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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

March 12, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to express our deep concern about the complicated economic, security, and humanitarian challenges in Haiti and respectfully request that you consider redesignating Haiti for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Haiti's protracted political crisis exacerbates the severe and prolonged humanitarian needs sparked by the 2010 earthquake. While the Government of Haiti has been able to receive limited numbers of Haitian nationals removed from the United States, it lacks the capacity to provide the needed reception and care for tens of thousands of returnees. As the United States engages with the Haitian government to help chart a way forward, a TPS redesignation would provide a much-needed reprieve for upwards of 55,000 Haitians in the United States, including current Haitian TPS beneficiaries. It would also lessen the burden on the Haitian people, government, and aid organizations, and mitigate risks of further destabilization.

The devastation caused by the January 12, 2010 earthquake—which killed over 300,000 people, displaced 1.5 million, and destroyed the country's already weak infrastructure—prompted the Obama Administration to grant TPS to Haitian nationals. The scale of the disaster in Haiti overwhelmed the government's ability to respond and earthquake-related needs were subsequently exacerbated by additional shocks to the country, including a cholera epidemic, that led to a redesignation in 2011. As a result of the lasting damage from those events, exacerbated by 2016's Hurricane Matthew and a multi-year drought that severely limited crop supply, DHS extended TPS on multiple occasions—including in May 2017 under the Trump administration—until it decided to terminate the designation in November 2017. That termination decision remains enjoined from taking effect as a result of a federal court order.

According to the UN's 2021 Haiti Humanitarian Needs Overview, approximately 4 million people were affected by acute food insecurity from August 2020 to February 2021 and 2.1 percent of children in the country faced severe acute malnutrition during this period. The UN estimates that 4.4 million people will need humanitarian assistance during the course of 2021. The United States must take immediate action to provide life-saving assistance and bring about a swift resolution to the country's newest crisis.

Additionally, we are concerned that Haiti's significant political challenges have introduced additional instability in the country. Currently, two-thirds of the Haitian Senate and the entire lower chamber of the legislature are unoccupied due to expired terms, and President Moise is ruling by decree. Amidst this crisis of democratic governance, we welcome the Administration's call for Haitian political actors to address their differences through peaceful means. Given that United States has historically set stability as a central element approach to Haiti, redesignating TPS status to the country will be a step in the right direction as we look to uphold and democratic institutions and protect human rights.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
Chairman



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator