

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 3, 2014

H.E. Eduardo Medina Mora Icaza
Embassy of Mexico
1911 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Your Excellency,

We write to express our grave concern for the welfare of thirteen Cuban nationals who were rescued in Mexican waters, and to respectfully request that you not forcibly return them to totalitarian Cuba.

According to press reports, fifteen Cuban nationals were intercepted by Mexican military personnel on September 1, 2014, about 133 miles north of Puerto Progreso, and transported to Mexico on a Mexican navy vessel. Tragically, one of the Cuban refugees perished during the perilous journey from Cuba, and another immediately thereafter.

As you may know, the Castro regime remains one of the world's worst human rights abusers, and the repression in Cuba has escalated markedly in recent months. Human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Cuban Human Rights and National Reconciliation Commission, and the UN Committee Against Torture have all issued scathing criticisms of the Cuban dictatorship's brutal oppression of the Cuban people. Forcibly repatriated Cuban nationals are often subjected to particularly vicious and punitive abuse upon their return. Yet despite the monumental risks, many Cubans choose to brave the hazards of the sea rather than suffer another day under the Castros' oppression.

Accordingly, and in memory of the precious lives lost, we respectfully request that the Cuban refugees currently within Mexican custody not be forcibly repatriated to the country that they risked their lives to escape.

Sincerely,



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress