

Association of Ghanaians graduated in Cuba

Human rights-The basic rights and freedoms, to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law.

The third president of the United States and the lead draftsman of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson was more expressive on the matter, when he spoke to the colonists along the eastern seaboard of North America to break free from tyrannical rule across the Atlantic Ocean. According to him their collective action was of a people striving to achieve the right to determine their own form of government, and that quote: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness". These expressions of Jefferson are amongst, if not the only pinnacle on which the United States democratic system of governance stand.

Indeed long after Jefferson in 1948, the United Nations issued a more insightful Declaration of Human Rights, which listed, among others, the right to life, liberty, security of person, nationality, recognition before the law as a person, and freedom of movement, including leaving one's country of residence. People had the right to marry, own property, think freely in conscience and religious beliefs, have an opinion and express it freely, assemble peacefully, and take part in the functioning of government. It stated that people shall have the right to a free education, at least at the elementary level; people shall have the right to work; they shall have the right to "rest and leisure," and the right to "a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being" of the individual and family, "including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services."

In fact Jefferson says the Cuban people, headed by their gallant heroes Jose Marti, Antonio Maceo and others, had the right to fight for their independence against the tyranny of the Spaniards and that they had the right to determine their own form of government.

Cuba has had its fair share of the aesthetic liberal bourgeois democracy, lived through its "multi-party" and "representative" system with sad experiences and dire consequences. Systems which were not formed by but for the Cuban people

brought about external dependencies, corruption, political and administrative fraud, hunger, disappearances, discrimination and institutional racism as well as physical maltreatment and torture. When the Cuban people had had enough of all these human rights abuses from a government headed by Fulgencio Batista, imposed by the United States government, they rebelled through Fidel Castro and his revolutionary group and of course supported by the Cuban people without which the revolution would not have been a success. The revolution came to give dignity to the people, restored the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

We, having lived in Cuba for so long, can attest to the fact that democracy in Cuba does not represent a formal and abstract concept, but that it is guaranteed through the full participation of citizens (even foreigners like us) in all public matters. It is also sustained in the plurality of opinions and consensus building of political, economic, social and cultural course of the nation. The “power to the people concept” is very much part of the Cuban democratic system where every citizen is beneficiary and co-owner of the decision making process. These and other reason are why the protection and guarantee of human rights and liberties are unequivocally stated in the constitution of the Republic and so humanly adhered to in line with rights and liberties consecrated in the Universal Declaration.

These are but a few of the reasons why we find it very strange when we hear all the powerful propaganda-mostly architected by the United States government- which seeks to question the system of governance and so called human rights abuses in Cuba. Therefore, is it not ironical that these same principles so well articulated by Jefferson and the UN which is practiced by the Cuban people be so demonized and frowned upon? The Cuban people have showed through the course of history that they will not remain quiet when they are oppressed or abused, that they will rebel and fight till the last drop of blood is drained from their bodies.

Patria o Muerte! Venceremos!

HASTA LA VICTORIA SIEMPRE.