



# Caribbean Research Center

Medgar Evers College \*\* City University of New York

1150 Carroll Street \*\* Brooklyn, NY 11225

Tel: (718) 270-6082/6083 \*\* Fax: (718) 270 6916/6919

*Dr. J A George Irish, Executive Director*

*Vera E Weekes, Assistant Director & Outreach Coordinator*

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Dr. Edison O. Jackson, President  
Chair

Dr Roy A Hastick, Sr -

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## US GOVERNMENT TO EXPEL 292 MONTSERRAT REFUGEES FLEEING ACTIVE VOLCANO IN MONTSERRAT SINCE 1995

292 persons from the island of Montserrat were granted Temporary Protected Status [TPS] due to volcanic activity on the island that started in July 1995. In August 1997, the US government granted these refugees TPS, renewable each year. Without warning and reason, on July 7, 2004, Mr Tom Ridge, Secretary of Homeland Security announced that they must leave the US by February 2005 or be subjected to deportation if they could not adjust their status by then. {See Fact Sheet for detailed information}

There has been public outcry from United States citizens and from nations abroad. Ms Vera Weekes who has been spearheading this effort has been featured on both BBC2 Newsnight TV on Thursday, August 12, and many BBC and Irish radio stations. Several newspapers throughout the US has reported on this story, for example, The New York Times front page story on Monday, August 9, 2004, Washington Post, Carib News, Caribbean Life, Baltimore Times, French newspapers. Other newspapers and newswriters are reporting on this throughout the world. Several of these refugees [TPS] persons have also been featured in these public radio, newspapers and television broadcasts.

It is noteworthy that many Third World developing countries opened their doors and hearts to these refugees from Montserrat providing them with jobs and homes, for example, Antigua, Jamaica, St Kitts & Nevis, Tortola, Anguilla, St Lucia, etc. Canada, US neighbor gave those who entered their shores, 'landed status', that is the equivalent to the 'green card' [note not temporary protected status]. After 5 years these refugees are now Canadian citizens. Whereas in the US, they are still in "Temporary Protected Status" and now face deportation after so many years here. Has America lost its humanitarian characteristics, kicking volcano refugees out because the volcano is no longer "temporary"? These folks are neither a threat nor a burden to the United States. Many of these folks have children born in the USA since that time.

We are bringing this problem to your attention and would hope that you can assist us by bringing this horrible state of affairs to the general public and legislators. {See article "Things Folks Can Do"}.

You may reach Ms Vera Weekes for detailed information: (718) 270 6082 work; (718) 893 4405 home; (917) 549 6635 Cell.

