

## Cuba sends doctors to earthquake region

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*Salvage work in the northern Syrian province of Aleppo after the massive earthquake on February 6 (Source: [Xinhua](#)).*

**Update** (11.02): The Cuban Ministry of Health announced Friday that Turkey will also receive medical assistance. The "Henry Reeve" brigade, consisting of 32 specialists, some of whom have already been involved in an earthquake operation in Pakistan, is currently departing for Turkey.

After the severe earthquake in Turkey and Syria, relief workers on the ground are still fighting their way through the rubble. In Syria in particular, aid continues to be slow. According to recent estimates, the death toll in both countries has risen to 15,000 people, with around 40,000 people believed to be injured. Now Cuba has announced it will send a medical brigade to the region.

As the Cuban evening news reported yesterday, the socialist country plans to soon send 27 doctors to the affected Syrian regions, specialized in missions in such scenarios. Syria's ambassador to Havana, Ghassan Obeid, expressed his gratitude for the assistance later that evening. "We are very grateful for the Cuban aid because very few relief supplies are reaching us due to the sanctions in place," said Obeid, who put the number of people left homeless in his country as a result of the quake at 300,000 to 400,000.

Earlier on Monday, Cuba's President Miguel Díaz-Canel expressed his condolences to the victims on Twitter and offered support to Turkey and Syria. "Cuba conveys its solidarity and our deepest condolences for the loss of life [...] and offers its willingness to assist in the care of the victims," Díaz-Canel expressed on Twitter. Cuban media reported that Díaz-Canel signed the Turkish Embassy's book of condolences on Wednesday and inquired with diplomats about the situation on the ground.

Cuba has a long tradition of humanitarian disaster relief, including missions to earthquake regions. After the massive earthquake in Nicaragua's capital, Managua, in 1972, Cuba was among the first countries to send relief supplies. After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Cuba increased its medical brigade already on the ground, which established an emergency hospital.