

Cuban Five Arrive in South Africa for Friendly Visit



Johannesburg, June 22 (RHC) -- The five anti-terrorist fighters known worldwide as The Cuban Five have paid tribute to South African anti-apartheid leader Oliver Tambo, as they began a visit to the African nation.

The five Cuban national heroes landed at the Oliver Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg on Sunday.

The Cuban Five -- Gerardo Hernandez, Ramón Labañino, Fernando Gonzalez, Antonio Guerrero and René Gonzalez -- are visiting the region for 13 days to thank South Africans, Angolans and Namibians who supported the call for their release from U.S. prisons.

Upon their arrival, the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation said it welcomes the men and acknowledges Cuba's contribution towards a democratic South Africa.

"Cuba has furthermore participated in the reconstruction of South Africa after the demise of apartheid by training scores of South African youth in medicine in Cuba. Cuba's ongoing support for the South African government's main priorities through the implementation of joint programs in health, social development, defense, housing and infrastructure is significant," said a statement issued by the Department on Sunday.

The Department said the deployment of Cuban doctors, engineers and technical experts throughout South Africa is a further demonstration of Cuba's commitment to work with South Africa to address the infrastructural back-logs inherited from the pre-1994 period.

"There are currently almost 3000 South African medical students studying in Cuba. A further 45 will begin their studies in medicine in Cuba in September."

The South African government will host the visitors in a Public Participation Program in Cape Town on Tuesday.

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