

# **GUYANA 2022 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Cooperative Republic of Guyana is a multiparty democracy. National and regional elections took place in March 2020, and the People's Progressive Party/Civic won both the presidency and a majority of representational seats. International and local observers considered the elections free and fair. The incumbent government at the time contested the results of the national elections, leading to a five-month electoral impasse that concluded with the swearing in of the People's Progressive Party/Civic government in August 2020.

The police commissioner heads the Guyana Police Force, which reports to the Ministry of Home Affairs and is responsible for maintaining internal security. The Guyana Defense Force is responsible for external security but also has some domestic security responsibilities. The defense force, headed by a chief of staff, falls under the purview of the Defense Board, which the president of the country chairs. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the security forces. There were reports that members of the security forces committed abuses.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: unlawful or arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings; laws that criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adult men, which were not enforced; and existence of the worst forms of child labor.

The government took steps to identify, prosecute, and punish officials who committed human rights abuses or engaged in corruption.

## **Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person**

### **a. Arbitrary Deprivation of Life and Other Unlawful or Politically Motivated Killings**

There were several reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. The Police Complaints Authority investigates whether security force killings were justifiable, and Department of Public Prosecutions pursues

prosecutions.

In May police shot and killed Deanraj Singh. Police officials alleged that Singh was killed during an exchange of gunfire with police. As of October 31, police were investigating the case.

In June police shot and killed Quindon Bacchus. According to police officials, Bacchus was the subject of an undercover investigation regarding the purchase of black-market firearms. During the operation, Bacchus shot at the officers, who returned fire, resulting in Bacchus's death. In July authorities arrested police officer Kristoff Denobrega and charged him with the murder of Bacchus. As of October 31, no date had been set for his trial.

As of October, the inquest ordered by the Department of Public Prosecutions regarding the May 2021 killing of Peter Headley had not been held.

## **b. Disappearance**

There were no reports of disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities.

## **c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and Other Related Abuses**

The law prohibits such practices. There were allegations that prison officials mistreated inmates.

### **Prison and Detention Center Conditions**

Prison and jail conditions, particularly in police holding cells, were reportedly harsh and potentially life threatening due to overcrowding, prisoner-on-prisoner violence, physical abuse, and inadequate sanitary conditions.

**Abusive Physical Conditions:** In September, the Guyana Prison Service reported there were 2,073 prisoners in seven facilities with a combined design capacity of 1,373. Overcrowding was in large part due to a backlog of pretrial detainees, who constituted approximately 27 percent of the total prison population.

Prisoners reported unsanitary conditions and a lack of potable water, and they also

complained of lengthy confinement in their cells with limited opportunities for exposure to sunlight.

In 2018 the government reported a study finding that prison officers physically abused prisoners and that prison conditions at Lusignan Prison were appalling and cells were unfit for human habitation. The government conducted human rights training for 14 prison officers during the year to address the problem of abuse of inmates by prison officials.

One death occurred due to injuries inflicted by other inmates.

The adult prison population contained individuals age 16 and older. In most cases, offenders younger than 16 were held in a juvenile correctional center that offered primary education, vocational training, and basic medical care.

**Administration:** Authorities stated officers in charge of each prison location conducted weekly meetings with prisoners' complaints committees to hear concerns. Prisoners often circumvented procedures for submitting complaints of inhuman conditions or mistreatment by passing letters addressed to government officials through family members.

**Independent Monitoring:** The government permitted outside groups to monitor prison conditions independently.

#### **d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention**

The law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention and provides for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of his or her arrest or detention in court. The government generally observed these requirements.

#### **Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees**

An arrest requires a warrant issued by a court official unless an officer who witnesses a crime believes there is good cause to suspect a crime or a breach of the peace was or will be committed. The law stipulates that a person arrested cannot be held for more than 72 hours unless brought before a court to be charged. Authorities generally observed this requirement. Bail was generally available except in cases of capital offenses and narcotics trafficking.

Although the law provides criminal detainees prompt access to a lawyer of their choice and to family members, authorities occasionally did not fully respect this right.

The state provides legal counsel for indigent persons only when such persons are charged with a capital offense. The Legal Aid Clinic, a nongovernmental organization (NGO), provides legal counsel at a reduced fee in certain circumstances, as determined by the clinic. Police routinely required permission from the senior investigating officer, who was seldom on the premises, before permitting counsel access to a client.

**Arbitrary Arrest:** There were reports of arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention. In 2021 the Police Complaints Authority issued its report covering 2019, which found most police officers interviewed were ignorant of constitutional provisions regarding arrests and searches. The report noted that a substantial number of members of the police force under investigation for abuses openly violated the constitution in the performance of their duties.

**Pretrial Detention:** Lengthy pretrial detention remained a problem, due primarily to judicial inefficiency, staff shortages, and cumbersome legal procedures. The average length of pretrial detention was three years for those awaiting trial at a magistrates' court or the High Court. This often exceeded the maximum possible sentence for the crime for which they were charged. In July the High Court freed Raymond Jones, a man accused of murder, after Jones was in pretrial detention for more than nine calendar years (15 partial or full years in prison).

## **e. Denial of Fair Public Trial**

The law provides for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected judicial independence and impartiality.

Delays and inefficiencies undermined judicial due process. Shortages of trained court personnel, postponements at the request of the defense or prosecution, occasional allegations of bribery, poor tracking of cases, and police slowness in preparing cases for trial caused delays.

## **Trial Procedures**

The law provides for the right to a fair and public trial, and the judiciary generally enforced this right.

While the law recognizes the right to legal counsel, it was limited to those who could afford to pay, except in cases involving capital crimes. Although there is no formal public defender system, a defendant in a murder case that reaches the High Court may receive a court-appointed attorney.

## **Political Prisoners and Detainees**

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

## **Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies**

Individuals and organizations may access the court system to initiate lawsuits seeking damages for, or cessation of, human rights abuses. Plaintiffs have the right to appeal adverse domestic decisions to the Caribbean Court of Justice.

### **f. Arbitrary or Unlawful Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence**

The law generally prohibits such actions, and there were no reports that the government failed to respect these prohibitions.

## **Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties**

### **a. Freedom of Expression, Including for Members of the Press and Other Media**

The constitution provides for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, and the government generally respected this right. An independent media, an effective judiciary, and a functioning democratic political system combined to promote freedom of expression, including for members of the media. Independent news media were active and expressed a wide variety of views without restriction. The ruling party's monopoly of state media created an imbalance in public discourse and tended to give the party a public affairs

advantage, since the opposition did not have an outlet of its own.

**Libel/Slander Laws:** Defamatory libel is a crime punishable by imprisonment of three years or less. The law was not enforced.

### **Internet Freedom**

The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content, and there were no credible reports that the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority.

### **b. Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and Association**

The law provides for the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association, and the government generally respected these rights.

### **c. Freedom of Religion**

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

### **d. Freedom of Movement and the Right to Leave the Country**

The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these related rights.

Married, divorced, or widowed women must fill out additional passport application sections that are not required of men, regardless of marital status.

**In-country Movement:** The law requires that local village councils grant permission in advance for travel to indigenous areas, but most individuals traveled in these areas without a permit.

### **e. Protection of Refugees**

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern.

**Access to Asylum:** The law does not provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has not established a system for providing protection for refugees. The government is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention on Refugees or the 1967 Protocol on Refugees. In the absence of national legislation and requisite government capacity, UNHCR assumed the main responsibility for determination of refugee status.

**Temporary Protection:** The government provided temporary protection to individuals who may not qualify as refugees. The number of persons receiving the protection during the year was not available.

### **Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process**

The law provides citizens the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal and equal suffrage. Elections also take place within indigenous communities, where members elect indigenous leaders every 33 to 36 months.

#### **Elections and Political Participation**

**Recent Elections:** National elections were held in March 2020, triggered by a no-confidence vote in December 2018 against the ruling A Partnership for National Unity + Alliance for Change (APNU+AFC) coalition government and following several rounds of litigation initiated by both APNU+AFC and the then opposition People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C). Claims of electoral fraud and the APNU+AFC coalition's refusal to accept its loss of the elections led to a national recount and litigation in the Caribbean Court of Justice, the country's court of final instance. The PPP/C won by a margin of 15,000 votes, and Mohamed Irfaan Ali of the PPP/C was installed as president in August 2020. The general elections resulted in the return of the PPP/C to government after a five-year hiatus from a previous 23-year administration. International observers concluded the 2020 elections were free and fair.

**Participation of Women and Members of Minority Groups:** No laws limit participation of women or members of minority groups in the political process, and they did participate.

## **Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government**

The law provides for criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There were isolated reports of government corruption during the year, and administration officials investigated these reports. There remained a widespread public perception of corruption involving officials at all levels and all branches of government, including the judiciary and police.

**Corruption:** Corruption by police officers was frequent. In August, police officer Dion Bascom alleged that a businessman bribed members of the Guyana Police Force to foil an investigation into an execution-style killing of Ricardo Fagundes, a gold miner. As of October, police had not investigated Bascom's claims.

## **Section 5. Governmental Posture Towards International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights**

Several domestic human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. These groups at times complained government officials were uncooperative and unresponsive to their requests. They stated that when officials responded, it was generally to criticize the groups rather than to investigate allegations.

**Government Human Rights Bodies:** The law provides for an ombudsperson to investigate official government actions or actions taken by government officials in exercise of their official duties. Observers reported the ombudsperson operated independently of government interference, and they considered the ombudsman to be somewhat effective.

## **Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses**

### **Women**

**Rape and Domestic Violence:** The law criminalizes rape of men or women,



including spousal rape, and domestic violence. The law provides stringent penalties for rape, with life imprisonment as the maximum penalty. Successful prosecution of domestic violence cases was infrequent. As of September, police reported that only 48 percent of reports of rape resulted in criminal charges. Authorities stated rape cases countrywide decreased by nearly 40 percent, compared with the same period in 2021.

Domestic violence and gender-based violence, including spousal abuse, was widespread. The law prohibits domestic violence and allows victims to seek prompt protection, occupation, or tenancy orders from a magistrate. Penalties for violation of protection orders include fines and 12 months' imprisonment. The law was not enforced effectively. There were reports of police accepting bribes from perpetrators and of magistrates applying inadequate sentences after conviction. In other instances, police noted that cases were dropped after the victim refused to proceed with charges or support the evidence collection.

**Sexual Harassment:** The law prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace and provides for monetary penalties and award of damages to survivors. The law does not cover harassment in schools. Acts of sexual harassment involving physical assault are prosecuted under relevant criminal statutes. While reports of sexual harassment were common, no cases had been filed as of October.

**Reproductive Rights:** There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

The government provided access to sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of sexual violence. Emergency contraception was available as part of clinical management of rape as well as for purposes of family planning.

Geographical circumstances remained the primary barrier to access health care, including emergency health care, specifically in the interior regions. The World Health Organization reported the country had a maternal mortality rate of 169 deaths per 100,000 live births. Primary causes for maternal death included poor obstetric performance, malaria, poor nutrition, and infrequent access to prenatal care among some women in remote areas due to inadequate transportation. A 2017 UNICEF study reported anecdotally that maternal mortality rates for the

indigenous community, irrespective of location, were higher than for the rest of the population but did not have qualitative data to support the data. UNICEF data from 2017 indicated that the rate of adolescent pregnancy within the indigenous community, 148 per thousand, was double the national average of 74 per thousand.

**Discrimination:** Although the law provides women the same legal status and rights as men, gender-related discrimination was widespread and deeply ingrained. The law prohibits discrimination based on gender, but there was no meaningful enforcement against such discrimination in the workplace. Job vacancy notices routinely specified that the employer sought only male or only female applicants, and women earned approximately 58 percent less than men for equal work.

## **Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination**

The law prohibits discrimination based on race or national origin, and the government enforced the provision. The political party system was overwhelmingly race based, with Indo-Guyanese forming most of the government and Afro-Guyanese forming the majority of the opposition as well as the civil service. Members of both ethnicities held senior leadership positions of the government.

A constitutionally mandated and broadly based Ethnic Relations Commission, a government body with a mandate to promote ethnic harmony among all citizens, was not fully constituted as of October.

## **Indigenous Peoples**

Various laws protect the rights of the indigenous community, and members had some ability to participate in decisions affecting them, their land, and resources. Rules enacted by village councils require approval from the minister of Amerindian affairs before entering into force. The government has the authority to override village councils when issuing mining concessions. There were reports of interference by government officials in the affairs of indigenous peoples' councils, as well as of labor exploitation and harassment. Indigenous lands were not effectively demarcated. The Amerindian People's Association reported difficulty securing meetings with government ministers on land titling matters.

## Children

**Birth Registration:** Citizenship is derived by birth within the country's territory or by birth to a citizen abroad. The law requires that births be registered within 14 days but also provides for registration of births after the 14-day period. Births at hospitals and health facilities were registered within a day of delivery.

Registration was provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.

**Child Abuse:** The law prohibits abuse of children, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation. There were frequent, widespread reports of physical and sexual abuse of children. As with cases of domestic abuse, NGOs alleged some police officers could be bribed to make cases of child abuse "go away."

**Child, Early, and Forced Marriage:** The legal age for marriage is 18, but boys and girls may marry at age 16 with parental consent or judicial authority.

**Sexual Exploitation of Children:** The law prohibits the commercial sexual exploitation of children age 18 and younger and stipulates penalties commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. There were continued reports of children being trafficked in commercial sex. Laws related to pornography and pornographic performances do not prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of a child for each of these purposes. The law also regulates selling, publishing, or exhibiting obscene material, defined as anything that could deprave or corrupt those open to immoral influences. The age of sexual consent is 16. By law, a person who has sexual relations with a child younger than 16 may be found guilty of a felony and imprisoned for life.

## Antisemitism

Excluding expatriates, the Jewish community had fewer than five members. There were no reports of antisemitic acts.

## Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

## **Acts of Violence, Criminalization, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression, or Sex Characteristics**

**Criminalization:** Consensual same-sex sexual activity among men is illegal and is punishable by up to two years in prison. Anal intercourse is punishable with a maximum sentence of life in prison, regardless of whether the intercourse is between persons of the same sex. These laws were not enforced, and there were no reports of arrests.

**Violence against LGBTQI+ Persons:** A leading lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) NGO reported frequent acts of violence by nonstate actors against members of the LGBTQI+ community. The NGO noted that police seldomly investigated these reports.

**Discrimination:** No specific antidiscrimination legislation exists to protect persons from discrimination based on real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics. Legislation to protect persons from discrimination based on gender at birth, age, race, religion, marital status, political persuasion, disability, or social status applies to LGBTQI+ individuals. NGOs reported widespread discrimination of persons in this regard.

Reports noted continued official and social discrimination in employment, access to education and medical care, and in public spaces. A law criminalizing cross dressing was repealed in 2021, but NGOs reported persistent discrimination against transgender persons in employment.

**Availability of Legal Gender Recognition:** The law does not provide for legal gender recognition.

**Involuntary or Coercive Medical or Psychological Practices Specifically Targeting LGBTQI+ Individuals:** There were no reports of so-called conversion therapy, including forced or involuntary, in an attempt to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, nor of the practice of performing unnecessary surgeries on intersex persons. There were no reports that government or medical associations condemned these practices.

### **Restrictions of Freedom of Expression, Association, or Peaceful Assembly:**

The law does not restrict the freedom of expression, association, or peaceful assembly of LGBTQI+ organizations. In June, the government permitted the LGBTQI+ community to host a pride festival, including a pride parade. Nevertheless, LGBTQI+ NGOs reported that fear of abuse and intimidation prevented them from developing their membership.

### **Persons with Disabilities**

The law calls for the formulation of policies regarding access to education, health services, and public buildings for persons with disabilities. Children with disabilities in the most populous areas attended mainstream or special education schools, while the majority of those living in rural areas did not have the ability to attend school as there were no specialized programs or special needs curricula in mainstream education. Special education schools used a primary school curriculum, irrespective of age, and students did not receive certification upon graduation. In June, the government announced a one-time public assistance payment of 100,000 Guyanese dollars (\$465) for children with disabilities.

The public health-care system was accessible to persons with disabilities. Most public buildings were inaccessible to persons with disabilities, but new schools were being built with ramps and elevators. Some information from the government was provided in accessible formats, including sign language, audio, and braille. The transportation system, based on privately owned minibuses, was not accessible to persons with physical disabilities.

There were reports of private abuse by family members against persons with disabilities. Government officials did not condone violence, harassment, intimidation, or abuses against persons with disabilities.

There were reports of private discrimination against persons with disabilities in attaining employment and housing.

### **Other Societal Violence or Discrimination**

Local activists noted continued stigma against individuals with HIV or AIDS. A 2014 UNICEF survey reported only 23 percent of persons ages 15 to 49 expressed

accepting attitudes towards individuals with HIV.

## **Section 7. Worker Rights**

### **a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining**

The law provides for the right of association and allows workers to form and join trade unions, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes. The law bars military and paramilitary members from forming a union or associating with any established union. The law prohibits antiunion discrimination by employers but does not specifically require reinstatement of workers fired for union activity.

The Ministry of Labor is required to certify all collective bargaining agreements. Individual unions directly negotiate collective bargaining status.

By law, unions must have 40 percent support of workers, a provision the International Labor Organization (ILO) criticized. The government may declare strikes illegal if the union leadership does not approve them or if the union does not meet the requirements specified in collective bargaining agreements. Public employees providing essential services may strike if they provide a one-month notice to the Ministry of Public Service and leave a skeleton staff in place. The ILO noted that public contracts do not contain required labor clauses.

The ILO noted that not all sectors deemed essential by the government adhered to international definitions, including the services provided by the Transport and Harbors Department and the National Drainage and Irrigation Board. Arbitration is compulsory for public employees, and such employees engaging in illegal strikes are subject to sanctions or imprisonment.

The government did not effectively enforce applicable laws. Penalties for violation of labor laws are small fines that the government frequently did not impose. Penalties were commensurate with those for other laws involving denials of civil rights. Administrative and judicial proceedings regarding violations often were subject to lengthy delays and appeals.

Some public-sector employee unions continued to allege antiunion discrimination by the government, asserting the government violated worker rights and did not

effectively enforce the law. The unions were concerned that employers used hiring practices such as contract labor and temporary labor to avoid hiring workers with bargaining rights. For example, the National Mines Workers Union of Guyana advocated on behalf of oil and gas workers to raise complaints with the Ministry of Labor that citizens received less favorable contracts and lower pay than Trinidadian nationals.

The Guyana Public Service Union reported instances of political interference in the union and government attempts to pressure some members to leave the union. In July, the union filed suit against the government, the country's largest employer, for failing to participate in required collective bargaining on public-servant wages, salaries, and allowances despite repeated requests since 2020.

## **b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor**

The law criminally prohibits forced labor. Penalties for forced labor include forfeiture of property gained as a result of the forced labor, restitution to the victim, and imprisonment. Administrative labor law penalties are small monetary fines, deemed insufficient to deter violations and rarely enforced. The ILO recommended that the government review and update its labor and immigration legislation to protect internationally recognized worker rights due to increasing numbers of migrants arriving from Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, Suriname, and Venezuela.

Country experts reported that forced and compulsory labor occurred in the gold mining, agriculture, and forestry sectors, as well as in domestic servitude. Children were particularly vulnerable to human trafficking, including forced labor (see section 7.c.).

Also see the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

## **c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment**

See the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>.

#### **d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation**

The law prohibits discrimination with respect to employment and occupation based on race, sex, gender, disability, language, social status, and national origin or citizenship. Penalties were commensurate with laws related to civil rights. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to women and to persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, and workplace access was limited for persons with disabilities (see section 6). Newspapers frequently carried advertisements seeking gender-specific or age-specific applicants to fill positions in the retail, cosmetology, or security sectors.

#### **e. Acceptable Conditions of Work**

**Wage and Hour Laws:** The law provides for a national minimum wage, but there is a different minimum wage rate for the public sector and private sector. Minimum wage rates are set through Minimum Wages Orders made under the Labor Act and Wages Council Act. In sectors not covered by the act, wages may be agreed upon by individual or collective agreement. Minimum wages for regular working hours of all full-time, private-sector employees are set nationally for hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly workers. The national minimum wage for regular working hours of full-time, public-sector employees was above the poverty line. A normal workweek is 40 hours, distributed over no more than five days per week. The law prohibits compulsory overtime, and overtime work must be paid according to rates set in the law or according to any collective bargaining agreement in force where workers are unionized. There is provision for overtime pay.

Alleged violations of wage, hour, or overtime laws were common in the mining, oil and gas, and logging sectors.

**Occupational Safety and Health:** Occupational safety and health (OSH) standards are not appropriate for the main industries, and government did not effectively enforce OSH laws. The law provides that some categories of workers have the right to remove themselves from unsafe work environments without jeopardizing their employment, and authorities effectively protected employees in



these situations. OSH inspectors actively identified unsafe conditions and recommended procedures for addressing workplace hazards.

**Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement:** The Ministry of Labor is charged with enforcement of minimum wage, overtime, and OSH regulations, but the number of inspectors was insufficient to enforce the law effectively. Penalties were not commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud or negligence, and were infrequently imposed. Inspectors have the authority to make unannounced inspections but not to initiate sanctions. Labor inspections carried out during the year targeted all sectors, including agriculture, mining, and construction. Ministry follow-up of labor inspection findings varied, and compliance among employers was also inconsistent. Trade unions criticized government delays and failure to act on wage and hour violations perpetrated by companies in the private sector and particularly in foreign-owned firms. In a number of hinterland mining areas, miners reported they never saw labor inspectors. Local trade unions and NGOs reported the Ministry of Labor did not enforce occupational safety and health laws adequately.

The government reported 193 workplace accidents, 98 of which were investigated. There were 11 fatal workplace accidents reported as of September.

**Informal Sector:** As of 2021, the Guyanese Bureau of Statistics reported the proportion of workers in informal employment was approximately 50 percent. The International Monetary Fund and Caribbean regional economists estimated the informal economy represented 35 to 44 percent of total economic activities. Most informal rural workers were engaged in agriculture or fishing sectors; others worked in artisanal mining, hospitality (such as rainforest hotels), or services sectors, including transportation (such as river boat taxis). In urban areas, informal work was clustered in domestic, retail, and service sectors. Regional economists noted that high unemployment motivated many persons to create their own work, such as driving a private minibus, selling ice cream from a bicycle-mounted cooler, or setting up a food cart in the street. Unorganized workers, particularly women in the informal sector, were often paid less than the minimum wage. Informal-sector workers and part-time workers are covered by wage, hour, and OSH regulations and are subject to labor inspections. Laws relating to wages and OSH were rarely enforced, however.