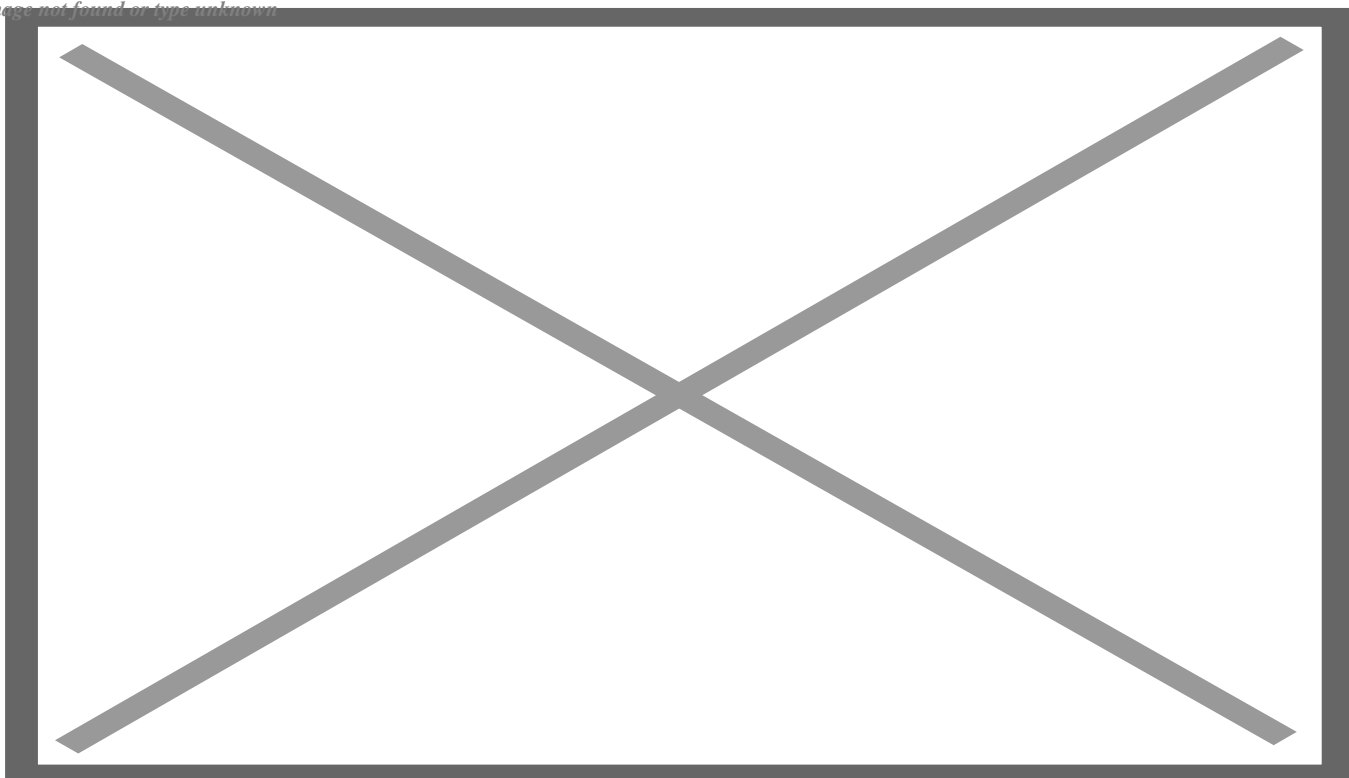


Of mudslides and hurricanes in Aragua and Pinar del Río

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Cubans and Venezuelans, trained to cooperate with available resources even in the midst of material hardships, have reasons to worry and encourage the other people, by virtue of two disasters that have occurred in both countries.

By Roberto Morejón

Cubans and Venezuelans, trained to cooperate with available resources even in the midst of material hardships, have reasons to worry and encourage each other, by virtue of two disasters that have occurred in both countries.

Cuba is trying to get back on its feet after the devastating crossing of the intense hurricane Ian through the western province of Pinar del Río, with an impact on contiguous territories.

A landslide devastated the town of Las Tejerías, in the Venezuelan state of Aragua, leaving more than twenty people dead and missing.

In the midst of the pain, the initial stupefaction and the support to the victims, Cubans and Venezuelans quantify the material damages and appeal to internal resources to recover from the damage.

In such thorny moments, mutual aid is back on the table. Venezuela sent ships to Cuba with food and equipment to reestablish the electric power system, especially in Pinar del Río, where almost all the power lines were destroyed.

In Venezuela, Cuban doctors working there reinforced their colleagues in Aragua, in the face of the landslide, and others said they were ready to imitate them.

The authorities of each country sent messages to their counterparts to lament the tragedies involved and to encourage them in the midst of compensating the damages, not an easy task.

Cuba and Venezuela suffer material limitations due to U.S. sanctions and isolation attempts.

But Cuba and Venezuela shield themselves in a collaboration agreement drawn up by Commanders Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez which, against all odds and not exempt of obstacles, has tried to respond to the requirements of the parties.

It is already known about the presence of almost twenty thousand Cuban doctors in Venezuela, where they deploy the Barrio Adentro Mission, and of advisors in sports and education, such as those located today in the State of Aragua.

President Nicolás Maduro is right when he highlights that "the cooperation models between both nations are an example of what can be done between two peoples who consider ourselves brothers".

The passage of Hurricane Ian through western Cuba and the landslide in Aragua have occurred when the largest of the Antilles and Venezuela are undertaking projects to develop their hard-hit economies and improve the welfare of their populations.

As pointed out by Venezuelan Ambassador Adán Chávez, Cuba is not alone in adversity and the same may be affirmed of the diplomat's native country.

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