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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Update on Peaceful Protest by Cuban Migrants**

* Eight Cuban migrants are refusing food, over various concerns related to their immigration status.
* Immigration officials have been working since last week to address concerns and
* The group is under close observation and receiving regular checks from HSA staff.

**GRAND CAYMAN (GIS) –**Agroup of eight Cuban migrants at the Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) yesterday (15 January 2019) refused food.

This followed a peaceful protest that began late last week concerning: immigration processing; access to free, bi-lingual attorneys; and a desire to be released into the community.

Acting Chief Immigration Officer Garfield Wong met with the migrants last Thursday (10 January) and committed to addressing their concerns. Additional meetings with Immigration and other agencies will be planned.

As soon as the migrants refused food Her Majesty’s Cayman Islands Prison Service, which is responsible for their care and custody, implemented its protocols for such situations. These include close observations and medical checks by Health Services Authority staff.

Officials also confirm that earlier this week they confiscated five mobile phones, which are prohibited for safety and security reasons, from the same group of migrants. All occupants of the IDC are able to make 10 mins of outgoing phone calls a week on a landline, but can receive incoming calls 24 hours a day.

Mindful of the peaceful nature of the protest, immigration and prison officers are working closely to de-escalate matters as much as possible.

The group of eight detainees were among 11 who arrived in the Cayman Islands on 28September 2018, when their boat got into distress in local waters on the way to Central America. Two persons from the group have already been repatriated to Cuba.

In early October 2018 the Immigration Detention Centre re-opened to accommodate the group’s arrival, following extensive renovations.

At the same time 10 migrants, who have been on-Island for a considerably longer period of time to accommodate the Immigration process, remain on release in the community. For security reasons these persons have been subject to electronic monitoring since the release programme began in August 2018.

**For the official Cayman Islands Government web portal,** [**www.gov.ky**](http://www.gov.ky)**:**

Web title: Cuban Migrant Update

Web blurb: Authorities are working to address concerns that have caused eight migrants to refuse food.