

# *They call us Cubans*

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By: Roberto Morejón

They greeted them with a hand on their chest as a sign of gratitude. In spite of the language barriers, the population of Turkiye managed to convey their gratitude to a brigade of Cuban doctors who came to assist them in the aftermath of an earthquake that caused the painful loss of more than 45 thousand lives.

The telluric shock of last February 6th, with the subsequent series of aftershocks, mobilized international solidarity towards Turkiye, better known by all as Turkey, and among those who arrived in Ankara were the Cuban doctors.

On their return after completing their mission, the professionals are once again adapting to the traditional heat of the tropics, after enduring temperatures below zero degrees Celsius in the Eurasian country.

This adversity, which forced them to wear more clothing than expected thanks to donations from the Friendship Association between the two nations, was not an obstacle to attend more than 3,700 patients during their 24-day stay and to perform 60 surgeries and 6,000 nursing procedures.

Their contribution was decisive in a scenario overwhelmed by the total or partial destruction of more than 230,000 buildings and the evacuation of more than three million people.

The inhabitants of Turkiye welcomed them in the southern province of Karaman Barach, epicenter of the earthquakes, where it was necessary to work together with the local colleagues, of high technical level, as the Antilleans noted.

The latter attended mainly to the polytraumatized and also to people with other ailments inherent to the strong shock received.

Cuba is proud of the exemplary work carried out by its doctors in Turkiye, as is usual in this type of missions, carried out temporarily or for prolonged periods since 1963.

The white-coated professionals from the land of José Martí have served since that year in 165 countries with more than 600,000 collaborators, and today they are present in 56 nations.

The hegemonic press usually speaks very little of such self-sacrificing work of Cuban doctors and when they make an exception, they often echo negative campaigns launched by the U.S. administrations.

All in vain because in many latitudes the altruism of the Cubans is claimed and welcomed with recognition.

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