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RECORD ID: 9404428
RECEIVED: 03 JUN 94 16

TO: BERGER

FROM: ROBINSON, RANDALL
ARNWINE, BARBARA

DOC DATE: 24 MAY 94
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: HAITI
REFUGEES
MP

HUMAN RIGHTS
ADNSA

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: LTR TO BERGER RE CONCERN IN HAITI

ACTION: NFAR PER SCHWARTZ

DUE DATE: 07 JUN 94 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: SCHWARTZ

LOGREF:

FILES: WH

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FOR ACTION

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ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

RECORD ID: 9404428

DOC ACTION OFFICER

001 ROSSIN
001
001 SCHWARTZ
001

CAO ASSIGNED ACTION REQUIRED

Z 94060317 PREPARE MEMO FOR LAKE
Z 94060618 ACTION TRANSFERRED
Z 94060618 PREPARE MEMO FOR LAKE
X 94122915 NFAR PER SCHWARTZ

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~~FOR ACTION~~
~~ROSSIN~~

FOR CONCURRENCE
CLARKE
HALPERIN
SCHWARTZ

FOR INFO
CICIO
EMERY
FEINBERG
ITOH
KENNEY
KRECZKO
REED
ROSNER
VEIT
WALKER

~~SCHWARTZ~~

to NSC/S -
Transfer action
to ERIC SCHWARTZ -
Rossin 6/6

Return to
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COMMENTS:

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6/1 Staff

4428

Volunteer Attorneys For Haitian Justice

May 24, 1994
HAND DELIVERY

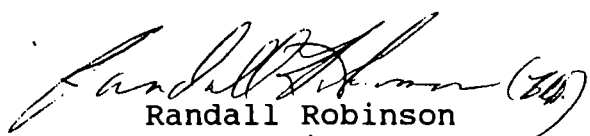
Samuel Berger
National Security Council
Washington, D.C.

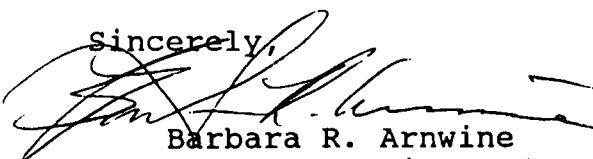
Dear Mr. Berger:

We are writing on behalf of the newly formed Volunteer Attorneys for Haitian Justice. This coalition is comprised of civil rights groups, bar associations and human rights organizations. It includes hundreds of pro bono attorneys and bilingual paralegals who are concerned with the plight of Haitian refugees. We are prepared to assist the Administration in ensuring fair screening procedures for Haitian refugees. Given the efforts of the Administration to plan for the overall screening process of Haitian refugees, we are requesting a meeting with you, at your very earliest convenience, to discuss the logistics of implementing this essential protection.

If Haitians are going to be returned to what the President has described as conditions of "repression and bloodshed", we must utilize safeguards that reduce the risk of error of returning bono fide refugees. When the potential consequence of an erroneous decision is persecution or death, access to volunteer counsel is the bare minimum protection that should be accorded. The attached letter, from major law firms in the San Francisco Bay Area, is only one example of the commitment of attorneys around the country to this principle.

We commend you for involving the United Nations High Commission on Refugees and religious organizations in the development of this effort. However, they are not a substitute for legal counsel in the context of an asylum screening process. An accused shoplifter is guaranteed the right to counsel at government expense. When volunteer attorneys have agreed, without expense to the government, to provide that same counsel for those whose lives may be at stake, we are certain that our government will respond positively to this offer. We look forward to working constructively with you toward successful implementation of this project. We honestly believe that justice for Haitian refugees cannot be achieved without it.


Randall Robinson
TransAfrica
797-2301

Sincerely,

Barbara R. Arnwine
Lawyers' Committee for
Civil Rights Under Law
662-8600