

Another blow to the island: Visa and Mastercard suspend business in Cuba



Starting Saturday, Visa and Mastercard will no longer be accepted in Cuba (Source: [frankieleon/Commons/CC-BY-SA 2.0](#))

Starting June 6, payments via Visa and Mastercard will no longer be processed in Cuba. As the Cuban Central Bank (BCC) [announced](#) on Tuesday, an unnamed foreign financial institution that had previously processed Visa and Mastercard transactions on the island has terminated its business relationship with the state-owned company Fincimex S.A. effective immediately. The bank reportedly rejected further cooperation as “illegal and impossible.”

The reason: The [secondary sanctions](#) imposed by the U.S. administration on May 1, which threaten penalties against all companies associated with the [military holding company Gaesa](#). “This interruption is directly linked to Executive Order No. 14404 of May 1, issued by U.S. President Donald Trump as part of his strategy to strangle the Cuban people,” the BCC stated in its official announcement.

The Systematic Destruction of an Economy

The move follows a discernible pattern aimed at systematically destroying Cuba’s economy while simultaneously eliminating potential Western competition on the island: Following the [withdrawal of the Canadian mining company Sherritt](#)—until recently the largest foreign investor on the island—as well as the complete or partial abandonment of their Cuba operations by the Spanish hotel chains Meliá and Iberostar and other companies, comes the exclusion from international payment transactions.

The Central Bank stated that Cuba is thus no longer able to “generate revenue from the sale of goods and services via internationally recognized payment cards such as Visa and Mastercard.”

Exclusion from credit card transactions is not the first severe blow this year. Since January, a [U.S. oil embargo against Cuba](#) has been in effect, effectively cutting the island off from all supplies from third countries. The resulting fuel shortage is affecting power generation, transportation, food distribution, the operation of hospitals and schools, and the water supply. Even the humanitarian work of UN organizations is affected, as they are unable to transport aid supplies due to the fuel shortage.

Trump has stated on multiple occasions that he would “take over” Cuba this year and, in the wake of an arrest warrant against former head of state Raúl Castro, has [created a backdrop of military threats](#).

Limited payment options

The BCC listed cash, the two entirely Cuban prepaid cards “Clásica” and “Tropical,” and international cards from the Russian Mir and Chinese UnionPay systems as the remaining payment options for foreign currency transactions. ([Cubaheute](#))