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African Union declares solidarity with Palestine, Cuba

The author, a former member of the Secretariat of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), writes of African events for *Avante!*, the newspaper of the Portuguese Communist Party. Translation: John Catalinotto.

African countries have reaffirmed their solidarity with occupied Palestine, the victim of vicious Israeli aggression, and with Cuba, which has faced a brutal U.S.-imposed blockade for decades.



African Union holds summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Feb. 17-18, 2024.

At the end of the 37th African Union (AU) summit, which took place the weekend of Feb. 17-18 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), the organization's member states pledged their "unbreakable, permanent and total commitment to the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle against the Israeli occupation and for the restoration of their inalienable rights," including the right to self-determination, the return of refugees and the creation of

an independent and sovereign Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem [al-Quds] as its capital.

Another declaration highlights the need to put an end to the Israeli occupation, which undermines the foundations of the international legal order. The African countries renewed their call for an end to Israeli aggression against Gaza and expressed their deep dismay at the humanitarian and health catastrophe in that territory. Up to now, the genocidal war waged in Gaza by Tel Aviv has already claimed more than 100,000 victims, including all dead, wounded and missing.

In the same vein, the AU summit called for removing Cuba from the list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism, a list drawn up unilaterally by the U.S. The pan-African organization condemned, for the fifteenth consecutive year, the illegal economic, commercial and financial blockade perpetrated by Washington against Havana, now for more than six decades.

The African countries reaffirmed their support for the resolution that the United Nations General Assembly passes every year regarding removing the blockade of Cuba and deplored the measures implemented by the U.S. at the end of 2017, which reinforced this unilateral measure and extended its extraterritorial character.

Despite the theme of the summit in the Ethiopian capital being “Educating for the 21st century: building resilient education systems to increase access to inclusive, quality and relevant learning in Africa,” and despite the agenda including issues such as the reform of the AU or economic integration, the wars and conflicts on the continent dominated the debates held behind closed doors by African leaders.

From Western Sahara struggling against Moroccan colonial occupation to destroyed Libya, divided Somalia and tensions in the Horn of Africa; from insecurity in several Sahel countries to the war in Sudan with its thousands of dead and millions of displaced people and refugees; from ongoing instability in the Central African Republic to the growing threats of a full-scale military confrontation between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda — all of this is of concern to the AU, which is still far from achieving its stated aim of “silencing the guns” in Africa.

But it’s not all bad news. In West Africa, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, governed by the military, have expelled French troops from their territories, created the Alliance of Sahel States and announced the withdrawal of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which is accused of being in the pay of Paris.

They are now considering how to free themselves from French neo-colonial dependence — by replacing the CFA Franc with national currencies as soon as possible — and thus strengthen the sovereignty of their countries.

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