

# *South African Defense Minister Calls for Strengthened Relations with Cuba*

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Pretoria, June 20 (RHC)-- *South African Minister of Defense and Military Veterans, Nosiviwe Noluthando Mapisa-Nqakula*, called for strengthened links with Cuba and thanked the Caribbean country for its cooperation programs with African countries.

In statements to the Prensa Latina news agency, the high-ranking South African official noted that cooperation relations between our two countries have strengthened in several fields and pointed to the hundreds of Cuban health and education collaborators, who are currently offering their services in South Africa, and also the more that 2 thousand 500 young South Africans who are receiving medical and other professional training here in Cuba on scholarships granted by Cuba.

On Friday, representatives of political organizations and of the South African Movement of Solidarity with Cuba gathered in front of the U.S. embassy in Pretoria to demand the lifting of Washington's blockade against Cuba and the return to the Caribbean country of the illegally occupied portion of Cuban territory in Guantánamo.

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