

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC 20500

February 17, 2011

Dear Mr. President,

As relief and development organizations working to promote recovery and reconstruction in Haiti, we write to express our shared concern about your administration's decision to resume deportations to Haiti of persons with criminal convictions. In light of the continued humanitarian emergency and the weak capacity of the Haitian government to guarantee the protection of the human rights of those deported, and the security of the society as a whole, we respectfully ask that you reinstate the moratorium on Haitian deportations until such time as conditions materially improve in Haiti and the nation has reached a point of stability that will allow the humane and secure absorption of repatriated persons.

On January 20, 2011, the Department of Homeland Security deported the first group of twenty-seven Haitians to Haiti. Upon their arrival, the twenty-seven deportees were taken into custody by the Haitian government and detained in jails. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has reported that the cholera epidemic is spreading rapidly through Haiti's over-crowded prisons as a result of the untreated water provided to the incarcerated, combined with a lack of food and medical care. **The unsanitary and, at times, inhumane conditions of Haitian prisons, compounded by the escalating cholera epidemic, have likely already resulted in the death of a recent deportee – Wildrick Guerrier, a 34-year-old long-time U.S. resident who had no family members left in Haiti, presented cholera-like symptoms soon after he was deported in January, and died within a week of his departure from U.S. shores.**

As you are aware, Haiti remains a country in crisis. Approximately one-eighth of its population is without housing, gender-based violence is rampant, and a deadly cholera epidemic has already killed over 4,100 people. Continuing deportations at this time is inhumane and risks diverting attention and resources away from Haiti's recovery and reconstruction. We fear it may undermine our joint effort to provide for a strong future for Haiti. At the present time Haiti is ill-equipped to provide the necessary protection and care to the deportees it receives, and currently has no resources available to properly and humanely integrate them into the population.

The U.S. was one of the first nations to issue a moratorium on deportations to Haiti after the devastating earthquake. Other nations, such as the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas, with far larger Haitian populations followed our humanitarian

example. We fear that the U.S. decision to resume criminal deportations to Haiti has sent the wrong message to other nations in the region. We respectfully ask the U.S. government to immediately reinstate the moratorium on deportations until the emergency situation in Haiti substantially and materially improves.

Sincerely,

American Jewish World Service

American Refugee Committee

Church World Service

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA

Oxfam America

Refugees International

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

World Relief

CC:

Secretary Janet Napolitano, Department of Homeland Security

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, State Department

Thomas Adams, US Special Coordinator for Haiti

Scott Busby, Director for Human Rights, National Security Council