CIUDADANÍA Y LIBERTAD

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# A Third of the Assembly Walks Away

*The 2026 vote on the embargo and the regional evolution of the vote in the United Nations General Assembly (2023-2026)*

**Ciudadanía y Libertad**
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This report analyses the vote on resolution A/81/L.5, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", adopted by the General Assembly on 28 October 2026, and compares it with the votes of 2023, 2024 and 2025. The 2026 figures are taken from the Assembly's voting board and from the explanations of vote; they will be confirmed when the verbatim record A/81/PV.28 is published.

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# 1. Executive summary

On 28 October 2026 the United Nations General Assembly adopted, for the thirty-fourth time, the annual resolution submitted by Cuba on the “necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba” (A/81/L.5), by 130 votes in favour to 17 against, with 25 abstentions; 21 States did not vote [1]. The resolution passed, as it has every year since 1992, but the result is the lowest level of support it has received since 1995, the highest number of votes against in the entire series and the highest number of abstentions since 1996 [2]. In two years, between November 2024 and October 2026, the resolution went from 187 favourable votes to 130: it lost 57 supporters, nearly a third of the Assembly.

The decline from 2025, when the text obtained 165 votes, has a precise anatomy. Of the 165 States that voted in favour in 2025, 128 did so again; 4 moved to a vote against (Colombia, Slovenia, the United Arab Emirates and Trinidad and Tobago), 17 to abstention and 16 stopped voting. Not one of the twelve States that abstained in 2025 returned to a favourable vote; six of them moved to a vote against. The movement runs in a single direction.

The erosion is concentrated in two regions where Havana enjoyed unanimous support barely two years ago. In Latin America and the Caribbean, where all 32 States entitled to vote backed the resolution in 2024, only 13 of 33 did so in 2026; six voted against, seven abstained and seven did not vote. In the European Union, which voted in favour as a bloc in 2024, thirteen member States voted in favour, ten abstained and four voted against; Germany, Italy and the Netherlands abstained for the first time in decades [3]. To this must be added unprecedented signals from outside the West: the first vote against by an Arab Gulf State (the United Arab Emirates), the abstentions of Qatar, Bahrain and the Republic of Korea, and the absence of Jordan and of several Pacific island States.

The explanations of vote shift the axis of the debate. Governments that voted in favour (Canada, Panama, Australia and New Zealand, Portugal, the European Union in its joint statement) expressly conditioned their vote on its not being read as an endorsement of the Cuban authorities, and demanded the release of political prisoners and political and judicial reforms. Those that abstained (Chile, Peru, Italy, Jamaica) justified their position on the grounds that the text is silent on human rights and that the Cuban crisis “cannot be explained solely by external factors” [4]. Those that voted against for the first time (Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica) invoked the nature of the regime, not the embargo. The Cuban delegation, in its right of reply, dismissed the concern for human rights as a “narrative at the service of Washington's interests” that “is not the substance of what is being discussed” [5].

The analysis of the 21 States that did not vote calls for caution. Venezuela and Afghanistan had their voting rights suspended under Article 19 of the Charter for arrears in their contributions and should not be counted as political losses; Bolivia, by contrast, settled its payments before the session, as the President of the Assembly reported, and could have voted [6]. The sixteen new absences among States that voted in favour in 2025 include five from Latin America and the Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Dominica, Guatemala and Saint Lucia), four from Africa, six from Asia and the Pacific and one from Europe.

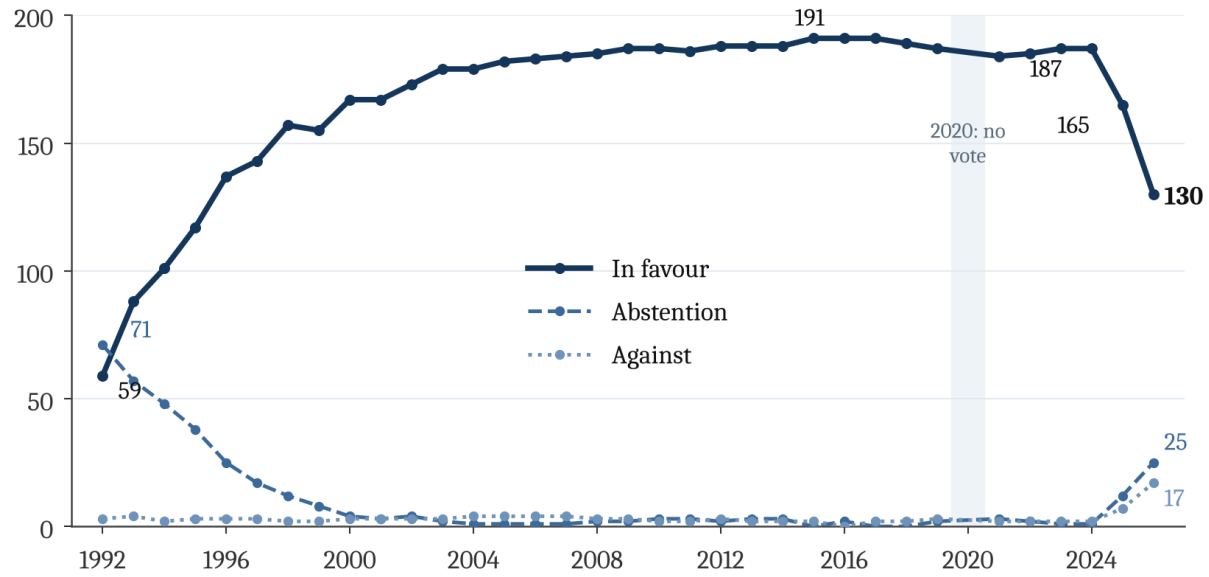
The procedural vote of July 2026, when Cuba asked to reopen the debate in a special session and obtained 136 votes in favour, 9 against and 30 abstentions, anticipated this result almost exactly [7].

Two factors combine to explain it, and the report treats them with equal rigour: Washington's open diplomatic campaign to persuade States to vote against or abstain, and the conduct of the Cuban authorities themselves, in particular their alignment with the Russian Federation in the war against Ukraine, the repression that followed July 2021 and the behaviour of their delegation in the Assembly. The result does not alter the legal status of the embargo, which only the United States Congress can change; what changes is the diplomatic price of backing Havana unconditionally.

## 2. The annual resolution and the historical series (1992-2026)

Since 1992 Cuba has submitted to the General Assembly every autumn a draft resolution, always under the same title, which reaffirms the sovereign equality of States and freedom of trade and navigation, expresses concern at laws with extraterritorial effect —in particular the Helms-Burton Act of 1996— and urges the States that apply them to repeal them. The text is legally non-binding and contains no reference to the situation of civil and political rights in Cuba. That omission, accepted without objection for three decades by almost the entire Assembly, is today the central argument of those who have stopped voting in favour.

**Figure 1.** Annual vote on the embargo resolution in the General Assembly, 1992-2026




Votes in favour, abstentions and votes against. No vote was held in 2020; the vote for the seventy-fifth session took place in June 2021. Sources: General Assembly voting records and United Nations press releases (notes 1, 8, 9, 10 and 11).

The first vote, in 1992, produced 59 votes in favour, 3 against, 71 abstentions and 46 States not voting [8]. Support grew steadily through the 1990s (117 votes in 1995, 137 in 1996, 143 in 1997) until it reached near-unanimity: 191 favourable votes between 2015 and 2017, the peak of the series, coinciding with the bilateral normalization process begun by the Obama administration, which in 2016 went so far as to abstain [8]. After that peak, the resolution settled between 184 and 189 votes for almost a decade, with the United States and Israel as the only regular opponents.

The 2023-2026 series breaks that stability. In 2023 and 2024 the resolution obtained 187 votes, with two against (the United States and Israel) and a single abstention (Ukraine in 2023, the Republic of

Moldova in 2024) [9][10]. In 2025, the first year of the second Trump administration and of an explicit State Department campaign to change the vote, it fell to 165 votes, with 7 against and 12 abstentions [11]. In 2026 it fell to 130. In historical terms, 130 votes in favour is the lowest figure since the 117 of 1995; 17 votes against is the highest recorded in thirty-four votes; and 25 abstentions equals the figure for 1996, when the embargo had just been tightened by the Helms-Burton Act.

The comparison with the 1990s is not merely arithmetical. Then, support for the resolution grew year after year as the rejection of the extraterritorial reach of United States legislation consolidated; today it declines year after year as the demand consolidates that the discussion of the embargo should not stand in for an examination of the Cuban State's conduct. The slope is the same, with the sign reversed.

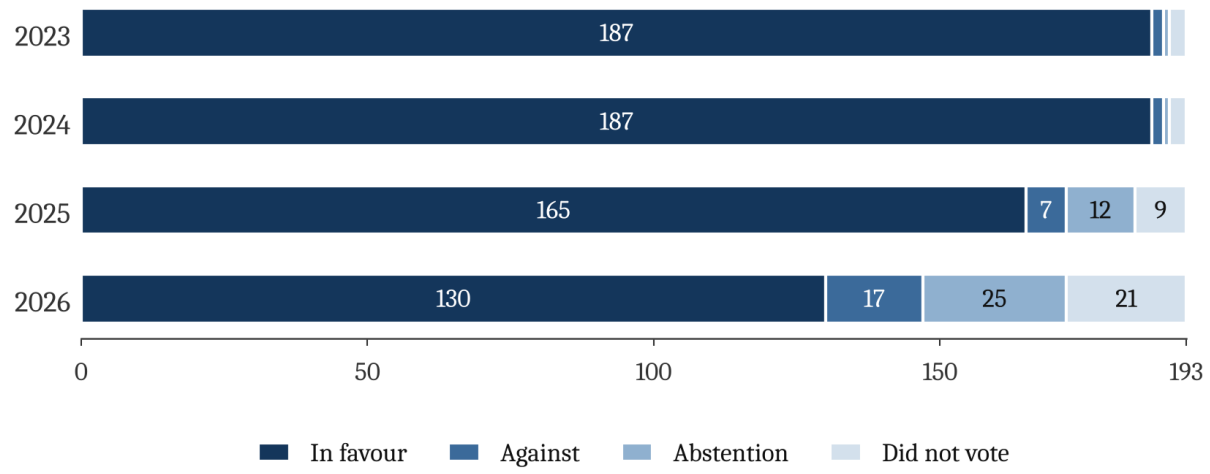
## 3. The 2026 result and the 2023-2026 comparison

The 2026 result comes down to four figures: 130 in favour, 17 against, 25 abstentions and 21 States not voting, out of 193 members. Table 1 and figure 2 place that result in the series of the last four years.

**Table 1.** Result of the vote, 2023-2026

| Year | Date | In favour | Against | Abstention | Did not vote | Document |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2023 | 2 Nov | 187 | 2 | 1 | 3 | A/RES/78/7 |
| 2024 | 30 Oct | 187 | 2 | 1 | 3 | A/RES/79/7 |
| 2025 | 29 Oct | 165 | 7 | 12 | 9 | A/RES/80/4 |
| 2026 | 28 Oct | 130 | 17 | 25 | 21 | A/81/L.5 |

**Figure 2.** Distribution of the 193 Member States in the last four votes




Sources: roll-call records of A/RES/78/7, A/RES/79/7 and A/RES/80/4 and voting board of the 28th plenary meeting of the eighty-first session (notes 9 to 12).

In 2023 the United States and Israel voted against; Ukraine abstained; the Republic of Moldova, Somalia and Venezuela did not vote [9]. In 2024 the United States and Israel voted against; the Republic of Moldova abstained; Afghanistan, Ukraine and Venezuela did not vote [10]. In 2025 Argentina, the United States, Hungary, Israel, North Macedonia, Paraguay and Ukraine voted against; Albania, Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Czechia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, the Republic of Moldova, Poland and Romania abstained; Afghanistan, Bulgaria, El Salvador, Madagascar, Myanmar, Nauru, the Dominican Republic, Syria and Venezuela did not vote [11].

In 2026, 17 States voted against: Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the United Arab Emirates, Slovenia, the United States, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Morocco, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago and Ukraine. Twenty-five abstained: Albania, Germany, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Solomon Islands, Italy, Jamaica, Latvia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Palau, Peru, Poland, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Dominican Republic and Romania. Twenty-one did not vote: Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, El Salvador, the Philippines, Guatemala, Equatorial Guinea, the Marshall Islands, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Myanmar, Saint Lucia, Syria, Somalia, Tajikistan, Vanuatu and Venezuela [1][12].

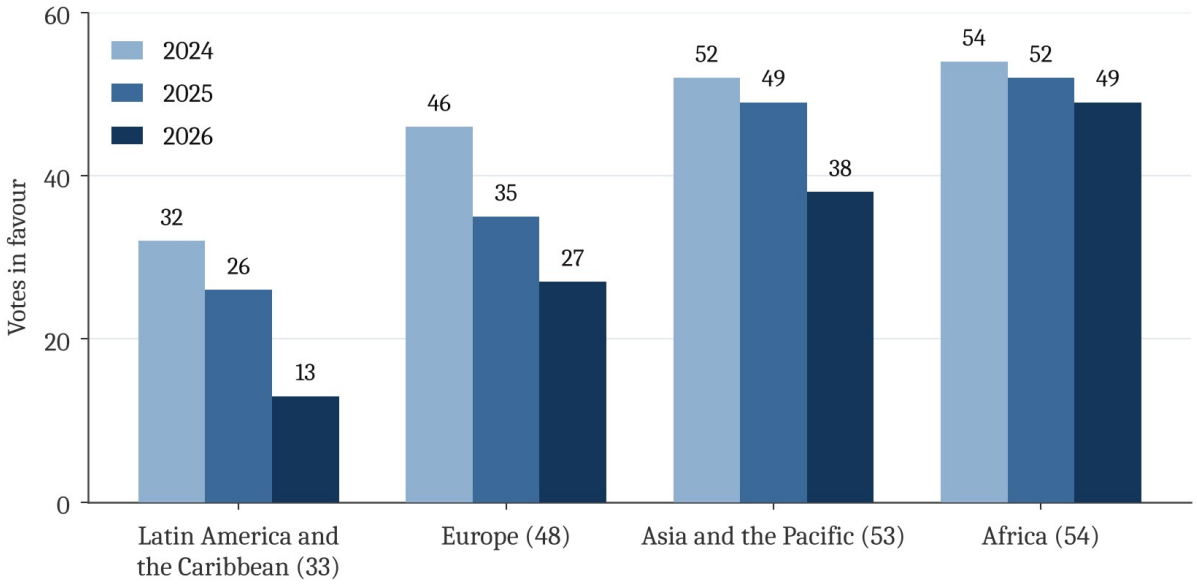
The regional reading, developed in the sections that follow, shows that the loss is not uniform. Africa and much of Asia retain almost intact support; the fall occurs in the Western Hemisphere, in Europe and, more incipiently but significantly, in the Gulf and the Pacific.

**Table 2.** Regional distribution of the vote, 2024-2026

| Region (geographical grouping) | States | In favour 2024 | In favour 2025 | In favour 2026 | Against 2026 | Abstention 2026 | Did not vote 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 33 | 32 | 26 | 13 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| Europe (EU-27 and others) | 48 | 46 | 35 | 27 | 7 | 13 | 1 |
| Asia and the Pacific (incl. Middle East) | 53 | 52 | 49 | 38 | 1 | 5 | 9 |
| Africa | 54 | 54 | 52 | 49 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Israel | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **193** | **187** | **165** | **130** | **17** | **25** | **21** |

The grouping is geographical and does not reproduce exactly the United Nations regional groups: Cyprus and Türkiye are counted in Europe, and the five States in the last row separately, so as to isolate the behaviour of the non-European Western allies. Row totals have been checked against the 2025 roll-call record (A/RES/80/4) and the 2026 voting board; the verbatim record A/81/PV.28 will allow the definitive 2026 roll call to be confirmed once it is published.

**Figure 3.** Votes in favour by region, 2024-2026




In brackets, the number of States in each grouping. The five non-European Western allies in table 2 are excluded. Sources: notes 9 to 12.

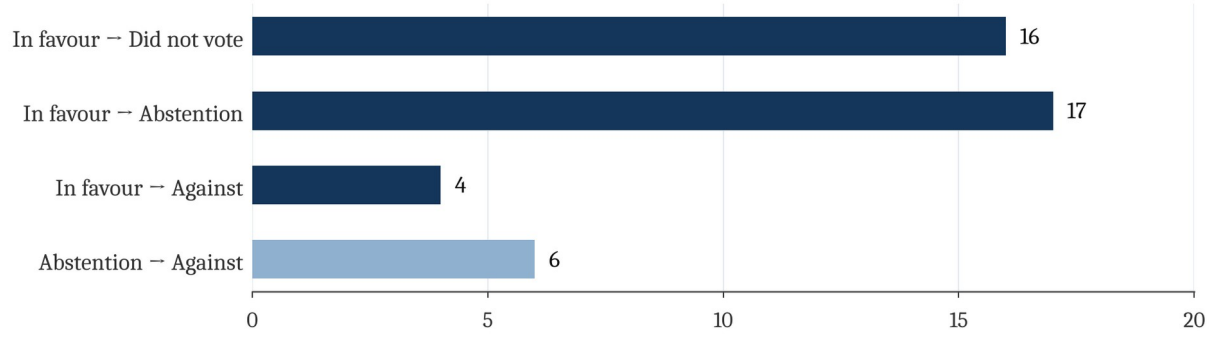
## 4. Anatomy of the change: how the votes were lost between 2025 and 2026

The subtraction of 130 from 165 conceals a larger movement than the net figure suggests. Cross-referencing the 2025 roll-call record with the 2026 board, 37 States that voted in favour in 2025 ceased to do so in 2026, and only two (Madagascar and Nauru, absent in 2025) joined the favourable vote. The 37 are distributed across three channels.

**Table 3.** Voting trajectories between 2025 and 2026

| Trajectory 2025 → 2026 | States | Names |
|---|---|---|
| In favour → Against | 4 | Colombia, Slovenia, United Arab Emirates, Trinidad and Tobago |
| In favour → Abstention | 17 | Germany, Bahrain, Chile, Croatia, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Solomon Islands, Italy, Jamaica, Montenegro, Netherlands, Palau, Peru, Qatar, Republic of Korea |
| In favour → Did not vote | 16 | Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, Philippines, Guatemala, Equatorial Guinea, Marshall Islands, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Saint Lucia, Somalia, Tajikistan, Vanuatu |
| Abstention → Against | 6 | Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Lithuania, Morocco |
| Abstention → Abstention | 6 | Albania, Estonia, Latvia, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania |
| Did not vote → Abstention | 2 | Bulgaria, Dominican Republic |
| Did not vote → In favour | 2 | Madagascar, Nauru |
| Against → Against | 7 | Argentina, United States, Hungary, Israel, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Ukraine |

**Figure 4.** The 37 favourable votes lost between 2025 and 2026, by exit channel




In dark blue, the States that voted in favour in 2025 and did not do so in 2026 (37). In light blue, the six States that moved from abstention to a vote against. Sources: notes 11 and 12.

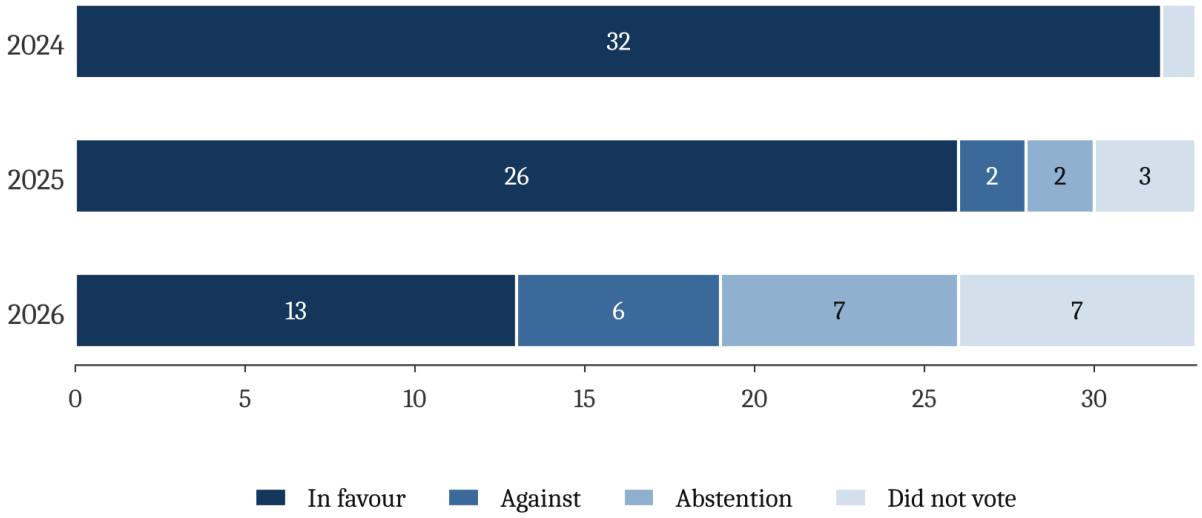
Three features of this table deserve emphasis. The first is the complete absence of returns: not one of the nineteen States that voted against or abstained in 2025 went back to a favourable vote, and six of the twelve abstainers hardened their position into a vote against. A State that moves away from the resolution does not come back; it consolidates or advances. The second is the weight of abstention as the preferred exit for first-rank Western allies (Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea), which chose not to back the text without formally joining the United States position. The third is the silent channel of absences, which accounts for almost half of the loss (16 of 37) and tends to go unnoticed because the board does not count it as a vote.

The scale of the change can also be read cumulatively. Between 2024 and 2026, 57 States stopped voting in favour. Fourteen of the seventeen votes against in 2026 belong to States that voted in favour in 2024; so do twenty-four of the twenty-five abstentions. Of the 130 that voted in favour in 2026, at least eighteen did so with an explanation that conditions their support or openly criticizes the Cuban Government: the thirteen European Union members that voted in favour, covered by the joint statement read by Ireland; Australia and New Zealand; Canada; Panama; and Fiji.

## 5. Latin America and the Caribbean

The region is the epicentre of the change. In 2023 and 2024 all 32 Latin American and Caribbean States entitled to vote (Venezuela was already suspended) backed the resolution without exception. In 2025 Argentina and Paraguay voted against, Costa Rica and Ecuador abstained and the Dominican Republic and El Salvador did not vote, bringing support down to 26. In 2026 only 13 of 33 States voted in favour: the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Cuba, Grenada, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Uruguay. Leaving aside Cuba and Nicaragua, eleven. For the first time since the resolution has existed, Havana does not have a majority in its own region.

**Figure 5.** Latin America and the Caribbean: distribution of the 33 States, 2024-2026




Venezuela appears among the States not voting in all three years by application of Article 19 of the Charter. Sources: notes 10 to 12.

**Table 4.** Latin America and the Caribbean, 2026

| Position 2026 | States | Names | Vote in 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|
| In favour | 13 | Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Cuba, Grenada, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay | All in favour |
| Against | 6 | Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago | Argentina and Paraguay against; Costa Rica and Ecuador abstention; Colombia and Trinidad and Tobago in favour |
| Abstention | 7 | Chile, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Peru, Dominican Republic | All in favour, except the Dominican Republic (did not vote) |
| Did not vote | 7 | Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Dominica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Saint Lucia, Venezuela | All in favour, except El Salvador and Venezuela (did not vote) |

The subregional map is eloquent. In South America only Brazil, Suriname and Uruguay voted in favour; Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Paraguay voted against, Chile, Guyana and Peru abstained, Bolivia did not vote and Venezuela could not. In Central America support was reduced to Belize, Nicaragua and Panama: Costa Rica voted against, Honduras abstained, Guatemala and El Salvador did not vote. In the Caribbean, historically the bloc most loyal to Havana, the Caribbean Community fractured: Trinidad and Tobago became the first CARICOM member to vote against, Jamaica, Guyana and Haiti abstained, and Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Saint Lucia did not vote, so that only seven of the fourteen CARICOM members backed the resolution [13][14].

The changes do not follow a simple ideological pattern. Colombia moved from a favourable vote to a vote against after a change of government, on the instruction of President De la Espriella and with an official communication referring to the “alleged embargo” [15]; Chile abstained for the first time in 33 years under the Kast government [16]; Honduras and Peru abstained after joining, together with Chile, the Shield of the Americas [17]. But Brazil and Mexico, with governments of the opposite sign to

Washington, kept their vote and defended it with lengthy statements; Uruguay, under a centre-left government, also spoke on behalf of the Group of 77; and Panama, governed by a president close to the United States, voted in favour. The variable that best orders the picture is not the orientation of the government but its willingness to inconvenience Washington over a text that brings it no benefit and whose sponsor has become a costly partner.

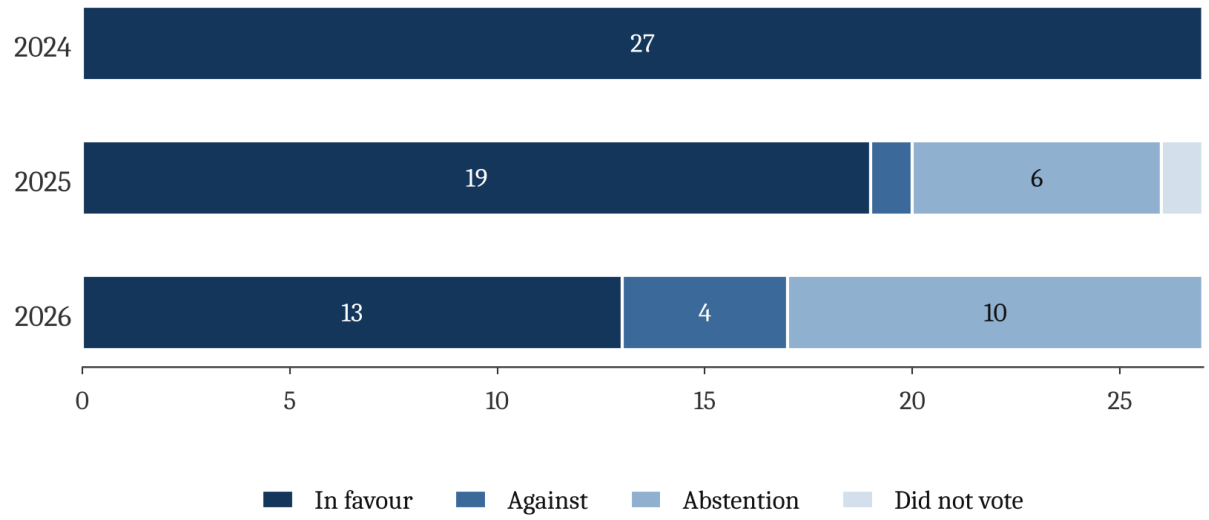
The explanations of vote of the Latin American States that moved away from the resolution share one argument: the embargo can no longer serve as a pretext. Peru declared that “the unilateral economic blockade cannot serve as a pretext to justify violations of fundamental freedoms in Cuba” and cited the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' diagnosis of the persistence of the single party, the concentration of power and the subordination of the judiciary to political authority [17][5]. Chile maintained that reducing the debate to an economic matter “entails an unjustifiable omission” and that the deterioration of living conditions “cannot be explained solely by external factors” [16][5]. Trinidad and Tobago went further: its Prime Minister stated that her country “will not support a military dictatorship in Cuba” and her Foreign Minister explained to Parliament that “our vote was not against the Cuban people; it was for the Cuban people” [14][13]. Costa Rica, which had abstained in 2025 and voted against reopening the debate in July, completed its shift to a negative vote [18].

Even among those that voted in favour, the tone changed. Panama reiterated its support for the resolution but called on the Cuban authorities “to commit to a process designed to achieve democratic institutions”, referred to the Panamanians detained in Cuba and offered its territory as the venue for negotiations between Washington and Havana “to pave the way for a democratic process” [5][19]. Jamaica, which abstained, attributed the Cuban crisis to the “combined effect” of external restrictions and of “domestic economic policies and structural limitations” [5]. Only Mexico, Brazil, Nicaragua and the Eastern Caribbean States that spoke (Belize, on its own behalf and that of Barbados) maintained a discourse of unconditional solidarity.

## 6. Europe: the European Union and non-member States

The European Union voted in favour as a bloc in 2023 and 2024: all twenty-seven member States without exception. In 2025 that unity broke on the Central European and Baltic flank, when Hungary voted against, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania abstained and Bulgaria did not vote, leaving support at nineteen. In 2026 the fracture reached the large economies: thirteen member States voted in favour, ten abstained and four voted against.

**Figure 6.** European Union: distribution of the 27 member States, 2024-2026




Sources: notes 10 to 12 and the press release of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 3).

**Table 5.** European Union, 2026

| Position 2026 (EU-27) | States | Names | Vote in 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|
| In favour | 13 | Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Slovakia, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Sweden | All in favour |
| Abstention | 10 | Germany, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Romania | Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Romania abstention; Bulgaria did not vote; Germany, Croatia, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands in favour |
| Against | 4 | Czechia, Slovenia, Hungary, Lithuania | Hungary against; Czechia and Lithuania abstention; Slovenia in favour |

The abstention of Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, three of the Union's four largest economies, is qualitatively different from the movement of 2025, which could be read as a Baltic and Central European reaction to Cuba's position on Ukraine. Italy had voted in favour without interruption since 1995; Germany, since 2002 [31]. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained its abstention in a statement that attributes the crisis to “the lack of political and economic freedoms” and to the “structural weaknesses” of the Cuban model, reiterates the call to release all political prisoners and deplores that Cuba's position on “Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine” remains incompatible with the Charter; it adds that Cuba voted against the General Assembly resolution of 24 February 2026 calling for a ceasefire [3]. The same statement identifies the partners with which Rome coordinated the abstention: Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Croatia. The abstention was, therefore, a concerted decision by ten States, not ten isolated national decisions.

The European paradox is that the Union kept a common statement and lost the common vote. Ireland spoke in explanation of vote “on behalf of the European Union and its member States”, reiterating the Union's opposition to the embargo and to the extraterritorial application of the Helms-Burton Act,

which Union law forbids member States to enforce; but the same text states that “the decisions taken by the Cuban authorities, including long-standing structural weaknesses and inefficiencies of the economic system, the lack of economic, judicial and political reforms and inadequate investment, have contributed significantly to the current crisis”, demands the release of all political prisoners and arbitrarily detained persons, the ratification of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, a standing invitation to the United Nations special procedures and the opening of a dialogue with civil society; regrets that Cuba does not prevent its nationals from joining the Russian armed forces; and concludes that “humanitarian support alone will not solve Cuba's crisis. Important sovereign decisions can no longer be postponed” [5]. Fourteen of the twenty-seven States on whose behalf that statement was delivered did not vote in favour of the text.

Outside the Union, Europe splits three ways. The United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Andorra, Türkiye, Serbia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and the Russian Federation voted in favour. Ukraine, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina voted against; Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Montenegro abstained; Armenia did not vote. Seven of the seventeen votes against in 2026 are European [3]. Ukraine, which abstained in 2023 and did not vote in 2024, voted against for the first time in 2025, on the same day it closed its embassy in Havana and downgraded its diplomatic relations over the presence of Cuban nationals fighting on Russia's side [21], and kept that position in 2026.

The European argument has been on the official record since 2025 and cannot be reduced to pressure from Washington. Poland, speaking also on behalf of Czechia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, then explained its abstention by “the selective application of the Charter of the United Nations”, a reference to Cuba's continued support for Russia in its invasion of Ukraine [22]; Denmark, on behalf of a group of countries that voted in favour, urged Havana to guarantee full freedoms and to prevent its nationals from joining the Russian war [6]. In 2026 Portugal, which voted in favour, declared in its national capacity that it “strongly condemns the systematic repression and the human rights violations perpetrated by the Cuban authorities” and that the hardships of the Cuban people are “caused mainly by the policies of the Cuban authorities” [5]. Between the Europeans that voted in favour and those that abstained, the difference is one of tactics, not of diagnosis.

## 7. Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, Africa and the non-European Western allies

Outside the Western Hemisphere and Europe, support for the resolution remains in the majority, but for the first time cracks appear in blocs that until 2025 voted in favour without exception.

In the Middle East and the Gulf, the United Arab Emirates became the first Arab State of the Gulf Cooperation Council to vote against; Qatar and Bahrain abstained; Jordan did not vote; Morocco, which had abstained in 2025, voted against. Qatar explained its abstention in deliberately neutral terms, reaffirming its opposition to unilateral coercive measures but stating that “the best way to resolve disputes between States must be diplomacy, dialogue and peaceful means” [5]. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and the other Arab States voted in favour, and Egypt aligned itself with the statement of the Arab Group.

In East Asia and the Pacific, the Republic of Korea abstained (it had voted in favour in 2025), a change that the United States Ambassador expressly cited as an example of the shift by “major economies” [23]. Japan, China, India, Indonesia and the whole of ASEAN, which spoke through Singapore, voted in favour. Among the Pacific island States, Palau and Solomon Islands abstained and the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu did not vote; Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Fiji voted in favour. Fiji, in a careful explanation of vote, declared that it “respects the position of the United States” and that its human rights concerns “are important and shared by many”, but that its vote “reflects our principled support for engagement over isolation” [5]. The Philippines and Tajikistan did not vote.

Africa is the most stable region. Forty-nine of the fifty-four African States voted in favour; Morocco voted against and Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya and Somalia did not vote. Namibia, on behalf of the African Group, recalled that the African Union has renewed its call to lift the embargo for the seventeenth consecutive year and that “Africa's position on this question is settled at the highest level” [2]. Kenya's absence is striking because its delegation had spoken the day before in support of the resolution; it is likely an absence at the moment of the vote rather than a political decision, a reminder of the caution with which non-voters should be read [4].

Among the non-European Western allies, Canada, Australia and New Zealand voted in favour, but all three accompanied their vote with explicit reservations. Canada, whose Government had declined to anticipate its position in the preceding days [24], spoke in the debate of 27 October to ground its opposition to the embargo in “the principles of international law” and in its “long-standing” objection “to the extraterritorial application of laws”, and in the same speech expressed its “serious concern” that the Cuban Government “continues to severely restrict the political and economic rights of its people, detains hundreds of political prisoners and restricts peaceful debate and alternatives within the country”, factors it described as “principal contributors to the humanitarian crisis”. It added that “Cuba is now at a crossroads” and that Canada's preference is “a peaceful, Cuban-led transition” towards a future in which Cuba can “join the community of democratic nations of the Americas” [4]. Australia, speaking also for New Zealand, stated that its vote “should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the policies or actions of the Cuban Government”, mentioned Cuba's support for “Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine” and called for the release of all political prisoners [5]. Canada had already abstained in the procedural vote of July 2026, together with Australia and fifteen European countries [20].

## 8. The explanations of vote: in favour, abstention, against

The explanations of vote are the most valuable material of this vote, because they set down in writing the criteria by which each Government justifies its position and, therefore, the terms on which that position may change. They are summarized here from the transcript of the meeting of 28 October, the debate of 27 October and the subsequent official statements [5][4].

### 8.1. Votes in favour without reservations

The majority bloc grounded its vote in international law, the Charter and the humanitarian impact of the tightening of measures in 2026, in particular the restrictions on fuel supplies. Uruguay spoke for the Group of 77 and China, Uganda for the Non-Aligned Movement, Namibia for the African Group,

Singapore for ASEAN and Eritrea for the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter. Mexico reaffirmed its “historic and consistent position”, described ending the embargo as a “humanitarian imperative” and called for Cuba's removal from the list of State sponsors of terrorism; Brazil recalled that President Lula had described the measures as “collective punishment of ten million people” and cited the High Commissioner for Human Rights; India, Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Egypt, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Belize (also for Barbados), Nicaragua and Namibia spoke in similar terms. None of these statements mentioned the situation of civil and political rights in Cuba, except to question the moral authority of those who invoke it.

### 8.2. Votes in favour with reservations

A second group voted in favour and used the explanation of vote to distance itself from the Cuban authorities. The European Union, through Ireland, demanded the release of political prisoners, ratification of the Covenants, an invitation to the special procedures and dialogue with civil society, and maintained that the decisions of the Cuban authorities “have contributed significantly to the crisis”. Australia and New Zealand stressed that their vote “should not be interpreted as an endorsement” of the Cuban Government and denounced restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and association, arbitrary detentions and the harassment of journalists and activists. Canada, in the debate, called on the Cuban Government to “make the changes needed to respect the rights of its people” and declared its preference for a “peaceful, Cuban-led transition”. Panama called on the Cuban authorities to commit to “democratic institutions” and offered its territory as the venue for negotiations aimed at “a democratic process”. Portugal condemned “the systematic repression”. Fiji, in the tone proper to a small island State, acknowledged that the United States' human rights concerns “are important and shared by many”.

### 8.3. Abstentions

Chile articulated the most elaborate explanation: its abstention “responds to two convictions”, the rejection of coercive measures adopted outside the Security Council and concern over “the situation of human rights and political freedoms in Cuba, on which the text put to the vote is silent”; it maintained that excluding one of the three pillars of the United Nations from the debate “does the Organization no good”, called for the release of arbitrarily detained persons and an inclusive dialogue with civil society “listening to the whole Cuban nation, including the millions in the diaspora”, and offered the Chilean experience of transition. Peru abstained “out of its deep concern for the human rights and individual freedoms of the Cuban people”, cited the Inter-American Commission and called for the release of “all persons detained for political reasons and all prisoners of conscience”. Italy, in a press release, conditioned any easing of the embargo on “political, economic, social and judicial” reforms and on the release of political prisoners, and reproached Cuba for its position on Ukraine [3]. Jamaica attributed the crisis to the “combined effect” of external restrictions and domestic policies. Qatar justified its abstention by its preference for diplomacy and dialogue. Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia and Poland did not speak at the meeting, but the Italian statement confirms that the abstention was concerted among the ten. Honduras, Guyana, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Bahrain, Montenegro, Palau, Solomon Islands and the Republic of Korea did not explain their vote at the meeting.

### 8.4. Votes against

The United States, through its Ambassador Mike Waltz, built its statement on three axes: the denial that a blockade exists (United States exports to Cuba worth 876 million dollars in the first eight months of 2026, including fuel, and one hundred million committed in food aid through the Catholic Church), the denunciation of the wealth accumulated by the military conglomerate GAESA according to documents published by the Miami Herald (18 billion dollars in assets, 14 billion in cash), with the challenge to Havana to “open the books” and allow an independent audit, and repression (“the regime holds 800 political prisoners today”), with former political prisoners present in the chamber, among them José Daniel Ferrer [25][5]. Trinidad and Tobago grounded its vote in its refusal to “support a military dictatorship” and in the right of the Cuban people “to democratically elect a government of their choosing” [14][13]. Colombia invoked the presidential instruction and referred to the “alleged embargo” [15]. Argentina, Paraguay, Hungary, North Macedonia, Ukraine, Israel, Czechia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morocco, Costa Rica, Ecuador and the United Arab Emirates did not explain their vote at the meeting.

### 8.5. The Cuban reply

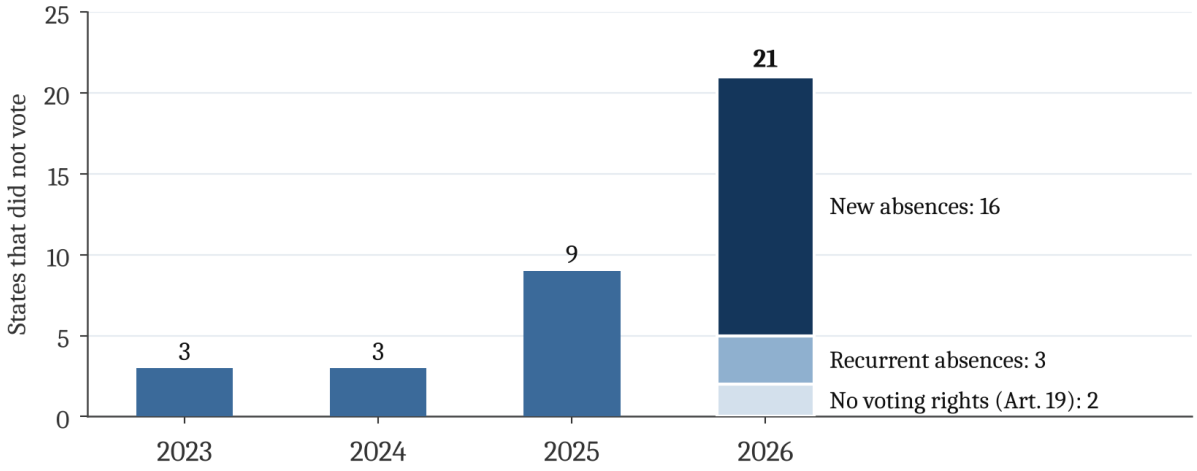
In its right of reply, the delegation of Cuba maintained that “some delegations focused on the question of human rights, which is not the substance of what is being discussed in this hall today”, that this “narrative at the service of Washington's interests” diverts attention from the “crime” being committed against the Cuban people, and that “it is contradictory to express concern for human rights without a categorical condemnation of the impact of the blockade” [5]. Before the vote, Foreign Minister Rodríguez Parrilla had denounced “a wave of pressure, intimidation and blackmail against many Member States” and displayed a running dollar counter of the economic damage accumulated since the start of the meeting [1][5]. The Cuban Government's response to the explanations of vote thus consisted in denying legitimacy to the very argument that explains its loss of support.

Read together, the 2026 explanations of vote turn into doctrine what in 2025 was the exception: the embargo and human rights are no longer discussed separately. Governments that voted in favour, abstained and voted against coincide in demanding the release of political prisoners, in attributing a substantial part of the crisis to the decisions of the Cuban State and in linking Havana's position on Ukraine to its credibility in invoking the Charter. What separates them is solely the weight each assigns to the extraterritorial reach of United States legislation as against the conduct of the regime.

## 9. The States that did not vote: Article 19 and absences

Twenty-one States recorded no vote on 28 October, compared with nine in 2025 and three in 2024 and 2023. The board does not distinguish between a State that cannot vote, one that decides not to vote and one whose delegate was not in his seat, so this category requires separate analysis before any political meaning is attributed to it.

**Figure 7.** States that did not vote, 2023-2026, and composition of the 21 absences of 2026




Sources: notes 5, 9 to 12 and 27.

### 9.1. States deprived of the right to vote (Article 19 of the Charter)

Article 19 suspends the vote in the General Assembly of any State whose arrears equal or exceed the amount of its contributions for the preceding two years, unless the Assembly decides that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond its control [26]. At the opening of the eighty-first session, the Secretary-General's letter (A/81/360) identified Afghanistan, Bolivia, Sao Tome and Principe and Venezuela as States in arrears [27]. At the meeting of 28 October, before the vote, the President reported on addendum 1 to that document, in which the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that Bolivia "has made the payments necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19" [5]. Sao Tome and Principe appears voting in favour, so it either obtained the exemption the Assembly has granted it in previous sessions or settled its payments. Two States therefore remain disqualified: Venezuela, which has lost its vote in the General Assembly since 2020 and which in February 2026 was required to make a minimum payment of 115.7 million dollars to recover it [28], and Afghanistan, whose seat is still occupied by the representative of the previous Government. Neither should be counted as a political loss for Havana: Venezuela has not voted in any of the four votes analysed and Afghanistan has not voted since 2024.

### 9.2. Recurrent absences or absences of representation

El Salvador, Myanmar and Syria did not vote in 2025 either. Myanmar's representation in the Assembly has been contested since 2021 and its delegation has not voted on the last two occasions; Syria has not voted on either of them; El Salvador did not vote in 2025 or in 2026 and has not explained its position, which turns its repeated absence into a political decision by omission. Somalia, which did not vote in 2023 but did in 2024 and 2025, is absent once again.

### 9.3. New absences among States that voted in favour in 2025

There are sixteen, and they are the analytical core of this section.

**Table 6.** New absences in 2026, by region

| Region | States | Observations |
|---|---|---|
| Latin America and the Caribbean (5) | Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Dominica, Guatemala, Saint Lucia | Bolivia settled its arrears before the session and could have voted; its absence coincides with the change of government. Guatemala did not vote despite having an active representation. The three Caribbean absences add to the vote against by Trinidad and Tobago and the abstentions of Jamaica, Guyana and Haiti. |
| Asia and the Pacific (6) | Philippines, Marshall Islands, Jordan, Kiribati, Tajikistan, Vanuatu | Jordan is the only Arab absence. The Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu, together with the abstentions of Palau and Solomon Islands, reflect a movement among the small Pacific island States. |
| Africa (4) | Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Somalia | Kenya had spoken in the debate of 27 October in support of the resolution; its absence appears circumstantial. Somalia has a record of absences. |
| Europe (1) | Armenia | No public explanation. |

Without the official roll call and without explanations of vote from the absentees, it is not possible to state with certainty which of these sixteen absences were deliberate. But three indications suggest that a substantial part of them were. First, the Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, defending his vote before Parliament, expressly listed Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Venezuela and Saint Lucia among the States of the hemisphere that "chose not to support the resolution, whether by voting no, abstaining or being absent", which indicates that in the region absence was read, and counted, as a form of non-support [13]. Second, in the procedural vote of July several Caribbean Governments had already "abstained or did not show up" [20], so the absence in October repeats earlier behaviour. Third, the United States administration itself publicly counted the absentees as part of its result: "nearly three times as many nations voted no, abstained or simply chose not to vote" [29].

The methodological conclusion is twofold. To measure real support for the Cuban regime, the relevant figure is not 130 of 193 but 130 of 191 States entitled to vote, and the loss from 2025 should be described as 37 States that stopped voting in favour, 16 of them by way of absence. And for diplomatic advocacy, the sixteen new absentees are a group as relevant as the seventeen new abstainers: States that decided not to back Havana but which, unlike those that abstained, did not wish to leave a record of it.

## 10. Political reading and implications

The concerted abstention of ten European Union members is explained, in the Italian statement and in Ireland's declaration, by the lack of reforms, the political prisoners and Cuba's position on Russia's war of aggression, including the participation of Cuban nationals in the Russian forces and the Cuban vote against the February 2026 resolution on a ceasefire in Ukraine [3][5]. Chile and Peru grounded their abstention in the text's silence on human rights and in the reports of the Inter-American Commission. Trinidad and Tobago, Canada, Australia and Panama spoke of political prisoners, of dictatorship and of transition. None of these arguments can be attributed to pressure from Washington: Germany, Italy and the Netherlands do not depend on it, and Chile explained its vote in the terms of a "State" foreign policy maintained by governments of different political signs. To this must be added a factor of immediate conduct: the incident of 27 October, with the suspension of the meeting, the assault by a

Cuban diplomat on a United States official and the expulsion order, and the Cuban delegation's hostility towards the former political prisoners invited by the United States Mission, gave undecided foreign ministries an additional reason not to appear on Havana's side [1][20].

Five implications follow.

1. **The Latin American consensus has ceased to exist.** For three decades the resolution was a point of regional unity, invoked in the preamble of the text itself through the CELAC declarations. With 13 of 33 States in favour, the reference to a regional position loses its foundation, and the fracture reaches CARICOM, SICA and the Andean countries. For Havana, which has made the "unity of Our America" an axis of its foreign policy, this is the most costly fact of the vote.

2. **The common European position on Cuba is under strain.** The Union maintains a joint statement and the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, but fourteen of its twenty-seven members did not vote in favour of the text that statement supports. The divergence between the Union's position and that of its member States opens a space for advocacy: the criteria set out in Ireland's statement (political prisoners, the Covenants, special procedures, dialogue with civil society) are the ones ten Governments have used to stop voting in favour.

3. **The human rights argument has moved to the centre of the annual debate.** What in 2023 was an isolated explanation of vote by the United States is in 2026 the axis of the explanations of Governments from every continent and of every orientation. The Cuban response —that human rights "are not the substance" of the debate— confirms that the regime has no reply other than to disqualify the interlocutor.

4. **The trend is cumulative and has not been reversed in a single case.** Since 2024, every State that has moved away from the resolution has maintained or hardened its position the following year. If the pattern repeats in 2027, with some abstainers moving to a vote against and some absentees to abstention, the resolution could pass with fewer than 120 votes and with more than 50 abstentions and negative votes combined, a scenario not seen since the mid-1990s.

5. **The embargo is losing effectiveness as an instrument of domestic legitimation.** The United States Ambassador himself recalled that the Cuban Government broadcasts the result of this vote on State television every year to claim that "the world stands with the regime" [25]. A result of 130 votes, with the region divided and Europe fractured, weakens that use. To the extent that the regime has presented the embargo as the almost exclusive explanation of the national crisis, the loss of support in the Assembly also erodes the credibility of that explanation before the Cuban population.

Finally, over-interpretation should be avoided. The resolution continues to pass by an absolute majority, Africa and much of Asia back it without fissures, and most of the Governments that moved away from it, including the European Union as a whole, reiterated their opposition to the embargo and to the Helms-Burton Act. The change is not a shift in favour of the embargo but a refusal to let the condemnation of the embargo serve as an endorsement of the regime that promotes it. That distinction, which Governments have formulated precisely in their explanations of vote, is the one that Cuban civil society must preserve in its own discourse.

## 11. Recommendations

The following recommendations are addressed to the counterparts of Ciudadanía y Libertad in governments, parliaments and international organizations, and start from one principle: the criteria that Governments themselves have set out in their explanations of vote are the most effective instrument for advocacy, because they require convincing no one of anything they have not already said.

1. **To the Governments that voted in favour with reservations** (the European Union and the member States that backed the text, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Panama, Fiji): translate the reservations into conditions. The demands voiced in the chamber —release of all political prisoners and arbitrarily detained persons, ratification of the International Covenants, a standing invitation to the special procedures, dialogue with civil society— should be incorporated into bilateral dialogues and into the European Union-Cuba human rights dialogue as verifiable commitments, with deadlines, and not as aspirations. A favourable vote in 2027 should be expressly linked to demonstrable progress on those points.

2. **To the Governments that abstained** (in particular Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Chile, Peru and the Republic of Korea): make public the criteria for their abstention and uphold them. The Chilean formula —the text "is silent" on one of the three pillars of the Organization— offers a standard that other Governments can make their own: not to back a resolution on Cuba that omits the situation of civil and political rights. That position is compatible with opposition to the embargo and to extraterritoriality, as Chile made clear in its explanation of vote.

3. **To the European Union:** reconcile the common statement with the vote of its member States. The Council should review the implementation of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement in the light of the fact that fourteen of its twenty-seven members no longer back the text, and adopt conclusions that make the criteria set out by Ireland the Union's position in the 2027 vote as well, so that member States vote on a single criterion and not on three.

4. **To the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean:** take the discussion to the inter-American system. Peru and Chile invoked the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; Panama offered to host a negotiation aimed at a democratic process. The region has instruments of its own —the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the reports of the IACHR, the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression— to follow up on what was said in New York, and an opportunity at the next CELAC summit to make the reference to Cuba reflect the real position of its members.

5. **To allied Governments and multilateral institutions:** name the regime's responsibility without euphemism. The discussion of the embargo cannot operate as an exoneration of the Cuban State founded on a narrative that the Assembly itself has begun to disavow. A Government responsible for political prisoners, for the repression of peaceful protest and for the capture of the national economy by a military conglomerate is not a neutral actor to be shielded from consequences; it is a subject of accountability. The Governments that voted in favour or abstained on human rights grounds should accompany that position with targeted sanctions —entry bans and asset freezes— against the individuals and entities associated with human rights violations, with the illicit enrichment of the leadership and with the persecution of dissent, within the global

human rights sanctions regimes that already exist in the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom and Canada. Targeted sanctions distinguish those responsible from the population, admit no reading as the "collective punishment" that Havana attributes to the embargo, and respond precisely to the objection that Chile, Peru and the European Union raised in the chamber.

6. **To the General Assembly and its Member States:** complete the examination. The Assembly has been pronouncing itself on the embargo for thirty-four years without ever having adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in Cuba. The Governments that declared in 2026 that they cannot back a text that omits that examination are in a position to promote, in the Third Committee or in the Human Rights Council, a specific pronouncement on political prisoners, the repression of peaceful protest and the restrictions on freedom of association and assembly, with the same rigour the Assembly applies to other situations.

7. **To Cuban civil society and its partners:** document and accompany. Ciudadanía y Libertad intends to keep a roll-call record of the vote, country by country and year by year, with the explanations of vote as the reference, and to work with the missions of the States that abstained or did not vote before the eighty-second session, so that each one's position in 2027 rests on public criteria. The objective is not that the resolution should fail, but that no Government should back it again without pronouncing itself on the situation of fundamental rights in Cuba.

## Annex I. Country-by-country table, 2023-2026

The table lists the 65 States that in at least one of the four votes did not vote in favour; the remaining 128 voted in favour in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026. Abbreviations: F = in favour; A = against; Ab = abstention; NV = did not vote.

| State | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Afghanistan | F | NV | NV | **NV** |
| Albania | F | F | Ab | **Ab** |
| Antigua and Barbuda | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Argentina | F | F | A | **A** |
| Armenia | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Bahrain | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Bolivia | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | F | F | Ab | **A** |
| Bulgaria | F | F | NV | **Ab** |
| Chile | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Colombia | F | F | F | **A** |
| Costa Rica | F | F | Ab | **A** |
| Côte d'Ivoire | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Croatia | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Czechia | F | F | Ab | **A** |
| Dominica | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Dominican Republic | F | F | NV | **Ab** |
| Ecuador | F | F | Ab | **A** |
| El Salvador | F | F | NV | **NV** |
| Equatorial Guinea | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Estonia | F | F | Ab | **Ab** |
| Germany | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Greece | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Guatemala | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Guyana | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Haiti | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Honduras | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Hungary | F | F | A | **A** |
| Israel | A | A | A | **A** |
| Italy | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Jamaica | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Jordan | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Kenya | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Kiribati | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Korea, Republic of | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Latvia | F | F | Ab | **Ab** |
| Lithuania | F | F | Ab | **A** |
| Madagascar | F | F | NV | F |
| Marshall Islands | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Moldova, Republic of | NV | Ab | Ab | **Ab** |
| Montenegro | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Morocco | F | F | Ab | **A** |
| Myanmar | F | F | NV | **NV** |
| Nauru | F | F | NV | F |
| Netherlands | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| North Macedonia | F | F | A | **A** |
| Palau | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Paraguay | F | F | A | **A** |
| Peru | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Philippines | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Poland | F | F | Ab | **Ab** |
| Qatar | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Romania | F | F | Ab | **Ab** |
| Saint Lucia | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Slovenia | F | F | F | **A** |
| Solomon Islands | F | F | F | **Ab** |
| Somalia | NV | F | F | **NV** |
| Syria | F | F | NV | **NV** |
| Tajikistan | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Trinidad and Tobago | F | F | F | **A** |
| Ukraine | Ab | NV | A | **A** |
| United Arab Emirates | F | F | F | **A** |
| United States | A | A | A | **A** |
| Vanuatu | F | F | F | **NV** |
| Venezuela | NV | NV | NV | **NV** |

Sources and verification note. Roll-call records of A/RES/78/7, A/RES/79/7 and A/RES/80/4 (United Nations Digital Library) and voting board of the 28th plenary meeting of the eighty-first session [9][10][11][12]. The 2023, 2024 and 2025 data are taken from the official roll-call records. The 2026 data are taken from the electronic voting board projected in the chamber and from the explanations of vote; they match the totals announced by the President (130-17-25) and the tallies published by the foreign ministries of Italy and Trinidad and Tobago and by the Miami Herald [3][13][20]. Two clarifications: Fiji stated in the chamber that it had voted in favour and is recorded accordingly; Afghanistan, in arrears under Article 19, is recorded as not voting. The definitive 2026 roll call will be confirmed with the publication of the verbatim record A/81/PV.28 and of the record of A/RES/81/x in the Digital Library.

## Annex II. The procedural vote of July 2026

In July 2026 the General Assembly approved, at Cuba's request, the reopening of the debate on the item in a special session, by 136 votes in favour to 9 against (Argentina, Czechia, Costa Rica, the United States, Israel, North Macedonia, Morocco, Paraguay and Ukraine), with 30 abstentions [7]. Canada, Australia and fifteen European States, Germany among them, abstained, and several Caribbean Governments abstained or did not show up [20]. Trinidad and Tobago abstained [14]. That procedural vote anticipated the October distribution three months in advance and is the most reliable leading indicator for the 2027 vote.

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31. Periódico Cubano, “Italia revela las razones por las que dejó de apoyar a Cuba ante la ONU”, 30 October 2026 (cites La Stampa on Italy's last abstention, in 1994). periodicocubano.com; Cuba Headlines, “Germany May Alter Its Vote on Cuba Embargo at UN for First Time in 24 Years”, 19 October 2026 (communication from the Auswärtiges Amt to the Bundestag of 7 October, published by Berliner Zeitung). cubaheadlines.com

Caveat on the transcripts. Notes 4 and 5 refer to the United Nations automatic transcription service, which does not constitute an official record. The verbatim quotations from the explanations of vote have been checked, where they exist, against the official statements of the foreign ministries (notes 3, 15, 16, 17, 25) and should be verified against the verbatim records A/81/PV.27 and A/81/PV.28 once they are published in the Official Document System.