

# *Cuba announces the immediate withdrawal of all its aid personnel from Bolivia*

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Havana, November 15 (RHC)—Cuban authorities have announced the withdrawal of its aid personnel deployed in Bolivia to assist in different social sectors in response to the acting government smear campaign blaming Cubans of instigating violence in the Andean nation.

The Cuban Foreign Ministry issued an official declaration announcing the measure on the morning of Friday, November 15.

Full text of the declaration follows:

In the last few hours, officials from the acting authorities in the Plurinational State of Bolivia have raised the idea that Cuban aid workers are encouraging the protests that are taking place in the country, in addition to a similar focus on social media, with dubious accounts and false profiles inciting violence against the island's health personnel.

In this context, on November 13, four members of the Medical Brigade in El Alto were arrested by the police as they moved to their place of residence with money taken from a bank to pay for essential

services and rents for the 107 members of the Medical Brigade in that region.

The arrest took place under the slanderous assumption that the money was used to finance protests. Representatives of the police and the Public Ministry visited the headquarters of the Medical Brigade in El Alto and La Paz and confirmed, based on documents, payrolls, and bank data, that the amount of money coincided with the amount regularly extracted each month.

The four collaborators arrested are:

- Amparo Lourdes García Buchaca, Licentiate in Electromedicine. In Cuba, she worked at the Provincial Electromedicine Center in the province of Cienfuegos before starting the mission in Bolivia in March of this year.

- Idalberto Delgado Baró, Economics graduate from the Special Municipality of Isle of Youth, who worked in the Municipal Electromedicine Center of Isle of Youth when he joined the mission in Bolivia last March.

- Ramón Emilio Álvarez Cepero, Specialist in Intensive Care and Endocrinology, who worked in Cuba in the Gustavo Aldereguía General Hospital of the Province of Cienfuegos until he began his mission in Bolivia in July 2017.

- Alexander Torres Enríquez, specialist in General Integral Medicine who worked in Cuba in the Carlos Verdugo Policlinics of the province of Matanzas when he left to fulfill his mission on February 3, 2019.

Permanent contact has been maintained with these Cuban aid workers, through the Cuban Embassy in La Paz and the Head of the Medical Brigade.

The four Cuban aid workers have a recognized performance per their occupational profile and, like the others on mission in Bolivia, they have adhered strictly and rigorously to humanitarian and cooperation work, which is why they traveled to that country under intergovernmental agreements.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejects false accusations that these comrades encourage or finance protests based on unfounded deliberate lies.

Under the circumstances described, Cuban authorities have decided that aid workers will return immediately to their homeland.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs demands that the detained aid workers be released immediately and that the Bolivian authorities guarantee the physical integrity of each of them following the responsibilities acquired by the Bolivian State with the security and protection of the cooperating partners per the intergovernmental agreements signed.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls on the Bolivian authorities to halt the worsening of irresponsible anti-Cuban expressions of hatred, defamation, and incitement to violence against Cuban aid workers, who have given their solidarity contribution to the health of the brotherly Bolivian people. The millions of Bolivians who have received the generous attention of hundreds of Cuban doctors know perfectly well that lies cannot hide the meritorious contribution and noble purpose of our health professionals.

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