



Yordan Gil



A heartfelt plea is being made by Vice President of the newly-formed Cuba-Guyana Community in Guyana Yordan Gil to the government to leverage the wealth of high-level intellectual talent among Cuban migrants currently residing here. Gil, a professional musician and symphonic maestro, highlighted in an interview with Stabroek News yesterday that while many Cubans have found a better quality of life in Guyana compared to their homeland, their lack of permanent documentation is forcing highly-skilled professionals into low-skilled jobs.

Gil estimates that there are approximately 5,000 to 6,000 Cubans currently living in Guyana. "Since I see that life in Guyana is much better than Cuba, a million times, I decided to stay here for a better life, and so [did] many Cubans," Gil stated.



The primary hurdle for the Cuban community is the difficulty in obtaining legal status and citizenship. Gil said that the current process is "very difficult," involving only three-month visa extensions, with a possible further restriction to just two extensions total.



The community is eagerly awaiting a government initiative, which Gil hopes could be “an immigrant ID card” or general identification card for foreigners, that will provide stability. “What we Cubans want is to have Guyana as a second homeland, as our country,” Gil said. He added that the situation in Cuba is “very serious, it is very miserable. We don’t want to leave, we want to live, work and be here permanently. [We are asking] that they give us opportunities to work, to stay, to be able to cooperate in all aspects of our lives and work here in Guyana.”

A key point of distress for the community leader is the underemployment of Cuban professionals. Gil, a national symphonic teacher with a master’s degree in music, works in construction.

“Here there are first-degree doctors, specialists of a great category working in construction,” Gil revealed. He cited that highly-qualified engineers,



Chinese stores, and fast food outlets like KFC and Wendy's.

Gil argued that this is a missed opportunity for Guyana. "Here there is a shortage [of medical specialties] and you can take advantage of that talent," he said, noting that Cuban medicine is widely respected, and many Guyanese students travel to Cuba to study.

"Can you imagine if a great musician... came here to Guyana, and they tell him that he cannot work in music because he does not have the Guyanese documents? It is really unfair," Gil stressed.

To address these challenges and provide support, Gil founded the Cuba-Guyana Community in Guyana approximately three years ago, initially as a WhatsApp group that now boasts 5,000 members. The group serves as a vital network where members help each other with economic problems, share information about laws and processes, and collaborate in general. "It is very difficult to be far from our country... we have to unite ourselves," he explained.

On the matter of family life, Gil estimated that only 20 to 30 of the thousands of Cubans have brought their children, who are now attending Guyanese schools. Most others come alone to work and send remittances back home.

Despite the documentation obstacles, Gil is determined to contribute his high-level skills to Guyanese society. He has attempted to meet with government ministers and has approached schools and music institutions but has not yet secured a formal interview. He mentioned a previous, unfulfilled offer for a meeting with a former Home Affairs minister regarding a musical project.



Guyana, which is not here. He also wants to elevate the quality of music teaching, particularly for instruments like the guitar and piano, claiming the current level in local schools is "very basic."

Gil added, "The government of Guyana [should] take advantage of that massive talent of Cuban intellectuals," offering them the proper opportunities their qualifications deserve.



TRENDING

1

Vendors behind Demico House served with notice to remove by today



2

Gov't mum on US-sanctioned Mae Toussaint Jr Thomas



3

Linden-Soesdyke accident victims identified