
Cuba criticizes Canada's diplomatic downsize after another diplomat falls ill

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The Cuban government is criticizing Canada's decision on Wednesday to halve its embassy staff after a 14th Canadian fell ill to an unexplained illness in Havana.

Josefina Vidal, Cuba's ambassador to Canada, says that reducing embassy personnel in Havana will do nothing to help find the cause of a mysterious ailment that has affected Canadian and American diplomats.

Canada and Cuba have been co-operating to find the cause to the mysterious set of circumstances, but the Americans have criticized the Cubans over the matter, walking back major improvements in their strained relations that had begun under former U.S. president Barack Obama.

Vidal said that "Canada's decision made public today is incomprehensible."

She said the decision will "not help find answers to the health symptoms reported by Canadian diplomats, and which will have an impact on the relations."

'Crickets'

The Cuban envoy said that is not how her government sees it.

"This behaviour favours those who in the United States use this issue to attack and denigrate Cuba," said Vidal.

The Cuban government has said the Trump administration is using the issue to roll back new measures instituted by the Obama administration to re-engage with its Caribbean island neighbour after five decades of tensions dating back to the height of the Cold War.

The U.S. withdrew most of its non-essential diplomatic staff in September 2017 but Canada did not.

