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Africans waiting in U.S. camp for political asylum

United Press International BAYVIEW — As a high school student, Moses Joe fled from his homeland of Liberia last year during a bloody coup. Hop-ing he would be allowed to continue his education without worrying about surviving each day, he escaped the country. Now Joe waits in a U.S. alien detainment camp near the

U.S.-Mexico border. His most mentally stimulating activity is watching an hour of television and sweeping the dormitory floor for \$1 a day

Joe, three other Liberians, and a Malian have waited almost eight months for a ruling by the U.S. State Department on their request for political asylum. All had stowed

away on a Spain-bound freighter. "My dad got killed," Joe, 19, said. "They seized our prop-

"I am afraid to go back. I am afraid they will put me in jail or maybe kill me

Fathers of the four Liberians were killed in the overthrow of

William Tolbert's government last April. The Malian's brother was slain.

Joe, whose father was a "security officer" in the Tolbert government, had hoped for refuge in Spain or Mexico when he boarded the freighter, but Joe and his four companions were refused entry at both nations.

The cargo freighter docked at Freeport on Aug. 3, 1980, where the five Africans were arrested and 10 days later moved to an alien detention center at Bayview.

The Africans are confined to housing that resembles military barracks, each unit holding a few dozen bunk beds and

Coulidaly Seldou, a Malian electrical engineer, said bore-

dom is the greatest problem facing the detainees. "We sit around all day," Seldou said. "Sometimes they (Border Patrol guards) bring us a television for an hour or so. The food is terrible and insufficient.

Howard Boldin, director for the U.S. Immigration and

Naturalization Service at Harlingen, said he expects a deci-sion soon from the U.S. State Department on the Africans' requests for asylum.

If the Africans have been detained eight months, I do not anticipate it would take much longer to get a recommendation," Boldin said.

But the Rev. Homer Wiemer of Brownsville has worked for the Africans' release and he said he keeps running into federal bureaucracy

"These men have been detained an extremely long time," Wiemer said. "They are not criminals. They are frightened people.

Bond for each of the men was set at \$2,000 and a federal magistrate refused to lower the bond during a March 19 hearing. Another detainment hearing is set for each man next Tuesday

"There's more to it than just getting them out (on bond), Wiemer said. "Someone will have to be responsible for find ing them housing, food, clothing and medical care.

More important than their immediate release, Wiemer i concerned the men will not be granted political asylum. The minister said State Department officials have told him there has not been any report of a slaughter since the Tolbert coup

"In fact, they (the State Department) said the Liberians are freeing political prisoners now," Wiemer said. "But those men are convinced there is danger for them if they return." Boldin admits being more cynical about the Africans' request for asylum, saying there's may be only another case of economic need

'I don't mean to sound cynical or hard, but it would be grea if there was a place everyone could go," Boldin said. "I think we would have to call it Utopia or the Garden of Eden, or something like that."



a full comparison of to other cities is impossible.

Through July of last year Houston recorded an 8.2 percen increase in major crimes. The FB annual crime report said citie with populations of more than million experienced an average 1 percent increase in major crime

Johnson said he could discer no trend from the decline of homi cides in Houston last year. Be tween 1976 and 1979, the numbe of homicides doubled.

21 rescued as tanker, ship collide

United Press International NEW ORLEANS — A Japanese tanker collided Tuesday with another vessel in the Gulf o Mexico and the Coast Guard sen out rescue teams to save 21 crew men who had abandoned the sink

The collision occurred abou 11:30 a.m., 130 miles southeast o Lafayette, La., a coast guard spokesman said.

The Japanese tanker Snow Hil was reported sinking and had been abandoned, said Coas Guard Petty Officer Dour

Details of the collision were sketchy and officials had no infor mation on the second vessel. No injuries had been reported.

Three coast guard helicopters an airplane from Corpus Christ and an 82-foot vessel were er route to the sinking tanker, Ban

The 330-foot Snow Hill is own ed by Endino Shipping Co. c New Orleans and was headed from Lake Charles, La., to Ver Cruz when the collision occurred

The Snow Hill was loaded wit caustic soda, but officials had n word on whether a spill had occur red. The substance dissolve when mixed with water, Bando said.