

# *The US has no political or moral authority to judge sovereign states*

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Havana Cuba. - On June 20, 2019, the State Department of the United States included Cuba in the worst category of its 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report. The document alleges that Cuba "does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons and does not make significant efforts to that end".

As it is logical to suppose, this qualification is not related to the island's real performance in the active confrontation of human trafficking and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejects it as slanderous, in the most absolute terms.

The government of the United States has no political or moral authority to judge sovereign States or to issue certificates of conduct. It is known that this unilateral report, without legitimacy or international recognition, published every year by the State Department, fulfills a clearly political and manipulative objective, as a weapon of pressure against other States and without respect, consideration or attachment at all to the international efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

The report deliberately disregards the exemplary and integral work of Cuba in the prevention, confrontation and response to this scourge; ignores the policy of zero tolerance of our country against trafficking, and hides the result of the exchanges that for 5 consecutive years were held between both countries to share information and cooperate on these issues.

It prefers to omit that the low incidence of trafficking in persons in Cuba is associated with social and citizen security achievements, equal opportunities, and policies and programs aimed at the empowerment of women; as it ignores the fact that free access to health services, education, culture and sports reduces the

vulnerability of the country and strengthens its capacity to increase international cooperation in this area.

It is known that 85 percent of the legal processes that are filed for this reason in the United States correspond to cases of sexual exploitation, and that of the one million children who leave their homes, more than 300 thousand are subject to some form of exploitation, according to the National Center for Investigations on Trafficking in Persons.

The State Department report also attacks the international medical cooperation of Cuba. It seeks to defame the legitimate South-South cooperation practiced by developing countries, which Cuba is a part with pride. In this effort, conducted under the principle of eagerness, hundreds of thousands of Cuban professionals have participated for almost six decades. It has had the merit of saving or contributing to saving the lives of millions of people and alleviating the lives of millions of others in some 160 nations that, without this contribution, would have faced serious difficulties in accessing health services.

Cuba will maintain its policy of "Zero Tolerance" against any form of trafficking in persons as evidenced by the 21 cases tried for crimes of "Corruption of Minors", "Sale and Trafficking of Minors" and "Procurement and Trafficking in Persons", with features typical of human trafficking, in the period from May 2017 to May 2018.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reminds the government of the United States that the transfer to third countries of the procedures to obtain a US visa by Cuban citizens, without granting guarantees, in addition to making the process considerably more expensive, places many citizens in a situation of vulnerability to criminal gangs engaged in human trafficking in other parts of the world.

The international scourge of trafficking in persons is primarily the result of the rules of the game of capitalism, which conceive the human being as a commodity, interchangeable as goods, money or capital.

Havana, June 21, 2019

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