



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		3 November 2006
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Organization Chart	Cuba: Information on jobs occupied by Cuban nationals at the Canadian Embassy in Havana and associated hiring procedures; whether Cuban national staff have access to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) communications, specifically from Etobicoke, Ontario; whether there are any reports or allegations of Cuban national staff relaying information to Cuban state authorities about refugee claimants	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy		
References		
Publications		
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division	A migration integrity officer at the Canadian Embassy in Cuba provided the following information in correspondence with the Research Directorate on 17 October 2006:	
Immigration Division	What jobs within the Canadian Embassy are occupied by Cuban nationals?	
Immigration Appeal Division	As in most Canadian offices abroad, the Embassy jobs are a combination of positions held by Canada-based officers (CBOs) and locally engaged staff (LES). LES take care of the clerical and support functions. Due to the specific nature of the Cuban environment and security concerns, all visa decisions are taken by CBOs. That means that only Canadian officers have the authority to approve or refuse applications for temporary and permanent resident visas in Havana.	
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Research Program	What are the hiring procedures for local embassy staff?	
National Documentation Packages	All staff are selected through a rigorous competitive process. The local company, Cubalse, responsible for dealings between Cubans and foreigners, including diplomats, must approve all Cuban citizens and residents working in the Embassy for them to work legally. Successful candidates are subjected to a security and criminal screening, conducted by the Embassy, in cooperation with Canadian partner agencies. Only persons who have obtained the proper Canadian security clearance are authorized to work in the Embassy.	
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets		
Responses to Information Requests	Would local embassy staff have access to communications from CIC offices in Canada, specifically Etobicoke, Ontario?	
Recent Research	Only insofar as clerical support is needed for Canadian officers to prepare the requested information. CBOs typically receive most action requests from Etobicoke through secure communications channels, and the role of the LES is limited to carrying out certain clerical tasks necessary to transmit the information to Canada, such as photocopying, faxing, mailing, etc. On a case-by-case basis, the LES will receive certain types of unclassified communication directly from other CIC offices, such as information on Right of Permanent Residence fee payments or sponsorship	
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withdrawals, to give some examples. Protected and confidential information is carefully screened by CBOs and not accessible to LES.

Are there any reports or allegations, within the last 10 years, of local embassy staff relaying information to Cuban state authorities about refugee claimants?

We are not aware of any allegations. This office has received other kinds of client service related complaints, mostly relating to family reunification applications and temporary resident visa refusals. So far there has been no evidence of malfeasance or improper circulation of information in Havana that we are aware of, and we continue to work on prevention of any such problems by handling the sensitive information in strict accordance with the standards established by the Government of Canada.

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.

Reference

Canada. 17 October 2006. Canadian Embassy in Cuba, Havana. Correspondence from a migration integrity officer.

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