

Cuba

The largest island country in the Caribbean, Cuba has a population of approximately 11 million. The Republic of Cuba is one of the world’s last remaining Communist states. There is no official state religion, however a majority of the population are Christian (59.2%), with a high proportion of people claiming to be unaffiliated to any faith (23%), and also a smaller but significant percentage of adherents to traditional folk religions (17%).

Constitution and government	Education and children’s rights	Family, community, society, religious courts and tribunals	Freedom of expression advocacy of humanist values
			<u>Expression of core humanist principles on democracy, freedom or human rights is somewhat restricted</u>
<u>Insufficient information or detail not included in this report</u>	<u>Insufficient information or detail not included in this report</u>	<u>Insufficient information or detail not included in this report</u>	

Legend

Constitution and government

The constitution affirms the secular nature of the state and the right freedom of religion, although in practice the government tends to restrict this right.

The 1992 constitution abolished atheism as the state ideology, declaring the country a secular state, with the right to practice religion. Catholics and other religious believers were given the right to join the ruling Communist Party of Cuba (PCC).

The constitution grants limited rights of assembly and association, but these may not be “exercised against the existence and objectives of the Socialist State.”

Education and children’s Rights

The government does not permit the existence of private primary and secondary schools, including religious schools, although several international schools in Havana operated under agreements with the government and were given considerable leeway in setting their curricula. Academic curricula at all levels of schooling are highly politicized. Consequently, groups such as Jehovah’s Witnesses experienced difficulties accommodating their prohibitions against political involvement in this environment. For instance, some Jehovah’s Witnesses leaders encouraged their members to avoid university education.

<state.gov/documents/organization/171775.pdf>

Freedom of expression, advocacy of humanist values

The government restricts academic freedom. Teaching materials must contain ideological content that supports the Communist regime.

The regime forbids any political organizing outside of the PCC, and effectively prohibits freedom of expression, assembly and association.

The news media are owned and controlled by the state. Independent media is illegal, aside from a few Catholic Church magazines, and the independent journalists and news agencies that do exist are infiltrated by the government. Scores of bloggers are arrested and imprisoned every year.

The regime severely restricts access to the internet, and less than 3 percent of Cubans are able to access the Internet.

The government tightly regulates the publication of all printed materials (not only religious literature), while tolerating a wider range of electronic media (some of which it censors locally). The government has a near monopoly on distribution and sale of printing equipment and supplies. The Catholic Church and some other churches publish printed periodicals without interference, even without permits. The Catholic Church and other religious organizations also operated websites and blogs that were not censored.