

Some 200 Cuban Intelligence Advisers Operate in Nicaragua

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Havana Times, June 3, 2019

Cuban agents have been operating in Nicaragua since 2007, but in a more intense and numerous way since 2018, in the wake of the April 18 rebellion.



Officials of the regime leaked that Cuban agents have been in charge of training police and state officials in repressive tactics, espionage and control of prisons and border posts. File photo: La Prensa

HAVANA TIMES – Up to two hundred Cuban Intelligence advisers operate in Nicaragua on a regular basis, according to high-level sources linked to the Ortega-Murillo government.

According to the information, ratified by two sources linked to government structures, Cubans who operate as “advisers” in Nicaragua are members of the State Security Forces of that county, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior.

Cubans have been operating in Nicaragua since 2007, but in a more intense and numerous way since 2018, in the wake of the April 18 rebellion and since they have doubled their presence with training programs for Ortega’s Police, Migration and Immigration authorities, Customs and prison system officials.

According to one source, the Cubans arrive with an official and diplomatic passport.

Most are received by Protocol and attended in the special window at the Augusto C. Sandino International Airport.

On most occasions they are met by personnel and officers of the Cuban embassy, sometimes Nicaraguan officials arrive, such as from the Foreign Ministry, Interior (Ministry) and the Police; as well as retired military working as political operators of the regime.

They come directly from La Habana on flights of Conviasa, the Venezuelan Airlines, or from Venezuela making a stopover in Panama. However, most of advisers travel on Conviasa flights among ordinary Cuban migrants who come to the country as tourists [often to buy products for resale in Cuba] or to travel to the United States in search of asylum.

According to the information obtained under protective measures, some Cuban officials return to the island within two days, for which it is suspected that their mission was to follow or watch over Cuban tourists on their trip to Nicaragua, but most remain between two and four months providing training to local officials.

“The classes taught by the Cubans are about personal defense, shooting with small arms, subversive activities, operational psychology, criminalistics, document analysis, tactics and interview (read as interrogation) techniques, internal security measures (for the airports and migratory posts),” the source explained.

Some theoretical training is carried out in the offices of the Silvio Mayorga building, headquarters of the Ministry of the Interior. Other practical lessons are carried out on the grounds of the Jorge Navarro penitentiary system in Tipitapa; others in police headquarters such as Plaza El Sol, the Walter Mendoza Academy and the Institute of Criminalistics and Forensic Sciences.

In the same way, the practices are developed in the air, land and water terminals with national and Cuban instructors.

The courses last between four to six months each and are a mandatory requirement for Interior Ministry staff in the following categories of courses: introduction, basic and elementary.

Migratory control program is Cuban

According to the information, the Nicaraguan migratory control system is one hundred percent Cuban. The previous system, which was developed by the United States and was powered by an intelligence data base of that country, was substituted in 2008 by the Cuban system called Front Pass that –according to the informants— has been a technological fiasco due to the fact that it is unstable and forces the user to ask the traveler the same questions every time he leaves or enters the country, because they are not shown in the terminal.

This system reclassifies even the countries under other categories and allows the Cuban Intelligence to access the database of travelers on transit through Nicaragua to other countries, according to the leaked information.

They become Cubans

In many cases, Cuban cooperation has also allowed a trip to Nicaraguan officials and policemen to La Habana for training that later they come back to replicate to their bases and sections.

Many of them return acting as Cubans, talking like Cubans, shouting like Cubans...: "It may be that many of the police and official trained there, here act and speak as Cubans to impress, because Cubans have a low profile in public operations and they are very strict in that role, but it should not be ruled out that the advisers had intervened as instructors in "live" interrogations and torture to extract information, as practical classes.

These advisers, according to the sources, were the strategists of the war training courses to police and public employees throughout 2018, called "Concentrated Military and Police Tactical Police Course."

The "invasion" at the end of March

More than a hundred Cuban entered previous and during the visit of the Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bruno Rodriguez Parilla, who arrived on March 27, to Managua to participate in the meeting of the 25 Anniversary of the Association of Caribbean States Association, which took place on March 28 and 29.

Upon his arrival he was received by the Cuban Ambassador to Nicaragua, Juan Carlos Hernandez Padron, and by Sidhartha Marin, Minister Adviser to the President of Nicaragua on Politics and International Affairs.

The number of agents was high for the diplomatic level of Cuban Minister, who was publicly announced, but later it was announced that who would actually come to represent Cuba was the President named by the Castro dictatorship, Miguel Diaz-Canel, who also entered with his own security ring.

Before April 18, 2018, the Cuban presence was already active and ranged between 100 and 150 recurrent advisers, according to the information provided.

Afterwards, it rose to an average of 300 per month until the end of 2018. These are rotated every so often.

Recently they have ranged between 150 and 200, without including the agents "spies" that come infiltrated on the flights of Conviasa and other airlines and return a few days later.

Unlike Cuban migrants, who disperse in Managua in low costs hostels, sometimes travelling in taxis, the Cuban intelligence officials are taken in state or rented vehicles and taken to government protocol houses and other sites reserved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua and the Cuban Embassy.

Allegations of Abuse

The presence of Cubans in Nicaragua has been linked since April 2018 to allegations of human rights abuses and torture. Pablo Cuevas, lawyer of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights, told La Prensa the reception of denunciations by Nicaraguans who affirm to have been assaulted in the protests by people in uniform with Cuban accents, along with Ortega policemen, be it in street protests or in detention centers like El Chipote. The denunciations have been echoed by the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro, who denounced Cuba in December of 2018 for exporting its methods of repression to Venezuela and Nicaragua.