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OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Indictment of Raúl Castro; Statewide Prosecution Partnership with U.S. Department of Justice



Courtesy of the Office of the Attorney General

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier joined Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, FBI Deputy Director Christopher Raia, and United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida to announce the indictment of Raúl Castro for the 1996 murders of Brothers to the Rescue volunteers Carlos Costa, Armando Alejandro Jr., Mario de la Peña, and Pablo Morales.

“On February 24, 1996, Raúl Castro and his criminal gang murdered Americans and our fellow Floridians,” **said Attorney General James Uthmeier.** “Upon taking office in 2025, I directed our Statewide Prosecutors to reopen a previously closed case file on Raúl Castro. Working hand-in-hand with United States Attorney Jason Reding Quiñones and his team at the U.S. Attorney’s Office, accountability starts here, in Florida, with this indictment.”

According to the indictment, Raúl Castro, then Minister of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, authorized and oversaw a military chain of command that ended with Cuban fighter jets firing air-to-air missiles at civilian aircraft over international waters.

As part of their conspiracy, Castro and the Communist Cuban regime violated Florida's sovereignty with spies operating in at least the Eleventh and Sixteenth Judicial Circuits of Florida. Those spies provided the intelligence that put the Brothers to the Rescue in the crosshairs of the MiG-29s.

On February 24, 1996, three unarmed U.S. civilian aircraft operated by Brothers to the Rescue left Opa-Locka Airport in Miami-Dade County. On the same day, MiG fighter jets operated by the Cuban Revolutionary Air and Air Defense Force destroyed two of the aircraft, killing four United States nationals, including three United States citizens.

At the time of their destruction, the two aircraft were flying outside of Cuban territory, over international waters, and traveling away from Cuba. Despite their contact with the Havana air traffic control tower, the Cuban military did not provide the Brothers to the Rescue aircraft with any warning of the imminent destruction of their aircraft. After the Castro Regime shot down the two aircraft, they followed the third, but that aircraft escaped.

The indictment announced today will be prosecuted under the authority of the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida in partnership with the Office of Statewide Prosecution.

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