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# Miami Furor On Deporting

## Haitians

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The United States is seeking to deport more than 300 Haitians who have fled to Florida from the regime of President Jean-Claude Duvalier.

It is a sensitive situation — made all the touchier because the Haitians have fled to a region that has in the past accepted thousands of Cubans fed up with life under Fidel Castro.

The Haitians now have an attorney fighting in the courts to get them U.S. residence, and the American Jewish Congress has suggested the possibility of racial bias in a policy that admits Cubans so freely and excludes the Haitians.

For the past 18 months, they have been smuggled in on fishing boats, mostly after they stop over in the Bahamas. Last week, the latest batch of 14 arrived in West Palm Beach on a 65-foot shrimp boat. They were arrested and the boat's four-man crew charged with smuggling illegal aliens into the United States.

The 14, according to U.S. Border Patrol Chief Eugene Chaput in Miami, probably will be returned to Haiti.

Attorney Neal Sonnet who says he is representing almost all of the Haitians at no cost, has filed suit in federal court here appealing immigration department rulings that they be sent back to Haiti.

Attached to the suit are affidavits from 50 of the refugees detailing the reasons they cannot go back, mostly because of political persecution.

Adding to the confusion in the city which has accepted 300,000 Cuban refugees, was a statement a few days ago by the Rev. Jacques Mompremier, director of the privately financed Haitian Refugee Center, which is trying to care for as many of the exiles as possible.

Mompremier said the 50

are the only ones out of the 300 who have given evidence of persecution in Haiti, mostly arrests and beatings. "An extremely high percentage are here to better their economic lives" he said.

Chris Pappas, deputy director of the State Department's Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs in Washington, says his office will investigate claims of the 50 and if they have a valid fear of persecution they'll stay in the United States.

That still leaves the hundreds of others subject to deportation.

Archbishop Coleman F. Carroll of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southern Florida has asked Florida congressmen for help in keeping the refugees here.

*Washington Post*

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