

Cuba's foreign minister: economic reforms despite US sanctions



Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez (Source: [Prensa Latina](#)/AI-scaled)

Interviews with Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez are rare. But recently, at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, he spoke to [Newsweek magazine](#) about the current challenges facing the Caribbean nation.

Rodríguez emphasized in the interview that Cuba is trying to restructure its economy in the midst of a global crisis caused by international conflicts, climate change, and economic uncertainty. Foremost, he said, the country is trying to counter the effects of the ongoing U.S. economic blockade.

The blockade was tightened during Trump's presidency, with more than 240 individual measures, under the pretext of the alleged sonic attacks on US embassy personnel. "To our surprise, these measures were continued by the subsequent Democratic administration," Rodríguez said.

Rodríguez sees the ending of Joe Biden's presidency as a missed opportunity to improve relations and enable more U.S. investment in Cuba. The U.S. is thus denying itself a geostrategic opportunity, he said. Cuba would like to see "respectful and mutually beneficial" relations with the United States. Rodríguez criticized [recent relaxations](#), such as the legalization of so-called U-turn dollar transactions through US banks, saying that they would not work in practice and therefore have no effect.

Regarding U.S. tourism, Rodríguez explained that while group tours are again possible under strict conditions, many small businesses and guesthouses (*Casas particulares*) that prospered during the Obama era have had to file for bankruptcy. “What is the logic behind the U.S. government taking measures that harm the emerging private sector in Cuba?” Rodríguez asked.

Rodríguez announced extensive changes to Cuba's economic policy. In the face of the severe crisis that has been ongoing for five years, the government is trying to mitigate the damage caused by the sanctions. It is seeking alternative partnerships, for example with China and Russia, and will continue to push ahead with reforms such as the admission of small and medium-sized enterprises.

“We have to find a much more efficient economic model and adapt it to today's reality.” The government is currently “working hard” on this, Rodríguez said. This model should not only be reflected in macroeconomic data, but should above all have a positive impact in people's everyday lives. According to Rodríguez, material as well as immaterial and cultural prosperity must be created that enables young people to realize their dreams and life plans.

The government is prepared to introduce all the necessary changes to achieve this, but “on the basis of the full exercise of our sovereignty and independence,” said Cuba's foreign minister. ([Cubaheute](#))