

# *From the Presidency: Cuban doctors are the pride of the nation*

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By: Angélica Paredes López

What is it about Cuban medical brigades that bothers the US government so much? This question was the central theme of a new episode of the podcast "Desde la Presidencia," hosted by the First Secretary of the Party Central Committee and President of the Republic, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez.

"They are targeting the export of medical services, aware that the training and education of health personnel is a strength of Cuban society," the president emphasized.

The Head of State emphasized that "undermining or attempting to contaminate traditional media and social networks with these messages is just one part of the cynical plan that the Cuban-born far right has conceived."

"We are not here to give explanations to those who don't deserve them; we are here to tell the truth that they want to bury under a mendacious campaign."

In this space, from the Palace of the Revolution, Díaz-Canel and his guests used solid arguments to dismantle the campaign of hate and lies that drives the attack—undoubtedly surgical—against Cuban Public Health and, in particular, against the export of medical services.

There is no doubt that this desperate campaign to block Cuban cooperation has two clear objectives: to close off any avenue of income into the country, even in an activity as noble and necessary for other nations as health services. The other reason is political and ideological: they want to sweep Cuba away from its example.

Some assessments on this matter were offered by Dr. José Ángel Portal Miranda, Minister of Public Health, who commented that "there are two main issues that have the United States government very upset: first, the indisputable international recognition our collaborators have received, for what they have managed to convey to the world in terms of solidarity and in achieving true health for the people."

"Second, it has to do with the recognition that international cooperation can also contribute to the sustainability of health services in Cuba, services that are free here, but which actually cost the State."

What is the income the country receives from its medical services used for? Why is the anti-Cuban campaign portraying health professionals as slaves and this humanistic and supportive program as human trafficking? How are the brigades organized, how are the contracts established, and what does it mean for the collaborators to know that they are contributing to the country, accompanied, of course, by professional growth and the well-being of their families?

These and other topics are also reflected on in this podcast, which featured Dr. Carlos Ricardo Pérez, current Secretary General of the Cuban Red Cross, who has served on several missions as a member of medical brigades in different countries around the world.

"It is important to clarify that when we go on the brigades to different countries, we are not going to spread any ideology or engage in political proselytizing," were his first words.

The experienced doctor asserted that "we have been respectful and impartial in our treatment of people. We have been in difficult places, we have applied the clinical method, we have adhered to the ethical principles of never profiting from people's health."

"The common denominator of our brigades is the public's satisfaction with how we do our work, and that is fundamental, the commitment to our profession and to saving lives."

In this regard, the Minister of Public Health recalled that "one of the opinions behind anti-Cuban campaigns is that our volunteers are being deceived, that they are being forced to do so, also alluding to

'supposed reprisals' against their families, which is completely false."

"We have a program so that healthcare workers can choose to carry out these missions, and there is a preparation process."

From May 1963 in Algeria, the date that marks the official beginning of Cuban medical collaboration worldwide, to the present, more than 600,000 volunteers have provided their services in 165 nations. Currently, more than 24,000 collaborators are in 56 countries, offering their humanity and solidarity.

The immense work created by Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro for the training of professionals in Cuba was also discussed in this episode of the podcast "Desde la Presidencia."

And from Tegucigalpa, via videoconference, Dr. Luther Castillo Harry, Secretary of State for Science and Technology of the Republic of Honduras, delivered an emotionally charged message.

But Luther didn't speak like a high-ranking official in the government of the sister Central American nation. He spoke like the humble Garifuna who arrived in Havana in March 1999, full of dreams, committed to the sad reality of his community and his country. Years later, he graduated with honors from the first graduating class of the Latin American School of Medicine.

"Today, there is no doubt in the world about the technical, scientific, and human capacity of Cuban healthcare professionals; and ELAM now has a worldwide brotherhood of more than 31,000 doctors in 122 countries," emphasized the doctor, proud of his training on the largest island in the Caribbean.

"The altruism that characterizes this healthcare professional, unconditional and willing to give his life for his patient, constitutes a fundamental element that our enemies are deeply afraid of." "They know us so well that they go to the trouble of inventing fallacies, all in an attempt to discredit something they themselves are clear about," stated the Honduran doctor, the same one who kept his promise to Fidel to care for the poor in his country, in the Mosquitia region.

This beautiful and enlightening podcast, hosted by President Díaz-Canel, confirmed that actions speak louder than words; and lies cannot defeat truths as powerful as the noble mission of the Cuban medical brigades.

The president asserted that "Cuban doctors are the pride of the nation and of many nations around the world. The maneuvers of Marco Rubio and Claver Carone, and the lies of those who serve their criminal plans, will crash against that formidable wall of dignity and proven professionalism; just as the invaders of Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) crashed against Cuban heroism in 1961."

"Long live the victors of hatred and death, the missionaries of love and life! Once again, we will win!" the Head of State concluded.

A new episode of the podcast "Desde la Presidencia" confirmed that the work of Cuban medicine inspires pride and gratitude. It is the work of a humanist genius like Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, who described medical collaboration as a genuine example of solidarity.

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