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### Inter-American Commission Orders United States to Stop Deportations to Cholera-Stricken Haiti

### 3,400 Americans Urge Obama Administration to Halt Life-Threatening Deportation after Deportee Death

*June 2, 2011, New York, Miami and New Orleans* – The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued a strongly-worded order yesterday directing the United States to refrain from deporting 33 men and women from the United States to Haiti. The order is in response to the controversial move of the United States to deport people with U.S. criminal records to Haiti despite the country’s continuing struggle after last year’s massive earthquake. A coalition of rights groups [sent a letter](#) (PDF) signed by nearly 3,400 individuals to President Obama and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano today urging the administration to stop deportations to Haiti until conditions improve and Haiti ends its unlawful practice of jailing deportees.

The IACHR, an international tribunal of the Organization of American States, issues such “precautionary measures” only in extreme circumstances to prevent irreversible harm to the people who appear before it. The IACHR’s order follows its February 4, 2011 order instructing the U.S. not to deport 5 similarly-situated men to Haiti in light of the life-threatening conditions for deportees in that country.

“How many people must die before the U.S. government stops this senseless, inhumane policy of death by deportation?” said **Caroline Bettinger-Lopez, Director of the Human Rights Clinic at the University of Miami School of Law.**

“Thousands of Americans across the country have called upon our government to do the right thing and prevent more deaths,” said **Farrin Anello, Supervising Attorney of the Immigration Clinic at the University of Miami School of Law.** “We urge the president and Secretary Napolitano to immediately suspend deportations.”

Advocates say the IACHR’s actions recognize the inhumane treatment of people deported to Haiti over the past five months and the hardship suffered by their children and spouses who remain in the U.S., many of whom are U.S. citizens. Upon arrival in Haiti, deportees are routinely jailed in horrific conditions, made even more life-threatening by the cholera epidemic there. 34-year-old Wildrick T. Guerrier became ill and died in Haiti only nine days after being deported in January 2011 and others have also fallen seriously ill. On April

15 and May 11, 2011, however, the U.S. deported individuals with serious physical and mental illnesses to Haiti without ensuring their access to life-saving medicines, food, water and sanitary conditions. The U.S. government has planned another deportation flight for later this month.

The deportations continue despite the Obama administration's recognition of the life-threatening nature of deportation to Haiti. On May 17, President Obama extended and re-designated the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program, which permits Haitians living in the United States who have no more than one misdemeanor conviction to remain here for eighteen months. The State Department has also advised U.S. citizens not to travel to Haiti.

“By extending Temporary Protective Status to some Haitian nationals, the U.S. government acknowledges the humanitarian crisis in Haiti,” said **Center for Constitutional Rights staff attorney Sunita Patel**. “The right to life is absolute - a criminal conviction does not absolve the U.S. from its obligation not to send someone to a country where their life is at risk.”

Cholera and widespread homelessness are two problems in Haiti which have a particular impact on deportees and which are only worsening with the arrival of the rainy season in Haiti. Just yesterday, USAID confirmed 5,300 deaths from cholera since the outbreak of the disease last October. A recent study in the medical journal Lancet estimates 800,000 future cases of cholera. This past week, large-scale evictions and massive violence against tent city residents has worsened an already-desperate situation.

Both orders were issued in response to a case filed with the IACHR by the coalition of rights groups who penned the letter sent to the Obama administration today, including the **University of Miami Human Rights and Immigration Clinics, the Center for Constitutional Rights, Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, Alternative Chance, FANM/Haitian Women of Miami and the Stuart H. Smith Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law**.

For more information, visit [www.StopHaitiDeportations.org](http://www.StopHaitiDeportations.org) and <http://ccrjustice.org/ourcases/current-cases/iachr-haitian-removals>.