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Cuban economy grew in 2019 despite the blockade, says Minister Gil

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Havana, January 10 (RHC) Cuba's Minister of Economy and Planning, Alejandro Gil, considered it as "something commendable" that the Cuban economy didn't decline in recent months, despite the restrictions imposed by the U.S. blockade.

On the television program Round Table, Gil stressed how the United States government tightened its grip on the island "to prevent the arrival of fuel in the first place."

"We faced a complex situation since April, which worsened in September," the official said.

According to Prensa Latina, Gil praised the country's response to the shortage of fuel and other raw materials and resources, which are essential to maintain the production of factories and other production processes.

In order to evaluate how Cuba was able to maintain itself without economic decline, and without affecting the population with blackouts or serious problems in services such as health and education, 'we must place ourselves in the context in which we had to operate', he observed.

"Our economy could have grown more, but the cost of the blockade was present," he added.

He described as 'a big lie' the statement that the U.S. measures are aimed at the government and not the people since all sectors are exposed to the damages caused by hostile actions.

The minister explained how the country also had to face unforeseen factors 'that occurred after

the plans were conceived' and other situations impossible to predict, such as the January 2019 tornado, which affected some eight thousand homes.

Gil said that the situation faced in recent times 'is not comparable to previous periods'. Nevertheless, the island managed to build more than 40,000 homes and received four million tourists. In 2019

The Economy Minister also mentioned growth in the communications sector, such as the recent reaching of six million mobile phone lines.

He also detailed how the nation managed to face food shortages, especially during the end of the year and expressed his confidence 'in the resistance of the people.

"We never gave up, and we are not going to let ourselves be defeated,' he stressed.

Edited by Jorge Ruiz Miyares

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