

344 Cuban Medics Treat Earthquake Victims

By [Global Research](#)

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Global Research, January 16, 2010

[Cuba Support Group Ireland](#) 14 January
2010

There are 344 Cuban medics working in Haiti today, they have two improvised hospitals where they are providing services to the earthquake victims. Only two of them were injured in the earthquake, both of whom have received treatment for minor injuries and remain there to assist the disaster victims.

Cuban doctors are working in all 10 “departments” (administrative regions) of Haiti. They are assisted by approximately 400 Haitian medical interns who have completed medical degrees on full scholarships in Cuba.

Cuba has provided free public health care to the poor of Haiti since 1989 – the only public medicine available in that country. During the recent coup and subsequent US/French/Canadian invasion which deposed the Aristide presidency, Cuban doctors continued to provide medical care when other hospitals closed down and other doctors fled the country.

The Cuban government has offered condolences to the people of Haiti and pledged immediate additional medical assistance if the Haitian government requires it.

Cuba’s “Henry Reeve Contingent”, a volunteer contingent of 1,000 medics, fully equipped and entirely self sustaining for 30 days, can land on any airstrip in the world at 72 hours notice. Haiti is 32 miles from Cuba – members of the Henry Reeve Contingent could be there within hours of a request.

Cuban doctors will go where no doctor has gone before, live in conditions that no doctor has ever lived in before and deliver life saving medical care to people who have never even seen a doctor before. And they do all this for free. Each doctor feels privileged to be able to use their skills to help people who are in such desperate need of medical care. 35,000 Cuban medics currently provide healthcare in 78 countries around the world, more than the World Health Organisation and Medecins sans Frontiers put together.

Cuban doctors have unique experience of working in earthquake zones in third world countries without infrastructure. There are Cuban medics currently working on the frozen slopes of the Himalayas in Pakistan following their unmatched medical support provided during the 2005 Pakistan earthquake. Many hiked for days over mudslides to reach the isolated communities of the region to deliver medical assistance. To this day, Pakistanis parents in the earthquake region name their children after the Cuban doctors who helped deliver them.

For Further information contact:

Simon McGuinness,
National Coordinator,
Cuba Support Group Ireland,
15 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Ph: 087 6785842

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