

EYE ON CUBA



ANNUAL REPORT



2018



People in Need

Center for Human Rights and Democracy

Prague, January 2019

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The Eye on Cuba project was initiated during the year 2012 and published its first case in March 2013.

The year 2018 has been an important one for Cuba. At the beginning of the year we learned about the suicide of Fidelito, the son of Fidel Castro. In the middle of the year, Tropical Storm Alberto slammed into the island and caused significant damage and displacement. Towards the end of the year, after the election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Cuba saw her doctors from the More Doctors Program being sent back. Another measure that without a doubt will change the island was the arrival of mobile internet just before the end of the year.

However, the biggest change came with the handover of the presidency. The succession by Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez as the President of Cuba has been the most commented event both on the island and abroad, being the first person that did not belong to the historical generation of the Cuban Revolution to govern the island. For many, this change brought a certain hope for reforms, a hope that had already completely faded by the second sentence of his speech at the United Nations: "We represent continuity, not a rupture."

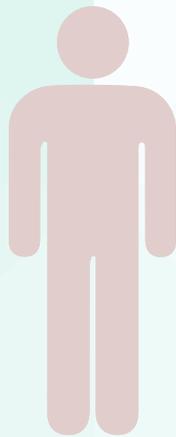
On the legislative front, a constitution project has been launched that will be voted on in early 2019 and that has been discussed extensively in terms of some of its articles. The text has been modified through consultations with the citizenry, so that the final version of the text had still not been agreed on by the end of year. Despite this, opposition and discordant voices are already preparing campaigns for abstaining and casting a negative vote.





With respect to the human rights situation, little has changed, the most basic civil and political rights have continued to go unrecognized by the Cuban government. The situation of economic, social and cultural rights, which the Cuban Revolution pretended to be a leader on, are still waiting for guarantees and a real sense of concern on the part of the government.

In the month of May, the Republic of Cuba was subjected to a Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations. Things did not turn out particularly well given that some countries reminded Cuba of the commitments the country had made previously and had not fulfilled and the deteriorating situation of some rights in particular.



Decree 349 entered into force on December 7th amid protests and critiques. From the outside it was also criticized, the European Parliament called for its withdrawal on the grounds that it undermined artistic freedom.

The new draft constitution had to be modified and agreed on through a consultation with the population. In theory, it will include basic rights such as Habeas Corpus, however, other rights such as the right to marry between members of the same sex were withdrawn before the end of the year. Some cases infuriated the population both on and off of the island, a few worth highlighting are: the imprisonment of biologist Ariel Urquiola, the death of Alejandro Pupo after being detained and beaten by the state security forces and the hunger strike of Tomás Magdariaga that nearly cost him his life.



EYE ON CUBA DATABASE

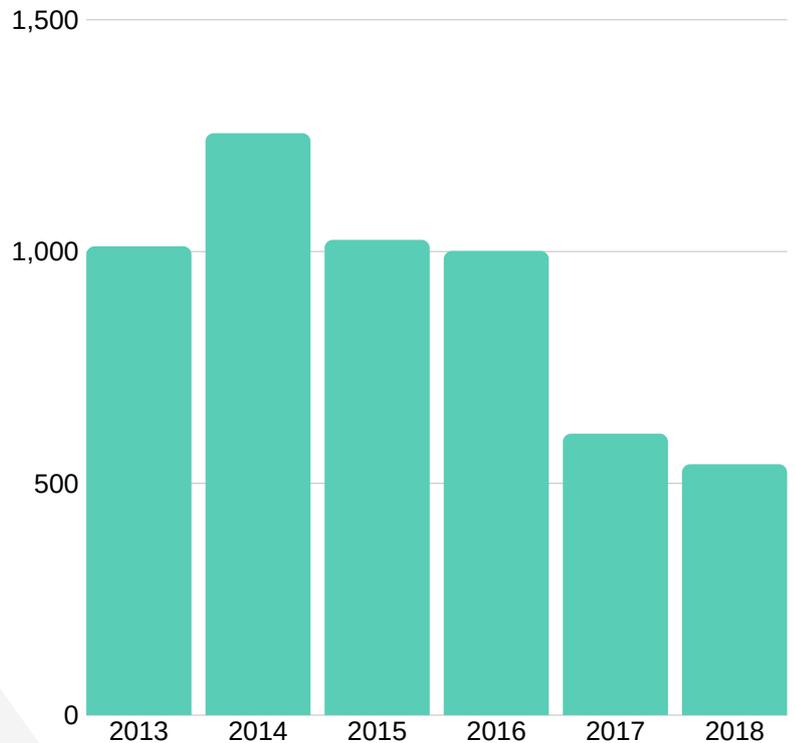


The Eye on Cuba database is in charge of collecting and properly documenting cases of human rights violations of in Cuba.

The intention of the database is not to simply collect all of the violations that occurred, but to select a sample of well-documented and verified cases that may suppose a sufficiently broad representation of what is taking place. This approach allows us to deeply study the individual cases, their characteristics, their evolution, and their similarities.

The database stores all of the possible data of the victims, although these details are not always made public, in order to protect them. Likewise, the identities of the perpetrators are also collected, in case they could be used in the future to serve as valid accounts in court.

In addition, the webpage www.eyeoncuba.org publicly presents these cases and aims to raise awareness about what the real human rights situation on the island is like.



Number of Documented Human Rights Violations on EYE on CUBA over the last 6 years

5.434

**Documented Cases of
Human Rights
Violations**

2018 IN NUMBERS

540

Cases reported throughout the year 2018 by collaborators of the Eye on Cuba network.

12

Documented cases of human rights violations have been recorded in 12 of the 15 provinces that make up Cuba

286

Number of victims who have received psychological support from the network

70

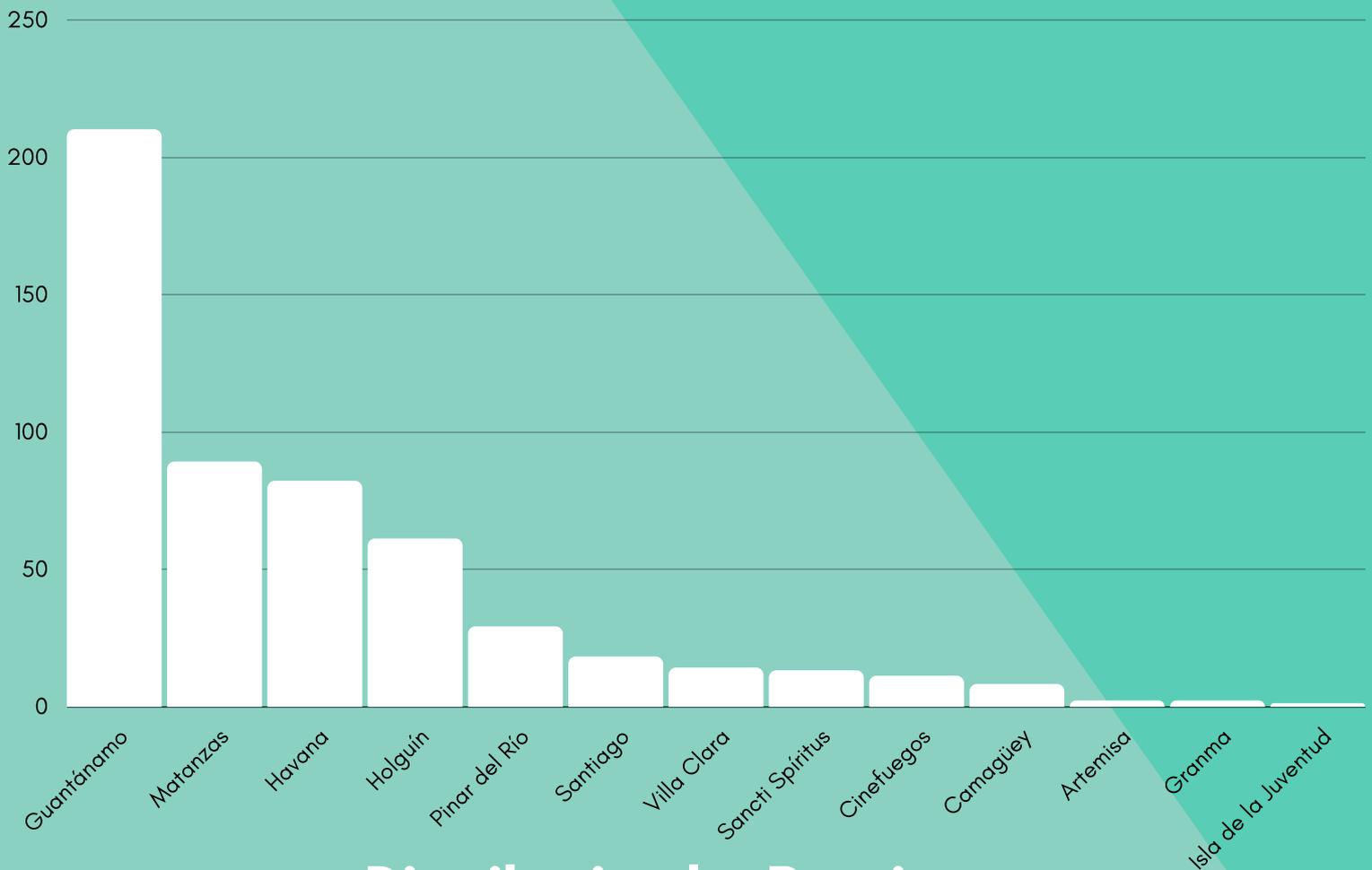
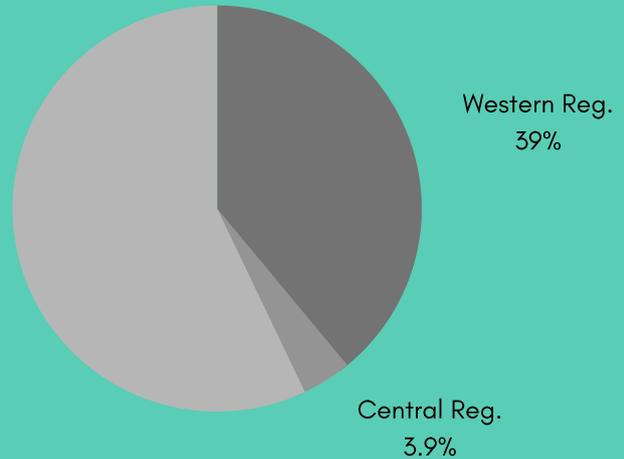
Number of victims that have received financial support from the network

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Distribution by Region

Documented cases in the three regions of the island. There is a greater number of incidence in the eastern region, where the police presence is greater and the network has a greater number of collaborators.

Eastern Reg.
57.1%

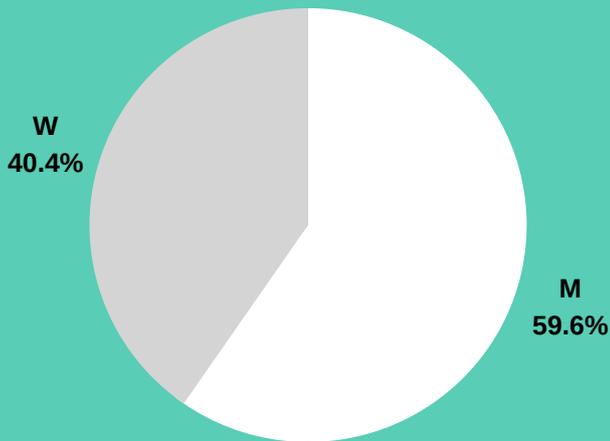


Distribution by Province

The cases occurred between January and December 2018 in 12 provinces and the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud

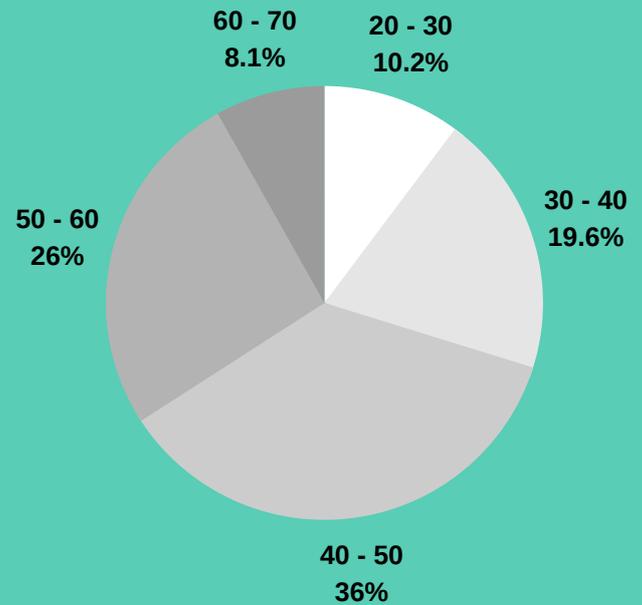


THE IDENTITY OF THE VICTIMS



Differences by Gender

The difference is clear. Human rights violations affect more men than women. However, machismo is still a big problem in Cuba, which makes the consequences of repression and social isolation far worse for women than for men. One very common example of this is that single mothers are affected.



Differences by Age

There are also large differences in the age of the victims. The incidence is much higher in the age groups ranging from 40 to 60 years. Human rights violations for those above the age of 70 and those below 20 are almost anecdotal when compared to the rest.





AFFECTED RIGHTS

In 2018, civil and political rights are the ones that remain the most limited in Cuba. At the top of the list are arbitrary detentions, restrictions in terms of freedom of movement, and limitations on freedom of expression. On the other hand, there is a growing number of complaints regarding the situation of economic rights. After disasters like Tropical Storm Alberto, many people have lost their homes and are still waiting for the state to provide some kind of help.

329

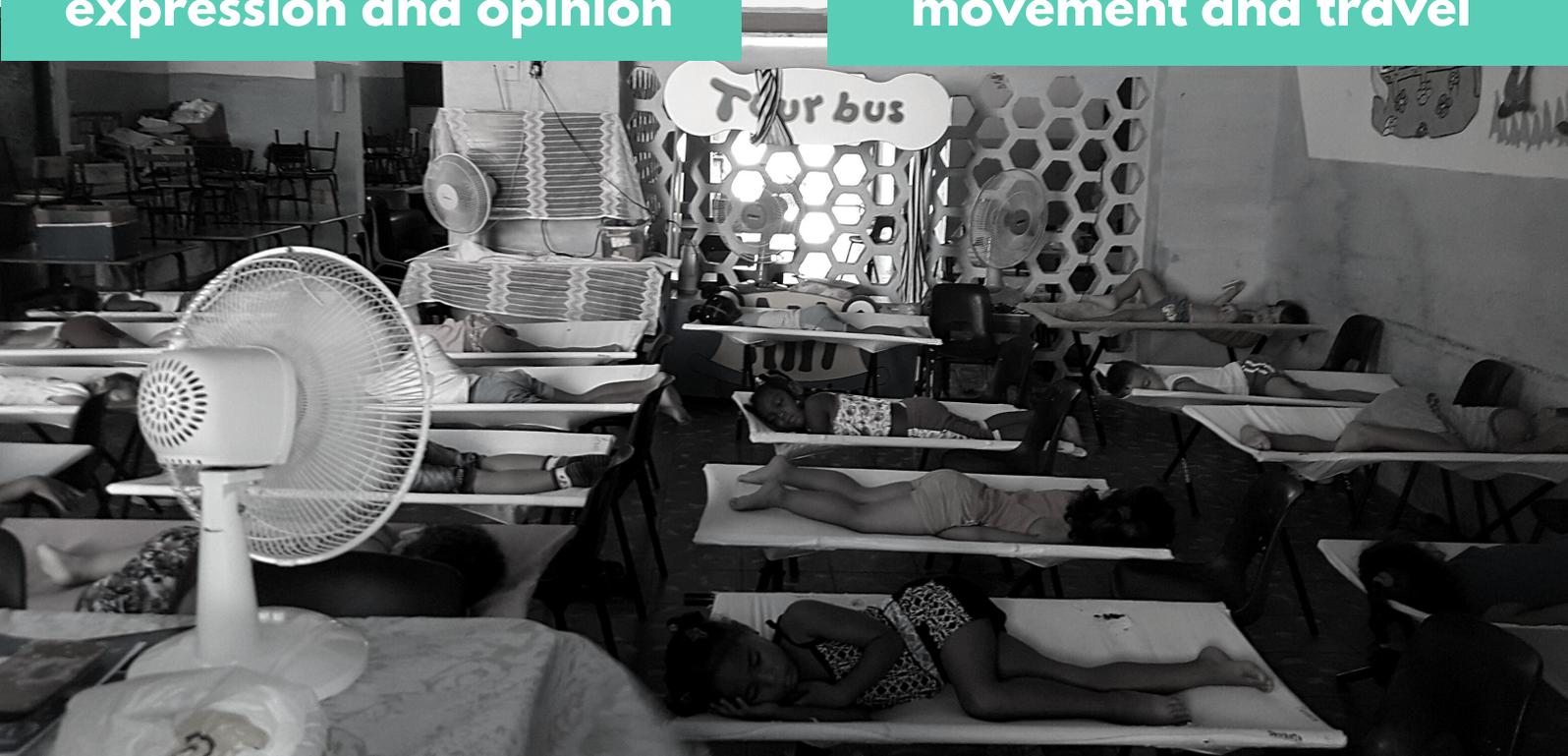
cases in which victims were arbitrarily detained. These are usually short-term detentions where no information is shared with the families

120

cases of limitations on the right to freedom of expression and opinion

188

cases that violated the right to freedom of movement and travel





OUTREACH AND SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS



@EYEonCUBA

The Twitter account started in April 2013, and it currently has more than a thousand followers



@EYECUBA

Our Facebook page has recently been created to reach an even greater number of people

www.eyeoncuba.org

24.665 Page views

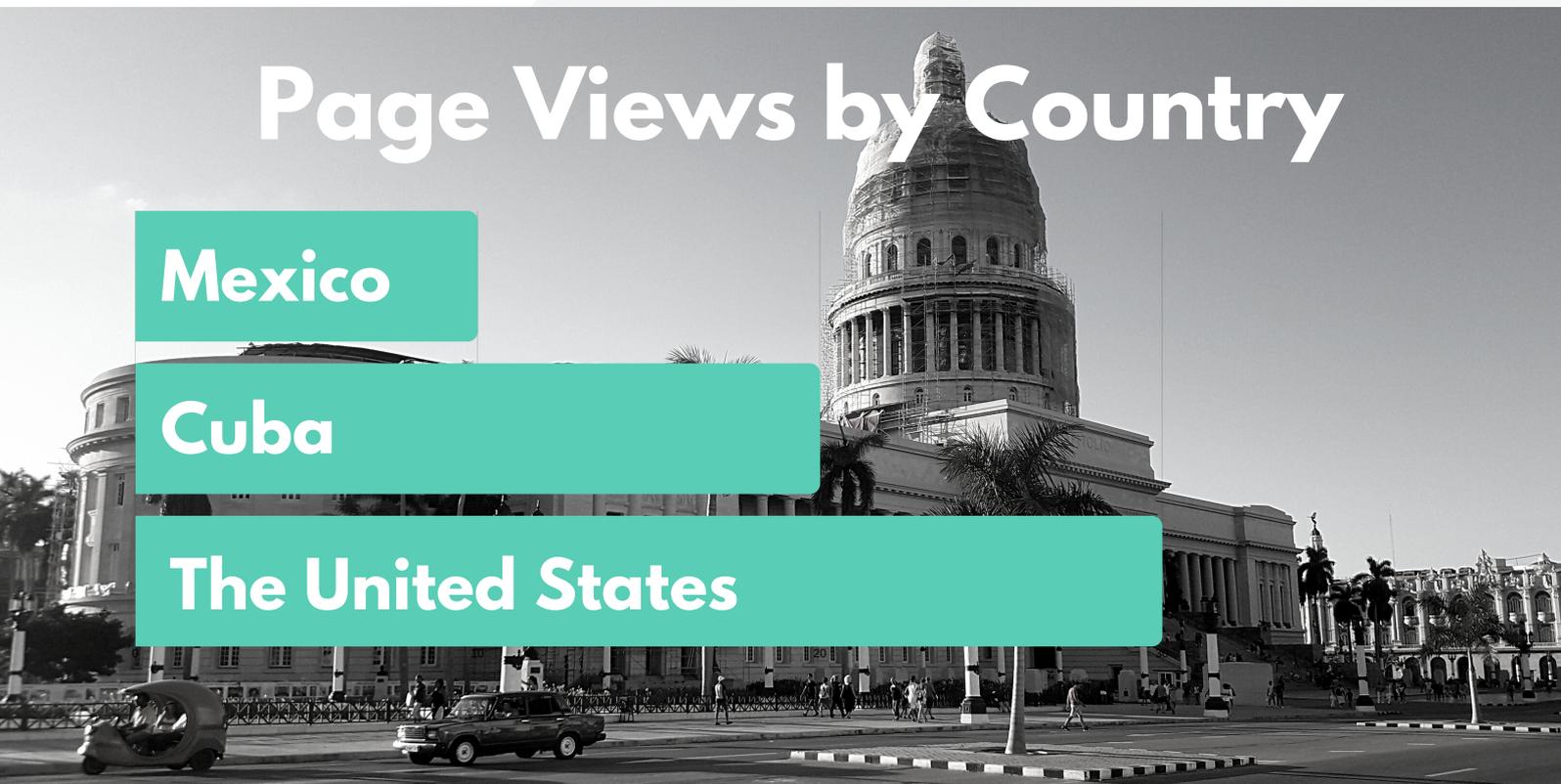
15.389 New users

Page Views by Country

Mexico

Cuba

The United States



ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

Sessions and Document from the UN's Universal Periodic Review of Cuba: <https://bit.ly/2t51xdh>

EP Joint Motion for a Resolution on Cuba:
<https://bit.ly/37aEjWD>

Human Rights Watch 2018:
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/cuba>

Amnesty International 2018:
<https://bit.ly/3a1LLdl>

Human Rights and the new Constitution:
<https://bit.ly/3gDpRe1>

10 milestones of 2018 (Spanish):
<http://www.cubadebate.cu/especiales/2018/12/31/diez-hitos-que-marcaron-a-cuba-en-el-2018-encuesta-y-linea-de-tiempo/>

IN APPRECIATION

Eye on Cuba would like to thank all the members of the network for their help and efforts in maintaining and growing the database, often risking their own safety and that of their families to keep this project going.

We also need to thank the people who both on and off of the island that collaborate with us in variety of ways and who also do their bit to make everything work.

Our warmest thanks and support for the victims who have dared to share their situation with us, either anonymously or publicly, whom we have helped or hope to help in one way or another.

Lastly, we give thanks to the entire team and all the people who at some point worked on this project and thanks to whom Eye on Cuba has been able to operate for more than five years, while also becoming an example for many other initiatives.



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