

USAID cuts: Cuban government criticizes political influence



Delivering more than just food: the US development agency USAID (source: [USAID/Flickr/CC-BY-SA 2.0](#))

Cuba's President Miguel Díaz-Canel has reiterated his government's criticism of USAID. This is in response to the latest announcements by the US government to cut funding for the development agency.

“They are alarmed by USAID’s multi-million dollar subversion projects and funding for so-called independent media and NGOs – which we have been denouncing for years,” Díaz-Canel wrote in reference to Western media reports. It is “very easy to follow the trail of money and see who they have made new millionaires,” he added.

A day earlier, Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez had already stated that USAID had served as a “front” to undermine the constitutional order in Cuba. According to the minister, USAID spent more than six million US dollars between 1998 and 1999 alone to carry out hundreds of illegal operations on the socialist Caribbean island.

USAID made headlines in connection with Cuba in 2014 following [revelations by the Associated Press](#). Their research revealed that the US government was trying to establish a propaganda tool on the island via the ZunZuneo platform, which was disguised as a commercial social media service. The platform was conceived to destabilize the political situation and collect user information while its US funding was deliberately disguised according to the investigation.

As the Reuters news agency [reports](#), several anti-government media outlets related to Cuba are affected by the cutbacks. For example, the Miami-based portal Cubanet is said to have previously received around half a million US dollars per year from the agency. The Madrid-

based medium Diario de Cuba is also affected. In total, around 2.3 million dollars were spent through USAID on Cuba-related media projects in 2024.

According to their own description, the portals are intended to promote “independent journalism” in Cuba. The Cuban government accuses them of not acting independently, but of pursuing the US foreign policy agenda. Cuba's Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernandez de Cossio described the USAID-funded media as “dependent on their master”.

Cuba's government allows some foreign news agencies and channels to work in the country, but has largely banned US government-funded media from operating on the island.

Cuba's accusations are partly in line with recent criticism of USAID from the United States itself. In early February, US President Donald Trump suggested that the agency should “close down”. He referred to possible corruption cases within the organization. Currently, Secretary of State Marco Rubio serves as acting USAID director following a merger of the organization with the State Department. ([Cubaheute](#))