

New travel regulations: Trump tightens sanctions on Cuba



Donald Trump has tightened the screws on Cuba with a new memorandum (source: [WhiteHouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov))

US President Donald Trump signed a [memorandum on Monday](#) that further tightens sanctions against Cuba. The document reverses some of the easing measures introduced by his predecessor Joe Biden and increases pressure on the communist-ruled island nation.

According to the White House, the existing ban on tourist travel to Cuba will be enforced more strictly and demands by international organizations such as the UN for an end to the US economic blockade will be rejected. The memorandum states that “economic practices that disproportionately benefit the Cuban government, military, intelligence, or security agencies at the expense of the Cuban people will be ended.” according to a fact sheet.

US citizens are already prohibited from traveling to Cuba for purely tourist purposes. However, there are 12 categories of exceptions, including family and educational travel, humanitarian projects, and sports competitions. The new memorandum provides for compliance with these provisions to be monitored through regular reviews and a five-year retention requirement for all travel-related documents.

US citizens are also prohibited from doing business with the Cuban military conglomerate GAESA, which owns many hotels on the island. Tourism is one of the most important sources of foreign exchange for the Cuban government. However, visitor numbers have fallen, partly due to the ongoing energy and economic crisis.

Sharp criticism from Havana

The Cuban government has [sharply criticized](#) the tightening of US sanctions. Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez said the memorandum “intensifies the aggression and economic

blockade that punishes the entire Cuban people and is the main obstacle to our development.”

President Miguel Díaz-Canel said the new US government policy served the interests of a small group “that is not representative of the majority in this country” and further strengthened the economic blockade. The effects would be felt, but Cuba would not bow down, Díaz-Canel said.

Prime Minister Manuel Marrero described Trump's move as “an escalation of economic warfare measures.” The memorandum builds on sanctions that Trump [had already imposed during his first term](#). Shortly after beginning his second term, [he also put Cuba back on the “list of state sponsors of terrorism”](#)—just days after his predecessor Biden [had lifted](#) the designation.

Disappointment among Cuban exiles

Trump's hard line against Cuba is supported by many Cuban exiles in the US. However, [his decision](#) to abolish temporary protected status for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans caused great disappointment in the community.

According to the memorandum, the suspension of the “wet foot, dry foot” policy in 2017 also remains in effect. It had guaranteed asylum to Cubans who reached US soil, regardless of how they entered the country. The aim is to prevent irregular and dangerous migration, it says.

At the same time, the document pledges to expand “efforts to support the Cuban people” by expanding internet services, strengthening press freedom, promoting private enterprise, and supporting freedom of association—without, however, providing details on how this will be implemented.

The measures signed by Trump are likely to further exacerbate the already difficult economic situation in Cuba. It remains to be seen what countermeasures the government in Havana will take. One thing is clear: Cuba remains in the crosshairs of the US. ([Cubaheute](#))