

# *Cuba and SADR celebrate four decades of friendship*

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Havana, January 21 (RHC)-- Cuba and the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) celebrated on Monday the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The celebration was held at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Havana, presided over by its head, Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla.

"The Cuban and Saharawi peoples are brothers, they have close ties, and in these 40 years the historical links and cultural ties have been consolidated", affirmed the Saharawi Ambassador accredited to the island, Melainine Etkana.

The diplomat also thanked Cuba for the solidarity and support it always gives to and its people in matters of cooperation and solidarity in various social sectors.

Etkana emphasized that the Caribbean island has demonstrated throughout history that it has the capacity to resist, challenge and succeed, and wished the island the best of lucks for future triumphs and achievements.

Cuba has graduated nearly four thousand Saharawi students in the health sector in its schools since 1977 and is helping with the deployment of medical brigades to the refugee camps.

For her part, Cuban Foreign Affairs Vice-Minister, Anayansi Rodriguez, stressed the resistance of the Saharawi people, their willingness and determination to continue until they achieve their right to total independence.

She recalled the words of the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro when he expressed the value of the resistance of the Saharawis and the support which "must be given to them."

Western Sahara, located in North Africa, is one of the 17 non-self governing territories under the supervision of the UN Special Committee on Decolonization.

Initially a Spanish colony, the independence process was interrupted in 1976, after the invasion of Mauritania and Morocco, the latter still in the de facto occupation although Moroccan sovereignty over what that kingdom calls its "Southern provinces" is not recognized by the UN or any country in the world.

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