



Probe Sought in Haitian Detainee's Death

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MIAMI -- A Florida congressman and an immigrant rights group called Wednesday for an investigation into the death of an 81-year-old Haitian man who died five days after he arrived in Miami and was taken into federal custody.



Congressman Kendrick Meek, a Democrat who represents part of the Miami area, sought the investigation in a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Thomas Ridge.

The New York-based National Coalition of Haitian Rights also said it has questions about the death of Joseph Dantica, who flew to Miami with his son Oct. 29 to escape gang warfare near the church and school he ran in Port-Au-Prince.

Dantica was hospitalized and died Nov. 3 of an inflammation of the pancreas. The government said he had the disease when he arrived.

According to the Haitian rights group, Dantica's son said his father suffered from a heart condition and his medication was taken from him by authorities.

Homeland Security officials would not say Wednesday why the pair were detained. The Haitian rights group said they had valid passports and visas.

The agency said it was not responsible for Dantica's death.

"We understand his family's grief, but there is no connection between the pre-existing, terminal medical condition he had and the process through which he entered the country," the statement said.

The statement also said Dantica had a folk remedy, but no medication for the pancreatitis.

The son, Maxo Dantica, was released after his father's death.

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