

# *Cuban doctors bring hope to the people of Turkey*

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**Cuban collaborators of the International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Situations of Disasters and Serious Epidemics are in Turkey to help save lives.**

By Maria Josefina Arce

Cuban collaborators of the International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Situations of Disasters and Serious Epidemics are in Turkey to help save lives. With the humanism and solidarity that characterizes them, they seek to alleviate the pain and bring hope to a people devastated by the strong earthquakes of the past sixth day.

There are 32 specialists who are where they are most needed. They have already performed surgeries, including pediatric ones, as well as research work and actions in intensive care areas.

The assistance provided by Cuban health professionals has been highlighted by local authorities and the media, such as the Indian portal People's Dispatch, which stressed that the contribution of doctors from other nations such as Cuba is invaluable.

Set up in 2005 by the historic leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro, the Henry Reeve Contingent has experience, as it has provided solidarity aid to other countries in the face of natural disasters and epidemics.

Thus, it was in Pakistan after the earthquake of 7.6 on the Richter scale in October 2005. Cuban health workers were the first to arrive in that Asian nation and the last to leave.

They treated nearly two million patients, performed highly complex surgeries and saved some 3,000 people during the 8 months they remained in Pakistani territory, where they set up 32 field hospitals, which were later handed over to the local authorities.

Also well remembered is the help provided by the doctors from the Greater Antilles when Haiti was hit by a powerful earthquake 5 years later. The Cuban brigade was one of the most important in providing direct assistance to the population in the first 72 hours.

But its contribution was equally decisive in confronting the cholera epidemic that broke out in the Caribbean country months after the earthquake. The effort deployed on that occasion by Cuban health professionals was recognized by various media outlets such as the British news agency Reuters, which highlighted Cuba's tradition of helping the poorest and most forgotten nations on the planet.

And when in 2014 the WHO, World Health Organization, made a call to help West Africa face an Ebola epidemic, Cuba was the first nation to respond. Members of the Henry Reeve Contingent traveled to the distant continent, which was already aware of Cuba's collaboration.

Nearly 200 health workers, including doctors, nurses, epidemiologists, intensive care specialists, among others, provided their assistance to contain the outbreak of the disease, described as the worst in history by the WHO, which thanked Cuba for its rapid response.

And closer in time is the confrontation with COVID 19. The Caribbean nation also extended its hand to countries from different latitudes. Even specialists from the archipelago were in Lombardy, Italy, epicenter of the virus in Europe in 2020.

There are many examples of Cuba's health assistance to other peoples. Everywhere our health professionals have been, they have earned the respect, admiration and gratitude of all, for their high professionalism, sensitivity and humane treatment.

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