

China provides Cuba with \$80 million emergency aid package



Handover of the first rice delivery on January 20 by Chinese Ambassador Hua Xin (Source: [BrunoRodríguez/X](#))

Amidst the difficult situation for Cuba's economy following the [kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro](#) by the US, China is backing its ally. According to a [report](#) by the state news portal *Cubadebate*, President Xi Jinping has provided the island with emergency aid amounting to US\$80 million. In addition, the People's Republic is donating 60,000 tons of rice, the first batches of which have already arrived in the country.

The US\$80 million is to be used to purchase electrical equipment and meet “other urgent needs of the country.” China has also decided to adjust the terms of existing aid projects. This affects a donation of solar power systems with a total capacity of 200 megawatts and the delivery of 5,000 solar panel kits for remote homes. In consultation with the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Trade, an implementing company has now been selected.

The new aid is in addition to a previously approved donation of 30,000 tons of rice. The first batch was delivered on Monday, and a second has already arrived at the port of Santiago de Cuba. Further deliveries are to leave China shortly, as reported by the Chinese state news agency *Xinhua*. According to Cuban media reports, the rice is to be distributed to the population free of charge.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel met with Chinese Ambassador Hua Xin on Tuesday at the Palace of the Revolution in Havana, where the ambassador informed him of his government's decision. During the meeting, Díaz-Canel praised the “intensive activity”

currently being carried out by the Chinese ambassador in the Caribbean country. He highlighted the state of bilateral relations and emphasized progress in joint projects.

Russian Interior Minister demonstrates solidarity

Parallel to China's aid, Russia also demonstrated its support for Cuba. Russian Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev arrived in Havana on Tuesday for a [visit](#), where he met with 94-year-old revolutionary leader Raúl Castro. The Russian embassy said the minister would hold “a series of bilateral meetings.”

Speaking to Russian state broadcaster Rossiya-1, Kolokoltsev [described](#) the US actions as “an act of unprovoked armed aggression against Venezuela” that demonstrated the need to “increase vigilance and combine all efforts to counter external factors,” the minister said after his arrival.

On Tuesday, the Russian interior minister attended a memorial service for [32 Cuban soldiers](#) who were killed in the US military strikes in connection with Maduro's abduction.

Pressure from Washington

The visit comes shortly after US President Donald Trump massively increased pressure on the socialist island. Trump warned that the government in Havana was “ready to fall” and called on Díaz-Canel to “make a deal before it's too late,” without providing further details.

The situation is exacerbated by the halt of oil and fuel supplies from Venezuela, which has long been Cuba's most important energy partner. According to a *Reuters* report citing shipping data and internal documents from the Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA, Caracas has not sent any crude oil or refined fuels to Cuba for about a month.

The report said that deliveries had already declined before Maduro's abduction by the US in early January due to American sanctions. Shipping records showed that the last shipment of refined products left the Venezuelan port of Puerto José in mid-December. The tanker involved is said to have switched off its transponder while transporting around 600,000 barrels of Venezuelan crude oil. Mexico announced that it would maintain its deliveries to Cuba but would not increase them, which is currently [tolerated by](#) Washington.

Last Saturday, [the National Defense Council met in Cuba](#) to “review and approve” plans in the event of a possible attack. Contrary to some false reports on social media, however, a state of war was not declared, but merely preparations were made for such a scenario. ([Cubaheute](#))