



October 20, 2016

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Democratic Candidate for President of the United States
1 Pierrepont Plz, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Madam Secretary:

As you know, Hurricane Matthew devastated Haiti, affecting two million Haitians; stranding hundreds of thousands; killing at least 1,000; obliterating tens of thousands of homes; destroying and inundating towns, livestock, crops, and livelihoods; and causing a surge in cholera cases. Florida-based leaders and organizations, we write with a non-exhaustive list of priorities, many of which are especially urgent now. They include the need for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to promptly **redesignate Temporary Protected Status** for Haiti, **expand** the arbitrarily and unfairly limited **Haitian Family Reunification Program**, revert to the pre-September 22 parole policy, and release all non-criminal detainees. Matthew has greatly exacerbated the **cholera** epidemic and **requires our government's short- and long-term funding and commitment**. We respectfully ask you to promptly inform of us of your views on the following concerns, which are of great importance to the Haitian-American community:

Cholera

Before Matthew struck, cholera had already killed over 9,300 Haitians and sickened over 800,000 since its introduction into Haiti by United Nations Peacekeepers in October 2010. The massive flooding and destruction of water supplies caused by Matthew has worsened the situation, causing a surge in cholera deaths and infections. We have lost family and friends to cholera, and we live with the threat of losing more of our loved ones. Our community has taken on significant financial burdens, as we support our relatives' funeral expenses, health care costs, and school fees for children orphaned by the epidemic.

For six years the UN stonewalled and evaded responsibility for its role in Haiti's cholera epidemic, despite worldwide criticism. The U.S. Government consistently defended the UN's inadequate response, including by advocating for UN immunity in a lawsuit brought by Haitians

and Haitian-Americans. On August 17, the UN finally shifted position, acknowledging its role in the outbreak and committing to presenting a significant new package within two months that will “provide material assistance” to victims and intensify cholera eradication efforts. On September 20, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon appealed to President Obama for U.S support for the UN’s new package. It is crucial that the U.S. Government now exercise political and financial leadership to ensure the UN’s commitments are followed by robust and transparent action and that this tragic crisis is finally resolved.

Ask: We ask that you commit to using the United States’ diplomatic powers to publicly and privately advocate for the UN to implement a robust and victim-centered package, including **1) a full public apology** for the actions and practices that caused and sustained the cholera outbreak; **2) remedies to victims;** and **3) robust investment in cholera control and elimination measures.** We also ask you to commit to working with Congress, the State Department, and USAID to ensure substantial U.S. funding to support a just UN response, including compensation for victims and cholera control and elimination. Matthew makes all of this even more urgent.

Redesignate Haiti for Temporary Protected Status

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) was granted after Haiti's 2010 earthquake but protects only those otherwise-eligible Haitians who were in the United States by January 12, 2011. Hurricane Matthew’s devastation warrants prompt DHS redesignation of TPS for Haiti to protect all Haitians in the United States at the time of the redesignation announcement. Matthew’s destruction has vastly exacerbated Haiti’s pre-Matthew conditions, including the surge in cholera, ongoing political and economic crises, and limited recovery from the 2010 earthquake. Removal to Haiti now is completely unsafe and destabilizing, and resource-deprived and infrastructure-challenged Haiti cannot safely receive, house, employ, or protect additional deportees. The editorial boards of the *New York Times* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* on October 8 and October 18, 2016 respectively; twelve members of the U.S. Senate in their letter to Secretary of State Kerry and DHS Secretary Johnson on October 13; U.S. Representative Frederica Wilson in her October 13 press release; and U.S. Representative Alcee Hastings in his October 12 letter to President Obama, among others, have all urged DHS to redesignate TPS for Haiti and to stop deportations there in light of Matthew. TPS redesignation would protect Haitian nationals, enable them to work and help Haiti by generating significant family-sustaining remittances, and enable Haiti to use its too-scarce resources on disaster recovery. In addition, TPS recipients of all nationalities are currently ineligible for federal student loans, preventing access to higher education for promising high school graduates, and also are considered by USCIS to be ineligible to adjust their status to legal permanent resident status.

Ask: Your administration should promptly redesignate TPS for Haiti in light of Hurricane Matthew to include all Haitians in the United States as of the date of your announcement of TPS redesignation, and also permit TPS recipients generally to be eligible both to adjust their status to legal permanent resident status and for federal student loans.

Expand the Arbitrarily Limited Haitian Family Reunification Program

In contrast to over 100,000 beneficiaries approved under the Cuban Family Reunification Program, only 1,952 Haitians had been approved as of June 30, 2016 under DHS's arbitrarily limited Haitian Family Reunification Program (HFRP). This has been extremely disappointing to the Haitian-American community and defeats HFRP's stated goal to facilitate orderly outflow and help Haiti recover by generating additional remittances. The program's denial rate is too high and its severe eligibility restriction unfair: of about 100,000 beneficiaries of DHS-approved immigrant visa petitions on waitlists of up to 13 years in Haiti, only petitioners whose beneficiaries are within three years of getting their visas may apply, excluding the majority and vitiating HFRP's stated goals "to promote family reunification and enable Haitians to send more remittances back to foster the Haitian economy...[and] to save lives by providing an alternative to migrating by sea." The arbitrary eligibility limitation not only defeats the goals of facilitating recovery and orderly outflow but makes applying prohibitively expensive for many, since all of the high costs including the per-beneficiary \$1,070 adjustment fee must be paid by the third year if not earlier. This is not what the community fought nearly five years to achieve after Haiti's 2010 earthquake. Expanding the program to the outer years of the wait list would expand the pool of applicants, make HFRP much more affordable for petitioners, and help Haiti recover from the 2010 earthquake and now Matthew by generating far more remittances than at present. The editorial board of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on October 18, U.S. Representative Frederica Wilson in her October 13 statement, and a September 27 *Miami Herald* op-ed have all strongly urged such HFRP expansion.

Ask: HFRP eligibility should be expanded to cover the beneficiaries of all DHS-approved immigrant visa petitions, regardless of where they are on the wait list; if necessary U.S. Government resources and capacity in Haiti should be expanded accordingly; and steps must be taken to lower the inappropriately high denial rate. Fairness, saving lives, reuniting families, helping Haiti recover, and facilitating orderly outflow require no less.

Elections

The August 9 and October 25, 2015 elections fell far short of minimum standards for fair elections. Haitians' voting rights were violated through a combination of violence, intimidation, irregularities and fraud, resulting in low voter turnout and a loss of confidence in the electoral process. Despite the mandatory quota set at 30 percent, only 8-9% of candidates were female. The community has repeatedly expressed its concerns about U.S. support for fraudulent elections and the political instability this has fostered. Over U.S. objections, Haiti's interim authorities created a verification commission to restore credibility to the electoral process. When the commission uncovered evidence of massive fraud and recommended rerunning the presidential race, the United States responded by terminating its financial support for the elections. This stance has discredited the United States and encouraged political spoilers in Haiti to violently oppose the interim government.

Ask: We ask that the United States respect Haitian sovereignty and support the positive steps being taken by the interim authorities to restart the electoral process on a sound democratic footing. We also ask that the United States support efforts to ensure greater female political participation, in particular to support meeting the quota for female candidates. We call on the United States to forcefully condemn appeals by interim government opponents, especially DEA fugitive and 2004 coup leader Guy Philippe, to violently oppose the government.

Denationalization of Dominicans of Haitian Descent

In 2013, the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic stripped Dominicans of Haitian descent of citizenship, rendering over 200,000 people stateless. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, this ruling created the largest stateless population in the Western Hemisphere and the fifth largest in the world, the vast majority of whom are children. The ruling effectively deprives these individuals of the most basic rights and due process, including the rights to work, education, access to healthcare, freedom of movement, and even to voluntarily travel outside of the country that stripped them of their citizenship. As such, if left unaddressed, these serious human rights violations will at best continue to be overlooked and, at worst, be further exacerbated.

Ask: We call on you to commit to engage and strongly urge and insist that the Dominican government enact laws and policies repealing the 2013 Constitutional Tribunal ruling and returning the rights of citizenship to all persons born on Dominican soil, regardless of parental immigration status; cease any and all expulsion efforts and actively pursue ending all acts of violence and discriminatory practices perpetrated against those of Haitian descent; and institute a proper resettlement plan for Haitian migrants deported to Haiti and a repatriation plan to reintegrate back into the Dominican Republic those Dominicans of Haitian descent who were unlawfully expelled. Your administration should engage in diplomatic outreach to guarantee basic human rights to persons of Haitian descent; should monitor, investigate, and regularly report to Congress on human rights abuses in the Dominican Republic, including specifically those that can justifiably be used to invoke the Leahy Amendment; and should if necessary consider imposing economic and other sanctions on the Dominican Republic if this crisis cannot be resolved through diplomatic channels.

Revert to the Pre-September 22 Parole and Non-Detention Policy

On September 22, 2016, DHS announced that it would resume “non-criminal” Haiti removals on the basis of purportedly improved conditions. Economic desperation, political insecurity, the unchecked cholera epidemic and other conditions made this assessment inaccurate and the new policy inhumane, unsafe, and destabilizing even before the hurricane, but Matthew’s destruction exacerbates and underscores these facts; Haiti cannot safely receive additional deportees. Many

Haitians had been paroled into the United States at San Diego after surviving traumatic journeys from South American countries; the September 22 policy change has separated scores of family members from one another by leaving some stranded in Mexico and has resulted in a growing population of non-criminal Haitian detainees at various institutions. DHS Secretary Johnson's October 11 statement that removals will be temporarily postponed in light of Matthew was welcome but inadequate, and many post-September 22 arrivals remain detained.

Ask: We seek your commitment that your administration will reunite separated families, revert to the pre-September 22 parole policy, release all non-criminal Haitians from detention and grant them work authorization eligibility, and postpone action in their immigration court cases. Recent arrivals, through San Diego or otherwise, should be protected by your administration by TPS redesignation.

Black Lives Matter

In addition, we support and endorse the Black Lives Matter [6 point policy demands](#) as our communities are also affected.

Ask: In particular, we echo the call to: "[End to the War on Black Immigrants](#) including the Repeal of the 1996 Crime and Immigration Bills, an End to All Deportations, Immigrant Detention, and Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) Raids, and Mandated Legal Representation in Immigration Court."

We hope to meet with you promptly, Madam Secretary, regarding these urgent community priorities and asks, and we thank you in advance for your consideration and prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Organizations

1. 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, Monica Russo, Executive Vice President, Florida Region
2. American and Haitian Economic Alliance for Development (AHEAD), Miami-Dade Chapter, Yanick Fulguerra, Chairwoman, Miami, FL
3. American Friends Service Committee, Miami Office, Lucio Perez-Reynoso, Director, Miami, FL
4. Americans for Immigrant Justice, Cheryl Little, Executive Director, Miami, FL
5. Catholic Charities Legal Services (Archdiocese of Miami), Randolph McGrorty, Executive Director, Miami, FL

6. Center for Self-Sufficiency, Edeline B. Mondestin, RN, BSN, Executive Director, Miami, FL
7. Circle of Brotherhood, Leroy Jones, President, Miami, FL
8. Fanm Ayisyen nan Miyami/Haitian Women of Miami, Inc (FANM), Marleine Bastien, Executive Director, Miami, FL
9. Florida Immigrant Coalition, Inc. and FLIC Votes, Inc., Maria Rodriguez, Executive Director, Miami, FL
10. Global Haitian Diaspora Federation, Yanick Martin, Executive Director, Miami, FL
11. Haiti First, Justin Manuel, President (Mr. Manuel leads MJM Capital Reality and is founder and former president of the Haitian American Scholarship Fund), Miami, FL
12. Haitian American Grassroots Coalition, Jean Robert Lafortune, Executive Director, Miami, FL
13. Haitian Empowerment Foundation, Inc (HEF), Ralph Cheriza, President and CEO, Lake Worth, FL
14. Haitian Diaspora for Democracy and Development, Jimmy Mertune, President, Orlando, FL
15. Haitians for Democracy in Haiti, Etzer Lalanne, Secretary General, Leesburg, FL
16. National Haitian Student Alliance, Lucson Joseph, Chairman, Miami, FL
17. New Florida Majority, Gihan Perera, Executive Director, Miami, FL
18. Power U Center for Social Change, Ruth Jeannoel, Lead Organizer, Miami, FL
19. Sant La, Haitian Neighborhood Center, Inc., Gepsie M. Metellus, Executive Director, Miami, FL
20. SEIU Florida State Council, Monica Russo, President
21. Sons of Little Haiti (SOLH) Academy, Ragasten Paul, President, Miami, FL
22. Sosyete Koukouy, Jean-Marie Denis (“Jan Mapou”), President Miami, FL
23. South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice, Jeanette Smith, Executive Director, Miami, FL
24. The Haitian League, Bernier Lauredan, M.D., President, Port St. Lucie, FL

25. United Haitian Students of Florida, Inc., Stervens Pauleus, President, North Miami, FL
26. Voice of Haitian Americans in the Diaspora (VHAD), Daniel Eugene, President, Boca Raton, FL
27. WeCount!, Jonathan Fried, Executive Director, Homestead, FL

Individuals

28. State Representative Daphne D. Campbell, Florida House of Representatives (District 108), State of Florida; Vice Chair, National Haitian American Elected Officials Network (NHAEON); Miami, FL
29. Hon. Smith Joseph, D.O., Pharm.D., Mayor, City of North Miami, FL
30. Alix Desulme, Vice Mayor, City of North Miami, FL
31. Philippe Bien-Aime, Councilman (representing District 3) and former Acting Mayor, City of North Miami, FL
32. Michael A. Etienne, Esq., Elected City Clerk, City of North Miami, FL
33. Philippe Derose, former Councilman and Vice-Mayor, City of North Miami Beach, and former Mayor, City of El Portal, FL (Mr. Derose was the first Haitian American elected to public office in the United States.); Miami, FL
34. Phillip J. Brutus, Esq., former Member, Florida House of Representatives (representing District 108, 2000-2006); former Member, Executive and Central Committees, Florida Democratic Party; former President, Caribbean-American Democratic Caucus of Florida; Miami, FL
35. Ven. Archdeacon J.Fritz Bazin for the Episcopal Diocese of S.E. Florida; Miami, FL
36. Pierre Imbert, MPA, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder, Haiti Community Trust; Senior Advisor on Haiti, The Barr Foundation (2010 to 2016); Deputy Director, Department of Social Services, State of California under Governor Schwarzenegger (2008-2010, three years); Director, Office of Refugees and Immigrants, Commonwealth of Massachusetts under Governor Romney (2005-2007); and Executive Director, Catholic Charities Haitian Multi-Service Center, Boston, MA (1994-2005), among other activities; Cutler Bay, FL
37. Soeurette Michel, Esq., M.S.C.J., LLM, The Michel Law Firm, LLC; Board of Directors, Legal Services of Greater Miami (LSGM); Member, Education Law Committee, The Florida Bar; North Miami, FL

38. Guerda Nicolas, PhD, Professor, Department of Educational & Psychological Studies, School of Education and Human Development, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
39. Irwin P. Stotzky, Professor, School of Law, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
40. Meena Jagganath, Co-Founder and attorney, Community Justice Project, Miami, FL
41. Paul-Andre Mondesir, Haitian Community Social Advocate and organizer, American Friends Service Committee, Miami Branch, Miami, FL
42. Jack Lieberman, Co-President, Progressive Jewish Action, and former President, American Jewish Congress, Southeast Region; Miami, FL
43. Michael D. Ray, Attorney at Law and former President, American Immigration Lawyers Association, South Florida Chapter, Miami, FL
44. Brad Brown, former President, Miami-Dade Branch, NAACP; Miami, FL
45. Ira. J. Kurzban, Esq., Board Chairman, Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH); former President, American Immigration Lawyers Association; former counsel to the Government of Haiti; Miami, FL
46. Neil D. Kolner, Attorney at Law, Miami, FL
47. Candace Jean, Attorney at Law, Miami, FL
48. Nancy Trevino, Community Organizer and Advocate, Miami, FL
49. Stephanie Kienzle, blogger, VotersOpinion.com, Davie, FL
50. Steven Forester, Immigration Policy Coordinator, Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH); Miami Beach, FL
51. Orisseau Acelas, Pharm.D, Rph, Wellington, FL