

# *Costa Rica to Probe U.S. Plot to Destabilize Cuba*

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San José, August 23 (RHC) -- Costa Rica has announced plans to launch an investigation into undercover US programs using its citizens in a plot to destabilize the government in Cuba.

Costa Rica made the decision based on a report by the Associated Press on August 4, which said the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and a contractor, Creative Associates International, sought to provoke political changes in Cuba under the cover of health and civic programs.

Since 2009, USAID has reportedly sent almost a dozen young Venezuelans, Costa Ricans and Peruvians to Cuba, for payments as low as USD 5.41 an hour, to stir up opposition against the Cuban government.

"If we can confirm all this, of course we're not going to agree that our national territory be used to attack a friendly government, regardless of what ideological side you're on," Costa Rica's Director of Intelligence and Security, Mariano Figueres, said on Friday.

"It's a matter of sovereignty and respect ... and we're very alarmed that they used Costa Rican citizens and put them at risk," he said.

Figueres noted that Costa Rica has not yet asked the US about the program.

The agents who travelled to Cuba posed as tourists and scouted for people they could turn into political activists around the communist country.

In one instance, the agents held an HIV-prevention workshop described in memos as "the perfect excuse" for the political objectives of the program.

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