

The Haitian Diaspora Federation



UNITED WE SUCCEED

March 17, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: **ICE's Proposed Policy for Resumed Removals to Haiti**

Dear President Obama,

We write to strongly urge the United States to stop deportations, respect its human rights obligations, and rescind the inhumane Policy for Resumed Removals to Haiti posted on the website of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on March 7, 2011.

It is widely accepted that the January 12, 2010 massive earthquake in Port-au-Prince and its surroundings left Haiti with nearly 300,000 dead and over 1.5 million displaced and homeless. This serious ongoing humanitarian crisis in Haiti has worsened due to the cholera epidemic, political violence, and social unrest. Today, most in Haiti lack basic sanitation, adequate shelter, food and potable water, and basic security. This horrendous situation, multiplied in Haiti's crowded and unsanitary detention centers where deportees are routinely jailed, imposes death sentences on dozens of lives, including that of 34-year-old Wildrick Guerrier, one of the first US deportees since the earthquake.

In the January 6, 2011's White House dialogue with the Haitian Diaspora, the Haitian Diaspora Federation pleaded with the US government not to resume deportations to Haiti until at least the conditions have improved in Haiti and a reintegration process is established. While the March 7, 2011's policy statement issued by the ICE states that it is working in coordination with the Department of State and the Government of Haiti to resume removals in **as safe, humane, and minimally disruptive a manner as possible**, the reality is that it is not the case. Inhumane conditions in Haitian squalid jails, fraught with feces, vomit and trash-layered floors, blood-stained walls, mosquitoes and cholera-infested mediums, are a death sentence for many.

The United States' own statements confirm that reality. In a February 18, 2011 response to the Inter-American Commission, the Department of State stated: "The United States has not received assurances from the Haitian Government regarding the medical care or provisions that the proposed beneficiaries will be able to obtain upon their return." Furthermore, on December 9, 2010, the same day the ICE lifted its ban on deportations, the Department of State issued a travel warning discouraging any nonessential travel to Haiti on account of the situation of "continued high crime, the cholera outbreak, frequent disturbances in Port-au-Prince and in provincial cities, and limited police protection and access to medical care."

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The Haitian Diaspora believes that the ICE can both honor our nation's human rights obligations by ceasing deportations, and keep the US public safe. It is simply untrue that the ICE must choose between these objectives. Many of the people facing deportation were leading law-abiding lives in their communities as lawful permanent residents before they were unexpectedly rounded up and detained. Moreover, ICE has robust supervision and electronic monitoring programs that it routinely uses to monitor noncitizens with criminal backgrounds who cannot be deported including people from Cuba and other countries to which deportation is not possible, and people who are stateless.

The Haitian Diaspora Federation urges the United States to immediately halt all deportations to Haiti, grant deferred action and/or stays of removal to all Haitians with final orders of removal, cease the roundups and detention of Haitian nationals in the United States, and release those currently in custody. The Haitian Diaspora Federation further requests a meeting between senior members of the ICE, the State Department and the White House, and representatives of the undersigned to discuss the March 7, 2011 policy and simultaneously permit a true review process of that policy.

Sincerely Yours,



Dr. Joseph Baptiste
President



Bernier Lauredan, MD
Vice President



Onesky Aupont, MD, MPH, PhD.
Chair, Committee on Policy

/s/ L. Belizaire

Landry Belizaire, Esq.,
Co-chair, Committee on Migration

Cc: Vice President Joseph Biden,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Cc: Secretary Janet Napolitano
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Cc: Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520