

# *Cuban Government Rebuts Washington's Harassment Allegations on U.S. Diplomats*

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Havana, August 10 (RHC)-- The Cuban government responded Wednesday to allegations from Washington regarding supposed harassment incidents related to the U.S. embassy staff in Havana and said Cuba strictly and seriously complies with its diplomatic protection obligations.

In vague statements, the U.S. State Department had implied that Cuban authorities may have been involved in those incidents.

A statement by the Cuban Foreign Ministry stressed that Cuba has never allowed, nor would it ever allow, its national territory to be used for any action against accredited diplomats or their relatives, without exception.

The Foreign Ministry noted that Cuba has impeccable performance regarding protection and integrity of diplomatic personnel and premises. That is internationally recognized, said Cuba, adding that the island is universally seen as a safe destination for foreign visitors and diplomats, including those from the United States.

Below is the MINREX statement in full:

On February 17 of this year, the United States Embassy in Havana and the State Department informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the alleged occurrence of incidents that caused illnesses to some officials of that diplomatic mission and their relatives.

Cuba took this matter with the utmost seriousness and acted expeditiously and professionally to clarify the situation, initiating a thorough, priority and urgent investigation as indicated by the highest level of the Cuban government. To this end, it conveyed to the United States Embassy the need for information-sharing and proposed to establish cooperation between the competent authorities of both countries.

The Cuban authorities set up an inter-agency committee of experts to analyze the facts, extended and strengthened security and safety measures for the embassy, their staff and diplomatic residences, and enabled new channels of direct communication between the U.S. Embassy and the Cuban Department of Diplomatic Security.

In this context, on May 23, the State Department informed the Cuban Embassy in Washington of the decision that two Cuban diplomats leave the U.S. territory, which led to a protest from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this unjustified and unfounded decision.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirms that Cuba complies strictly and seriously with its obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 regarding the protection of the integrity of diplomatic agents and the premises of the mission.

The impeccable performance of our country in this area is internationally recognized, and Cuba is universally considered a safe destination for foreign visitors and diplomats, including the Americans.

The Ministry categorically emphasizes that Cuba has never, nor would it ever allow the Cuban territory to be used for any action against accredited diplomats or their families, without exception. Moreover, it reiterates its willingness to cooperate in the clarification of this situation.

Havana, 9 August 2017.

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