



Cuban Doctors

Human Rights Litigation

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CUBAN DOCTORS TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION FOR ITS ROLE IN CUBA'S TRAFFICKING OPERATIONS

"Mais Medicos" Doctors Join to Fight for Basic Human Rights and Fair Wages

MIAMI (November 30, 2018) – Doctors from the “*Mais Medicos*” program in Brazil today filed a federal lawsuit against the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for its role in trafficking thousands of Cuban doctors and other health care professionals. They were sent to Brazil as part of a “foreign medical mission,” under conditions that violate U.S. and international laws against forced labor.

“The courageous doctors are stepping out after years of silence to show how PAHO sponsored, managed, and profited from an elaborate and illegal scheme with Cuba and Brazil under the ‘*Mais Medicos*’ program,” said the lead plaintiff attorney Sam Dubbin. “There is no other way to describe *Mais Medicos* other than calling it what it is: modern day slavery.”

According to official documents, the Cuban doctors saw less than 10 percent of monies paid by Brazil for their services and the rest was kept by PAHO and the Cuban government. Over the past five years alone, PAHO pocketed more than \$75 million for itself through ‘*Mais Medicos*,’ and sent approximately \$1.3 billion to Cuba through US bank accounts.

“We thought we were in the business of healing and helping others, now we ask for someone to look out for us. We work too hard to forgo basic human rights and wages,” said Dr. Ramona Matos, a Cuban doctor who escaped Brazil’s *Mais Medicos* program.

“We're simply asking for the full compensation that we earned, and we hope this case will expose Cuba's terrible practice of abusing its doctors in other foreign missions.”

Cuba's exploitation of its citizens in foreign missions to generate foreign exchange is well-documented. This is the first known example of an international organization, operating under the umbrella of the World Health Organization and the United Nations, acting as a key partner in one of Cuba's human trafficking schemes that violate long-settled rules of international law.

“This case represents a clear path to justice for these deserving physicians,” said Jonathan Cuneo, co-counsel for the Cuban Doctors.

The Pan American Health Organization, the Cuban government, and a private Cuban corporation created as a front for the Cuban government have been working in cahoots to recruit the doctors under political pressure and threats to their and their families' economic well-being. The program then ships them to other countries without informing them of their responsibilities, or the location of their work. They are restricted from traveling to and from Brazil, and even within Brazil, and they are under constant oversight by Cuban intelligence operatives who are employed by PAHO in Brazil.

Dr. Tatiana Carballo Gomez added, “We were forced to go to Brazil, we were cheated, and we were exploited for our expertise. No one wants to live as a slave, regardless of whether or not you make money. We are coming forward for ourselves, and for all of those who deserve justice.”

The Plaintiffs' attorneys will move to certify this case as a class action to make available to the thousands of Cuban doctors and other health care professionals who are living now in the United States.

For more information, please visit <https://cubandoctorshumanrights.com/>.

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ABOUT CUBAN DOCTORS HUMAN RIGHTS TEAM

The Plaintiffs' law firms, Cuneo Gilbert & LaDuca, LLP and Dubbin & Kravetz, LLP, successfully represented Hungarian Holocaust Survivors seeking restitution and an accounting against the United States government in the Hungarian Gold Train case, Rosner v. United States of America. After five years of litigation, the government agreed to a settlement providing \$25 million for medical care, food, and other emergency needs of indigent Hungarian Holocaust survivors throughout the world.