

New sanctions against Cuba: Díaz-Canel warns of U.S. attacks



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is considered the driving force behind the escalation against Cuba (Source: [Gage Skidmore/Flickr/CC-BY-SA 2.0](#))

The U.S. is escalating its conflict with Cuba at an ever-increasing pace: On Monday, the Trump administration [imposed](#) sanctions on eleven high-ranking officials from the country as well as three government organizations.

Those sanctioned include Communications Minister Mayra Arevich Marín, Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy, President of the Cuban National Assembly Juan Esteban Lazo Hernández, Police Director Óscar Alejandro Callejas Valcarce, and Roberto Morales Ojeda, a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party and close associate of President Miguel Díaz-Canel.

Several generals were also added to the U.S. Treasury Department's sanctions list, while Raúl Castro's grandson Raúl Guillermo ("El Cangrejo") and Foreign Trade Minister Oscar Pérez-Oliva Fraga—who are apparently viewed by the U.S. as potential negotiating partners—are absent from the list.

The measures prohibit those affected from engaging in any economic relations with U.S. partners. Additionally, Cuba's foreign intelligence agency, the Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia (DGI), was added to the sanctions list. U.S. Secretary of State Rubio announced that further sanctions are expected in the coming days and weeks.

Hamburg Shipping Company Bows to U.S. Sanctions

Cuba's head of state Miguel Díaz-Canel [stated](#) in an initial reaction that no one in the Cuban party and state leadership owns assets or property under U.S. jurisdiction. "The U.S.

government knows this very well—so well, in fact, that there isn't even any evidence to present." At the same time, he criticized the [executive orders issued on May 1](#), which threaten third countries and trading partners with penalties in nearly all sectors, as "immoral, illegal, and criminal."

The punitive measures, which also affect companies that merely wish to supply basic goods such as food, medicine, and hygiene products, are "an act of genocide that must be condemned by international organizations and prosecuted under criminal law." Cuba will continue to resolutely denounce the "state of siege," the president said.

As a result of the measures, the Hamburg-based shipping company Hapag-Lloyd, among others, [announced](#) that it would no longer accept orders bound for Cuba, a move likely to severely impact the island's supply security. Previously, the Canadian mining group Sherritt International had [announced its withdrawal from Cuba](#).

Havana Warns of U.S. Military Strike

In recent days, Washington has once again circulated reports of possible military strikes as part of its psychological warfare against the island. For instance, the magazine *Politico* recently [reported](#), citing an anonymous U.S. official and intelligence sources, that the Trump administration is considering military options against Cuba more seriously than before.

The website *Axios*, which is increasingly acting as an [unofficial mouthpiece for the U.S. State Department](#) with regard to Cuba, attempted a few days earlier to sketch out a threat scenario with [reports](#) about alleged Iranian military advisers and 300 military drones from Russia and Iran. Havana spoke of legitimate defense preparations without commenting on the report in detail.

In response to the reports on Sunday, Díaz-Canel [stated](#) that a U.S. military strike against Cuba would "trigger a bloodbath with unforeseeable consequences." Cuba has "the absolute and legitimate right to defend itself against a military attack." *Axios* itself acknowledged that U.S. officials did not expect an imminent attack from the Cuban side—a caveat that, according to observers, failed to register in the public perception amid the headline-grabbing effect.

A [media analysis](#) by the Cuban news portal *Cubadebate* concludes that the *Axios* report missed its mark: The most common interpretive framework—accounting for 32 percent of the reactions analyzed—was not the perception of Cuba as a military threat, but rather the assessment of *Axios* itself as a "state propaganda tool." ([Cubaheute](#))