

anyone could run in the elections. However, the nominating process appears to be controlled by the Party and its organizations, effectively preventing members of the opposition from running. Furthermore, the Party leadership, including Castro, have consistently rejected multi-party democracy .

UNITED NATIONS ACTION ON CUBA

In September 1988, a delegation from the UNCHR visited Cuba. However, some dissidents were prevented from testifying before the CHR representatives and others, who did testify, were subsequently charged with criminal offences. In 1991, The Commission appointed a Special Representative to maintain direct contact with the Cuban Government and citizens on the matters raised by the 1988 report. The Cuban Government refused to cooperate with the Special Representative. Therefore, at its 1992 session, the Commission appointed the Special Representative to be its Special Rapporteur on Cuba. The Cuban Government has also refused to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada is concerned about the continued deterioration of human rights in Cuba, and deplores the mistreatment of activists. Canadian representatives take every opportunity to raise human rights issues at the very highest levels, both bilaterally and in multilateral fora. Canadian Embassy officials in Havana also maintain contact with the dissident community. Although trials are supposed to be open in Cuba, when Embassy Representatives tried to attend the trials of some dissidents, including Yndamiro Restano and Sebastian Arcos, they were denied access by Cuban officials. Following the attack on Elizardo Sanchez, the Secretary of State for External Affairs called on the Cuban Government to cease the harassment of dissidents.

Canada was not a co-sponsor of the 1991 CHR resolution on Cuba but did vote for it. Canada co-sponsored the resolution in 1992 because of the deterioration of the human rights situation since 1991. In addition, by co-sponsoring the resolution, Canada showed its support for the UNCHR and its institutions.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- What steps can be taken to encourage the Cuban government to improve the human rights situation and to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur?