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# Haitian advocates claim discrimination

## Interdiction assailed as double standard

By GARRY PIERRE-PIERRE  
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, 13 Cubans escaping their homeland washed ashore in South Florida. They were fed, given medical care and taken to Krome Detention Center, and soon will be released to relatives.

Two days later, 106 Haitians, who also were fleeing their homeland, were intercepted about 20 miles east of Boynton Beach and will probably be sent back to Haiti.

Why are the Cubans allowed to stay here while the Haitians are returned to Haiti? Haitian advocates say the reason is race, but government officials say it's because of a bilateral agreement signed with the government of former Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier.

Cubans and Haitians have traditionally fled to the United States by boat. Under the terms of the 1981 interdiction treaty with Haiti, Coast Guard ships can stop Haitian vessels in international waters and return the people on board to Haiti, said Pam Lewis, a

State Department spokeswoman in Washington.

The treaty angers Haitian advocates, who have been fighting it in the courts since 1982. Representatives have pressed the new Haitian government to revoke the treaty.

Cubans, on the other hand, can defect to the United States with greater ease than people from other countries because of the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act.

Cubans arriving in the United States can simply declare they do not want to go back, and the act bars the United States from deporting them, Lewis said. The defector then waits 18 months to establish legal residency and applies for citizenship, which is invariably granted.

"It's a double standard," said Cheryl Little, an attorney with the Haitian Refugee Center in Miami. "The Cubans are treated like heroes, while the Haitians are treated like criminals."

"I think it's discriminatory," said Chantal Thomas, executive director of the Haitian American Center in West Palm Beach.

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# Guard sinks rescued Haitians' boat

By DEBORAH P. WORK  
Staff Writer

Its mission completed, the sinking wooden boat that transported 106 Haitians from the Caribbean to within miles of Boynton Beach was sunk by the Coast Guard on Saturday.

The 57-foot leaking structure, christened *My Friend*, brought the refugees through the 500-mile crossing before taking on water and running out of fuel. Its pas-

engers included three pregnant women and 16 children.

The Haitians, who had not eaten in five days, were doing well, Coast Guard officials said.

"The boat was unseaworthy. We couldn't just set it adrift because it would be a hazard to [other boat's] navigation," said Coast Guard Lt. Todd Turner. "That was a bad situation."

Turner said the weatherbeaten boat was taken 40 miles off the coast of West Palm Beach, then

riddled with bullet holes in the hull and the deck to sink it. Fed and dried off, the Haitians are being interviewed aboard the Coast Guard cutter *Hamilton* by U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service agents to determine whether any are eligible for political asylum.

Haitian refugees are routinely turned away from the United States when they are intercepted on the high seas. Since 1981, 21,919 Haitians have been intercepted.