

The Honorable William Lehmann
2347 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

June 6, 1989

Dear Sir:

As members of the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrants (ICI), we wish to support your committee's effort to know the facts concerning the interdiction and detention of Haitians seeking asylum in the United States. As a multi-faith coalition of religious leaders in the Greater Miami Area who are concerned with the rights and well-being of displaced persons, we feel it essential to bring to your attention some very troubling reports that have come to us from a variety of attorneys, clergy, and other community agencies concerning the Haitian refugees detained here at the Krome Detention Center:

1. That fair legal representation of large numbers of detainees has been impeded and in some cases flatly denied by the Krome staff.
2. That mass hearings of unrepresented Haitians have been held without the presence of reliable translators.
3. That there is a great statistical disparity between the numbers of Haitian detainees paroled during the processing of their asylum claims in proportion to those of particular other nationalities.
4. That minors and pregnant women are being detained at Krome along with other refugees in violation of stated detention policy.
5. That Haitian and other detainees are being frequently brutalized by guards at the detention center.
6. That Haitian and other detainees are being denied access to basic necessities such as bathrooms and shower facilities.
7. That Regional INS Director Perry Rivkind and his staff have been thoroughly uncooperative and unresponsive in all of our attempts to address these concerns.

We are more than willing to supply extensive documentation for these concerns. It is our hope that through national attention and congressional pressure this inhumane and intolerable situation might come to some rectification.

We implore your prompt consideration of these matters. Please do not hesitate to contact us through James A. Altman,

Carol City and Opa-Locka United Methodist Churches, 600 Sharar Avenue, Opa-Locka, Florida, 33054. His phone number is (305) 681-1132.

Sincerely,

The Rev. James A. Altman
Pastor
Carol City and Opa-Locka
United Methodist Churches

Craig W. Nelson
Immigration Response Coordinator
United Methodist Church

The Rev. Damon Wagner-Fields
Pastor
First Church of the Brethren

The Rev. Susan Wagner-Fields
Pastor
First Church of the Brethren

The Rev. Walter Sawatzky
Director
Mennonite Central Committee

Jonathan L. Fried
Director, Florida Undocumented
Workers Program
American Friends Service Committee

Dorothy L. Serotta
National Commission of Social Action
Union of American Hebrew Congregations