



FORO POR LOS DERECHOS
Y LIBERTADES



August 23rd, 2016

Mr. J.W. Marriott Jr.
Executive Chairman and Chairman of the Board
Marriott International, Inc.
10400 Fernwood Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20817-1102
cc: Mr. Arne M. Sorenson, President and CEO
Marriott Board of Directors

Dear Mr. Marriott Jr.,

On behalf of the Assembly of the Cuban Resistance, a coalition of Cuban American organizations based in the United States and the Forum for Rights and Freedoms, the coalition of pro-democracy organizations in Cuba, we reach out to you with this plea for an ethical review of Marriott's possible business partnership with the Castro Military Regime.

Marriott has two roads to choose from, one offers growth by comprising principles and the other offers growth by reaffirming principles...

“View the problem as an opportunity to grow.”

J. Willard Marriott

Here is the problem:

Marriott International Inc.'s pending merger with the Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Inc. portfolio includes three deals Starwood made during this past year with the Castro Military Regime in Cuba.

Starwood forged ahead of other U.S. hotel companies including Marriott, all yearning to be among the first to raise their landmark flags in Cuba. Marriott CEO Arne Sorenson actually referred to

Cuba as “a paradise”, stating in a USA Today interview¹, “Obviously, you get paradise. But with it, you get this history, architectural history, you get a political history, you get a cultural history which is extraordinarily rich.” In a previous interview Mr. Sorenson had suggested that “American business can also play a crucial role in helping the United States and Cuba build a new relationship based on mutual respect and trust”²

Mr. Marriott, how we wish for the day to come when in fact the Cuba’s murderous military regime will indeed be part of history. That day couldn’t come fast enough – but that day is most definitely not today. Cuba is no “paradise”, just ask any one of us – exiles carrying the deep scars or Cubans on the island bearing fresh new wounds inflicted by Starwood’s newest business partner, or those still living in Cuba and imprisoned or persecuted for trying to exercise their freedom of conscience.

While Mr. Sorenson has been credited in the past for “taking politics out of highly politicized issues”³, his asking for respect and trust to be given to the Castro Military Regime means to excuse, to forget, to reward the atrocities of this murderous regime. No decent human being is able to find it within themselves to associate emotions like “respect and trust” towards those that commit crimes against humanity.

Marriott, just like Starwood, is a publicly traded company which has adopted a number of strong human rights and employment principles. These principles read very well for investors and guests that are socially conscious. The reality is that doing business with the Castro Military Regime means going against the core values within Marriott’s Global Employment Principles, Human Rights Principles, Human Rights Policy Statement, and Global contract policy.⁴ Moving forward at this time with Cuba would require for Marriott to relinquish these principles for the sake of doing business in what your CEO refers to as “paradise”. In the quest to add properties in Cuba, Marriott would also be complicit in following a systematic approach of servitude which has been at the helm of controlling and utilizing Cubans for the financial benefit of the Castro Military Regime.

Has Marriott truly considered to the degree that it has to plummet in order to facilitate the universally illegal labor practices of the Castro Military Regime?

¹ <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2016/03/21/marriott-starwood-cuba-hotels/82069212/>

² <https://skift.com/2015/07/22/marriotts-ceo-on-why-now-is-the-moment-to-embrace-business-in-cuba/>

³ <https://skift.com/2015/07/22/marriotts-ceo-on-why-now-is-the-moment-to-embrace-business-in-cuba/>

⁴

http://www.marriott.com/Multimedia/PDF/CorporateResponsibility/Marriott_Principles_of_Responsible_Business.pdf

Here is the opportunity to grow:

- We implore for you to follow Marriott's Global Employment Principles, Human Rights Principles, Human Rights Policy Statement, and Global contract policy. Re-commitment to these principles means there is absolutely no way for a business partnership between Marriott and the Castro Military Regime. Marriott's flag should proudly fly in a Cuba free from the Castro Military Regime and not beforehand.
- We ask for a public apology from Marriott CEO Arne Sorenson. From calling Cuba a "paradise" to asking for respect and trust for the Castro Military Regime, these are highly insensitive and hurtful comments to make. There are Cubans wanting to be free from Castro's Regime risking their lives on rafts, rotting in jails and being beaten in that so-called "paradise" - tens of thousands of deaths at the hands of those that cannot ever be "respected or trusted".
- We request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience in order to discuss these issues. Much has been referenced by Mr. Sorenson as to what is good for Cuba, it is about time for Marriott to hear from those of us actually affected by the alliance being forged with the Castro Military Regime.

Attached please find correspondence that took place between us and Thomas B. Mangas, CEO of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. between July 28, 2016 and August 9, 2016. As you will see, we had planned a press conference for Tuesday, August 16th which we have postponed pending the answer to this letter. We respectfully request a reply from you by Monday, August 29th, 2016.

Agreed upon and Submitted this 23rd day of August by:

Iván Hernández Carrillo
Coalición Sindical Independiente

Joel Brito
José "Pepe" Collado
Grupo Internacional de Responsabilidad Corporativa

José Luís Fernández
Presidio Político Histórico Cubano

Comité Coordinador Foro de Derechos y Libertades, p.p.

Isela Fiterre,
Mothers Against Repression (MAR por Cuba)

Horacio S. García
Cuban Liberty Council

Jorge Luís Pérez “Antunez”
Frente Nacional de Resistencia Cívica Orlando Zapata Tamayo

Laida Carro
Coalition of Cuban American Women

Fernando Mirabal
Comité Cubano Americano de Rescate

Pedro Peñaranda
Circulos Municipalistas Democráticos

Rodolfo Rodríguez San Román
Frente Unido Occidental

Osiel González
Alpha 66

José Pérez Gil
Movimiento de Recuperación Revolucionaria

Rafael Artilles
Movimiento 30 de Noviembre

Germán Miret
Directorio Democrático Cubano

We remain in anticipation of your response,

Sincerely,

Dr. Orlando Gutierrez-Boronat

Enclosed:

- Starwood Hotels and Resorts Communication/Back-Up July 28, 2016-August9, 2016
- AFL-CIO Letter to Raul Castro dated 8/4/16
- Marriott Global Employment Principles
- Marriott Human Rights Principles

