

Caribbean: End Illegal Airstrikes & Lift the Blockade

The Ongoing Strikes in the Caribbean Are Inhumane and Illegal

Since September 2025, the U.S. military has conducted a campaign of lethal strikes against alleged drug-trafficking vessels in the Caribbean Sea (and Eastern Pacific) under [Operation Southern Spear](#).

- As of early May 2026, at least **193 people have been killed** in [more than 55 strikes](#) — without trial, without due process, and without any meaningful evidence presented to Congress or the public that these individuals posed an imminent threat to the United States. The Department of Defense has [rarely identified the alleged traffickers or the cartels involved](#).
- When [senior defense official Joseph Humire testified before Congress](#) in March and was asked whether the strikes had reduced the quantity of drugs entering the United States, Rep. Adam Smith stated plainly: “But that’s a no in terms of the drugs actually getting into the U.S.”

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [has demanded the U.S. halt the strikes](#), with UN experts finding that the strikes are “extrajudicial killings” that violate international human rights law. A [former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court](#) has said the strikes constitute “crimes against humanity.” Drug trafficking, however grave, does not carry the death penalty under U.S. law — and it does not constitute the kind of armed attack that would justify military force under the Constitution. Congress has never authorized these killings.

The Blockade on Cuba: Collective Punishment as an Instrument of Regime Change

The Trump administration has imposed an [effective oil blockade on Cuba](#)—the first since the Cuban Missile Crisis—by threatening tariffs against any country that supplies Cuba with fuel and by cutting off all oil from Venezuela after the capture of President Maduro.

- The administration has been explicit about its purpose. Trump [wrote on Truth Social](#): “There will be no more oil or money going to Cuba—ZERO! I strongly suggest they make a deal, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.” He also suggested to reporters that the U.S. could pursue “a friendly takeover.” This is collective punishment by design: deliberately depriving a civilian population of fuel, food, and medicine to compel political change — precisely the kind of coercion that prohibitions on collective punishment in international humanitarian law exist to prevent.

The human consequences are devastating. Cuba’s [national electric grid has collapsed](#) repeatedly. Blackouts of up to 20 hours are routine. Running water has been cut off because pumps run on electricity. Hospitals have [suspended operations](#), [medicines are spoiling](#) in unpowered refrigerators, and doctors report rising preventable deaths, increasing premature births, and interrupted chemotherapy.

- The [UN Secretary-General](#) has warned of outright humanitarian “collapse.” UN human rights experts have condemned the blockade as “an extreme form of unilateral economic coercion” that constitutes a “serious violation of international law.” The [General Assembly has called for an end to the embargo](#) for more than 30 consecutive years.
- The average Cuban wage is \$15 per month; gasoline costs nearly \$40 per gallon when it can be found at all. Eleven million people are paying the price for a policy whose architects have openly stated that their suffering is the point.

Congress Has the Authority and Obligation to Act

- **Cosponsor and support S.136 and H.R.7521, the United States-Cuba Trade Act of 2026** introduced by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA). Dismantle the statutory foundations of the

longest embargo in modern history. End a policy that punishes 11 million civilians for the actions of their government and replace it with the engagement, trade, and travel that a majority of Americans support.

- **Support new War Powers Resolutions to end unauthorized military strikes in the Caribbean and Pacific.** Congress has never authorized the use of lethal military force against alleged drug-trafficking vessels. Cosponsor and vote for resolutions requiring the removal of U.S. Armed Forces from these unauthorized hostilities. The killing of unidentified people at sea without trial is incompatible with American law and American values.
- **Support additional future War Powers Resolutions on Cuba.** As the administration escalates pressure — through oil blockades, the seizure of fuel shipments, and threats of further military action in the region — Congress must assert its constitutional authority to prevent the slide toward wider conflict.