

U.S. policy is contributing to a severe humanitarian crisis in Cuba. In 2021, President Trump re-added Cuba to the [State Sponsors of Terrorism List](#). The list was intended as a tool for the state department to identify and sanction countries that “repeatedly provide... support for acts of international terrorism.” Countries designated as State Sponsors of Terrorism (SSOT) are subject to sanctions on U.S. foreign aid, exports of defense and dual-use items, and financial transactions.

Cuba is listed as a state sponsor of terrorism even though it does not provide support for international terrorism. In fact, Cuba continues to make international commitments to combat terrorism, has ratified numerous international [counterterrorism conventions](#), and has signed a [bilateral agreement](#) with the United States on counterterrorism. Cuba has [worked with the U.S. on other efforts](#) as well and provided access to Cuban air space so the US could deliver aid to the Haitian people. Cuba [has been lauded](#) by the Colombian government for its help with their peace negotiations. **Cuba should not be on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list.**

Unfortunately, some members of Congress want to enshrine Cuba’s SSOT listing into law. The FORCE Act, introduced in both the House and Senate, would bar the president from removing Cuba from the SSOT list unless Cuba meets a list of human rights conditions.

The sanctions associated with an SSOT listing are deadly for the Cuban people. Our Cuban Presbyterian partners have told us stories about doctors who must choose which children will receive cancer treatment because there are not enough drugs for everyone. Cubans are turned away from medical procedures because there is no equipment and from jobs in bakeries because there is no flour. These shortages are caused by U.S.-imposed restrictions on exporting to Cuba.

The SSOT list is a major obstacle for churches that want to send humanitarian aid to address these shortages. Due to U.S. sanctions, it took a year for a shipment of syringes from Presbyterians in the United States to reach Cuba. Many banks over-comply with the regulation and refuse to send humanitarian aid to Cuba, even though sending humanitarian aid is legal.

The SSOT designation was not intended to be a human rights tool. When President Obama lifted restrictions on Cuba in 2015, the Cuban economy and human rights flourished. A strategy of engagement with Cuba would provide much-needed humanitarian support to the Cuban people and could open the door for diplomacy focused on human rights.

Instead, the FORCE Act would punish the Cuban people and make it impossible for the president to relieve the unfair sanctions on them. **Tell your members of Congress not to co-sponsor the FORCE Act and to vote no on it if it comes up for a vote.**