

Western Union suspends money transfers to Cuba



A Western Union branch (source: [Usien/Commons/GNU FDL](#))

Financial services provider Western Union has suspended its money transfers from the US to Cuba for an indefinite period. The company announced this in a statement on Thursday.

The reason for the suspension of the service is the [recent tightening of US sanctions against Cuba](#) under President Donald Trump. On January 20, Trump [reversed](#) several relaxations of sanctions by his predecessor Joseph Biden.

This included the re-inclusion of Cuban companies and organizations on the so-called "[Cuba Restricted List](#)" (CRL). The list is used to restrict direct financial transactions with the entities listed on it.

"As a global company, we are obliged to comply with the laws and regulations of the countries in which we operate," Western Union stated, adding: "Due to a change in US sanctions regulations, Western Union is forced to suspend its money transfer service between the US and Cuba with immediate effect for an indefinite period."

One of the companies affected by the new restrictions is Orbit S.A. Western Union's Cuban partner was [set up in 2022](#) specifically to process international money transfers after its predecessor Fincimex was blocked by US sanctions. Both companies are accused of acting "for or on behalf of the Cuban armed forces".

According to Western Union, the company is currently working with its customers to reimburse the full amount of active transfers. They deeply regret the situation and sincerely apologize to customers for the inconvenience caused, they say. Western Union did not give a date for the possible resumption of the service, but stated that they are still examining options to restore the flow of money to Cuba.

For the part of the population with access to remittances from relatives abroad, these are often the most important source of income. They serve to cushion shortages of food and medicine and to supplement the often modest wages. According to estimates, around two billion US dollars in remittances flowed into the country in 2023 – most of it through informal channels as cash due to inflation and US sanctions. ([Cubaheute](#))