

April 8, 2024

The Honorable Joe Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. State Department
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Dear President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, and Secretary Blinken:

We, the undersigned 101 faith-based organizations and 151 faith leaders, write with grave concern about the escalating crisis in Haiti and to call for immediate humanitarian actions for Haiti. We call on you to: redesignate and extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Special Student Relief, pause all deportations, and expand key lawful migration pathways. We also urge you to halt any plans to detain Haitian migrants at Guantanamo Bay. Many of our organizations and places of worship have deep connections to Haiti and continue to work with our partners there to prevent violence, promote peace and justice, and welcome Haitians displaced by the ongoing crisis. Our diverse faith traditions call us to express solidarity with all people whose lives are impacted by conflict and violence, and we urge the Administration to vigorously pursue all options for humanitarian protection for Haitians.

According to the United Nations, armed gangs have seized control of 80 percent of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. In recognition of the deteriorating situation in Haiti, the U.S. military airlifted embassy staff from the country on March 10th. Today, the widespread violence has severely escalated, with coordinated gang attacks and prison breaks that forced Prime Minister Ariel Henry to agree to resign. This has disrupted government functions, closed Haiti's main airport, displaced over 160,000 civilians since February 2024, and triggered a devastating hunger crisis. Approximately half of the population, including nearly three million children, requires humanitarian aid. We are especially concerned about the reports of rape, indiscriminate kidnapping, and vigilante violence against the civilian population.

Mass migration from Haiti is closely tied to historical Western foreign interventions. The ramifications of this history and ongoing crisis continue to put the lives, rights, and freedoms of all Haitians at risk. The U.S. and the international community must act now to show the Haitian people that we stand with them. As Haitians pursue multiple avenues to end this turmoil and rebuild the government, the U.S. and the international community must also make clear that they support Haitians' self-determination.

We call on the Administration to:

Extend and redesignate TPS for Haiti and Special Student Relief for Haitian Students as soon as possible

The existing TPS designation for Haiti is set to expire on August 4, 2024. In addition to the currently deteriorating situation, all the conditions leading to the Biden administration's TPS extension and redesignations on December 5, 2022, and August 3, 2021 have worsened. The situation therefore meets the TPS designation criteria of temporary and extraordinary conditions that make a safe return to Haiti impossible. TPS designations can also promote stability,

because Haitians with work permits can send increased remittances to relatives in Haiti, helping them cover basic needs.

The Administration can also extend Special Student Relief employment benefits for nonimmigrant students from Haiti experiencing severe economic hardship. This notice is set to expire on August 3, 2024.

Halt plans to detain Haitian migrants interdicted at sea at Guantanamo Bay or detention centers in other countries

We are concerned by recent reports that the administration is considering detaining Haitians interdicted at sea at the Guantanamo Bay naval base and other offshore migrant detention centers. The period of detaining Haitian refugees at Guantanamo Bay is a shameful chapter in our nation's history. The history of Haitian refugees at Guantanamo Bay underscores the importance of treating all individuals with dignity and ensuring their rights are protected, especially in times of crisis. Haitians fleeing violence and persecution need support, not punishment. Instead of denying them protection by imprisoning them, we encourage the administration to take all available steps to restore and expand asylum processing at and between ports of entry, including for Haitians interdicted at sea, and to intervene in efforts by U.S. states to unjustly detain Haitian migrants.

Indefinitely halt deportations to Haiti, release detained Haitians, and support administrative closure of removal cases

The U.S. continues repatriations to Haiti, even though the Haitian government is unable to safely receive returnees. We ask the Biden administration to halt all removal flights and maritime removals to the already-overburdened country and urge favorable prosecutorial discretion for Haitians with final removal orders, which may include release from immigrant detention if they pose no threat to public safety. For individuals deemed to pose a security threat who cannot be returned to their home country due to the risk of harm, we urge the U.S. to explore alternatives that balance the need for security with the individual's right to non refoulement.

Expand and Expedite Parole to Haitians

We request that the administration raise the monthly cap on the Cuban-Haitian-Nicaraguan-Venezuelan (CHNV) parole process, and expedite the processing time. This program has created a key pathway for nationals of these countries to seek protection in the United States. This program not only facilitates family reunification and strengthens connections between communities, but it also helps mitigate the risk associated with perilous migration journeys that many Haitians now have no choice but to take in search of safety. By expanding and expediting these applications, the U.S. will be directly responding to the critical humanitarian challenges facing Haiti. We also request expedited processing for the Haitian Family Reunification Program.

Maintain Access to Asylum

While the CHNV parole program is an important humanitarian pathway, it should not be considered a substitute for the right to seek asylum. This is particularly true for asylum seekers from countries like Haiti, where civil society and infrastructure have collapsed. The main airport in Haiti is currently closed, creating a barrier to the CHNV parole program beneficiaries to leave the country. A robust asylum system is an essential protection for people fleeing violence who are unable to access flights or passports. We urge the Biden administration not to enact further

asylum restrictions and to consider ways to make the asylum system more accessible to Haitians.

Our faith traditions call on us to welcome the stranger and take action in solidarity with those fleeing violence, injustice, and disaster. In 2020, President Biden promised Haitian communities that he would “be there and stand with [them],” and it is important now, more than ever, to renew this promise. Guided by our shared faith principles, we must ensure that no Haitian is sent back to dangerous, unlivable conditions.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Alliance of Baptists
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Bread for the World
Church World Service
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Disciples Home Missions
Disciples Peace Fellowship
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
Ethical Humanist Society
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Faiths for Safe Water
FEA Foundation Ministries
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Global Refuge
Immigration Law & Justice Network
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Lutherans Restoring Creation
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
MPower Change
National Action Network, Inc.
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nuns and Nones
Order of Lutheran Franciscans
Pax Christi USA

Presbyterian Church (USA)
Quixote Center
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province
SHARE FOUNDATION
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of Mercy Solidarity Committee
Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia
Sojourners
The Episcopal Church
U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ
World Relief

State and Local Organizations

Berkeley Friends Meeting
Berkeley Society of Friends
Border Servant Corps
Christ the Servant Church, Peace and Social Justice Committee
Church Women United in New York State
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC
Estrella del Paso (Formerly Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services)
FAITH IN TEXAS
First Congregational United Church of Christ Albuquerque
First Parish Unitarian Universalist Arlington, MA, Social Justice Committee
Florida-Bahamas Synod
Franciscan Justice Circle, Mid Hudson Valley, NY
Global Mission Table: Florida Bahamas Synod
Hope Border Institute
Immaculate Heart Community, Commission on Justice for Immigrants, Refugees, Indigenous People
Immigration Law & Justice New York
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
Interfaith Welcome Coalition of San Antonio, Texas
Justice For Our Neighbors North Central Texas
Kehilla Community Synagogue
LEAMNJ
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)
Lutherans Engaged in Advocacy NJ
Messiah Lutheran Church

Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid
Newman Nonviolent Peacemaking Group
Oregon Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice
Pax Christi New York State
Pax Christi Hudson Valley, NY
Peace & Justice Team of First Churches, Northampton, MA
Pedro Arrupe Jesuit Institute
Peninsula Solidarity Cohort
Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Carlsbad, CA
Shepherd of the Hills United Church of Christ
Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants
Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, Holy Name Province
Social Justice Team, First Church of Christ, Longmeadow, United Church of Christ
Southeast Michigan Synod ELCA Immigration and Refugee Task Force
St. Peter's Lutheran Church
St. John XXIII Parish, Evanston Il
Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry
UCC Sanctuary Working Group
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois
Unitarian Universalist FaithAction NJ
Unitarian Universalist Justice Florida (UUJF)
Unitarian Universalist Justice PA (UUJusticePA)
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hidalgo County Texas
United Methodist Churches of Indiana (INUMC)
UU Mass Action
Virginia Unitarian Universalist State Action Network
Wellspring UCC
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

Faith Leaders

Rose Lynn Abesamis-Bell, Connectional Ministries Co-Lead, Lake Merritt United Methodist Church
John Alder, Member, Westminster UCC
Sister Sharon Altendorf, PBVM, Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the BVM, US Province
Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman, Associate Pastor, First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, UCC
The Rev Marjo Anderson, Pastor, Salem Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, CT
JL Angell, Presbyterian Ruling Elder
Olga Anglada, Pastoral Companion/Collaborator, Pastoral Migratoria
Kay Arnold, Scripture Study Facilitator, St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church
Terry Barber, OFS, Deacon, Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Rev. Lecia A. Beck, Pastor of Youth & Christian Nurture, St Thomas Lutheran Church, Bloomington, IN
Pastor O. Jermaine Bego, CenterPoint Baptist Church
Deacon Denise Benjamin, ELCA

Sarah Berel-Harrop, Intern Minister, Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry
Deacon Steven Beumer, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Rev. Dr. Lindsay Louise Biddle, Teaching Elder, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Pastor Juliet Bongfeldt, Pastor (Retired), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Sister Laetitia Bordes, SH, Justice, Peace, and Integration of Creation Coordinator, Society of Helpers
Rev. Dr. Colin Bossen, Senior Minister, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston
Rev. José Manuel Capella-Pratts, Regional Liaison for The Caribbean, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Kathryn Carroll
Neribel Chardon
Reverend Laura Mariko Cheifetz
Reverend Theresa Cho, St. John's Presbyterian Church
Rev. Shannon Clarkson, Retired, United Church of Christ
Sr. Joanne Clavel, Justice Minister, Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia
Marilyn Cleveland, Clerk of Accompaniment Team, Berkeley Society of Friends (Quakers)
Sister Elizabeth Conway, Congregation Leader, Sisters of St. Joseph
The Ven. Catherine Cooke, Archdeacon, Episcopal Diocese of Vermont
Sister Kathleen Corbett
Barbara and Jim Dale
The Rev. Mark T. Davis, Pastor-Theologian (retired), PC(USA)
Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Jan Demro, Lay Leader, Grace Lutheran Church (ELCA)
Rev. Terri Dennehy, Minister, Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Stamford, CT
Rev. Dr. Tiffany DeTienne, Pastor, The Fringe
T Dickinson, Convinced Quaker
Sister Josephine J. Dybza, Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania Ohio
Pastor Jack Eggleston, Retired Pastor, Southeast Michigan Synod, ELCA
Gayle Eleanor, Member, Berkeley Society of Friends (Quaker)
Elena
Judith M. Engel, Associate with Adrian Dominican Sisters
John Eriksson, Co-Leader Gateway Team, Saint Stephen Lutheran Church ELCA
Catherine Fedewa, Peace and Justice Committee Member, Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth
Rev. Michael K. Fischer, Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Carolyn Fitzkee, Refugee Committee, Lancaster Church of the Brethren
Pastor Alice Fleming Townley, United Methodist Church
Louise Fortmann, Member, Accompaniment Team, University Lutheran Chapel
Sara Fread
Rev. Brian Frederick-Gray, Director for Justice and Advocacy Ministries, Disciples Home Missions
Pastor Rock Fremont Jr., Shepherd of the Hills UCC
Jan Gardner, Elder, St. Luke's Presbyterian Church
Vicki Gass, Executive Director, Latin American Working Group (LAWG)
Sally Jane Gellert, Cochairperson, Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC)
Rev. Barbara Gerlach, Retired Minister, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Washington, DC
Wendy Gist, Immigrant Accompaniment Organizer, Presbytery of San Gabriel

Pastor Donald W. Glanzer Jr., Senior Pastor, St John Lutheran Church, Reedsburg, WI
Reverend Justo Gonzalez II, Manager, Spiritual Care
Reverend Melissa Melnick González, Tapestry
Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, Shomeret Shalom
Pamela Green, Racial Justice Task Force Chair, Woodinville Unitarian Universalist Church
Jill Hardt Zundel, Retired Clergy, United Methodist Church
Dr. Sandra Hareld, Outreach Coordinator, Loretto Community
Reverend Rebecca Harrison, Executive Pastor
Rev. Nell Herring, Mission Specialist for Volunteer Ministries, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
Br. Steve Herro, O. Praem., St. Norbert Abbey
Holly C. Hoffman, MAMS, MD, Deacon, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church Carlisle
Beth Holst, Committee Member, Interfaith Committee for Migrant Justice
Rev. Jeff Horejsi, Pastor, Church of St. Philip
Rev. Jennifer Huff, Ordained Deacon/Conference Missions Coordinator, United Methodist Churches of Indiana
Rev. Sonja L. Ingebritsen, Pastor, Glenside United Church of Christ
Pastor Brian Jack, First Lutheran Church, Milford, IA
Sister Nancy Marie Jamroz, CSSF, Co-Director of the Center for Catholic Studies and Interfaith Dialogue, Madonna University
Rev. Chris Jimmerson, Co-Lead Minister, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin
Sister Juanita
Sister Bernadine Karge, Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa, WI
Rev. Kellie Kelly, Minister, Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Rev. Dr. James J. Kirk, Associate for Disaster Response US, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
Phyllis Klein, Earth Action Co-Leader, UUCE Earth Action
Heidi Knudsen, Ruling Elder, North Shore Presbyterian Church
Rev. Josh Komo, Associate Minister, Pilgrim United Church of Christ
William D Krum, Lay Servant, Northside United Methodist Church
Rev. Michelle LaGrave, Co-Lead Minister, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin
Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Executive Director and Team Leader, Disciples Center for Public Witness
Anna Marie Lesutis, Sister of Mercy Health Promotion
Julie Litwin, Immigration Committee Chair, Kehilla Community Synagogue
Sister Marie Lucey, Associate Director, Franciscan Action Network
Reverend Roderick MacDonald, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Dr. Wesley Magruder, Office Director, Church World Service Wilmington
Rev. Kim Mason, Minister, First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
Reverend Giuseppe Mattei, Pastor, Nativity Lutheran Church
Margaret McBride, RSM, VP, St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center
Eileen McCann, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood, NY
Patricia McDermott, Franciscan Sister of Peace
Rev. Sam McFerran, Associate Minister, First Congregational United Church of Christ
Diane McLeod Sonda, Administrative and Outreach Pastor, Ann Arbor Blue Ocean Church
The Reverend Benjamin Meyers, Unitarian Universalist Minister

Sr. Pat Millen OSF, Justice Promoter, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Jason Miller
Rev. Danielle Miller, Senior Pastor, Advent Lutheran Church
Dr. Stephanie Mitchell, Coordinator, Immigration Legal Support Initiative, Racine Interfaith Coalition
Rev. David L. Morton, Retired United Methodist Pastor, United Methodist Church
Rev. Michael S. Mulberry, Pastor, United Church of Christ
Pastor David Nellist, Dearborn First United Methodist
Rev. Elizabeth Newton, Assistant Minister, First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio
D.Q. Neyhart, Berkeley Friends Meeting
Rabbi Dev Noily, Senior Rabbi, Kehilla Community Synagogue
Kate O'Donnell OSF, Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Committee East Coast Coordinator, Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia
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Maria Orlandini, Director of Advocacy, Franciscan Action Network
Rosemarie Pace, Coordinator, Pax Christi New York State
The Rev. Kenneth G. Page, Interim Pastor, The First Presbyterian Church of Howard County
Glenda Pawsey, Co-chair Mission and Justice Commission, St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, CA
Pastor Nate Pequette, Church of the Sojourners
Gregory Perkins, President, Board of Deacons, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
Deacon Cindy Pickard, Shepherd of the Hills United Church of Christ
Reverend Shari Prestemon, Acting Associate General Minister & Co-Executive for Global Ministries, United Church of Christ
Marion Pruitt-Jefferson, Retired Clergy, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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The Rev. Sanna B Reinholtzen, Pastor, University Lutheran Chapel of Berkeley, CA
Rev. Carlos S. Reyes Rodríguez, Culture & Outreach Manager, Immigration Law & Justice Network
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Terri Robertson, Executive Assistant for Finance & Accounting, Office of the Bishop, Pacifica Synod, ELCA
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Susan Saudek, Sanctuary Committee, First Congregational UCC
Pastor Clint Schneklath, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Johnny Sears, Director, The Academy for Spiritual Formation
Rev. Artgur Severance, Minister Emeritus, First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio
Courtney Spearman, Lay leader, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
Dale Story, Chair, Justice Coordinating Committee, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Houston
Rev. Pedro Suarez, Bishop, Florida-Bahamas Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev Joanne Sylvander, Retired Clergy
Rev. Dr. Allison J Tanner, Pastor of Public Witness, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church
Rev. Linda Theophilus, Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Eastmont

Rev. Daryl J. Thompson, Pastor, Calmar and Springfield Lutheran Churches
Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, General Minister and President/Chief Executive Officer, United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Wanda Thompson, Pastor, The Ambassador Baptist Church
Rev. Bethany Ulrich, Pastor, ELCA
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Rev. Amy Chieko Wake, Lead Pastor, Trinity United Methodist Church
Sister Marge White, Sisters of St Joseph, TOSF
Rev. Ashlee Wiest-Laird, Pastor, First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain
Rev. Elizabeth R. Wright, Elder, United Methodist Church
Reverend Ellen Zienert
Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese, Retired, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America