

Trump Reinstates Tough U.S. Policy on Cuba, Ending Biden's Easing Measures

July 1, 2025

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WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump on Monday signed a directive bringing back strict U.S. restrictions on Cuba, reversing key steps taken by President Joe Biden to improve relations with the island nation.

The new policy once again bans Americans from traveling to Cuba for tourism. Even educational and humanitarian trips will face tighter controls, with travelers required to keep records of all expenses and activities for at least five years. The White House said regular audits will be carried out to ensure people follow the rules.

“The United States will not allow its money to support a regime that oppresses its own people,” the White House said in a statement.

The directive also renews a ban on financial transactions with businesses linked to the Cuban military, especially Grupo de Administración Empresarial S.A. (GAESA), a large company that manages much of Cuba’s tourism and retail sectors. Only transactions that directly help Cuban citizens or serve U.S. interests will be allowed.

Earlier this year, Trump had already reversed Biden’s decision to remove Cuba from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism. Monday’s move takes the policy further, signaling that the Trump administration plans to return to a strategy of maximum pressure.

Cuba quickly condemned the decision. Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez called it “a criminal act and a violation of human rights,” saying the restrictions worsen economic hardships and limit the country’s development.

Critics of the policy warn that the sanctions will mainly hurt everyday Cubans who rely on tourism and small business. They point to growing shortages of food, medicine, and basic goods as evidence that further isolation will deepen the crisis.

Supporters of the new measures, however, say they are necessary to weaken the Cuban government’s hold on the economy and to press for more freedom and democracy. Several Cuban-American lawmakers and advocacy groups praised Trump for taking a strong stand.

With this decision, the U.S. is returning to a policy of isolation that has shaped relations with Cuba for decades. The move will likely restart debates in Washington and at the United Nations over whether isolating Havana helps or harms the Cuban people and whether engagement or pressure is the best way forward.