

## US Secretary of State: Cuba remains on terror list



US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken (source: [GPA Photo Archive/Flickr](#))

The outgoing Biden administration has made it clear that there will be no more positive gestures towards Havana from it. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [stated in](#) a hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Thursday that he sees “no changes to our policy” (regarding Cuba) until January 20.

He was responding to a question from Republican Representative María Elvira Salazar about whether the removal of Cuba from the U.S. so called list of “State Sponsors of Terrorism” was under consideration.

US President Biden repeatedly announced in recent years that such a review was taking place – one of Cuba's key demands in terms of easing the [economic blockade that has been in place since 1962](#). Now apparently not. Although the US government [recognized](#) in May that Cuba was “fully cooperating” in the fight against terrorism, this has not had any impact on the list.

Cuba was removed from the list in 2015 under then-President Barack Obama as part of a diplomatic rapprochement with Havana. However, U.S. President Trump put the island back on the list of “State Sponsors of Terrorism” in January 2021. In addition to Cuba, this list currently includes North Korea, Iran and Syria.

The listing results in massive restrictions for the affected countries in terms of access to international financial markets and hinders opportunities to do business with other countries and entities. For international financial institutions, countries on the list are considered [pariah states](#). When doing business with them or entities based there, third parties risk being targeted by the [US sanctions authority OFAC](#).

Representatives from Cuba and numerous other states, as well as civil society actors, had sharply criticized the island's renewed listing in recent years. In February, a UN expert group had [warned](#) that the listing had a negative impact on fundamental human rights such as the right to life, food, health, education, and economic and social rights, as well as the right to development. Even top officials in the Trump and Biden administrations have privately called Cuba's inclusion on the terror list “absurd.” Colin Powell's former chief of staff [called it](#) “a fiction that we created to support the rationale for the blockade.”

Observers expect the incoming Trump administration to return to its “maximum pressure” policy towards Havana, which would mean new sanctions. These could apply to individuals, companies and entire industries, and would further affect both the state economy and the private sector. ([Cubaheute](#))