



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti



Half-Hour For Haiti: Urge DHS to Grant More Generous Humanitarian Parole for Haitians Now!

February 25, 2010

Be Part of the Solution for Haiti: *Make a Difference in Half an Hour a Week*

Update

A quick update, we've been very busy. The [Bureau des Avocats Internationaux](#) (BAI) has used its relationships with grassroots groups, established over the last fifteen years to distribute money for food and medical supplies to over 250 earthquake victims (so far). BAI also hosted a New York City medical team, which slept in back of the office and set up a field hospital in front, and has helped other organizations obtain the supplies necessary to treat thousands of injured. BAI also co-organized a funeral mass for the earthquake's dead, at a mass grave site (listen to [the NPR story](#)). Thank you to everyone who donated to the BAI's emergency relief efforts, including the [Haiti Emergency Relief Fund](#) and [Rights Action](#).

BAI and IJDH are coordinating the international legal response to the earthquake through the [Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network](#) (LERN), which already has over 300 U.S. lawyers, law professors and students. We've also given [dozens of interviews](#) to radio, television and print media, focusing on the need for the earthquake response to respect the rights of Haiti and its citizens, and to reduce the structural injustice that makes Haiti so vulnerable to environmental shocks.

In the midst of the earthquake response, we also switched on our new [website](#), the result of seven months' work by team of volunteers headed by Alex Goodell and Ian Umeda. The new site

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We welcome the newest member of our team, Georgia Rose Concannon, DOB 1/25/2010.



BAI's Mario Joseph, Av. at a memorial service for

will make it easier to connect with our work and find out information about human rights in Haiti. Please take a look, and let us know what you think (leave comments [here](#)).

We ask that you help us stay better connected with you by (re)subscribing to our Half-Hour for Haiti Action Alert community [here](#) (even if you are currently signed up) so we can upgrade to a more effective system that will reduce messages caught in spam filters.

This Week's Action: Urge the U.S. Government to Grant More Generous Humanitarian Parole

**Generated with the help of Columbia Law School's Human Rights Clinic*

Background

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), under Immigration and Nationality Act Section 212(d)(5)(A), can use its humanitarian parole power to allow foreign nationals to temporarily enter the US in a compelling emergency. This power can be exercised immediately, without Congressional approval. The DHS has already recognized the devastation in Haiti as an extraordinary case, by using the parole power to bring Haitian orphans in the process of adoption to the U.S. The DHS can and should extend this power to save lives and ease the suffering of tens of thousands awaiting family reunification.

Health care facilities in Haiti are overwhelmed by the hundreds of thousands of wounded seeking medical treatment. People die every day due to lack of basic supplies and attention. For those injured, U.S. hospitals offer the only hope of life-saving medical care. And, thousands maimed need prosthetics and rehabilitative care in safe conditions which do not exist in Haiti. Hospitals across the U.S. are able and willing to accept these patients. Through the parole power, the Department of Homeland Security can allow them to cut through bureaucratic red tape and enter the U.S. for medical care. We should be exercising humanitarian parole in a far more generous manner than we have to date. We were right to parole well over 350,000 Cuban citizens from Camarioca and Mariel who were uninjured, and who did not necessarily have any family members in the U.S.; we should also parole Haitian earthquake victims who are ill or who have family here.

Right now, over 55,000 Haitians with family members living legally in the US have had their immigration visa applications approved or are on the waiting list to enter the US. Another 19,000 have applications pending that will likely be approved. Allowing them to join their families immediately will ease the burden on relief efforts, and allow more Haitians to work in the U.S. and send money back to Haiti.

earthquake victims organized by the BAI and the Aristide Foundation.



A healthcare provider treats victims of the earthquake in the medical clinic set up in the BAI courtyard.

Take action

Contact DHS and urge them to parole Haitians in need of medical care, and allow those with approved or pending visa petitions to join their families here in the U.S.

Write a Letter

Follow [this link](#) to send a letter to Secretary Napolitano in an action generated by the [Hebrew Immigration Aid Society \(HIAS\)](#).

Call the Comment Line

DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano
Comment Line: (202) 282-8495

Sample Message

My name is _____, and I am calling to encourage the Department of Homeland Security to more generously use its humanitarian parole power to allow Haitians in need of medical care, and those with approved or pending visa petitions, to enter the U.S.

Prior to the earthquake, Haiti was already the most impoverished nation in the Western Hemisphere, and the disaster has pushed millions into even deeper poverty. The U.S. has taken an admirable role in leading relief efforts, but we can and should do more. Humanitarian parole will ease the burden on relief and rebuilding efforts, ultimately saving lives and reducing Haiti's extreme vulnerability to the next disaster.

Thank you.

For more infor-ma-tion about the Half-Hour For Haiti pro-gram, the Insti-tute for Jus-tice & Democ-racy in Haiti (IJDH) or human rights in Haiti, see our web-site, www.IJDH.org. To receive Half-Hour for Haiti Action Alerts (about 2 per month), [subscribe here](#). To keep us fighting on the front lines, donate to our cause [here](#).