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Cuba Denies Participating in Ukraine War

By AFP

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The Cuban Foreign Ministry. **Whoisjohngalt / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 4.0**

Cuba on Saturday denied U.S. assertions that it is involved in the military conflict in Ukraine or had sent soldiers there.

Cuba "rejects the false accusations that the United States government is spreading about Cuba's alleged involvement in the military conflict in Ukraine," a statement from its Foreign Ministry said.

It said 26 Cubans had been sentenced to prison terms ranging from five to 14 years for mercenary activity since September 2023, when reports circulated of Cubans being sent to the front in Ukraine.

"We're aware of reports that Cuban nationals are fighting alongside Russian troops in the Russia-Ukraine war," a U.S. State Department spokesperson told AFP earlier this week.

"The Cuban regime has failed to protect its citizens from being used as pawns in the Russia-

Ukraine war."

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In May, a Ukrainian government initiative that encourages enemy combatants to surrender asserted that it had data on more than 1,000 Cuban mercenaries recruited by Russia since early 2023.

"We reliably know the names and personal details of 1,028 Cubans who signed contracts with the Russian Armed Forces in 2023–2024," the I Want to Live project stated.

Cuban authorities "do not have precise information about Cuban nationals" participating "on their own" or "in the military forces of both sides" in the war between Russia and Ukraine, the foreign ministry statement said.

"It is irrefutable that none of them have the encouragement, commitment or consent of the Cuban State for their actions," the ministry emphasized.

Relatives of Cubans who left for Russia in 2023 told AFP at the time that their loved ones had been deceptively recruited through advertisements on social media.

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