

US Sanctions against Cuba. US Cruise Lines Begin to Withdraw. Sea Crossings to Cuba from the US are Declared “Illegal”

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As international condemnation of the latest U.S. sanctions continues to grow, three cruise lines operating on the island began to withdraw and apologize to their guests for changes in itineraries, with some 800,000 passengers affected

As international condemnation of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on Cuba June 5 continues to grow, the measures have already had an impact. Three of the four U.S. cruise lines operating on the island, began to withdraw and apologize to their guests for changes in itineraries. The largest cruise ship operator in the world, Carnival, well known for its customary stops in Cuban ports, informed clients that it was forced to cancel visits to Havana and apologized for “the unexpected change.”

Thus customers who were on board the Carnival Sensation, which departed two days before the ban and was set to travel to Havana, was obliged to continue on to Cozumel, Mexico. The company said it regretted the change and recognized Havana as a “unique destination,” offering “a full refund” to those who decided to cancel the trip.

According to Prensa Latina, Royal Caribbean Cruises said it would adjust departure itineraries planned for June 5 and 6, since “they will not stop in Cuba.”

The president of the International Association of Cruise Lines (CLIA), **Adam Goldstein**, said he was disappointed and reported that almost 800,000 passenger reservations currently scheduled, or in progress, will be impacted, with the Association’s member companies forced to eliminate all Cuban destinations on their itineraries immediately, since the new travel restrictions “make sea crossings to Cuba from the United States illegal”.

“For its part, the United States-Cuba Business Council, affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, called for respecting freedom of travel, while the Engage Cuba coalition said that the sanctions represent an attack on a fundamental right of citizens and that Cubans should not be used” as political pawns.

“The executive director of the Center for Democracy in the Americas, Emily Mendrala, described the new measures as a step backward, “which will only undermine the commercial interests of the United States and further divide Cuban families.

“Meanwhile, U.S. **Senator Patrick Leahy** (D-Vermont) announced that he will introduce the “Freedom for Americans to Travel to Cuba Act,” calling the latest sanctions “dumb,” and hypocritical, since Washington has serious differences with other countries and does not prohibit U.S. citizens from visiting them.

Leahy recalled that an overwhelming majority of the U.S. people oppose these prohibitions, saying,

“I urge all Senators to not let the same old, worn out, Cold War, isolationist, fear mongering, failed arguments about Cuba stand in the way of common sense.” Cubans chose a path 150 years ago. While others choose to hate and destroy, this people will continue to belong – with the truth on our side – to the band of those who “love and create” as José Martí would say.

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Featured image: The Cuban people demand an end to the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the United States. Source: Granma Archives

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