

Four dead after speedboat attack off Florida



Symbolic image: A coastal defense vessel and speedboat (Source: [Defense Imagery/Commons/OGL 1.0](#))

Four people were killed and six others injured in an armed incident in Cuban territorial waters on Wednesday morning. The Cuban Interior Ministry [reported](#) that occupants of a speedboat with Florida license plates opened fire on a border patrol.

The incident occurred about one nautical mile northeast of Cayo Falcones Island in Villa Clara province on Cuba's north coast. According to the ministry, the boat bore the Florida registration number FL7726SH.

According to the Ministry of the Interior, a Cuban border guard vessel (*Tropas Guardiafronteras*) with five soldiers on board approached the speedboat to identify it. The occupants of the boat then opened fire and injured the commander of the Cuban ship, the statement said.

The Cuban forces then returned fire. Four of the boat's occupants were killed. The six wounded were evacuated and given medical attention. Neither the identity nor the origin of the boat's occupants was initially disclosed. Their intentions also remained unclear.

The Cuban Interior Ministry announced that the relevant authorities would continue their investigation to fully clarify the incident.

This is not the first incident of this kind. In [December 2023](#), Cuban authorities arrested a suspected Cuban exile terrorist from Florida who had illegally reached the island on a jet ski, also with Florida license plates. According to the [investigation findings](#), the accused had planned to organize an armed uprising by smuggling in handguns. He had intended to recruit more people locally. Several people were arrested and firearms seized in the course of the

investigation at that time. "For some time now, we have been warning the United States about terrorists operating against Cuba from Florida. However, they continue to act with impunity," [criticized](#) Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel at the time.

Update (February 26): The Cuban Interior Ministry stated in a recent [statement](#) that the boat was transporting ten armed individuals. "According to preliminary statements by those arrested, they intended to carry out an infiltration with terrorist objectives," the statement said. During the seizures, Cuban authorities found assault rifles, handguns, Molotov cocktails, bulletproof vests, telescopic sights, and camouflage uniforms.

All those involved are Cubans living in the US, the ministry said. Most of them have "a known criminal and violent past." Two of those arrested were on the national list of individuals wanted by Cuban authorities for alleged terrorist activities under UN Security Council Resolution 1373. In addition, a man was arrested on the island who "was sent from the United States to ensure the reception of the armed infiltration." He confessed to his involvement, according to the ministry.

Journalist Javier Díaz of the US television station *Univisión* [reported](#), citing family members, that the group had prepared for the departure at a farm in southern Florida and organized themselves via social media such as TikTok. The sources said it was not an escape attempt, but a coordinated operation to "liberate" Cuba.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who also serves as President Donald Trump's National Security Advisor, [stated](#) that this was not a US operation and that no US government personnel were involved. The incident was "highly unusual" and is being investigated, Rubio announced during a visit to Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Various parts of the US government were now looking into the matter, and the US Coast Guard had been dispatched to the region. Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier ordered an investigation into the incident.

"It is strange that the US Coast Guard – as far as we know – did not attempt to prevent this ship from entering Cuban territorial waters, as this would clearly be interpreted as a provocation given the long history of such incursions by Cuban exile organizations," analyst Lee Schlenker [explained](#). Even if it had been only a rescue mission for migrants, it would have constituted a violation of numerous US and Cuban laws. ([Cubaheute](#))