

Protest Rally in front of U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services in Miami
Thursday, August 11 at 11am – over 200 demonstrators expected
8801 NW 7th Avenue, Miami

Unjust Immigration Policies for Haitians Must Change Now
Civil, Human and Workers Rights Groups Call for Reform

The A. Philip Randolph Institute, TransAfrica, 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, NAACP Miami and the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) will join local organizations Haitian Women of Miami (FANM) and the Florida Immigrant Coalition in a protest rally outside the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) USCIS office in Miami to demand changes in U.S. immigration policy for Haitians. Representing a wide range of advocates including human rights, worker and labor rights, and immigration reform activists, over 200 demonstrators from throughout the U.S. are in Miami to call attention to the discriminatory policies that continue to treat Haitian immigrants to the U.S. by standards differently than immigrants from other countries, most notably Cuba.

Although Haiti is in the midst of a dangerous hurricane season and hundreds of thousands of earthquake survivors are still homeless and living in tent cities, the United States is delaying immediate immigration reform that could save lives. Fifty Haitians are slated to be deported back to Haiti where they likely face inhumane conditions during an escalating cholera epidemic. In addition, more than 16,000 minor children and spouses of lawful permanent U.S. residents are in a holding pattern in Haiti, despite the fact that the Department of Homeland Security could quickly allow them parole in the U.S. – not only protecting their lives, but increasing remittances to Haiti during an ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Clayola Brown, President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, is bringing together hundreds of African Americans from throughout the U.S. for the APRI 42nd Annual Education Conference in Miami this week. These activists are anxious to send a message about just immigration policies for Haitians. Ms. Brown explains that: *“Quick action to address possible parolees is a key part of a much larger need for immigration reform. Although DHS extended Haiti’s Temporary Protected Status (TPS) through January 2013, immigration reform must happen before it expires.”*

The call to action this Thursday is for the DHS to immediately enact a ***Haitian Family Reunification Plan (HFRP)*** to help Haitians in Haiti and the Diaspora by granting immediate parole in the U.S. to already approved immigration beneficiaries, to halt deportations at this time, and to ensure that TPS for Haitians is extended as long as the humanitarian crisis persists. TransAfrica Forum’s President Nicole Lee states: *“At this time, our government must act decisively to reunify families, provide humanitarian relief and live up to our nation’s highest values. The ongoing dehumanization of Haitians must end; dignity and respect must guide our immigration policy.”*

Marleine Bastien, Executive Director, Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami, also emphasizes the importance of reunited Haitian families: *“Creating the Haitian Family Reunification Program could be the United States’ most direct and significant form of support to Haiti’s rebuilding. The Cuban Family Reunification Program has been renewed in 2009 and 2010 but a similar program for Haiti remains outstanding. We are coming together to ask in one voice: ‘Equal Treatment for Haitians Now!’”*

Speakers at the rally include: Clayola Brown, A. Philip Randolph Institute

- George Gresham, President, SEIU 1199
- Jerry Hudson, SEIU
- Marleine Bastien, Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami, Inc.
- Joia Jefferson Nuri, TransAfrica
- Adora Obi Nwaze, NAACP, Miami
- Gerard Cadet, Haitian VP of SEIU
- Maria Rodriguez, Florida Immigration Coalition

Also, Haitians directly affected by U.S. immigration policies will testify to their personal experiences.