

Cuba confirms talks with the U.S. and calls for an end to the energy embargo



Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirms the latest round of talks with the U.S. in Havana (Source: [Cubadebate/Flickr/CC-BY-SA 2.0](#))

Cuba has officially confirmed a recent meeting between delegations from both countries for talks in Havana. At the heart of Cuba's demands was the lifting of the U.S. energy blockade, which has further exacerbated the severe electricity crisis on the island.

Alejandro García del Toro, Deputy Director General for U.S. Affairs at the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, confirmed the meeting on Monday, April 20, in an interview with the Cuban Communist Party's newspaper, *Granma*. "It is a sensitive issue that, as we have already said, we are handling with discretion. But I can confirm that a meeting between delegations from Cuba and the U.S. took place here in Cuba recently," García told *Granma*.

According to *Granma*, the U.S. side was represented by deputy undersecretaries of the U.S. State Department, while the Cuban side was represented at the level of the vice foreign minister. The Cuban government did not provide specific names.

García explicitly contradicted reports in the U.S. media claiming that Washington had given Cuba a two-week ultimatum to release political prisoners. "During the meeting, neither party set deadlines or made demands of a coercive nature," the diplomat emphasized. The entire exchange was "respectful and professional," he said.

U.S. media had previously reported, citing anonymous sources, that the meeting took place on April 10. According to these reports, Washington demanded the release of prominent political prisoners, including dissidents Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara and Maykel Osorbo. This was intended to serve as a first gesture of goodwill, to be followed by a list of further demands for economic and political reforms.

The news portal *Axios* also reported that Raúl Guillermo Rodríguez Castro, a grandson of former President Raúl Castro, had participated in the meeting; he had already been described in the run-up to the talks as a key figure in initiating these discussions.

According to García, the Cuban delegation's top priority was the lifting of the U.S. energy blockade, which Washington has imposed since January and which significantly hinders Cuba's access to fuel supplies from abroad.

"Lifting the energy blockade against the country was a top priority for our delegation," García said. He described the measure as "an unjustified punishment of the entire Cuban population" and as "global blackmail against sovereign states that have every right to supply fuel to Cuba in accordance with the norms of free trade." ([Cubaheute](#))