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**COMMUNITY AND DIASPORA GROUPS AND LEADERS DEMAND THAT CARICOM OPPOSE HOLDING  
THE 46TH OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

**Hillside, NJ** – Fifty (50) organizations and seventy (70) political, religious, judicial and community leaders today wrote to the Caribbean Community (“CARICOM”) urging the international body to act as a regional bloc in relocating the 46th General Assembly meeting of the Organization of American States (“OAS”) from the Dominican Republic (“DR”) to another country and to ensure that the plight of Dominican citizens of Haitian descent is added to the Assembly’s agenda.

The letter highlights the DR government’s broadly condemned human rights violations against its Haitian-descended citizens; in particular, the creation of the largest stateless population in the Americas by a Constitutional Tribunal ruling that stripped citizenship from Dominican citizens of Haitian descent. The letter also noted that the Dominican law enacted to “fix” this situation has rendered these individuals second-class citizens in their own country, and that, to date, 129,000 individuals of Haitian descent have been forcibly removed or fled the DR in fear resulting in a humanitarian crisis at the Haitian-Dominican border.

“If the OAS General Assembly meeting is held in the Dominican Republic despite the country’s utter disregard of its treaty obligations to the OAS, then the mission of the OAS is moot and unenforceable,” said Serge Renaud, president of the National Alliance for the Advancement of Haitian Professionals. “The Caribbean Community must stand up and speak for those who are vulnerable and persecuted in the Dominican Republic. We can no longer afford to turn a blind eye to human rights abuses to people in the region.”

The OAS, through its principal organ, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, has the mandate to promote and protect human rights in the American hemisphere, in particular with respect to its member countries which includes the Dominican Republic. The community letter documents how the Dominican Republic has consistently ignored the OAS’s authority, guidance and jurisdiction. For example, in retaliation to a ruling against the Dominican Republic by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the judicial arm of the OAS, the Dominican Republic Constitutional Tribunal held that the DR was not subject to that international court’s jurisdiction, even though the DR has litigated before it since 1999.

“In 2013, tens of thousands of Dominican citizens lost their citizenship and were denied a national identity solely because of their Haitian ancestry. Such a gross violation of a basic human right based on racist foundations must not go unchallenged,” said Genesis Aquino, of the Dominican-American organization, Ahora/Now. “More importantly, the Dominican Republic has, since 2005, refused to adhere to its treaty

obligations to the OAS and under the American Convention of Human Rights, and as such, it should not now be rewarded with the privilege of hosting the General Assembly meeting. Such an honor in the face of such disrespect by the Dominican Republic sets a dangerous precedent for the region.”

Included amongst the 50 organizations that have joined NAAHP’s letter are the: Haitian Diaspora Federation, National Organization for the Advancement of Haitians (NOAH), Haitian American Lawyers Association of New York, Inc., LatinoJustice PRLDEF, Latino Ministry at the Riverside Church in New York City, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers for Citizenship in the DR-Organizing Committee, Black Alliance for Just Immigration, Florida Immigrant Coalition, Leonard Tim Hector Memorial Committee (Antigua), Antiguan Liberation Movement, and SEIU Florida State Council. The 70 leaders endorsing the letter include respected U.S., U.K. and Caribbean cultural, political, judicial and business leaders, diplomats and economists.

**About NAAHP** – Founded in 2011, the National Alliance for the Advancement of Haitian Professionals (NAAHP) – formerly known as the National Association of Haitian Professionals (NAHP) – is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization established by diverse group of forward-thinking industry experts, youth leaders, faculty, public and nonprofit sector professionals from Haiti and its global diaspora. NAAHP is focused on connecting a global community of peers with career advancement resources as well as fostering transformative relationships between NAAHP members and committed stakeholders to rebuild Haiti through philanthropy and social entrepreneurship. Find out more at: <http://naahpusa.org/>.

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