

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

August 9, 2021

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our deep concern with the political and security crisis in Haiti and the heinous assassination of President Jovenel Moïse and attack on First Lady Martine Moïse. Given that Haiti's caretaker authorities have requested our assistance, there is an important role for the United States to play in helping our close neighbor in the aftermath of this tragedy.

We urge your administration to assist the Haitian authorities as they investigate this brutal attack and to cooperate with international partners to ensure justice and accountability for all individuals involved. We further implore your administration, in coordination with international partners, to engage in a diplomatic effort with a broad range of democratic actors across Haitian society to build the consensus and confidence needed to hold credible presidential and parliamentary elections. As part of this effort, the United States should work with the United Nations and partner nations to help address the alarming levels of criminal violence that have terrorized Haiti's population and displaced tens of thousands of people. We recognize that this is a daunting challenge which will not be achieved quickly.

Over the past year, Haiti has experienced a startling rise in criminal activity, kidnappings, human rights violations, and a growing humanitarian crisis. President Moïse's murder is only the latest in a wave of uncontrolled violence. In recent weeks, more than 20 Haitians were killed in Port-au-Prince, including human rights activist Antoinette Duclaire, who was brutally shot to death. We encourage you to aggressively use sanctions and other authorities to deny visas to and freeze the assets of the individuals responsible for these barbaric attacks.

Amidst this climate of violence, the United Nations reports that nearly 650,000 people are displaced throughout the country, including more than 13,000 who were displaced during the month of June. Millions of Haitians lack access to food, water, fuel, and other basic items. Growing popular frustration and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to a widespread loss of hope in the country and daily street protests. The United States should continue to work with Haitian civil society and the international community to help respond to urgent humanitarian needs while promoting self-reliance.

We strongly support free and fair presidential and legislative elections in Haiti as a necessary step to overcome the current political crisis. However, an electoral process will only be successful if it is deemed credible by the majority of Haitians, meets international standards, and facilitates the participation of a wide range of political and civic actors. Less than 25 percent of Haiti's electorate participated in the country's last elections, underscoring a widespread lack of

trust in the process. We urge your administration to work with our diplomatic partners to engage Haitian political leaders, civil society, the private sector, and traditionally underrepresented populations in order to forge a broader social consensus in support of new elections and a consensus agenda for the current interim government. We believe the integrity and inclusivity of this process is essential to an outcome that has public confidence and support.

Additionally, we firmly believe that a safe and secure environment is essential to ensure that Haitians can actively participate in their country's democratic process. The United States should continue to work with the international community to help the Haitian National Police (HNP) to facilitate acceptable electoral conditions, to fully investigate and prosecute the assassination of President Moïse, and improve the professionalism of its force to effectively protect Haitians. Given our geographic proximity to Haiti, the ongoing pandemic, as well as previous instances of mass migration from Haiti, this is a pressing national security concern.

Considering the urgency of the situation, we respectfully request that you accelerate efforts to nominate a new U.S. Ambassador to Haiti. As Ambassador Michele Sison has been nominated for a new position in the State Department, it is imperative that our embassy not have a lapse in leadership during this critical time. As you consider candidates to serve as our next ambassador, we encourage you to select someone with a deep understanding of the country, extensive diplomatic experience responding to crises, and a record of effective collaboration with civil society and multilateral institutions.

Congress has provided billions of dollars in assistance to the Haitian people in response to disasters, both natural and man-made. This assistance has made the U.S. the single largest source of humanitarian assistance to Haiti. This includes assistance for improving access to agricultural markets, preventing and responding to gender-based violence, and improving access to public health services. The United States has also provided support to the Haitian National Police, which increased its force to more than 15,000 officers and built new commissariats in regions previously without a police presence. At the same time, it is important to ensure that our investments do not perpetuate Haiti's dependency on foreign assistance or empower those who have cared more about enriching themselves than improving the lives of the Haitian people.

A safe, prosperous, and democratic Haiti is in the best interest of the United States and the Western Hemisphere. We therefore urge you to stand in solidarity with the Haitian people. We know you share our commitment to help enable the Haitian people to choose their next leaders in a free, fair and transparent manner. We thank you for your attention to this important matter and look forward to working with you to advance and uphold stability and democracy in our hemisphere.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



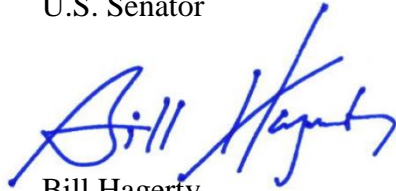
Robert Menendez
U.S. Senator



Todd Young
U.S. Senator



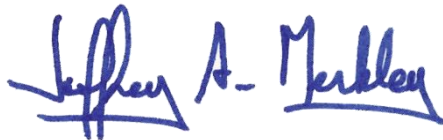
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Bill Hagerty
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Christopher A. Coons
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Jeffrey A. Merkley
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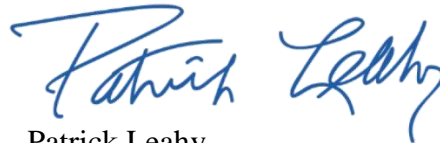
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