

URGENT ACTION

STOP U.S. ABUSES AGAINST HAITIAN PEOPLE

Thousands of Haitians have traveled to the US-Mexico border to seek safety in the USA. The US government has responded with human rights violations, including the forcible removal of thousands to Haiti and Mexico. These expulsions and deportations put Haitians at risk of gang violence, being unhoused, and even death as Haiti is in the midst of political, economic, and environmental crises. In past months, the situation has gotten worse. Call on US authorities to end deportations and respect the human right to seek asylum.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20528
USA
email: dhssecretary@hq.dhs.gov

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

I'm writing with deep disappointment about the enduring mistreatment of Haitians seeking asylum at the US-Mexico border at the hands of US immigration authorities. The administration's aggressive expulsions under Title 42 and the appalling decision to reinstate and expand the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) are especially concerning as these policies violate the human right to seek asylum and send hundreds of thousands of Haitians and other asylum-seekers to face danger and even death in their countries of origin and/or transit. These reckless actions not only abandon the administration's obligations under US and international law, but also its promises to halt these cruel, abusive and unlawful programs.

If the US truly aims to convince the world that its commitment to human rights and racial justice are sincere, then it cannot deny access to asylum protections and deport thousands of people who fear for their safety back to countries experiencing extreme instability and massive human rights violations.

I call on the Biden administration to:

- Immediately halt deportations to Haiti*
- Immediately end MPP and Title 42 expulsions*
- End the use of arbitrary, mass immigration detention*

Images of desperation from the airport tarmacs in Port-au-Prince and ill-treatment in refugee camps in Del Rio and elsewhere along the southern border have been a damning indictment of the US government's approach to humanitarian action and human rights for all, without discrimination. This is your time to reverse course and show truly principled leadership. People around the world are watching you.

Thank you,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Biden administration has shamefully continued dangerous policies of the preceding Trump administration – including Title 42 expulsions, the deceptively named “Migrant Protection Protocols” (MPP or the “Remain in Mexico” policy), and the use of arbitrary, mass immigration detention.

The US government has been misusing Title 42 of the US code to forcibly expel people at the US-Mexico border back to Mexico or to their countries of origin, without access to asylum or protection screenings. First implemented by the Trump administration under bogus public health grounds and the pretext of COVID-19, the Biden administration has continued Title 42 despite objections by CDC officials, public health experts, and administration officials. Over 1,400,000 people were expelled under Title 42 between March 2020 and November 2021 and subject to serious violence and dangerous conditions.

After the Trump administration implemented MPP in 2019, nearly 70,000 asylum-seekers at the US-Mexico border were forced to return to and stay in Mexico during the adjudication of their asylum claims, which can take months or years. They lived in dangerous conditions in northern Mexico, under the threat of violence, homelessness, and kidnapping. The Biden administration terminated MPP but a federal court in August 2021 ordered it to reinstate MPP for reasons of administrative legal procedure. Despite describing MPP as having “endemic flaws, imposed unjustifiable human costs,” DHS reinstated and expanded the program in December 2021 to include nationals from Haiti and other Caribbean countries.

Meanwhile, the average number of people held in US immigration detention has ballooned more than 50 percent to over 22,000 people under the Biden administration – despite the President’s previous commitments to end for-profit detention and as outbreaks of Covid-19 rage through detention facilities with the Delta and Omicron variants. As of 19 January 2022, more than 10 percent of people in detention had contracted Covid-19 in US custody – an increase of 680 percent in cases since 3 January 2022.

All of this has been entirely unnecessary and violates US obligations to uphold the right to seek asylum, detain people only as a last resort, and not forcibly return individuals to places where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations. Restoring the rule of law and access to asylum requires upholding due process. Asylum-seekers should be allowed to live freely in the country, not expelled or detained, where they can pursue their asylum claims in communities supported by community-based organizations.

News media in 2021 broadcast footage of US border agents charging into Haitian migrants on horseback – violently dispersing, taunting, and forcing them away from safety. This escalation of violence went hand-in-hand with a rise in removal flights to Haiti, despite the country still reeling from widespread violence, political instability and humanitarian disaster – from the catastrophic 2013 and 2021 earthquakes and the [assassination of its president](#) in 2021. Since 19 September 2021, the US has deported over 15,000 Haitians, largely without providing access to the asylum system or protection screenings. Amnesty co-authored “[Not safe anywhere](#)” and “[Stop US deportations and abuse against Haitians on the move](#)” with Haitian Bridge Alliance and other partners to document the harm facing Haitians in their search for safety in the US and across the Americas.

The recent misconduct at the border is just the latest in a long line of historical abuses of Black immigrants in the US, serving as a searing reminder of the hateful, racist, and xenophobic cruelty that has shaped US immigration policies and continues to brutally harm and oppress millions of people today.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 24 March 2022.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Haitian migrants at the US-Mexico border [they/them]

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr51/4773/2021/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGET

U.S. Embassy London

33 Nine Elms Lane

London SW11 7US