

Dr. Luther Castillo: Cuban doctors are angels who save lives



Dr. Luther Castillo Harry, a graduate of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Havana. Photo: Prensa Latina.

By Marxlenin Pérez Valdés, Laura Prada, Ramsay Mora

Since its beginnings, the Revolution has had to take on the challenge of being the standard-bearer of humanism in the midst of a world where the ideology of individualism and barbarism prevails with increasing force. Imbued with the internationalist spirit of socialism, Cuban medical cooperation has

become one of the most visible and impactful examples of how much can be done for one's neighbor in the name of the humble and of love. It is no coincidence that it is -- especially in these times -- the target of imperial harassment, which articulates, with undisguised hatred, surgical campaigns to undermine the performance of the Cuban army of white coats.

The history of Cuban collaboration in health care began just four years after the national triumph of 1959 and spans more than six decades and hundreds of countries on every continent, whose geographies -- especially rural and difficult-to-reach areas -- have been conquered by the ethics and tenacity of our doctors. At the same time, the United States government, instead of using its resources to support Cuba in this endeavor, persists in creating policies to attempt to discredit and limit its reach.

Based on this, it invents new disinformation campaigns, sanctions, and unilateral coercive restrictions. For example: visas that include foreign officials from those countries that request our doctors; pressure on third countries; reinforcement of the economic blockade; and even the impediment to Cuban brigades receiving international recognition through awards like the Nobel Peace Prize, attempting to distort what is already known: that we are a global benchmark in international medical solidarity.

However, the best recognition of the work of saving lives around the world and also of training health professionals -- inside and outside of Cuba -- comes through the sincere testimony of the hundreds of thousands of people who have benefited from the Revolution's altruistic and ethical policy, who attest to the magnitude of Cuba's work.

"I am, proudly, a product of this solidarity project of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM)." This is how Luther begins his conversation with a Cubadebate team, within the framework of the 5th International Convention Cuba Salud 2025, currently in session in Havana.

His full name is Luther Castillo Harry, a Honduran doctor who graduated in Cuba and is the current Secretary of State for Science and Technology of the Republic of Honduras.

"No one can be against a doctor who saves lives. It would be inhumane," affirms Luther, for whom our doctors are "the greatest ambassadors of the Cuban Revolution" as they have the capacity to spread throughout the world "that very good, architectural asset of the Revolution... that genuine work of saving lives." Although he is no stranger to the U.S. offensive and its fallacies against the Cuban brigades, the young minister explains that this "campaign of anti-values" by a system that fosters the destruction of life does not deter him from defending the prestige and values ??of Cuban health workers.

"We are very, very grateful to the Cuban doctors, who are like angels who save lives in those dark, hidden corners of the world where misery and exclusion attack the poorest and most dispossessed (...) That's where the criticism should be directed, toward those places where more humanism is needed, those places where there is a lack of that solidarity."

With his distinctive style of oratory, Luther seems to dance through words whose rhythm increases as his experiences as a graduate of a Cuban medical school, as a Latin American who lived here for so many years, as a doctor returning to his country fulfilling Fidel's dream of founding ELAM so that the professionals trained there could return to their countries and multiply solidarity among the poor of the earth, and as a representative of a government facing great social challenges, converge into a single feeling.

"Today, the great Medical College must be seen with the face of an Indigenous person, of a son of a worker, of a peasant, of a Black person. In my country, the first Garifuna graduated 118 years after the founding of the National Autonomous University. Today we have more Black Honduran medical graduates from the Latin American School than in a century and a half of the National Autonomous University of Honduras."

ELAM has created a brotherhood that can no longer be stopped.

Luther Castillo has a strategic understanding of the sociological, political, and economic impact of this arsenal of graduates from the Latin American School of Medicine, and he argues: "This also generates a breakdown of the existing elite in medical societies in the region (...) Having produced 31,000 graduates in more than 105 places around the world" spreads principles and love.

In this sense, he focuses as a plan on what still needs to be done and where "we have fallen behind." For example, he dreams of a scientific journal for all ELAM graduates; of increasing collaboration and scientific-technical exchange with Cuba; of addressing the challenges posed by artificial intelligence in healthcare; among others. But, above all, he places immeasurable trust in ELAM's legacy, which can only be understood from a sense of belonging.

Of his thousands of graduates, he smilingly states. "It's a worldwide brotherhood that they can no longer stop. I mean, no, that was already created; they should have come to stop it in 1999. We have 31,000 graduates (...) doing excellent work (...) What's happening in this unstoppable world is exquisite."

"We must be increasingly consistent, increasingly putting people at the center and breaking with the traditional paradigms that have structured the architecture of the elitist healthcare system, where people don't have rights, where if you can't pay, you can't access services. So, in one way or another, this generates a decomposition and reorganization of the human aspect of the healthcare process, which I firmly believe we can achieve."



Photo: Cuba Debate

Love is repaid with love

Luther says goodbye happily. He knows that “human quality makes the difference” in the health system conceived on the island. Therefore, he longs for the day we can create a platform with all the doctors trained in Cuba, so that from there, we will be able to “see how far we have come and how we have fulfilled that brilliant 20th-century dream of the Cuban Revolution.”

Thus speak the grateful, the humble, who have been touched—for the better—by the countless projects created and led by Fidel, and which today form part of the legacy of our socialism. Despite unhealthy efforts, neither morality nor courage can be blocked. That monster whose entrails José Martí knew knows that the force of humanist example is a powerful tool for changing peoples and guiding them along the path of salvation, goodness, and dignity; ultimately, to lift them out of the spiritual poverty into which the unprecedented capitalist exploitation of their natural resources and their people plunges them.

The solidarity that Cuba upholds and the prestige of national medical cooperation will continue to exist as a tangible testament to how much civilization can accomplish when driven by the power of love and altruism.

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