

MARIEL BOATLIFT U.S. MILITARY VETERAN EHR BACKS CALLS FOR CUBAN MILITARY TO SIDE WITH THE PEOPLE, AS PROTESTS ERUPT OVER ENERGY, FOOD SHORTAGES

DATE: March 24, 2024

MIAMI – 6-year U.S. military veteran Phil Ehr, who began his career participating in the Mariel Boatlift rescuing Cuban refugees fleeing to South Florida for freedom and democracy, [joined dozens gathered outside Versailles Restaurant last week in solidarity with the thousands of brave protesters in Cuba](#), and issued the following statement as we mark Palm Sunday:

“As thousands of Cubans were again forced to take to the streets in peaceful protest over one of the island’s worst ever economic and energy crises, after weeks of food shortages and rolling blackouts have pushed the country toward the verge of collapse, I gathered with our Cuban American brothers and sisters in Miami to stand with the brave Cuban people, as they once again demand basic human rights and an end to the oppressive communist dictatorship.

I also join the [movement coming from all sectors of Cuban civil society](#) from artists to ex-military officers [including Grammy-winning musician Yotuel Romero](#), calling on the [Cuban military to lay down their weapons and take the side of the people](#), who are asking for basic humane living conditions. Many Cuban military veterans and police are already themselves also living in extreme poverty.

These are the largest demonstrations on the island since the July 2021 uprising demanding freedom and democracy, and I urge my fellow Americans, including other U.S. veterans like me, to stand united with the Cuban people on the island and across our community at this historic moment. We must be united against the Western Hemisphere’s longest standing dictatorship.

¡Patria y Vida!”

