

# THE ISLAND OF FREEDOM OR OPPRESSION? WHAT IS THE STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA?

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**“Liberty is the right of every man to be honest, to think and to speak without hypocrisy.” Jose Marti**

Cuban Prison Photo taken from: [http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-I-x1MF4CcTo/VD\\_LnspLNaI/AAAAAAAAAAs4/rH0qkvL-pnc/s1600/0502\\_cuba-prison3.jpg](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-I-x1MF4CcTo/VD_LnspLNaI/AAAAAAAAAAs4/rH0qkvL-pnc/s1600/0502_cuba-prison3.jpg)



Cuban National Assembly of Peoples Power Photo taken from: [http://mipais.cuba.cu/img\\_conts/262.jpg](http://mipais.cuba.cu/img_conts/262.jpg)

Cuban Beach at Sunset taken from: <http://gottakeepmovin.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/dsc05532.jpg>



Cuban Military Photo taken from: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/600x315/42/27/ef/4227ef9e53c9ff4168d6c166402be6e4.jpg>

Excerpt: “Over the years Cuba has been highly criticized for their lack of transparency and accountability in government. Citizens receive less than a fair trial with unqualified judges. Cuba constantly harasses and detains protestors. Despite these abuses of rights, the social capital allowing for opportunity in advancement remains unusually high to the point that the Cuban Government maintains that no fair comparison can be made of the exceptional island against other cultures due to the vast differences.”

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## **DEFINITIONS FOR THIS PAPER**

**Unless citing a specific source in this paper, the following definitions is how this paper will define, refer to and imply the following terms in all areas of this paper for Cuba:**

**Arrest:** The detention of a person, people or group against their will in which they are detained for a period of time and subject to criminal charges for allegedly breaking a law or infringing upon public safety.

**Black Market:** The unregulated/untaxed market of the selling of goods by underground capitalist means either illegally smuggled to the island OR extras spilling over from Central Planning.

**Business Entrepreneurship** (see Human Rights 6, page 4): The right to own/start/invest in a business or businesses, to operate freely of government control and corner new/emerging markets without the permission of the government.

**Civil Liberties:** The freedoms and privileges one enjoys within their country that is either protected or unregulated under the law OR denied to them despite being a basic human right.

**Civil Rights:** The official written word of responsibilities, privileges and obligations for individual(s)/group(s)/citizens within the land/culture they reside/live in.

**Detained/Detention:** A span of time in which someone is held involuntary against their will that is allowed by law without requiring the order of a judge or court.

**Economy:** The system for means of production, trade and jobs within a country.

**Education** (see Human Rights 4, page 4): The right for all to have access to and learn reading, writing, math (PEMDAS), financial literacy, history, constitutional rights and technical trade OR higher education with specialization in labor.

**Food** (See Human Rights 1, page 4): The right to basic two (2) to three (3) meals a day with staples such as eggs, beans, rice, crackers, sandwiches and other basic foods.

**Freedom of Association** (See Human Rights 10, page 5): The rights of individuals to freely associate with others at parties, academic institutions, hold conversations, partake in correspondence and hang out.

**Freedom of Movement** (See Human Rights 8, page 5): The rights of individuals to move freely across borders, choose where to reside in the territory in which they live, the freedom to travel voluntarily and the right to both access/own transportation.

**Freedom of Religion** (See Human Rights 13, page 5): The right to worship freely any god(s)/goddess(es), spirits or be atheist so long as you do not kill or physically harm others, can still seek work and do not deny education to any group of people.

**Freedom of Speech** (See Human Rights 9, page 5): The right to say anything one wants so long as they aren't making direct violent or monetary threats against individuals.

**Health Care** (See Human Rights 7, page 5): The right to a once a year check up, vaccinations, glasses, vision check up, twice a year tooth cleaning, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> degree burn treatment, cancer screenings and right to purchase health insurance/private doctors for additional care.

**Human Rights:** The following 18 points make up Human Rights: 1: Right to food. 2: Right to water. 3: Right to shelter. 4: Right to education. 5: Right to work. 6: Business entrepreneurship. 7: Right to health care. 8: Freedom of movement. 9: Freedom of speech. 10: Freedom of Association. 11: Right to access/share/research/publish information without interference or restraint. 12: Presumption of innocence until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law with a defense attorney, neutral judiciary and jury of peers free from influence of any other branches of government. 13: Right to worship freely. 14: right to self defense and weaponize oneself. 15: Right to seek/hold government office & vote without threats in free and fair elections. 16: Right to civilly challenge/question government/authority. 17: Right to sell, buy, own, trade and defend property/possessions. 18: Right to the arts and cultural enjoyment.

**License:** Granted by the government to allow an individual to work a job outside of the government. Once granted an individual forfeits their right to pension and ration card unless they switch back to a government job.

**Pension:** A guaranteed life payment by the Cuban government to Cuban citizens that worked for the Cuban government or were unemployed their whole life.

**Private Sector:** Non state jobs that require licenses to operate, are heavily taxed, subject to frequent inspections, burdensome regulations and restricted on total amount of clients they can serve within a certain span of time.

**Property Rights** (See Human Rights 17, page 5): The right to freely own, buy, sell, trade, rent, lease and defend real-estate/property/possession/investment holdings.

**Ration System:** Ration quota in pounds per month per person unless otherwise specified (Table taken from: Cuba's Aborted Reform: Mesa-Lago & Pérez-López: Chapter 3: Social Welfare & Growing Inequalities page 101): In addition Raul proposed in 2008 to do away with the ration system.

Commodity	1979	Since 2002
Lard & Oil:	1.5	0.5
Rice	6	6
Beans	1.25	1.25
Sugar	7	5
Fish	Free on first come, first serve basis	0.7
Tubers	NA	15
Beef:	2.5	0.5
Ground Beef & Soy:	NA	0.5
Chicken:	1.5	1
Plantain:	NA	3
Pasta	NA	1
Milk (Children up to 7, women pregnant/nursing & people above the age of 70):	1 liter per day	1 liter per day.
Eggs (1 unit = dozen):	Free	8
Bread (1 roll per day 1979/lbs 2002):	Free	1
Bar of Bath Soap:	1.5	0.5
Washing Soap:	1.5	0.5
Laundry Detergent:	0.5	0.33

**Shelter** (See Human Rights 3, page 4): A structure with a floor, four walls, lockable door, roof and no leaks that contains a cot, bed or sleeping bag for sleeping.

**Water** (See Human Rights 2, page 4): The ability to bathe, safely drink and have sanitation for disposing of waste.

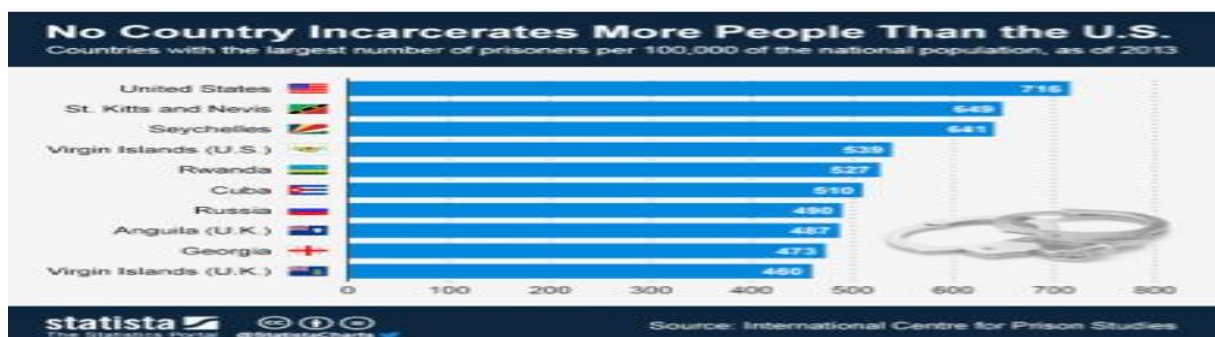
**Work** (See Human Rights 5, page 4): The right of an individual to assess/hold/partake in a job, make a living wage and be entitled to the fruit of their labor.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION: “What is the Status of Human Rights in Cuba?”**

To answer this question the Cuban Constitution, Federal Statues, political dissent blogs, the Cuban legal system and the National Assembly of Peoples Power, frequency of elections and prison conditions will be examined against the 18 points in the definition of human rights under definitions on pages 4-5 of this paper in detail. It will also examine the independence/dependence of the judicial system on the executive and explore how political decisions are made/come about in Cuba. Furthermore the Freedom House & Human Rights Watch reports on Cuba will be examined while providing an explanation of the Cuban defense before finally coming to a conclusion on the status of Human Rights in Cuba.

### **CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OF CUBA**

**Incarceration Rate:** As of 2015 Cuba has a population of 11.39 Million people. For every 100,000 people 510 (2013) are put in jail in Cuba. That comes out to 58,140 people or ½ of 1% of the total population in prison which means 1 out of every 200 people are sent to prison on average.



Photo/Incarceration taken from: The Caribbean Journal Online: <http://www.caribjournal.com/2013/09/07/the-caribbeans-incarceration-problem/#>

**Treatment of Prisoners/Prison Conditions:** There are conflicting reports over the years in how Cuba treats its prisoners. According to a 1988 report from the Institute for Policy Studies (Cuban Prisons: A Preliminary Report page 58) prisoners in Cuba are given access to 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, still allowed to work for pay, no cruel and unusual punishment is involved while cell and prison conditions are clean. However at the same time, a 1999 Human Rights Watch Report (Cuba's Prisons) states Cuban prisoners suffer malnourishment, stay in overcrowded cells and denied medical attention with common "re-education" sessions. At the same time a May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 article by the BBC (Rainsford Sarah: [A Glimpse Inside Cuba's Prisons](#)) shows prisoners in La Lima earn up to \$40 a month as a carpenter while getting education. However at the same time the 2016 Human Rights Watch World Report (Prison Conditions: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/cuba> ) states "Prisons are overcrowded. Prisoners are forced to work 12-hour days and punished if they do not meet production quotas" while many former political prisoners claim (can't be verified) that wages are withheld.

**Status on International Monitors/Inspectors:** The Cuban Government declares Human Rights monitoring an illegal activity on the island and denies the Red Cross access to inspections. People attempting such activities in Cuba can be subject to arrest, exile, torture/harassment and long prison sentences in Cuba. In addition the Cuban Government doesn't file official reports on prison statistics

**Rehabilitation into Society:** Sentences are typically short and most people in Cuban prisons are allowed family visits. In addition many get access up to 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, vocational training and are allowed to work while they are in prison. Those that are allowed to work can either have their salary go toward their family or save it up in an account to help for Human Rights in Cuba 7

reintegration into society upon release. However political prisoners, foreign nationals and those sentenced to life in prison are denied this right.

### **CUBAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM**

**Rights of Businesses:** Businesses currently have very few rights in Cuba and are at the mercy of the State for operation while constantly risking their operating license being revoked. In addition businesses face frequent inspections and there is only 200 categories of self employment that are subject to heavy taxes.

**Central Planning & State Control:** Central planning is the majority of the resources and economy in Cuba. Most businesses are State run and controlled. The majority of food is issued by a ration system and most shops selling goods are hidden.

**Foreign Investment:** While foreign investment is allowed in Cuba and networks such as AT&T (\$2.05 MB, \$3 a min call, \$0.50 a text message, \$1.30 per video/picture sent/received) have signed agreements for coverage in Cuba, the Cuban Government requires 51% ownership by Cubans, meaning the entire economy is internal with protectionism measures.



In addition the US has legalized crops for cash upfront only exports to Cuba despite Cuba wanting to make payments later. The US demanded cash seeing the record of the Cuban Government as defined in Cuba's Aborted Reform (Mesa-Lago & Pérez-López: page 34) "At the end of 2001, Cuba was in arrears in paying for the Venezuelan crude purchases and had run up a debt of \$95 million."



**Embargo:** Many Cubans call for an end to the Embargo with the US while blaming it for their problems with lack of goods on the island. To that effect according to the US Customs & Border Protection website as of October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 “OFAC is removing the monetary value limitations on what authorized travelers may import from Cuba into the United States as accompanied baggage. This includes the value limitation on alcohol and tobacco products. Persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction will be further authorized to import Cuban-origin merchandise acquired in third countries into the United States as accompanied baggage, again without value limitations. OFAC is also removing the prohibition on foreign travelers importing Cuban-origin alcohol and tobacco products into the United States as accompanied baggage.” (Traveling to Cuba: What you need to know before you go: <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go/united-states-cuba-travel> ) This means that the US is closer to getting a continual stream of Cuban goods which will eventually lead to an increased demand and make it easier for businesses to sell products from Cuba within the US legally.

According to the Cuba Business Report on an August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 article, the exceptional island has opened up trade with China (Trade with Cuba and the Winner is China: <http://www.cubabusinessreport.com/trade-with-cuba-and-the-winner-is-china/> ) with increase by \$1.6 Billion USD in trade over the last year alone while direct flights of Havana to Beijing are operating. China with its mass market and potential of goods to flood markets, means the distribution problem is with the Central Planning and State Control within Cuba. If the US were to end the embargo as long as the distribution of goods is state controlled, there would still be a shortage of goods on the island and an increase in government corruption and or black market activity. Strict rules, regulations and restrictions on imports into Cuba still remain by the Cuban

government making it hard for US businesses to trade goods with businesses located on the island.

### **CUBAN JUDICIAL & LEGAL SYSTEM**

**Cuban Constitution:** The current Cuban Constitution was adopted in 1974 and last amended in 2002. It provides rights to citizens in broad terms provided they don't interfere with the Socialist State order. However with Articles 122 & 123 there is hope on paper for a small chance of fairness within the Cuban Courts. Article 122 states: "Judges, in their function of imparting justice, are independent, and owe obedience solely to the law." This means that judges would have a legal justification in Cuba for dissenting within the government and have a legal justification to do so thus striving toward judicial independence. In addition the few treaties that the Cuban government is a signatory of thus requiring Cuba to comply with those international obligations, means that international law could override domestic law as a first step toward reinstating the political side of Human Rights for Cuban Citizens and political dissidents.

The first half of Article 123 states "The sentences and other decisions of the tribunals, pronounced or enacted within the limits of their jurisdiction, must be obeyed and implemented by State agencies," Even though the Cuban Government currently has total impunity on domestic matters within Cuba, if a Court were to rule against a government by a Justice invoking Article 122 with Article 123 would be the first step toward allowing citizens with an independent judiciary to take recourse against their government and bring down complete impunity on domestic matters that the Cuban Government has constantly enjoyed while abusing its citizens.

**Judicial Process & Structure:** The courts in Cuba are made up of 5 judges. 3 judges with legal training appointed by the Executive and 2 civilian judges appointed by the National

Assembly of Peoples Power for 30 days at a time. Judgments require 3 of the 5 judges to rule in a consensus.

### **CUBAN POLITICS**

**Political Party:** There is only 1 political party legally allowed to exist in Cuba. That party is the Communist Party of Cuba which enjoys 100% control of the Courts, National Assembly of Peoples Power and the Executive. Most if not all of the elites on the island, belong to the Communist Party and anyone dissenting is subject to arrest or exile.

**Elections:** Elections in Cuba are held once every 4 years for the National Assembly of Peoples Power and Cubans are given the choice of 1 person on the ballot to accept or reject. Each time the candidates are approved with high voter turnouts according to the Cuban Government and receive 99% support.

**National Assembly of Peoples Power:** This body in Cuba with a population of 11.4 Million people has 612 seats aka 1 seat per every 18,627 citizens compared to 535 seats in the US Senate & House or 1 representative per 560,747 per citizens with a population of 300 Million. This body meets twice a year for less than a week at a time to pick judges for the courts, elect party leadership positions and decide the Council of Ministers. It also has the power to put referendum before the people however while attempts have come close in the past, nothing has succeeded yet.

### **ACCURATELY RANKING CUBA ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

The 18 points defined as human rights for the purposes of this paper on pages 4-5 in definitions will be assessed for/against Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Below in the chart there will

be a category and a score: The scoring range will be a negative -5 to 5. A negative five (-5) represents the worst possible score while a positive five (5) represents the best possible score in a category. A zero is neutral. If a Country receives a 2 or higher in that category they are viewed as having achieved granting/ensuring Human Rights are upheld. If a Country receives a -1 to 1 they are viewed as neither granting/achieving OR denying/blocking human rights in that category. If a Country gets a -2 or worse than they are seen as actively blocking and participating in denying Human Rights to their citizens for that category. Negative ninety (-90) is the worst possible overall score while a positive 90 is the best overall score. The following score ranges represent how a Country scores in recognizing Civil Rights & Civil Liberties within the context of Huang Rights. The purpose of this is to test the Cuban Government claims that its social capital makes it better or even with many Countries and that current systems/methods don't take these things into account. By measuring 18 different areas within Civil Rights & Civil Liberties which all have themes and roots within Human Rights to advance the interest of people. In order for a country to be considered meeting its obligation on both Human Rights that coincide with granting Civil Rights & Civil Liberties they must meet a minimum score of 41.

Score Range	Rating
-90	No Human Rights Exist.
-89 to -70	Extremely Poor
-69 to -60	Very Poor
-59 to -50	Poor
-49 to -35	Mostly Poor
-34 to -25	Somewhat Poor
-24 to -15	Extremely Negative Neutral
-14 to -5	Very Negative Neutral
-4 to -1	Negative Neutral
0	Somewhat Negative Neutral
1-15	Between Somewhat Negative Neutral & Neutral
16-25	Neutral
26-40	Somewhat Fair
41-49	Fair
50-60	Very Fair
61-69	Rights Respected and Mostly Upheld
70-85	Corruption Mostly Non Existent

86-89	Even Playing Field & Major Respect for Everyone's Rights/Liberties
90	Perfect Society for Civil Rights & Civil Liberties: All areas of Human Rights Achieved.

<b>Category:</b>	<b>Score:</b>	<b>Explanation:</b>
Food:	2	While Cuba does give out rations to most of its citizens, the people of the Marianao neighborhood in Havana are considered non citizens, not entitled to rations and the current ration system only last the average person 10-13 days while goods outside the state ration system are scarce, expensive and hard to come by.
Water:	3	Cuba has running water that is safe to bathe and cook in while providing sanitation and making it free to all Cuban citizens. However the tap water is not safe to drink and bottled water is hard to find/buy on the island.
Shelter:	3	Cuba provides free housing for most of its citizens. However there is a shortage and many multi generational families living together in overcrowded conditions while maintenance and up keep are very lacking causing many structures to decay.
Education:	3	While Cuba has a 99.8% Literacy Rate, universal 9 <sup>th</sup> grade education for all on the island, offers tremendous skill and job training while offering free college individuals don't have a choice in what they pursue, quota systems are enacted and for those denied there are no private alternatives.
Right to Work:	0	Cuba does an excellent job of providing jobs for its citizens and great training and placement. However private enterprise is greatly restricted, private workers are heavily taxed and individuals rarely get a choice on their jobs being subjected to government quota systems.
Business Entrepreneurship:	-3	While businesses are allowed to exist on the island, all business must have a minimum of 51% government ownership, are heavily taxed/regulated, subject to frequent inspections/raids and instead of an anything but this/these categories system, it's an only this will be granted an operating license system.
Health Care:	4	Cuba has free health care open to all of its citizens and incredibly trained doctors in what should be a model for the World. What prevents Cuba from getting a 5 is the desperate need to update facilities and modernize equipment.
Freedom of Movement:	-4	People are assigned housing and not really allowed to move. In order to enter the capital Havana permission must be obtained by order of Decree 217 issued in 1997. Any Cuban wanting to leave the Country other than trained Foreign Doctors for payments of goods, must obtain government permission for an exit visa. The only thing preventing Cuba from receiving a -5 is the introduction of the House swap and the recent abolishment of the fee on the exit visa.
Freedom of Speech:	-4	Freedom of Speech is discouraged, not tolerated and penalties can include loosing rations, being denied access to health care or serving long jail sentences.
Freedom of Association:	-4	Members of religious groups can looser government jobs. While religion was banned at one point and has since been reinstated, it can still cost government employees promotions. In addition Cuba only has 1 political party and all others are banned. Membership with any foreign alliance is looked upon as highly suspicious and any existing semi private industry is heavily taxed.

Right to Access/Share/Publish/Research Information	-5	Internet is extremely restricted, a large number of books are banned, the government lacks transparency and doesn't publish most statistics while making everything sub classified. Other than government run radio, TV and the Grandma there is no other source of information easily and readably available on the island other than illegally downloaded and smuggled in news items on flash drives plus dissident bloggers who have been blocked and have to set up on servers outside of Cuba while facing constant harassment and arrest within Cuba.
Due Process, Defense & Independent Judiciary	-2	The Cuban Judicial System does have courts which on paper are separate from the Executive (Castro). In addition trials are normally held relatively fast (minus political prisoners and foreign nationals) while most accused of crimes are let out on bail. Attorneys do exist in Cuba, of which a large number do work for the government. Attorneys are not allowed to individually operate private practices. However Government sponsored law firms called Bufetes are allowed to operate by charging fees for defense and council. However those offices are subject to frequent government raids and once someone is convicted its almost impossible for the attorney to visit their client or report on prison conditions. In addition the judges are a mix of citizens and legally trained people. That being said, the burden of proof is on the accused to disprove allegations instead of being on the state to prove the allegations. The assumption is guilty until proven innocent with the blessing of the state.
Freedom of Worship	0	You can practice any religion you want in Cuba so long as it doesn't interfere with the state. However practicing religion can cost you your job OR promotions. Foreign religious leaders are treated with respect but local religious leaders & bishops constantly harassed. The ladies in white are also constantly arrested before or after mass. Free on paper and allowed to exist/operate but very much repressed/oppressed in practice.
Right to Self Defense & Own Weapons	-5	If the government wants something or to do something to you in Cuba it will. Any acts of violence even self defense can result in long prison sentences. Citizens are prohibited from owning weapons and foreigners are prohibited from transporting them or bringing them into the Country.
Political Office & Elections	-4	While the National Assembly of Peoples Power does exist along with other Regional bodies and elections are held, there is also only 1 political party allowed in Cuba, only 1 person from said party on the ballot for each position and the Executive of the Party (Castro) chooses the candidates. In addition the National Assembly of Peoples Power meets infrequently & can easily be disband. Also while the National Assembly of Peoples Power has a mechanism for creating a referendum on issues to put before the Cuban people both the Courts and the Executive (Castro) can block it. Also many people that want to run are blocked membership from the 1 party or prohibited from running for office.
Recourse Against/Challenging the Government	-4	There are attorney offices (Bufetes) allowed to operate and charge fees while International groups pay attention and publically criticize, but for the most part the Cuban Government acts with impunity doing whatever it wants while making up the rules as it goes.
Property Rights	0	While people are given places to live and can buy, sell and trade housing assignments within their area while partial private

		business is starting to form with up to 49% ownership, property rights have greatly improved. However individual ownership is still mostly prohibited and almost everything is seen as belonging to the government.
Arts/Cultural Enjoyment	5	Cuba does a world class job of parties, dances, music, rum, drinks, theatre, movies and making all of this easily available to its citizens while having world class beaches. On this aspect Cuba is perfect.
Total Score:	-15	Extremely Negative Neutral toward Human Rights

**Summarizing Cuba's Rating:** Cuba is a country that many in the International Community routinely criticize and ranks extremely low around the World in report after report. While many accuse Cuba of completely denying rights to individuals and society as a whole along with this report having major concerns for Cuba. However unlike many reports that claim Cuba doesn't meet its obligations of granting any Human Rights, this report concludes that Cuba meets its obligations for 6/18 (Food, Water, Shelter, Education, Health Care & Arts/Cultural Enjoyment) categories on Human Rights. This reports also concludes that Cuba neither meets or fails it obligation in 3/18 (Right to Work, Freedom of Worship & Property Rights) categories on Human Rights. It also concludes that Cuba fails to meet basic human rights in 9/18 areas (Business Entrepreneurship, Freedom of Movement, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Association, Right to Access/Share/Publish/Research Information, Due Process/Defense/Independent Judiciary, Right to Self Defense/Own Weapons, Political Office/Elections and Recourse Against/Challenging the Government).

Cuba is a land where most individuals can live a happy and simple life with Health Care, food, water, free housing, achieve literacy and have tremendous access to joyous cultural life. However with that being said forming an opinion contrary to the government is dangerous. People wanting to seek work in a job they want is extremely difficult and organization of labor is prohibited in practice. Politics is only accessible to the elite and even though the judiciary is

independent on paper, in reality its controlled by the Executive as a kangaroo court. Access to information is limited and almost unattainable for ordinary Cubans.

**What Cuba can do to Improve its Rating:** In order for Cuba to improve its ranking this report recommends the following suggestions. In order for Cuba to improve on food it is recommended that Cuba: 1: Invest on improvements and allow foreign capital to update/modernize the agricultural industry to improve means of production and availability. 2: Issue ration cards to the people of the Marianao Neighborhood in Havana. 3: Allow greater imports of food for the private industry and allow the opening of official privately owned and run grocery stores on the island to sell goods. With regards to water this reports recommends that Cuba increase the availability of bottled water sold on the island and implements filters in faucets so the tap water can be drinkable.

For shelter this reports recommends that existing structures be renovated/modernized with stable structures while building new additional housing. On Education Cuba needs to allow private schools/universities to operate, create a private pay option for students wanting to study something other than what is allowed in the quota system and allow the establishment of private universities on the island while expanding research opportunities and allowing more materials into the classroom.

On right to work and business entrepreneurship the State needs to expand the number of licenses granted and categories available. In addition they need to drop the minimum 51% government ownership clause on all foreign investment within Cuba and allow the formation of unions while letting individuals pick their own occupation. With regards to Health Care Cuba needs to update and modernize their facilities.



Freedom of Association, Movement & Speech should be tolerated in Cuba. How Cuba can improve its score and be allowed among the Countries of rank for tolerating these fundamental elements to Human Rights are: 1: Allow private political media to legally exist on paper and have a physical office in Cuba. 2: Stop pursuing the unlawful arrest, detention, harassment and exile of dissident journalist. 3: Repeal Decree 217 that was implemented in 1997. 4: Repeal numerous laws making it a crime to criticize the State that carry jail sentences and or hard labor. 5: Recognize Human Rights Monitoring as a legal activity. 6: Allow the legal formation of groups.

With regards to information Cuba needs to make its research public, expand its public Wi-Fi hotspots, increase the number of individuals with private internet access in the home, make its government statistics public and allow alternative news sources. Within the Judicial System, Cuba needs to grant its judicial system 100% independence in practice, not just paper and apply the law evenly in all cases while upholding basic principles such as innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt (not Assumption of guilt until proven innocent beyond any doubt with the blessing and backing of the State), granting attorneys access to their clients in prison, bail while the trial is pending and decisions made on the law within basic human rights independent from a Kangaroo Executive Court.

Cuba also needs to allow all religions/religious groups on the island to freely publish their own publications, allow individuals to worship freely and not fire people/withhold promotions for being members of a Church. With regards to self defense and weapon ownership, Cuba needs to legalize gun ownership on the island while giving citizens recourse to civilly sue the government for recourse/compensation when a citizen is wronged instead of the current government impunity in place.

In regards to politics Cuba needs to 1: Allow more than 1 choice on the ballot. 2: Allow the formations of opposition political parties. 3: Expand the powers of the National Assembly of People's Power to create an effective legislative branch for the purposes of checks and balances on power. 4: Get the Executive out of the Courts. 5: Immediately release all political prisoners and stop arresting on the basis of belief.

With the changes mentioned above, Cuba could not only improve its score, but easily become a Country that respects Human Rights.

**CONCLUSION:** Over the years Cuba has been highly criticized for their lack of transparency and accountability in government. Citizens receive less than a fair trial with 2 unqualified judges in every case along with no jury. Cuba constantly harasses and detains protestors. Despite these abuses of rights, the social capital allowing for opportunity in advancement remains unusually high to the point that the Cuban Government maintains no fair comparison can be made of the exceptional island against other cultures due to the vast differences. While this reports does conclude that Cuba does overall fail to meet its obligations on Human Rights, especially in a political context, it is not as bad as most people claim while aiming for hope with a Cuba that can easily make process as described in the summary of results.

As the society in Fahrenheit 451 keeps its citizens entertained with fun, so does Cuba with its incredible art, dancers, classic cars, heavy subsidizing of the theatre, cheap tasty high quality rum, out of this World Cuban Coffee and World famous Cigars. However just like the Society in Fahrenheit 451 burns books and restricts information access, so does Cuba with its crack down on journalist, arrest of political dissidents, lack of internet access on the island, lack of books to buy, recognizing Human Rights Monitoring as an illegal activity, banning books and

information from entering classrooms at all levels of education and refusing to publish official government statistics.

While Cuba doesn't officially burn books, it might as well with its difficulty to obtain Internet access, crack down on journalist and political dissidents. As Cubans have lots of fun and experience the arts, this reports concludes that Cuba is the modern Fahrenheit 451 Society and cracks down on human rights, people wanting to learn and as the Society burns books of rebels so does Cuba humiliate Human Rights Activist and opposition. Despite the hope and potential, Cuba is still a major violator of Human Rights and the Status of Human Rights in Cuba is terrible despite meeting 1/3 of its obligations.

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