

January 21, 2011

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



Dear Madam Secretary:

On behalf of the Jesuit Social Research Institute at Loyola University I write to express my grave concerns regarding the resumption of deportations of persons with criminal convictions to Haiti. I ask that DHS reconsider its decision until conditions in Haiti improve substantially.

Haiti remains a country in crisis. Over one-tenth of its population is without housing, political violence from the disputed November elections is escalating, crime is rampant, and a deadly cholera epidemic which has already killed over 3,500 people is spreading. The resumption of deportations at this time is inhumane and would divert scarce resources from Haiti's reconstruction and recovery.

I am also concerned that persons deported to Haiti are held in abominable conditions in severely over-crowded and unsanitary police substations. Experts on the Haitian penal system have warned that deporting people to such chaotic and unhealthy circumstances is like a death sentence, as they are likely to die from the cholera epidemic that is raging in Haitian jails and prisons.

It is simply unconscionable to deport individuals to Haiti at the present time. I urge the Obama Administration to:

- 1) Publicly clarify this new policy and to provide an explanation for how conditions have materially changed in Haiti to justify the resumption of deportations, which have been suspended since the earthquake.
- 2) Explain what steps are being taken in Haiti to prepare for the returns and what agreements have been reached with the Haitian government regarding the treatment of those returned.
- 3) Review this policy, and individually review each case in light of humanitarian and human rights standards and best practices for safe and dignified returns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Kammer".

Rev. Fred Kammer, S.J.
Executive Director