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# Russia Expected to Supply Cuba With Oil as 'Humanitarian Aid'

By AFP

February 12, 2026




Vehicles line up at a gas station in Havana, Cuba. **EPA / TASS**

Russia is expected to supply Cuba with oil as part of a "humanitarian" effort, the pro-government Izvestia newspaper reported Thursday.

Cuba is currently suffering its worst energy crisis in years, driven largely by the United States throttling supplies of Venezuelan oil.

The Russian Embassy in Cuba told Izvestia that "as far as we know, Russia is expected to supply oil and petroleum products to Cuba as humanitarian aid in the near future."

On Monday, the Kremlin, a traditional ally of Cuba, accused the United States of attempting to "suffocate" the island nation.

Already under U.S. trade embargo for over 60 years, Cuba is struggling with fast-dwindling fuel stocks and taking drastic rationing measures, including preventing airlines from

refueling.

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Several foreign airlines have dropped routes in response, while governments, including Russia's, have called on their citizens to avoid travelling to the island until the issue is resolved.

On Wednesday, Russia's federal aviation regulator Rosaviatsia said in a statement that difficulties refueling had "forced" Rossiya Airlines and Nordwind Airlines to adjust their flight schedules to Cuba.

"Rossiya Airlines will operate a number of return flights only — from Havana and Varadero to Moscow — to ensure the evacuation of Russian tourists currently in Cuba," it added.

Around 5,000 Russian tourists may still be on the island, Russia's Association of Tour Operators said earlier this week.

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