

U.S. court overturns lawsuit over cruise ship trips to Cuba



Every president in the Oval Office has suspended Title III since Bill Clinton ratified the law in 1996. Photo: EFE/Archive

Havana, October 24 (RHC)-- The United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit has overturned a previous ruling that established that four large cruise lines operating in Cuba were prohibited by U.S. law.

In 2022, District Judge Beth Bloom ordered the prominent cruise lines with connections in South Florida, Carnival, Norwegian, Royal Caribbean and MSC Cruises to pay \$439 million, plus legal fees and expenses, for an unjust accusation based on the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

The ruling was the first of its kind due to a crucial provision, called Title III, of the Helms-Burton Act—which codifies the blockade—that authorizes former property owners on the island to claim on properties that were nationalized by the revolutionary government and demand from those who, according to them, benefit from the commercial use of these.

Every head of the White House has suspended Title III since William Clinton ratified the law in 1996, until Donald Trump ended that interruption in 2019 during his government.

The 2-1 verdict last Friday in the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta dismantled the Miami judge's ruling in a lawsuit seeking "prohibited tourism" and "trafficking activities" by taking passengers to Cuba and using the docks of the facilities of the American company Havana Docks, which was nationalized in 1960.

In a joint statement, MSC Cruises, NCLH and Royal Caribbean said: "We are pleased with the appeals court's decision and thank the court for its thorough consideration of the case."

In the prevailing opinion, both William Pryor and Adalberto Jordan established that, although Havana Docks is suing for the loss of the dock and facilities and its exploitation rights, it did not possess "any absolute ownership rights over any real property in the port of Havana."

On March 12, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez denounced that the Helms-Burt Act codifies the blockade and represents an economic aggression by the United States Government against his nation, globally and in a generalized manner.

Rodríguez published on his profile on the social network X that the criminal punishment that this law applies to Cuban families violates Human Rights and International Law; it also demonstrates the failure of the United States policy towards the Revolution.

The third and fourth sections of the Helms-Burton Act remained inactive until Donald Trump allowed their implementation as a component of his policy of extreme pressure towards Cuba and one more obstacle to hinder the path towards normalization between Havana and Washington.

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