

August 7, 2025

**Open Letter Re Imperative to Center Women's Rights and Leadership in Haiti's Transition
To His Excellency Laurent Saint-Cyr, President of the Presidential Transitional Council**

The undersigned feminist, human rights, and civil society organizations take note of your assumption of the Presidency of the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) on August 7 - the final such term before the end of the TPC mandate in February. Your mandate is thus the last opportunity to correct the transitional government's clear violations of the rights of Haitian women and girls under Haitian and international law. Given the lack of progress towards ensuring that women have the equal opportunity to participate in shaping the transition and any elections, centering women's perspectives and leadership is particularly pressing. So is confronting widespread sexual violence against women and girls, including because of the acute gendered harms arising from Haiti's crisis, which are compounding longstanding discrimination and inequality. Respecting the rights and leadership of Haiti's women and girls is also imperative given well-established evidence that centering women's priorities and leadership results in greater long-term peace, democratic stability, and economic prosperity for all.

We expect that you will act on these imperatives immediately, since you have yourself [publicly emphasized](#) the vital nature and urgency of these principles. You said in March: "Women's leadership is not a secondary issue: it is essential to the progress of our nation." We agree. In your new role as the last President of the TPC, you have the legal obligation, authority, and opportunity to address these ongoing harms. We demand you do so urgently.

We direct your attention to the [Policy Framework for an Effective and Equitable Transition](#) put forward by Haiti's civil society and endorsed by [over 180](#) organizations from Haiti and across the globe. The Framework identifies your legal obligations; applicable best practices like the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda; and offers concrete recommendations that you should immediately implement. We further direct your attention to previous related open letters directed to members of the transitional government on [March 19, 2025](#), [February 20, 2025](#), and [November 25, 2024](#).

The transitional government remains in sharp violation of its legal obligations to Haiti's women and girls. [Domestic and international law obligates](#) Haiti's government to secure the rights of Haiti's women and girls to equality, non-discrimination, freedom from violence, full political participation, and access to justice and economic opportunities. Haiti's Constitution provides an explicit [30% minimum](#) for participation by women in all public roles alongside guarantees of equality. Yet the situation for women and girls [continues to deteriorate](#), with some of the most acute sexual violence and gendered privations in the world. Women also remain marginalized in or outright excluded from decision-making and leadership, and we observe no meaningful steps towards ensuring that women will be able to shape and participate in the elections you are obligated to organize during your term.

More specifically, the following [deteriorating conditions](#) constitute grave violations of the rights of women and girls that your government is responsible for addressing. Sexual violence against

women and girls is omnipresent and being wielded as a deliberate instrument of conflict by Haiti's armed groups. The incidence is so staggering and under-reported that UN experts [acknowledge](#) any available statistics are [misleadingly low](#). However, increases of [1,600%](#) and [254%](#) in cases of sexual violence observed by some providers and the UN, respectively, offer some sense of the [crushing scale of harm](#). Collective rape is [endemic](#). Women and girls are the [majority](#) of those displaced by Haiti's crisis with compounded gendered harms. They are desperate for [medical and psychosocial services](#), for [food](#), for [safe economic opportunities](#).

The government is [not respecting](#) its obligation to meet these basic rights, to protect from violence, and to offer recourse. For example, [most services](#) for displaced women and girls and survivors of sexual violence are provided by civil society with international support, with the government "[completely absent](#)" at displacement sites. And it has failed to ensure that women's priorities and voices are adequately represented. The composition of transitional government entities is short of the minimum 30% quota, and budgets and policies do not reflect women's needs. The TPC [still](#) has no women with a vote, which also means that the rotating presidency you just assumed has not been available to any women. There are too few women ministers ([only](#) 4 of 18). Gendered exclusion is replicated across Haiti's government, policies, and programs down to the management of displacement sites, with [deeply harmful impacts](#) for women and girls. Such exclusion weakens the transition and causes very direct harms: for example, the absence of women from leadership at displacement sites exposes women and children to [sexual exploitation and abuse](#) in addition to [gendered challenges](#) arising from site organization that fails to take their distinct vulnerabilities into account. Moreover, the lack of adequate attention to women's safety and inclusion in organizing the mechanisms by which the transitional government must restore democracy before the end of your term - including ensuring their ability to fully participate as organizers, candidates, and voters in any elections - both blatantly violates women's rights and risks exacerbating and entrenching gendered harms in the future.

The rights of Haiti's women and girls should not be violated with [impunity](#) nor can they be afterthoughts among your government's priorities. That is not only a firm obligation under Haitian and international law, but also a well-established principle of conflict-affected transitions as reflected in the global Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, which [recognizes](#) that efforts to secure peace, democratic stability, and economic prosperity are more successful and lasting when women's needs and women's leadership are respected. Haiti's civil society, accompanied by human rights practitioners, scholars, and other experts, have offered the transitional government [concrete recommendations](#) for addressing the ongoing violations against women and girls and advancing their rights. As the TPC's new - and by the terms of your position, last - President, we demand that you urgently implement these measures.

Respectfully and with great hope that you will take immediate action,

1. Alternative Chance / Chans Alternativ, Haiti
2. American Jewish World Service (AJWS), United States
3. AMURT, Haiti
4. Anana Consultants, United States

5. Ansara Family Fund, United States
6. Avanse Ansanm, United States
7. Bureau des Avocats Internationaux, Haiti
8. CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice, Trinidad and Tobago
9. Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (CGRS), United States
10. Centre Anacaona Droits Humains Haïti, France
11. Coalition des Associations des Femmes pour la Justice Sociale en Haïti (CAFJSH), Haiti
12. Coordination Europe-Haïti, Belgium
13. Collectif des Amis des Droits Humains (COLADH), Haiti
14. Développement Entrepreneuriat Social Production Rural Intégré (DESPRI), Haiti
15. Dominican Sisters of Hope, United States
16. Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, United States
17. Faith in Action (FIA), Haiti
18. Faith in New Jersey, United States
19. Family Action Network Movement (FANM), United States
20. Femmes en Action Contre la Stigmatisation et la Discrimination Sexuelle (FACSDIS), Haiti
21. Friends of Matènwa, Inc., United States
22. Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC), United States
23. Forum Jeunesse Afro-Québécois, Canada
24. Fós Feminista, Global
25. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, United States
26. Gran Jipon, Haiti
27. Groupe d'Action pour le Progrès d'Haïti (GAPH), Haiti
28. Groupe d'Appui au Développement et à la Démocratie en Haïti (GRADE), Haiti
29. Haitian American Foundation for Democracy (HAFFD), United States
30. Haitian Bridge Alliance (HBA), United States
31. Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees (HWHR), United States
32. Haitian Women's Collective (HWC), Haiti
33. Haiti Policy House, United States
34. Haiti School Project, United States
35. Impact Communautaire pour le Développement d'Haïti (ICODEH HAITI), Haiti
36. Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), United States
37. Lekòl Kominotè Matènwa, Haiti
38. Li, Li, Li! Read, Haiti
39. MADRE, United States
40. Manifest Haiti, United States
41. Massachusetts Communities Action Network, United States
42. New England Human Rights Organization (NEHRO), United States
43. Nou Pap Dòmi, Haiti
44. OE Consulting, United States
45. Òganizasyon Feminis Dantò, Ayiti, Haiti
46. Organisation Féministe MARIJÀN, Haiti
47. Passionists International, United States

48. Plateforme des Organisations de Femmes Haïtiennes pour le Developpement (POFHAD), Haiti
49. PROFAMIL, Haiti
50. Quixote Center, United States
51. Roots of Development, United States
52. SAN POU SAN FANM (100% FANM), Haiti
53. Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center, United States
54. St. Joseph Worker Foundation, United States
55. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), United States
56. WE ARE WOMEN ORG, Haiti
57. Women's All Points Bulletin (WAPB), United States
58. ZANTRAY FANM KREYÒL, Haiti