



THE AGENCY FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

P.O Box 608, Kingstown, St Vincent and The Grenadines

Tel: (784) 456-1600, Fax (784) 456-2430

Email: apisvg2023@gmail.com

6/3/2025

CUBAN MEDICAL PERSONNEL PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN PROVIDING QUALITY HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves has reiterated that Cuban medical professionals who contribute significantly to the Ministry of Health in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) are not being exploited by their home country.

The Prime Minister made the statement on radio while addressing Secretary of State Marco Rubio's announcement that the United States of America (USA) will bar visas to foreign government officials who are part of the Cuban overseas medical program.

On Tuesday February 25th, 2025, Rubio announced that the USA was immediately imposing visa restrictions under the expanded policy on several people from Cuba's ally Venezuela and that immediate family members of sanctioned officials would also be affected.

Dr. Ralph Gonsalves said that as a result of the announcement, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) will attempt to hold a high-level meeting with the USA government to address the concerns that government has surrounding the employment of Cuban professionals in the region.

Dr. Gonsalves said that CARICOM's foreign ministers have met and it was decided that all the relevant information to address the USA's decision should be gathered.

The Prime Minister said that regional collaboration in relation to the Cuban Medical Brigade is important as CARICOM approaches the USA from a unified stance.

He said that Cuban medical professionals in SVG are paid at the same rate as local professionals, and that claims of exploitation are unwarranted.

Dr. Gonsalves also pointed out that the medical personnel in SVG and other places like Jamaica have received free education from Cuba, and as a result they contribute a small percentage of their salaries to support further medical education in their home country.

The Prime Minister said that the contribution is similar to standard practices in other nations like the USA, where students repay government loans or are subject to withholding taxes when working abroad.

Regarding healthcare services in SVG, Dr. Gonsalves highlighted the critical role that the Cuban professionals play, particularly in life-saving treatments such as haemodialysis at the Modern Medical and Diagnostic Complex in Georgetown.

He said that if these professionals are not at that facility to ensure continued access to haemodialysis, a lot of people can be prevented from accessing critical healthcare.

“I would prefer to lose my visa than to allow 60 Vincentians to die due to lack of medical care,” the Prime Minister commented.

--End--