



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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

The Board		26 April 2010
About the Board	CUB103443.FE	
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Cuba : Revolution Defence Committees (Comités de Defensa de la Revolución, CDR); whether informants with the CDRs report the population's activities to the police, government or security agencies; the consequences of refusing to join a CDR (2008-April 2010)	
Employment		
Legal and Policy		
References	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
Publications		
Tribunal	Revolution Defence Committees (Comités de Defensa de la Revolución, CDR) are local groups that exist in most Cuban neighbourhoods (Director 8 Apr. 2010; Human Rights Watch Nov. 2009, 51-52).	
Refugee Protection Division		
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division	According to an article on the Cuba Solidarity Campaign website, an organization based in the United Kingdom (UK) that is "for the defence of [Cubans'] right to self-determination and national sovereignty" (Cuba Solidarity Campaign n.d.), there were approximately 133,000 CDRs in the country at the beginning of 2008 (ibid. 1 Jan. 2008). The article indicates that 95.8 percent of the people eligible to join were members of a CDR at that time, that is, 8 million people out of a total population of 11.2 million (ibid.). However, in 8 April 2010 correspondence with the Research Directorate, the director of the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami stated that CDR membership was closer to 3.5 million people (Director 8 Apr. 2010).	
Decisions		
Forms		
Statistics		
Research	The official purpose of the CDRs when they were created in the 1960s was to defend the Cuban revolution from counter-revolutionary forces in individual neighbourhoods (Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010; Cuba Solidarity Campaign 1 Jan. 2008). According to a professor of Latin American history, who is also the director of the Centre for Research on Cuba at the University of Nottingham in the UK, one of their roles was to identify possible collaborators in invasions of the country (7 Apr. 2010).	
Research Program		
National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets		
Responses to Information Requests		
Recent Research	Since then, CDRs have become a socially cohesive element of the community (Professor of Urban Studies 14 Apr. 2010; Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010; Cuba Solidarity Campaign 1 Jan. 2008). They serve as a forum for discussing and sharing official information (Director 8 Apr. 2010; Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010).	
Media Centre	Moreover, the CDRs ensure neighbourhood security (Professor of Urban Studies 14 Apr. 2010; Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010; Cuba Solidarity Campaign 1 Jan. 2008). CDR members advise the authorities about certain activities and behaviours of members of the community (Professor of Urban Studies 14 Apr. 2010; Director 9 Apr. 2010). According to the United States (US) Department of State's <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009</i> and Human Rights	
News		
Information Sheets		
Media Relations		
Proactive Disclosure		

Watch, CDRs monitor the population for the government (US 11 Mar. 2010, Sec. 1f; Human Rights Watch Nov. 2009, 52, 96). However, according to a professor of urban studies who published a work on life in Cuban neighbourhoods, CDR members should not be considered "government spies" (14 Apr. 2010). According to him, they are people who live in the community and who report suspicious activities or behaviour to the police and the Department of Internal Affairs (Professor of Urban Studies 14 Apr. 2010).

Consequences of refusing to join a CDR

It is not mandatory to join a CDR (*ibid.*; Director 8 Apr. 2010; Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010), and there are no official consequences to not being a member (Professor of Urban Studies 14 Apr. 2010; Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010). However, sources indicate that Cuban citizens face social pressure to join the CDRs (Professor of Urban Studies 14 Apr. 2010; Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010). Many people therefore become CDR members without participating in the activities (Professor of Urban Studies 14 Apr. 2010; Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010).

Those who do not join may be considered suspect because of their attitude toward the government and the community (Professor of Urban Studies 14 Apr. 2010; Director 8 Apr. 2010). Moreover, CDRs can be used as references for members applying for jobs (Professor of Urban Studies 14 Apr. 2010; Director 8 Apr. 2010; Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010) or wanting to attend school (Director 8 Apr. 2010; Professor of History 7 Apr. 2010).

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

Cuba Solidarity Campaign. 1 January 2008. Natasha Hickman. "In Every Barrio, Revolution!' - CDR Museum Opens." <http://www.cuba-solidarity.org/cubasi_article.asp?ArticleID=85> [Accessed 7 Apr. 2010]

_____. N.d. "Our Aims." <<http://www.cuba-solidarity.org/aims.asp>> [Accessed 15 Apr. 2010]

Director of the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, University of Miami. 9 April 2010. Correspondence.

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Human Rights Watch. November 2009. *New Castro, Same Cuba: Political Prisoners in the Post-Fidel Era*. <<http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/11/18/new-castro-same-cuba-0>> [Accessed 12 Apr. 2010]

Professor of urban studies and director of the Center for Urban Studies University at Buffalo. 14 April 2010. Correspondence.

Professor of Latin American history and director of the Cuba Study Centre at the University of Nottingham. 7 April 2010. Correspondence.

United States (US). 11 March 2010. Department of State. "Cuba." *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009*. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136108.htm>> [Accessed 12 Apr. 2010]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact an expert on Cuba at the Florida International University were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: Cubasource, Cuba Verdad, European Country of Origin Network (ecoi.net), Fondation canadienne pour les Amériques (FOCAL), Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, United Nations (UN) Refworld, Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA).

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[Top of Page](#)

[Important Notices](#)