

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 25, 2022

Samantha Tate
Division Chief for USMCA Monitoring and Enforcement
Office of Trade and Labor Affairs, Bureau of International Labor Affairs
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Ms. Tate,

We are writing to request your consideration of a formal investigation into Mexico's cooperation with the Cuban regime in promoting human trafficking. Specifically, Mexico's official use of Cuban foreign medical personnel violates the anti-human trafficking and labor provisions in Chapter 23 of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Therefore, we believe that this trafficking scheme should be examined to uphold the integrity of this historic agreement.

According to the U.S. State Department, Cuba's international medical missions are a form of human trafficking and modern-day slavery. Cuba is currently ranked Tier 3 on the State Department's *2021 Trafficking in Persons Report*¹, the lowest possible ranking reserved for those countries violating international trafficking agreements with no intention to improve. This report explicitly cites the Cuban regime's export of forced labor through medical professional exchange agreements as a violation of trafficking standards. Cuban doctors are paid pennies compared to doctors from any other country, are forced to sign contracts against their will, and their families may be put at risk if they do not comply.

The USMCA is the gold standard among trade deals and has strong provisions to uphold labor standards and human rights. Specifically, Chapter 23² (Labor) of the agreement directly cites "combatting forced labor and human trafficking" as an area in which the parties should engage, cooperate, and hold each other accountable. It also notes that the parties, including the United States and Mexico, "recognize the goal of eliminating all forms of coerced or compulsory labor" and "shall prohibit the importation of goods into its territory" produced with forced labor, and that these parties "shall establish cooperation for the identification and movement of goods produced by forced labor." These provisions must be rigorously enforced to ensure the United States is upholding our part of this agreement and human rights standards.

¹ 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Cuba; <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/cuba/>

² USMCA Chapter 23, Labor: <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/agreements/FTA/USMCA/Text/23-Labor.pdf>

Therefore, we are requesting that the USMCA Monitoring and Enforcement Office consider opening an official investigation into this issue, coordinating directly with the Bureau of International Labor Affairs, the Department of State, the Department of Commerce, the United States Trade Representative, and any other relevant agencies. Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this request, consistent with applicable agency guidelines, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Carlos Gimenez
Member of Congress