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Haitian Refugees Given Temporary Residency In Honduras

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On Nov. 15, Foreign Minister Mario Carias told reporters that a request by Juan Amunategui, regional representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), that Honduras accept 100 Haitian refugees was under consideration. The refugees were among 700 Haitians rescued by the US Coast Guard and merchant ships. Carias said that the government may seek to resettle the Haitians in Puerto de Trujillo on the Atlantic Coast. The area is inhabited by Garifuna (Afro-Carib) communities. On Nov. 20, 250 Haitian refugees arrived in the Honduran port of La Ceiba on board US Air Force planes. One of the refugees told reporters that most refugees fled Haiti in late October to escape the violence perpetrated by military authorities against supporters of deposed president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Some of the refugees said they had previously been employed in Aristide's government. Honduran officials said the refugees will be housed in facilities located at Puerto Trujillo, located about 150 km. east of La Ceiba. President Rafael Callejas told reporters that the refugees would be allowed to remain in Honduras for no more than 90 days. The Honduran gesture to accept the Haitian boat people came in response to petitions from Washington and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 11/15/91, 11/20/91)