

# *Cuba and South Africa: A great brotherhood*

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By María Josefina Arce

Great is the brotherhood that unites the peoples of Cuba and South Africa, a reflection of the friendship, mutual admiration and respect that united their leaders Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela, who barely a year after his release from prison, where he remained for almost three decades, traveled to Cuba.

The anti-apartheid fighter would summarize the solidarity that has characterized the relations between the two countries, when he expressed that Cubans went to his land as doctors, teachers, agricultural experts and soldiers to fight underdevelopment and apartheid, but never as colonizers.

Thirty years have passed since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Havana and Pretoria. Three decades in which solidarity cooperation has been present for the benefit of both peoples.

The collaboration in the field of health stands out. Professionals from the Caribbean nation have been present in that state since the 90s of the last century. They have helped to improve health indexes and bring medical care for the first time to the most remote places.

The government and people of the African country highly appreciated Cuba's quick response to the request for help during the COVID19 pandemic, in view of the increase in the number of people infected with the virus.

Family doctors, epidemiologists, electromedical doctors and biotechnologists battled with their South African counterparts to reduce the incidence in that territory of the disease caused by the new coronavirus.

The Cubans worked in five South African provinces, with greater representation in those where more cases of Covid19 were reported.

The South African brothers, on their part, donated supplies and medicines to support Cuba in the fight against the virus, in view of the tightening of the U.S. blockade in the midst of the world health emergency.

Cooperation between the two countries also extends to the field of education. Young people from that nation of the African continent have been trained on Cuban soil as doctors and in other professions.

South Africa has always stood by the Cuban people in their struggle against the genocidal U.S. blockade and has also demanded that the United States remove Cuba from the unilateral list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism.

Cuba and South Africa have marched together in their goal of a better future for their peoples. The friendship that unites them is indestructible and is proof against time and geographical distance.

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