



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.

DIVISION OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

OFFICE OF HAITIAN REFUGEE CONCERNS

110 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

William P. Thompson, President Claire Randall, General Secretary

September 3, 1978

Marcia Ryan
Rep. Lehman
236 CHOB
Wasn., D.C. 20515

Dear Marcia;

The Miami District Office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has recently moved aggressively to deport Haitian asylum seekers without respect for due process or the Haitian lives which might be lost. Actions taken within the last month include:

- 1) Withdrawal of work authorizations, even for those 2,000 exclusion cases which are still in legal limbo awaiting the new regulations which would permit them full evidentiary hearings on their claims.
- 2) Conducting deportation hearings at a rate of up to 60 per day, using information and documentation obtained without legal counsel, when there are only three free immigration lawyers available.
- 3) Refusing not only lawyers, but resident Haitians and priests access to the waiting rooms to explain to the Haitians their legitimate legal rights.
- 4) Returning new arrivals to Haiti without benefit of access to any legal counsel, under cover of having obtained "voluntary departure" agreements: August 22 = 13 persons returned; August 29 = 57 persons; August 30 = 23 persons; a total of 93 persons deported in little over one week.

Amnesty International has stated that it is "concerned that the United States Government not deport any of these persons to Haiti without fully assuring itself that they will not face imprisonment or persecution on their return." (Full statement enclosed.) Reports from former Haitian political prisoners, as well as State Department and Congressional records, indicate that arbitrary arrests, detentions and death are not uncommon fates for Haitians deported from the U.S. or returned "voluntarily."

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We are convinced that these Haitians are victims of a pre-judgement of their claims based on their race, their poverty and the double-standard for refugees which only recognizes those fleeing from communism and not those fleeing from the repression of right-wing U.S. allies.

After you have read the enclosed materials, we are certain that you will agree that your timely support is necessary to call a halt to this gross miscarriage of justice. Please send letters of concern and inquiry to Attorney General Bell and INS Commissioner Castillo.

There will be a meeting on Wednesday, September 13, at 2:00 p.m.* to discuss the details of this situation and methods of generating sufficient Congressional support for lawful, humane Administrative actions. Resource persons from the D.C. Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the firm of Covington and Burling, and the National Council of Churches will be present.

If you have any further questions, I will be in New York September 4 - 8 and can be reached at: (212) 870-2260. Thereafter, I shall be in my office in Washington, D.C.: (202) 544-5174.

Thank you for your continued concern for the rights of Haitian refugees.

Sincerely,

Sue Sullivan
Sue Sullivan, Director
Haitian Refugee Concerns

Enclosures:

UP-DATE

Attorney Kurzban's letter to U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees
Amnesty International statement
Testimony of Marc Romulus, former Haitian political prisoner

cc - Dorothy Anderson, Rep. Diggs
Elizabeth Bankowski, Rep. Drinan
Elizabeth Bedell, Rep. Pepper
Raquel Frankel, Hispanic Caucus
Steve Horblitt, Rep. Fauntroy
Estrelita Jones, Rep. Fraser
David Lake, M.C.P.L.

Joanna Moore, Sen. Eastland
Laura Murphy, Rep. Chisholm
Marcia Ryan, Rep. Lehman
Jim Schweitzer, Rep. Holtzman
Anne Swift, Rep. Fascell
Jesse Sydnor, Sen. Metzenbaum
Jerry Tinker, Sen. Kennedy

*Location to be determined.