

From Tindouf to a medical classroom

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Saharawi students traveling to Cuba to study medicine (cubaminrex.cu)

By Roberto Morejón

To the camps in southern Algeria, especially in Tindouf, came the voice of Cuba, with its offer of 12 scholarships to young Saharawis to study medicine in Havana and other provinces.

The Saharawi refugee population, estimated at over 173,000 people, welcomes these opportunities, while waiting for a solution to the drama of their land and an end to decades of displacement.

The young Saharawi thank the government of the largest of the Antilles for the solidarity shown to help exponents of the new generations in poor countries.

Since 1999, thousands of young people from families with scarce means of subsistence have graduated in the Caribbean nation as doctors and other health specialties.

Those selected have had the chance to get to know a health system that does not neglect the quality of its medical education programs, even when the country faces hard material shortages, mainly due to the U.S. blockade, the consequences of the pandemic and internal distortions.

With more than two centuries of academic trajectory, thirteen Universities of Medical Sciences are open in the Caribbean archipelago, backed by a first-rate teaching staff.

Foreigners, like Cubans, are trained in disease prevention and rehabilitation in the social context of the patient.

Cuba expects to graduate more than 12,000 new professionals in this field of knowledge this year, but there is also room for thousands of people born in other latitudes to finish their studies.

They may be Mexicans, Angolans, Palestinians or Saharawis, but all of them are committed to return to their places of origin with the lessons learned and the values instilled, such as altruism and devotion to the neediest. No adverse media campaign against the Cuban health collaboration will be able to demerit this work shared between Cuba and other peoples to train in such a noble profession.

Surely when the dozen of young Saharawis return with diplomas of doctor in Medical Sciences, they will serve their compatriots, either in camps like the current ones or in other places. They will always carry with them the memory of their training in Cuba.

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