



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

9 October 2009

GUY103251.E

Guyana: Whether members or supporters of the People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) are targeted because of their political beliefs (2007 - Sept. 2009)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) [also known as People's National Congress Reform - One Guyana (PNCR-1G) (*PHW 2009* 2009, 548; *Political Parties of the World* 2009, 254)] is the leading opposition party in Guyana (Freedom House 2009; *PHW 2009* 2009, 548; *Political Parties of the World* 2009, 255). It is led by Robert Corbin (*PHW 2009* 2009, 549; *Political Parties of the World* 2009, 254; Global Insight 22 July 2008). According to *Political Parties of the World*, in the August 2006 election, the PNCR won 34 percent of the vote, resulting in 22 seats out of 65 seats in the National Assembly (2009, 254). Sources indicate that the PNCR draws its support primarily from the Afro-Guyanese community, while the ruling People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) draws its support primarily from the Indo-Guyanese population (US 25 Feb. 2009, Sec. 2; Global Insight 22 July 2008). Relations between the two parties have been characterized as "hostile" with long standing racial tensions (EIU 16 Apr. 2009; see also UN 27 Feb. 2009, Para. 18).

In 28 September 2009 correspondence with the Research Directorate, the General Secretary of the PNCR claimed that members and supporters of the PNCR have been subject to mistreatment, including being detained and facing abuse during politically volatile times, such as elections or national emergencies (PNCR 28 Sept. 2009). The General Secretary also alleged that PNCR members and supporters are often denied promotion to top positions in governmental departments and organizations (*ibid.*). This information could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Sources report that in early May 2008, the PNCR led non-violent protests against the government in response to the rising costs of living (EFE News Services 10 May 2008; PNCR 16 May 2008; *PHW 2009* 2009, 549); the Cabinet Secretary of the Guyanese government categorized the protests as "extremism" (EFE News Service 10 May 2008). Sources report that law enforcement officials arrested the personal bodyguard and personal chauffeur of the PNCR leader in mid-May 2008 (CMC 15 May 2008; PNCR 16 May 2008). The chauffeur was reportedly arrested for "using a noisy instrument without permission" while announcing a protest march, while the bodyguard was allegedly detained for armed robbery following a search of his home (PNCR 15 May 2008). In a press release, the PNCR states that these actions were part of "a campaign of harassment by the repressive PPP/C Administration, designed to instill fear, and terrorize supporters of the People's National Congress Reform" (15 May 2008).

The PNCR also alleges that the bodyguard was questioned about PNCR matters rather than the offence for which he was arrested (PNCR 16 May 2008). The PNCR reports two cases in which several young men were arrested "indiscriminately" without being told the reason, placed in trucks and taken to "an unknown destination" (ibid. 15 May 2008).

In June 2008, PNCR leader Robert Corbin stated that he received an anonymous death threat warning him that if he continued to speak out about the alleged drug trafficker Roger Khan, he would be killed (CMC 4 June 2008; *Kaiteur News* 6 June 2008; Global Insight 20 June 2008; *PHW* 2009 2009, 549). The threat came after Corbin alleged that Khan had connections to the Guyanese government (CMC 4 June 2008; *Kaiteur News* 6 June 2008; Freedom House 2009). Sources indicate that United States authorities link Khan, who was extradited to the US to face drug trafficking charges, to a death squad in Guyana allegedly responsible for the murder of 200 Guyanese men (CMC 4 June 2008; *PHW* 2009 2009, 548; *Kaiteur News* 6 June 2008). The General Secretary of the PNCR claimed that several of the 200 young men killed between 2002 and 2004 were members and supporters of the PNCR (PNCR 28 Sept. 2009). In August 2009, Inter Press Service (IPS) reported that further testimony in a US court revealed that Khan's gang used surveillance equipment allegedly bought by the Guyanese government, to listen to telephone calls, including those of PNCR leader Corbin (4 Aug. 2009).

In July 2009, the PNCR condemned the "harassment" of opposition figures Heston Bostwick and Archie Poole by security forces and accused the authorities of "pursuing a political agenda" following a fire at the Ministry of Health (PNCR 24 July 2009). The General Secretary of the PNCR stated that Poole and Bostwick are closely associated with the PNCR and were arrested and "manhandled" by the police after the Ministry of Health was destroyed by fire on 17 July 2009 (PNCR 28 Sept. 2009). Sources report allegations that Bostwick sustained stab wounds while in police custody (Aljazeera 27 July 2009; CUSO-VSO 30 July 2009). Information about Poole's alleged mistreatment could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Aljazeera. 27 July 2009. "Guyana Police Accused of Brutality." <<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2009/07/2009727195515848565.html>> [Accessed 13 Aug. 2009]

Canadian University Service Organization - Volunteer Service Overseas (CUSO - VSO). 30 July 2009. Simon Cooke. "Human Rights Group Concerned About Guyana Police Brutality." <<http://www.cuso.org/news/19288318/human-rights-group-concerned-about-guyana-police-brutality>> [Accessed 8 Sept. 2009]

Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC). 4 June 2008. "Guyana Opposition Leader Receives Death Threats Linked to Drug Allegations." (BBC Monitoring Americas/Factiva)

_____. 15 May 2008. "Guyana Police Arrest Opposition Leader's Bodyguard." (BBC Monitoring Americas 16 May 2008/Factiva)

EFE News Services. 10 May 2008. "Senior Guyanese Police Officers Transferred for Failing to Quell Protests." (Factiva)

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) [London]. 16 April 2009. "Guyana: Country Outlook." (Factiva)

Freedom House. 2009. "Guyana." *Freedom in the World (2009)*. <<http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7620>> [Accessed 21 Sept. 2009]

Global Insight [Lexington, MA]. 22 July 2008. Kate Joynes-Burgess. "Police Under Spotlight in Suspected Guyanese Torture Case." (Factiva)

_____. 20 June 2008. Kate Joynes. "Government and Opposition Hold Rare Security Talks in Guyana." (Factiva)

Inter Press Service (IPS). 4 August 2009. "Guyana: Government Complicity with Drug Ring Aired in New York." (ISI Emerging Markets Africa Wire 5 Aug. 2009/Factiva)

Kaiteur News. 6 June 2008. "PNCR Says . . . Corbin Will Be Protected by Any Means Necessary." <<http://www.kaiteurnewsonline.com/2008/06/06/corbin-will-be-protected-by-any-means-necessary>> [Accessed 21 Sept. 2009]

People's National Congress Reform (PNCR). 28 September 2009. Correspondence with the General Secretary.

_____. 24 July 2009. "Human Rights: The Regime Must Not be Allowed to Continually Abuse Our Citizens." <http://www.pncrguyana.com/view_press_statement.php?id=335> [Accessed 18 Sept. 2009]

_____. 16 May 2008. "Press Statement by People's National Congress Reform." <http://www.pncrguyana.com/view_press_statement.php?id=274> [Accessed 25 Sept. 2009]

_____. 15 May 2008. "Press Release People's National Congress Reform." <http://www.pncrguyana.com/view_press_release.php?id=338> [Accessed 25 Sept. 2009]

Political Handbook of the World 2009 (PHW 2009). 2009. "Guyana." Edited by Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet and Judith F. Isacoff. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Political Parties of the World. 2009. 7th Ed. "Guyana." Edited by D. J. Sagar. London: John Harper Publishing.

United Nations (UN). 27 February 2009. Human Rights Council. *Promotion and Protection of All Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural*

Rights, Including the Right to Development. (A/HRC/10/11/Add.2)
<[http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G09/115/59/PDF/G0911559.pdf?](http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G09/115/59/PDF/G0911559.pdf?OpenElement)
OpenElement> [Accessed 9 Sept. 2009]

United States (US). 25 February 2009. Department of State. "Guyana." *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008*.
<<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119162.htm>> [Accessed 25 Sept. 2009]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sources, including: Amnesty International (AI), Center for Public Integrity, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Guyana Police Force, Guyana Government Information Agency (GINA), Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group, Office of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Refworld.

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.