

# *Gran Caribe developed intense commercial activity in 2019 to counteract Washington's anti-Cuba crusade*

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Cuba's Hotel group Gran Caribe registered intense commercial activity over the past twelve months, yielding modest, but positive results in a year particularly complex due to the new anti-Cuba crusade of the Trump Administration that seeks to debilitate the Cuban economy, of which tourism is a major driving engine.

Gran Caribe is Cuba's foremost hotel group operating 4 and 5 star hotels across the island.

In statements to the press here in Havana, Gran Caribe president Cristina León offered information on the Group's performance in 2019.

"I should recall here that the British travel company and airline Thomas Cook declared bankruptcy in September 2019. We should mention here the withdrawal of cruise ships from Cuba due to the anti-Cuba

measures implemented by the Trump Administration.

“Even before that, for a number of years now, the US government has adopted a practice to include Cuban hotels and other tourist facilities on a black list. That is the case of the Hotel Nacional de Cuba and the Hotel Capri –two facilities that belong to our Hotel Group. These two hotels sold splendidly. There was also the so-called sonic attacks, a mere pretext used by Washington to, among other things, discourage travel by US citizens to our nation.

“All the uncertainty generated by these and other anti-Cuba measures have put these and other of the Groups facilities in an unfavorable situation, as US citizens traveling here are been advised against visiting or booking in them.”

The president of Gran Caribe then elaborated on strategies adopted by the Hotel Group to compensate for the damage inflicted by Washington’s anti-Cuba measures.

“In order to confront these adversities, the Hotel Group defined and adopted new strategies based on the diversification of our offers to attract clients from other nations and regions to, some how, compensate for fewer US clients. We have experienced also the slight contraction of the Canadian market, which is our case was not significant.

“We should say that other markets experienced growth and that was instrumental in the Group registering a modest, but positive growth in 2019.”

Discouraging travel to Cuba, creating obstacles to Cuba’s development and generating uncertainty and an atmosphere of mistrust are among the objectives of the Cuba policy of the current US administration. But, Cuba does not remain complacent, as it’s constantly finding and implementing alternatives to counteract Washington’s aggressiveness.

In the case of Gran Caribe, the group’s efforts have not been in vain, as it registered a growth in the average number of tourists per day and the occupancy rate of its more than 14 thousand rooms distributed in 54 hotels.

“Last year, we registered an increase in air tour operations from other countries like Russia, which is steadily positioning itself favorably within Gran Caribe Hotel Group. We are not talking here about short-stay tourism, but between 10 to 14 nights on average. Undoubtedly, this has had a positive impact on our results.”

According to the National Statistics Office, Russian tourism to Cuba grew by nearly 30 percent in 2019.

The hotels owned by Gran Caribe, located in Cuba's most important destinations, include hotels that range from landmark properties such as the Hotel Nacional de Cuba and the historic Hotel Inglaterra in Havana, to hotels along the beautiful beaches of Varadero and the Cuban keys (Cayo).

Gran Caribe is continuously developing its travel products to ensure exclusivity, diversity and competitive prices, inspired by a longstanding tradition of Cuban hospitality.

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