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First Cuban doctors return Home

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Cuba announced Wednesday it was pulling thousands of its doctors out of Brazil in response to Bolsonaro's "direct, contemptuous and threatening" remarks about its "More Doctors" programme.

A first group of 196 doctors arrived at Havana airport, welcomed home by Cuba's deputy health minister after a three-year stint in disadvantaged areas of Brazil.

The official, Regla Angulo, said the withdrawal "will be supported by our doctors, because principles and dignity are non-negotiable".

Cuba's state news agency ACN reported the medics arrived "happy to have fulfilled their mission" but also "worried about what awaits the (Brazilian) people with the newly elected president".

Bolsonaro has repeatedly criticised Cuba's management of the programme, saying he would make changes to include a competency test for Cuban medical personnel wanting to work in Brazil.

He said Cuba kept back most of the doctors' salaries, and he planned to directly hire doctors who wished to remain in Brazil.