

Cuba mourns the death of former Uruguayan president José “Pepe” Mujica



Pepe Mujica died on May 13 at the age of 89 (source: [Frente a Aratiri/Flickr/CC-BY-SA 2.0](#))

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel has mourned the death of former Uruguayan President [José “Pepe” Mujica](#). "Our America mourns the loss of Mujica. His extraordinary life reminds us of the dark era of Washington-backed military dictatorships, but also of the hopeful time when the left was in power and the unfulfilled dream of [Latin American] integration. We will not forget," Díaz-Canel [wrote](#) on Tuesday on the platform X, formerly Twitter.

Mujica, who died at the age of 89, was often considered the "poorest president in the world" due to his modest lifestyle, and was a figurehead of the left in Latin America. He had made the leap from ex-guerrilla to Uruguay's highest office.

In the 1960s, Mujica was one of the founders of the [Tupamaro urban guerrilla](#) group, which fought the state with violence. He was arrested several times and spent almost 14 years in prison, mostly in solitary confinement. After his release, he first devoted himself to flower cultivation, then to politics. He was president of Uruguay from 2010 to 2015.

Mujica donated most of his presidential salary to charity. He continued to live on a simple farm and drove an old VW Beetle. He led his simple life out of deep conviction. "To live, you need freedom. And to have freedom, you need time," he once said.

Mujica transformed himself from an activist with radical views into a pragmatic politician focused on compromise. He advocated for more modesty in politics and criticized social inequality and human rights violations, including those committed by left-wing governments such as those in Nicaragua and Venezuela.

He remained closely connected to Cuba, which he visited for the first time in 1960, throughout his life. In 2013, he participated in the peace negotiations between the FARC

guerrillas and the Colombian government in Havana. He last [visited the island in 2016](#), where he joined Raúl Castro in a torchlight march in honor of national hero José Martí.

Even after leaving office, Mujica remained politically active, even as he battled cancer in his old age. With his death, Latin America has lost an important voice of the left who always stood up for integration and understanding. His legacy will also be remembered in Cuba. A day of national mourning has been [declared](#) for May 16. ([Cubaheute](#))