



OSAC Country Security Report

Cuba

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This report is intended to supplement the U.S. Department of State [Cuba Travel Advisory](#) and [Cuba Country Information Page](#).

Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

U.S. Embassy: Vedado, Havana at Calzada between L and M Streets.
+53-7-839-4100
Emergencies: +53-5213-2603 (Embassy Duty Officer)
Hours: Mon-Thurs, 0800-1630; Fri, 0800-1530

OSAC Country Chapter(s)

At present, there is no active country chapter in Cuba.

Contact osacamericas@state.gov with any questions.

Cuba Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory at the date of this report's publication assesses that travelers should **exercise increased caution in Cuba due to crime, disease outbreaks, and unreliable electrical power.**

Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Havana as being a **MEDIUM**-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests. Cuba carries a **Crime "C" Indicator**, reflecting widespread violent or organized crime and limited law enforcement responsiveness. The crime emergency line in Cuba is **106**. Review the State Department's Crime Victims Assistance [brochure](#).

The security environment is generally stable, supported by a strong police and military presence. However, crime remains a significant risk, particularly in Havana and other large cities. Petty crime is a risk for travelers in Cuba. This includes pick pocketing, purse snatchings, residential break-ins, and car break-ins. Violent crime, including armed robbery and homicide, is on the rise in Cuba. Criminals target foreigners for crimes of opportunity, often in tourist areas but also across the city at all hours. There has also been an increase in theft of travel documents, including green cards.

Crime rates increase during holiday periods and power outages linked to the unstable grid. Petty theft is the most frequent crime affecting visitors, though there are credible reports of violent incidents involving knives, machetes, and occasionally firearms.

Official statistics are unavailable, but independent sources report sharp increases: 649 confirmed incidents in 2023, 1,317 in 2024, and 1,319 in just the first half of 2025. Havana, Santiago de Cuba, Matanzas, and Holguín are consistently the most affected areas. Reports highlight growth in drug trafficking, firearms availability, and livestock theft. Despite official claims of declining crime, independent reporting and public perception indicate significant deterioration in citizen security. While serious violent crime against foreigners is less common, there have been reports of druggings, sexual assaults, and scams. Travelers staying in hotels and *casas particulares* are generally safe but remain vulnerable in cluster zones such as city centers, bars, restaurants, and airports.

The U.S. Embassy receives several reports of crimes against U.S. citizens each month, consistent with increases reported by other diplomatic missions. Visitors should report crimes both to local police and to the U.S. Embassy.

Kidnapping Threat

The Department of State has **not** included a Kidnapping “K” Indicator on Cuba’s advisory. Kidnapping risk is minimal, and there are no recent reports of incidents

Infrastructure

Cuba's electrical supply is unreliable. Since October 2024, there have been several prolonged nationwide power outages. Scheduled and unscheduled power cuts lasting up to 12 hours occur daily in Havana, and even longer outside the capital. Some large businesses, hotels, hospitals, and institutions use generators during power outages. However, they may have trouble keeping the generators running during a long outage due to the inconsistent and scarce availability of fuel.

Terrorism

The Department of State assesses Havana as a **LOW-threat location** for terrorism affecting U.S. government interests. No Terrorism “T” Indicator is in place. Post concurs with this assessment; terrorism is not a significant concern for travelers in Cuba.

Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The Department of State assesses Havana as a **LOW-threat location** for political violence. No Civil Unrest “U” Indicator is present.

Civil unrest can develop quickly, sometimes disrupting services and logistics. Demonstrations—even those intended as peaceful—can escalate and turn violent. In 2021, nationwide protests over shortages and the government’s COVID-19 response were the largest in decades and were met with harsh government crackdowns. Small-scale protests and hunger strikes continue sporadically, though they are rarely acknowledged by state media. Small-scale protests are a growing trend since the more frequent infrastructure issues with nationwide blackouts and water and fuel shortages.

Elections/Political Stability

Cuba is an authoritarian state. The 2019 constitution codifies that Cuba remains a one-party system in which the Communist Party is the only legal political party. In so-called national elections held in October 2019, Miguel Díaz-Canel was declared the winner of the role for president. He assumed the presidency, an office re-established following a constitutional referendum held in February 2019, after replacing Raul Castro as first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party, which was until then the highest political entity of the state by law. Elections were neither free nor fair nor competitive. Political dissent is tightly controlled and harshly repressed.

Protests & Demonstrations

Some activist groups hold small-scale demonstrations, hunger strikes, and sit-ins throughout Cuba, however, protests are generally sporadic and spontaneous. Typically, Cuban authorities intervene to crack down on demonstrations even if peaceful. State-controlled media outlets generally do not report on them, and the Cuban Government refuses to acknowledge them. Unannounced and unsanctioned demonstrations and protests are infrequent but can incite violence and often lead to arrests even if peaceful.

In 2021 a series of protests against the government’s response to COVID-19, along with ongoing food shortages, were the most significant protests against the regime in decades. The government responded by cracking down on demonstrators, charging them with crimes and imposing lengthy sentences.

Most protests or demonstrations (“*marchas*”) that affect U.S. Embassy operations have been organized by the Government of Cuba with advance notice given to the Embassy.

Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

The Government of Cuba openly criticizes the U.S. policies towards Cuba and occasionally organizes anti-U.S. demonstrations outside of the U.S. Embassy.

Law Enforcement

The Ministry of Interior (MININT) controls police, internal security forces, and the prison system. The National Revolutionary Police are the primary law enforcement organization, supported by state security. Specialized units of the ministry's state security branch are responsible for monitoring, infiltrating, and suppressing independent political activity. The national leadership, including members of the military, maintain effective control over the security forces.

Police Response

The Government of Cuba relies on a robust internal and external security apparatus to maintain law and order. Most police and law enforcement officers conducting official business wear uniforms. Some investigators or officials may be in plainclothes, but all law enforcement personnel carry identification. The overall police response to crimes involving foreigners is not adequate. Victims of crime may find unusually long wait times for a police response. Police will accept reports of crime, but U.S. victims should also report their circumstance immediately to American Citizen Services at the U.S. Embassy.

Law enforcement maintains effective control but is inconsistent in responding to crimes involving foreigners. Response times are often long, and investigations rarely yield results. Corruption among police and customs officials is common. Visitors should cooperate with police if detained, carry a passport or copy of identification, and ask friends/family to notify the Embassy immediately if detained, as Cuban authorities often delay or deny U.S. consular notification.

If police apprehend you, be cooperative with orders. Advise the police of your nationality and show them your passport or a copy. Under the Vienna Convention, those arrested overseas have the option to request that the police, prison officials, or other authorities alert the nearest U.S. embassy of your arrest and to have communications from you forwarded to the nearest U.S. embassy. In practice, the Cuban government frequently fails to notify the U.S. Embassy when arresting or detaining U.S. citizens, and/or delays U.S. consular access to U.S. persons. Ask friends or family to notify the U.S. Embassy immediately on your behalf should government authorities detain you. U.S. nationals needing assistance should contact the U.S. Embassy at +53-7-839-4100 or +53-5-280-5713 after business hours.

Contact emergency services within Cuba by dialing **106** for Police and **105** for Fire.

Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Cuba, review the local laws and circumstances on the Department of State's Country Information Page.

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [Gay and Lesbian Travelers](#)

- [Travelers with Disabilities](#)
- [Student Travelers](#)
- [Faith-Based Travelers](#)

Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption, & Transparency

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Risk of Wrongful Detention “D” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Cuba

Cuban 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. However, there are confirmed reports of long-term disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities. There are multiple reports of detained activists whose whereabouts were unknown for days or weeks because the government did not register these detentions, many of which occurred at unregistered sites. There are recurring reports that members of the security forces and their agents harass, intimidate, and physically assault human rights and prodemocracy advocates, political dissidents, and peaceful demonstrators, and that they do so with impunity. Some detainees and prisoners endure physical abuse by prison officials or other inmates at the instigation of guards. The U.S. Department of State Human Rights Report notes that Prisoners Defenders estimated there were at least 1,047 political prisoners in detention as of August.

Although the law prohibits coercion during investigative interrogations, police and security forces at times use aggressive and physically abusive tactics, threats, and harassment during questioning. Detainees report officers intimidated them with threats of long-term detention, loss of child-custody rights, denial of permission to depart the country (exit bans), and other punishments. Arbitrary arrests and short-term detentions increased in 2021 following the July 11 protests and became a routine government method for controlling independent public expression and political activity to this day. The government frequently detained activists arbitrarily without informing them of any charges against them and often denied them the ability to communicate with their relatives.

Police and security officials used short-term and sometimes violent detentions to prevent independent political activity and free assembly. Security officials are known to dress in plainclothes to surveil and record community activity in all provinces. Such detentions generally last from several hours to several days. The law allows for “preventive detention” for up to four years of individuals not charged with an actual crime, based on a subjective determination of “precriminal dangerousness,” which is defined as the “special proclivity of a person to commit crimes, demonstrated by conduct in manifest contradiction of socialist norms.” Mostly used as a tool to control “antisocial” behaviors such as substance abuse or prostitution, authorities also use such detentions to silence peaceful political opponents.

The law provides criminal penalties for corruption. The government is highly sensitive to corruption allegations and often conducts anticorruption crackdowns. The law provides for

three to eight years' imprisonment for "illegal enrichment" by authorities or government employees. The government does not implement the law effectively, and officials sometimes engage in corrupt practices with impunity. There are numerous reports of police and other official corruption in enforcement of economic restrictions and provision of government services. There are multiple reports that when searching homes and vehicles, police sometimes take the owners' belongings or seek bribes in exchange for not imposing fines or arrests. Corruption by customs officers is also common.

Cybersecurity

The Cuban government closely monitors electronic communications, including hotel business centers, phone networks, and Wi-Fi. Authorities can intercept all data and information sent electronically – by text, texting applications, social media, fax machine, computer, or telephone. Wireless devices are especially vulnerable. The Cuban government closely monitors activities, including contact with Cuban citizens. Private activity of a benign nature could be used to blackmail or compromise individuals. Hotel rooms or rental houses may be searched.

Import/Export Restrictions

U.S. sanctions restrict exports to Cuba. All transactions providing U.S. exports to Cuba must be licensed by the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and are subject to certain restrictions, such as a ban on exporting items to Cuban state-owned enterprises or agencies, which includes many organizations involved in the tourism industry. Travel to Cuba for tourist activities remains prohibited by statute.

Electronics such as drones, radios, gaming devices, satellite phones, etc. are heavily restricted and often seized.

Review OFAC guidance and the U.S. International Trade Agency website before travel. A country-specific listing of items/goods prohibited from being exported to the country or that are otherwise restricted is available from the U.S. International Trade Agency [website](#).

Additional resources and reports can be found in the [OSAC Traveler Toolkit](#).