



Jesuit Conference
Office of Justice and Ecology

Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology
1016 16th Street NW, #400
Washington, DC 200036

September 23, 2021

Dear President Biden,

We write to condemn the U.S. government's treatment of Haitians and other migrants at the Del Rio Sector of the U.S.-Mexico border. Your Administration's continued use of Title 42 expulsions, decision to close the Del Rio Port of Entry, and acceleration of deportation flights both violate migrants' legal right to apply for asylum and show callous disregard for the plight of our brothers and sisters seeking refuge in the United States.

As Christians, we are inspired by our faith to welcome the stranger, a theme repeated throughout Scripture. At Mount Sinai, God instructed the people of Israel, "You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:21). In his letter to the Romans, Paul instructs his readers to "extend hospitality to strangers" (Romans 12:13).

Your Administration has repeatedly expressed a desire for an immigration system that is "safe, humane, and orderly." However, rather than offering migrants an opportunity to request asylum, Customs and Border Patrol established a staging area under the Del Rio International Bridge where tens of thousands of men, women, and children, primarily from Haiti, have lived for more than a week in squalid conditions. Equally disturbing is the resumption of deportation flights to Haiti despite the country's chronic political and economic turmoil, notably in the wake of the recent assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, the 7.2 magnitude earthquake, and Tropical Storm Grace. Deporting people there while the country is in no condition to meet their basic needs is cruel and denying them the opportunity to seek asylum violates our obligations under international law.

We ask you and your Administration to:

- Halt deportation flights to Haiti immediately;
- Ensure that Haitians and all other migrants have an opportunity to apply for asylum, as required under international law;
- Protect migrants from being deported to Haiti using available administrative mechanisms such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED);
- Assist Haitian leaders in finding a solution to the political crisis, putting the needs of the Haitian people first and foremost.

During the 2020 campaign, you repeatedly emphasized that the election was a "battle for the soul of the nation." You pledged to "reassert America's commitment to asylum-seekers." This latest crisis at the border presents you with the opportunity to show that these words were more than

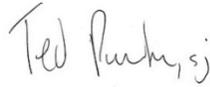
just a campaign slogan. We ask you and your Administration to offer protection to those who seek asylum here.

Sincerely,



Jean Denis SAINT-FÉLIX, S.J.
Supérieur des Jésuites en Haïti

Jean Denis Saint Félix, SJ
Superior
Jesuits in Haiti



Ted Penton, SJ
Secretary of Justice and Ecology
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States

CC: Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States
Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary of State