

Portuguese Political Leader Describes Links Between Portugal and Cuba as Historic

After placing a floral arrangement at the monument honoring Cuba's National Hero Jose Martí in Havana's Revolution Square, the Portuguese political leader said he hopes to learn more about Cuba's current process of economic updating.

Jerónimo de Souza told reporters that the Portuguese Communist Party follows with great interest the economic and social advances achieved by Cuba: "We place great trust and faith in the future of the Cuban people and its efforts for a better life as an independent and sovereign nation."

The visitor said his country is currently undergoing a difficult and dramatic economic crisis indicating high levels of unemployment and an increase of up to two million in the number of Portuguese citizens living on the threshold of extreme poverty.

He said that the policies imposed on that European country by the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank, among other institutions, are responsible for the current crisis in Portugal

In Portugal, de Souza added, economic and social rights achieved by the working class have been reversed and tens of thousands of young Portuguese are emigrating in search of new economic avenues abroad. He noted that given the current crisis in his country, the policies adopted by Cuba to improve its social and economic standing are of utmost interest in Portugal.

As part of his visit to Cuba, Jerónimo de Souza will meet with the families of the four Cuban anti-terrorist fighters still imprisoned in the United States.

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