights Council can preserve its independent course and cooperation is further consolidated as a true way to promote and protect human rights in the world.

On behalf of the heroic and noble people of Cuba I should proclaim that there would be no campaign that could make us drift away from our ideas of independence and freedom.

Thank you, very much.