

New York Times Editorial Praises Cuba's Role in Fight Against Ebola



New York, October 20 (RHC) — Editors of the New York Times joined representatives of governments and international organizations in praising Cuba's impressive role in combating Ebola.

This Sunday's Times editorial noted that "an impoverished island that remains largely cut off from the world and lies about 4,500 miles from the West African nations where Ebola is spreading at an alarming rate... has pledged to deploy hundreds of medical professionals to the front lines of the pandemic."

It contrasted the role of Cuba in confronting the disease to that of the world's richest nations, saying: "While the United States and several other wealthy countries have been happy to pledge funds, only Cuba and a few non-governmental organizations are offering what is most needed: medical professionals in the field."

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry did offer a few words of begrudging support for Cuba's efforts on Friday as he praised "the courage of any health care worker who is undertaking this challenge," noted the editorial, which goes on to say that Cuba has a long tradition of sending doctors and nurses to disaster areas abroad and even offered to send doctors to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in

2005.

The New York Times further describes Cuba's current work in West Africa:

"With technical support from the World Health Organization, the Cuban government has trained 460 doctors and nurses on the stringent precautions that must be taken to treat people with the highly contagious virus. The first group of 165 professionals arrived in Sierra Leone in recent days. José Luis Di Fabio, the World Health Organization's representative in Havana, said Cuban medics were uniquely suited for the mission because many had already worked in Africa."

The editors also echoed the sentiments about the negative role of the U.S. blockade against Cuba, expressed by the Uruguayan official who said that in spite of the fact that Cuba has excellent doctors, the country's "efforts to aid in health emergencies abroad are stymied by the blockade the United States imposes on the island, which struggles to acquire modern equipment and keep medical shelves adequately stocked."

Fidel Castro's argument in a column published over the weekend in Granma, in which he argues that the United States and Cuba "must put aside their differences, if only temporarily, to combat a deadly scourge," prompted a closing comment by the editors of the influential New York Times: "He's absolutely right."

New York Times Editorial full text: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/20/opinion/cubas-impressive-role-on-ebola.html?_r=0

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