

PRESS RELEASE

May 15, 1980

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We, concerned Haitian representatives of various community organizations based in Washington and Miami, wish to make the following statement in response to President Carter's statement on Cuban refugees of May 14, 1980.

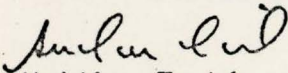
- 1) The Haitian refugee situation was parenthetically mentioned in the next to last paragraph of the more than three page statement that dealt with the Cuban refugees.
- 2) A detailed plan to welcome the Cuban refugees was presented by the President but no mention was made of 12-15,000 Haitian refugees who have been seeking political asylum in south Florida since 1972.
- 3) Mr. Carter has unequivocally refused to exercise his parole power to grant political refugee status to the Haitian refugees before the May 15th deadline.
- 4) In denying political refugee status to the Haitian refugees, Mr. Carter is unquestionably supporting/condoning the brutally repressive dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier.
- 5) By attempting to place the burden on the Congress for a long-range solution to the "current emergency situation", the President is misleading both the Congress and the United States public in that:
  - a) the Haitian refugee situation is not new, but rather seven years old.

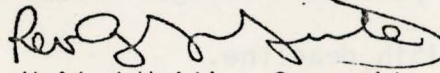
- b) the immigration laws were and still are fully sufficient to provide for the arrival of large numbers of refugees on our shores.
- 6) Even if President Carter's statement does eventually lead to equal treatment for newly arriving Haitians, the 10-15,000 Haitian refugees currently in this country will now be subject to many more years of legal and political struggles, and to starvation and ill health, before hopefully achieving the political refugee status they should have had since 1972.

Consequently we feel that the statement reveals

- a) the hypocrisy of the Administration's policy toward Haitians in that it is predicated on racist assumptions;
- b) it is rooted in the cold war mentality which still prevails among high officials of the Administration.

We, therefore, continue to advocate political refugee status for the 15,000 Haitian refugees now in south Florida and we request that the people of the United States, those of the third world, and especially those of the Caribbean support our struggle for the Haitian refugees.

  
Haitian Taskforce of the  
Haitian Refugee Project  
Washington, D.C.

  
United Haitian Community  
Miami, Florida