

Ongoing economic crisis: Cuba reduces bread rations



Maintaining state-imposed rations is becoming increasingly difficult in Cuba (Source: [Commons](#))

The situation of state-provided basic services in Cuba, which play an important role for vulnerable groups in particular, remains increasingly strained in view of the ongoing economic crisis. As the party newspaper *Granma* announced yesterday, Thursday, in order to maintain the supply across the country bread rations will have to be cut.

The measure, which came into force yesterday, stipulates that the weight of the daily bread roll issued via the *Libreta* booklet will be reduced from 80 to 60 grams. At the same time, the subsidized price will be reduced from one peso (about 0.003 euros) to 0.75 centavos.

As the director of the Ministry of the Food Industry (MINAL) explained, the decision was made “in order not to affect production and to ensure that the bread reaches everyone equally, both the population and social consumption, such as hospitals, schools, and other institutions”. She also said that this was a “temporary measure” due to the logistical effort involved in the production and distribution of *Libreta* products, due to the shortage of foreign currency.

In recent years, there have been repeated failures and restrictions in the distribution of the state basic rations. The rationing system, introduced in 1962, has been considered an important part of the social contract in Cuba, particularly since the “special period” of the 1990s, as the *libreta* guarantees a certain basic security regardless of the purchasing power of wages and the market prices of food.

However, since the beginning of the current crisis in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, it has become increasingly difficult for the state to maintain this mechanism. As a result,

temporary restrictions and delays have become more and more common in recent years, and the quality of the products has also suffered.

The government plans to reorganize the subsidy system in the future. “Today, we subsidize a poor old pensioner just as much as the owner of a large private company, who has a lot of money,” Prime Minister Manuel Marrero told the National Assembly last December. At the time, steps were announced towards targeted support for vulnerable groups – but so far, corresponding measures have been slow in coming.

Meanwhile, more bad news came from Pinar del Río almost simultaneously: As the local television station “Tele Pinar” announced on its Facebook page, all public transport in the provincial capital will have to be suspended starting next Saturday due to a lack of fuel. Long-distance and train connections are also affected. According to Tele Pinar, the restoration of services depends on “how the country overcomes this economic situation.”
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