Update on Cuba's Medical Mission in Qatar
February 2025

Excerpts from
"Forced/compelled labor (trafficking in persons) by the Cuban state: information for the 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report for the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State," Free Society Project/Cuba Archive, February 2025

Edited excerpts from "Update on selected countries' medical brigades": Qatar

The 2024 U.S. Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP report) classified Qatar as a Tier 2 country because "the Government of Qatar does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so." The report states that there were "approximately 400 Cuban nationals working at the Cuban Hospital in Dukhan who may have been forced to work by the Cuban government," and describes an NGO report that Cuban workers employed in Qatar "were vulnerable to abuses including sexual harassment, coerced enrollment into the medical mission program, surveillance, exploitation, restriction of movement, and passport confiscation." Its Prioritized Recommendations included proactively identifying trafficking victims by screening for trafficking indicators among vulnerable populations, including … Cuban government-affiliated workers, including medical professionals."

Currently, around 1,232 Cuban health professionals work in Qatar, distributed across 13 institutions," including 550 in "the Cuban Hospital" in Dukhan, a town near the capital, Doha.[1] The hospital, a modern facility, officially opened in January 2012, and is reportedly gradually expanding. It is a "joint project" and "partnership" of the governments of Cuba and Qatar and is inserted into Qatar's public health system, but accepts patients paying privately or covered by private insurance.[2]

As reported in previous years, the Cuban workers live and work in much better conditions than in most other brigades and are paid, according to the last available report, $1,000 per month. However, Cuba is said to be paid at least $10,000 per month per member of the brigade (doctor, nurse or technician). This would leave Cuba net revenues (after paying the workers) at least $133 million a year, not counting additional funds from forced donations and arbitrary exchange rates imposed on the workers. Thus, the medical brigade in Qatar is one of the most profitable for Cuba.

Qatar, of course, is a very rich nation, so it does not receive aid from the United States and can afford to hire well paid doctors from all over the world. The US has important and varied ties with Qatar: defense, security, geostrategic, economic, political.

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[1] Alina Perera Robbio, René Tamayo, "En Catar todos hablan de los médicos cubanos," *Cuba Debate*, Dec. 3, 2023; Concluyó XXII reunión de Jefes de Misiones Médicas, La Habana, Juventud Rebelde, Jul. 13, 2024.

[2] The Cuban Hospital, https://hamad.qa/EN/Hospitals-and-services/The-Cuban-Hospital/About/Pages/default.aspx?utm_source=chatgpt.com