

Time to Act on Cubans and Haitians in Camps

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Body

To the Editor:

For some months, safe haven **camps** have been organized at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba and in Panama for more than 35,000 **Cubans** and **Haitians** who have fled their countries (front page, Dec. 10). Now, the United States Government is obliged to provide a solution to the needs of these **Cubans** and **Haitians** for new permanent homes.

The executive committee of governments, including the United States, that oversees the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees concluded in 1981 that after a large-scale influx of asylum seekers has stabilized, states should take action to facilitate voluntary repatriation, to promote local settlement in the receiving country or to provide resettlement in third countries. This conclusion recognizes the human right of asylum seekers to a resolution of their situation of international homelessness.

All **Haitians** and **Cubans** in the safe havens who can establish a well-founded fear of persecution should be admitted immediately to the United States as refugees. Others could be brought to the United States on humanitarian grounds or urged to repatriate if appropriate.

The timeline for such action is not specified in international practice, but the March 1995 date negotiated by the United States with Panama for safe-haven facilities would provide a manageable deadline for such a solution.

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