

## U.S. Tightens Sanctions on Labor Day



*This year, May Day in Havana was once again celebrated along the Malecón waterfront promenade (Source: [Cubadebate](#))*

U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Friday that expands sanctions against socialist Cuba. The new measures are intended to target individuals and organizations with ties to the Cuban security apparatus, but they go beyond that.

According to the published text of the order, the sanctions can apply to “any foreign person” operating in Cuba’s energy, defense, raw materials, mining, financial services, or security sectors. In addition, so-called secondary sanctions—that is, punitive measures against banks and financial service providers worldwide—threaten those who conduct transactions with the affected individuals.

Jeremy Paner, a former sanctions investigator at the U.S. Treasury Department, told *Reuters* that the move is the most significant for non-U.S. companies since the start of the U.S. embargo against Cuba more than 60 years ago. “Oil and gas companies, mining firms, and banks that have carefully separated their Cuba operations from the U.S. market are no longer protected,” Paner explained.

The sanctions announcement came on Labor Day: While Labor Day celebrations were still underway, the White House briefed members of the press on the measures.

According to government figures, more than 500,000 people had previously participated in a march in Havana along the waterfront and past the U.S. Embassy—including President Miguel Díaz-Canel and 94-year-old former head of state Raúl Castro, who marched in military uniform and accompanied by high-ranking government officials. Due to the ongoing fuel shortage resulting from the U.S. energy blockade, this year’s event was smaller than in

previous years. People in other provinces across the country also gathered for the traditional Labor Day celebrations.

The highlight was the presentation of a book to Raúl Castro containing more than 6.2 million Cuban signatures—nearly two-thirds of the population—as a pledge to defend the country against a possible U.S. military attack.

Osnay Miguel Colina Rodríguez of Cuba's Confederation of Workers (CTC) stated during his speech: "Our enemies have tried everything. They thought they would find us defeated and resigned, but we stand resolute and steadfast, with our foot firmly in the stirrup, and we continue to fight."

Díaz-Canel wrote on Platform X: "Together and united, we call for peace and reaffirm our willingness to engage in dialogue without preconditions. There is no place for fear here."

He described the new sanctions as "coercive measures" that intensified the U.S.'s "brutal, genocidal" blockade against the island. Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez stated that the measures were aimed at "collectively punishing the Cuban people" and that the country would not be intimidated.

The latest tightening of sanctions is part of a series of measures with which the Trump administration has gradually increased pressure on Havana since the beginning of the year. In January, the U.S. halted Venezuelan oil shipments to Cuba after President Nicolás Maduro was abducted in a military operation.

Shortly thereafter, Trump threatened other countries with punitive tariffs should they continue to supply oil or other energy sources to Cuba—whereupon Mexico also halted its shipments. The United Nations has already warned of a humanitarian crisis.

Trump has recently spoken openly on several occasions about a possible "takeover" of Cuba and declared that the country is on the verge of collapse. ([Cubaheute](#))