

Cuba Uncovers Human Trafficking for Russia's War in Ukraine

By [AFP](#)

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Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez. **Ernesto Mastrascusa / EPA / TASS**

Cuba has identified an alleged human trafficking ring aimed at recruiting its citizens to fight in Russia's war in Ukraine, the foreign ministry said Monday.

The government was working to dismantle a "trafficking network that operates from Russia to incorporate Cuban citizens living there, and even some from Cuba, into the military forces involved in military operations in Ukraine," the ministry said in a statement.

The Cuban government had initiated criminal proceedings against those carrying out the trafficking, it added.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said in a post on X, formerly Twitter, that the government was "acting with the full force of the law" against trafficking operations.

"Cuba is not part of the war in Ukraine," the ministry said, adding it would take action against anyone "who participates in any form of human trafficking for the purpose of recruitment or mercenarism for Cuban citizens to use arms against any country."

There was no immediate reaction from Moscow.

On Friday, Miami's America TeVe newspaper published what it described as testimonies from two teenagers who said they had been tricked into working alongside the Russian army on construction sites in Ukraine.

In a video message posted on the newspaper's website, one of the teens called for help getting out as quickly as possible. America TeVe said the video message was sent from a bus transporting the pair from Ukraine to the Russian city Ryazan along with Russian servicemen.

"We can't sleep (because) at any moment they can come back and do something to us," said another young man, who claimed to have been beaten.

Another Cuban man told the media outlet that he had signed up with Moscow's armed forces hoping to legalize his status in Russia.

Moscow and Havana have boosted ties recently, with Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel meeting his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Moscow at the end of last year.

In June, Cuban Defense Minister Alvaro Lopez Miera was received by his counterpart Sergei Shoigu.

Ukraine said on Monday it had made some gains against Russian forces in the south and east as it pushes ahead with a highly scrutinized counteroffensive.

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