



# Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## ATTORNEY GENERAL'S STATEMENT ON CUBAN INFLUX

To divert the Cuban people from seeking democratic change, the government of Cuba has resorted to an unconscionable tactic of letting people risk their lives by leaving in flimsy vessels through the treacherous waters of the Florida Straits.

Many people have lost their lives in such crossings. We urge the people of Cuba to remain home and not to fall for this callous maneuver.

I want to work with all concerned including the Cuban American community to make sure the message goes out to Cubans that putting a boat or raft to sea means putting life and limb at risk.

The Cuban government is not acting this way because of U.S. immigration policy. It is a desperate attempt to salvage a communist regime which has fallen victim to its own inherent rigidity and repression. An uncontrolled exodus from Cuba will do nothing to address Cuba's internal problems. The solution to Cuba's problems is rapid, fundamental and far reaching political and economic reform.

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Cuban Americans have recognized Castro's ploy and the word has gone out that the U.S. will not tolerate boats leaving from South Florida as they did in Mariel -- in which 90% of the influx was a result of Floridians traveling to Cuba to get their relatives. To prevent this from happening again, the Coast Guard has mounted an aggressive public information campaign so people know that vessels that appear to be bound to Cuba may be stopped and boarded and may be seized. Individuals who violate U.S. law will be prosecuted in appropriate circumstances. As you know, one boat was seized last week and the boat crew is in detention.

We have been able to manage the increased flow arriving from Cuba during the last several days in an orderly way and without disruption to the community. We have increased our Immigration and Naturalization Service and Community Relations Service personnel. 26 INS agents have been reassigned to Key West. More are on their way -- and within 24 hours a total of 86 agents will be specially assigned to manage these cases.

We have been ably assisted by voluntary agencies including United States Catholic Conference Migration Service and Church World Service and state and local officials.

Of the people who have arrived, 90% of the individuals have been settled with relatives in the United States. 75% in Florida -- and 15% in primarily New York and New Jersey. The 10% with no

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relatives in the United States are being placed outside of Florida.

We will continue to monitor and assess the situation and have intensified our work with other federal agencies to be able to respond to all circumstances.

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