
Five Truths About 62 Years of Cuba's Internationalist Medical Cooperation

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It began on May 23, 1963, when Cuba sent its first medical brigade to Algeria, composed of 58 healthcare professionals. This pioneering act of solidarity in the developing world came just four years after the triumph of the Revolution, marking the start of a state policy rooted in internationalism.

Since 1963, over 605,000 Cuban healthcare professionals have served in 165 countries. Today, more than 24,000 collaborators are active in 56 nations, performing surgeries, delivering babies, providing community care, and responding to humanitarian crises. They are estimated to have saved over 12 million lives and profoundly transformed healthcare access in underserved regions.

The Henry Reeve International Contingent was created in 2005 to respond to natural disasters and epidemics. It has deployed 90 brigades to 55 countries, with more than 13,400 professionals treating over 8 million people and saving more than 166,900 lives. Their

missions have included combating Ebola in West Africa, cholera in Haiti, and COVID-19 in Europe and Latin America.

Cuba has trained over 30,000 foreign medical students free of charge at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM). Founded in 1999, this institution welcomes young people from vulnerable communities worldwide, promoting a healthcare model focused on equity, prevention, and primary care.

Despite the U.S. economic blockade and smear campaigns, Cuba's medical cooperation has been widely recognized for its humanitarian impact. In 2020, the Henry Reeve Contingent was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Countries, patients, and international organizations emphasize that Cuba exports not weapons but doctors and hope, defending health as a universal right, not a privilege.

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