

Cuban Foreign Ministry denies delaying visas to create difficulties for U.S. Embassy operations



Havana, November 29 (RHC)-- Cuba has flatly rejected U.S. allegations that the island is manipulating the issuing of visas to U.S. diplomatic personnel to affect bilateral ties.

A statement issued by the island's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Wednesday that over the last few months, the U.S. State Department has been attempting to portray Cuba as responsible of creating difficulties for the U.S. Embassy operations in Havana.

The Foreign Ministry statement affirms that in doing so, the U.S. administration deliberately conceals that it was Washington that unilaterally decided to reduce the staff of its embassy in Havana in September 2017, especially those related to consular services, and it was also the Trump administration that decided to expel unilaterally, arbitrarily, and unjustly 15 diplomats from the Cuban Embassy in Washington D.C.

The Cuban Foreign Ministry recalled that similarly, the granting of the required visas for the personnel of the respective embassies has been subject to capricious approvals and delays by the State Department and affirmed that since the end of September 2017, the U.S. Government has only granted 26 visas and has denied six for the personnel that Cuba requires at its Embassy in Washington, while in the same period, Cuba has granted 105 visas for temporary and permanent diplomatic and administrative personnel to the U.S. Embassy in Havana, and has only denied one in reciprocity to the State Department's actions.

"Accusing Cuba of generating an unsustainable situation for the operations of the United States Embassy constitutes a flagrant distortion of the truth. The Cuban Government is not responsible for the instability and irregularity generated unilaterally by the Government of the United States for the operation of the Diplomatic Missions of both countries in the respective capitals."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded by reiterating its commitment to meet the operational requirements of the U.S. Embassy on a reciprocity basis.

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