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World reacts to death of Fidel Castro

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Cuba's late revolutionary leader Fidel Castro

The death of Cuba's revolutionary leader Fidel Castro at the age of 90 has drawn an array of reactions from world leaders and politicians.

In a message on Saturday, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif extended his condolences over the death of Castro to the government and people of Cuba.

The Iranian foreign minister praised Castro as an exemplary figure "in the fight against colonialism and exploitation... and the independence-seeking fight of oppressed nations."

China

China's President Xi Jinping said in reaction to the death of Cuba's iconic former president that the "Chinese people have lost a close comrade and a sincere friend."

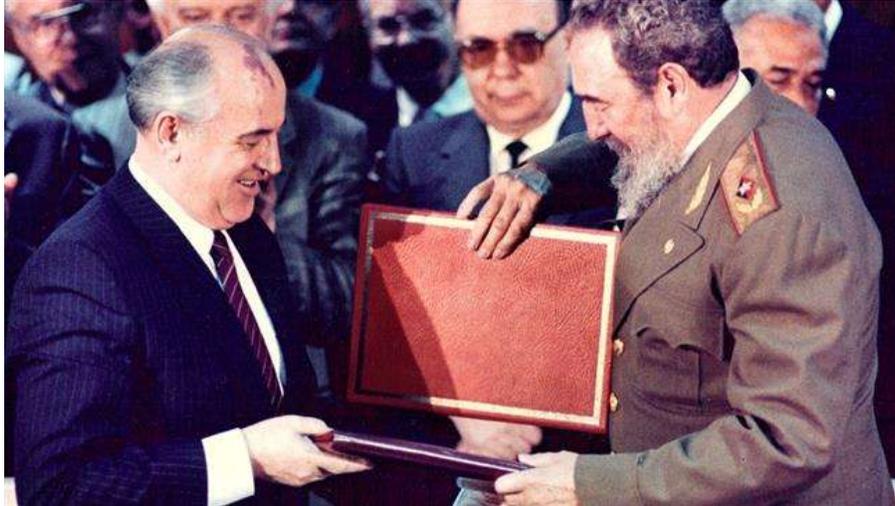


China's President Xi Jinping, left, greets Fidel Castro in Havana, Cuba, July 2014.

In a message broadcast on the national television, Xi said, "Comrade Castro will live forever. History and people will remember him."

Gorbachev

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has hailed Castro, saying the late revolutionary leader "strengthened" Cuba.



The file photo shows then Cuban President Fidel Castro, right, and then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev exchanging documents during a ceremony in the Cuban capital, Havana, in 1989.

"Fidel stood up and strengthened his country during the harshest American blockade, when there was colossal pressure on him and he still took his country out of this blockade to a path of independent development," Interfax quoted Gorbachev as saying on Saturday.

"In the past years, even when Fidel Castro was not formally in power, his role in strengthening the country was huge," he said.

Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin praised Castro as "the symbol of an era" on Saturday.



The file photo taken on December 13, 2000, shows Cuban President Fidel Castro, right, welcoming Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Jose Marti Airport in the Cuban capital, Havana.

"The name of this distinguished statesman is rightly considered the symbol of an era in modern world history," Putin said in a telegram to Cuban President Raul Castro cited by the Kremlin.

"Fidel Castro was a sincere and reliable friend of Russia," Putin stated.

France

French President Francois Hollande said in a statement on Saturday that Castro's rejection of foreign interference in Cuba was a source of "pride" for the Cuban people.

"An actor of the Cold War... he represented, for Cubans, pride in rejecting external domination," Hollande said, referring to Castro's rejection of US dominance over his country.

Venezuela

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro conveyed his condolences to the Cuban people over the death of Castro.



Venezuela's late President Hugo Chavez, right, meets Cuba's revolutionary leader Fidel Castro in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 29, 1999.

Maduro, himself a socialist revolutionary, said the news of Castro's death had "hit hard."

"With all our solidarity and all our love and condolences and the sorrow of the revolutionaries and of the Venezuelan Chavista patriots. To the people of Cuba: I spoke to Raul and I shared with him the pain we are feeling. It was a hard hit for all the revolutionaries, the revolutionaries of the world," Maduro told broadcaster Telesur in an interview.

India

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on his Twitter account that Fidel Castro "was one of the most iconic personalities of the 20th century."



The file photo shows Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, center left, being welcomed by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the airport in the Indian capital, New Delhi, in 1983, when Castro came to attend the 7th Non-Aligned Summit.

Modi said his country “mourns the loss of a great friend.”

Indian President Pranab Mukherjee also expressed his “heartfelt condolences” on the “sad demise” of the Cuban revolutionary leader.

EL Salvador

EL Salvador’s leftist government of Salvador Sanchez Ceren issued a statement, expressing “eternal gratitude” to Castro, El Salvador’s “eternal friend,” and the Cuban people for help “in the most difficult times,” an apparent reference to Cuba’s support of the guerrilla factions fighting a US-backed and military-dominated government, which was in power in the 1980s.

The statement further said Castro’s “example will live forever in our struggles and will flower in the noble ideas of new generations.”

Ecuador

Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa said in a message posted on Twitter, “It was a big one... Long live Cuba! Long live Latin America!”

Bolivia

Bolivia’s President Evo Morales said Castro “left us a legacy of having fought for the integration of the world’s peoples... The departure of Comandante Fidel Castro really hurts.”

South Africa

South Africa’s President Jacob Zuma expressed his gratitude to Castro for his solidarity with the black South Africans during their struggle to topple the apartheid regime in the country.

“President Castro identified with our struggle against apartheid. He inspired the Cuban people to join us in our own struggle against apartheid.” Zuma stated.

Nelson Mandela foundation

The Nelson Mandela foundation conveyed its “deepest condolences” to the Cuban people and government “on passing of Fidel Castro.” It also shared a photo on Twitter showing Castro with South Africa's late leader Nelson Mandela.



The file photo shows Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, left, with South African leader Nelson Mandela at the 50th anniversary of the GATT Agreement in 1997.
Namibia

Namibia’s President Hage Geingob also tweeted that “the death of Fidel signals the end of an era. Our comrade is no more but his revolutionary legacy will remain with Namibia forever.”

Pope Francis

The pontiff described Castro's demise as “sad news.” He added that he was grieving and praying for Castro’s “repose.”



Pope Francis, left, and former Cuban President Fidel Castro meet in the Cuban capital, Havana, September 20, 2015.

In a message to Castro's brother, Raul, Pope offered his "sense of grief to your excellency and family."

Canada

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also expressed grief over Castro's death, saying, "It is with deep sorrow that I learned today of the death of Cuba's longest serving president."

"Fidel Castro was a larger than life leader who served his people for almost half a century. A legendary revolutionary and orator, Mr. Castro made significant improvements to the education and healthcare of his island nation... I offer our deepest condolences to the family, friends and many, many supporters of Mr. Castro," Trudeau said.

He added that the Canadian people "join the people of Cuba today in mourning the loss of this remarkable leader."

Mexico

Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto said on his Twitter account, "Fidel Castro was a friend of Mexico, promoting bilateral relations based on respect, dialogue and solidarity."

Spain

Spain's Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy conveyed his condolences to the Cuban government over Castro's death, describing him as "a figure of enormous historical importance."

Rajoy's government also issued a statement, saying, "As a son of Spaniards, former President Castro always maintained close relations with Spain and showed great affection for his family and cultural ties."

Greece

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras also tweeted, “Goodbye, commandante. Until the peoples' eternal victory.”