

Change in US policy? Cuba's "cooperation in the fight against terrorism" recognized



Years ago, Biden announced a review of Cuba's status as a "state sponsor of terrorism". Shortly before the end of his term of office, things are moving (Source: [Communitynewspaper](#))

The USA has removed Cuba from the list of states that it considers to be "not cooperating fully" in the "fight against terrorism". This was announced by the State Department on Wednesday.

The move could be a cautious signal towards a possible removal of the socialist country from the controversial US list of "State Sponsors of Terrorism". In addition to Cuba, [the list](#) includes the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), Iran, and Syria.

"The Department has determined that the circumstances for classifying Cuba as a 'non-fully cooperating country' have changed from 2022 to 2023," a State Department spokesperson explained.

However, the "Counterterrorism Cooperation List" that the State Department is required by law to submit to the US Congress differs from the "List of State Sponsors of Terrorism". The latter is associated with considerable financial sanctions for the countries listed.

Former US President Donald Trump had Cuba added to the list of terrorism sponsors shortly before the end of his term of office in January 2021, a few years after his predecessor Barack Obama had removed the country from the list.

Representatives from Cuba as well as numerous other states and civil society actors had sharply criticized the island's renewed listing in recent years. In February, a UN group of

experts warned that its inclusion on the list would negatively affect fundamental human rights such as the right to life, food, health, education, economic and social rights and the right to development.

The Cuban government has repeatedly stated that the country would lose potential loans, trading partners, tourists and investors as a result, which would massively worsen the economic and social situation on the island.

Removal from the terrorism list became a key demand in relation to possible easing of the US trade blockade, which has been in place for over 60 years. Despite President Joe Biden's announcement that he would review his predecessor's Cuba policy, which was based on "maximum pressure", the issue remained quiet for a long time.

The State Department official clarified on Wednesday that the classification as a "state sponsor of terrorism" would be determined by separate legal criteria. "Any future review of Cuba's status would be based on the law and the criteria established by Congress," the spokesperson said.

"This move by the Biden administration could well be a prelude to the State Department reviewing Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism," William LeoGrande, an expert on US-Cuban relations from American University in Washington, told Reuters.

Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez welcomed the decision, but criticized that it did not go far enough. "The US has just admitted what everyone knows: that Cuba is cooperating fully in the efforts against terrorism," Rodriguez wrote on X. "Any political manipulation of the issue should stop, and our arbitrary and unjust inclusion in the list of countries that sponsor terrorism should end," he added.

It is a "clear and incontrovertible truth that Cuba is not a sponsor of terrorism, but a victim of it, including state terrorism", the Cuban Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday, alluding to several acts of terrorism against Cuba financed with US support. The US government is "aware of the extraordinary damage caused to the Cuban economy by the measures, actions, and intimidation that are automatically triggered against any state on this list". Biden can now "act honestly and do the right thing", the statement concludes.

[\(Cubaheute\)](#)