

CUBA 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cuba is an authoritarian state with former president Raul Castro serving as the first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party, the highest political entity of the state by law, and Miguel Diaz-Canel serving as president of the republic. A new constitution ratified in February 2019 codifies that Cuba remains a one-party system in which the Communist Party is the only legal political party. Elections were neither free nor fair nor competitive.

The Ministry of Interior controls police, internal security forces, and the prison system. The ministry's National Revolutionary Police are the primary law enforcement organization. Specialized units of the ministry's state security branch are responsible for monitoring, infiltrating, and suppressing independent political activity. The national leadership, including members of the military, maintained effective control over the security forces. Members of the security forces committed numerous abuses.

Significant human rights issues included: unlawful or arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings, by the government; forced disappearance by the government; torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of political dissidents, detainees, and prisoners by security forces; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrests and detentions; political prisoners; significant problems with the independence of the judiciary; and arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy. Freedom of the press functionally did not exist. Criminal libel laws were used against persons who criticized government leadership. The government engaged in censorship and internet site blocking, and there were severe limitations on academic and cultural freedom. There were severe restrictions on the right of peaceful assembly and denial of freedom of association, including refusal to recognize independent associations. There were severe restrictions on religious freedom. There were restrictions on internal and external freedom of movement. Citizens were unable to change their government through free and fair elections. Political participation was restricted to members of

CUBA

regulations specific to these kinds of entities. Government bodies, including the tax collection agency and the Ministry of Finance and Prices, enforced regulations.

On July 6, a total of 13 military personnel were hospitalized and 1,245 persons near La Pua were evacuated after old ammunition exploded in a military facility in Holguin. Following the initial major explosions, workers in nearby fields continued to feel several small explosions throughout the day. They received no information about the cause or the response from the government or military.

The CTC provided only limited information to workers about their rights and at times did not respond to or assist workers who complained about hazardous workplace conditions. It was generally understood that workers could not remove themselves from dangerous situations without jeopardizing their employment, and authorities did not effectively protect workers facing this dilemma.