



FANM, Inc.



PRESS CONFERENCE

April 14th, 2011

PRESS CONFERENCE: Stop Deportations to Haiti!

FIND US ON  **What:** PRESS CONFERENCE**When:** FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2011 -- 10 AM**Where:** IMMIGRATION BUILDING, 8801 N.W. 7TH AVENUE**Who:** Haitian LEADERS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAITH GROUPS, DETAINEES' FAMILY MEMBERS**Why:** Stop Deportations to Haiti!

Despite a national outcry stemming from the January 20, 2011 deportation of 27 detainees to Haiti, which resulted in the death of 34 y.o. Wildrick Guerrier, the Obama Administration recently made a decision to resume deportations to Haiti. Haitian deportees risk a death sentence from cholera due to unhygienic conditions in Haiti's inhumane and overcrowded police station holding cells, where detainees routinely are jailed. The conditions in these jails include severe overcrowding, filth and a lack of clean water or medical care. Wildrick Guerrier became deathly ill in just such a jail cell and, after experiencing extreme diarrhea and vomiting, died on January 29, 2011.

The Obama Administration has yet to provide relief to many of Haiti's earthquake victims who were evacuated to the United States by U.S. Forces after the quake or who came to the United States with tourist or other visas seeking a temporary reprieve. The administration also has been unresponsive despite enormous editorial and bi-partisan congressional support to calls for a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program similar to the Cuban Family Parole Program .

Regarding the deportations, Caroline Bettinger Lopez, Associate Professor of the Human Rights Clinic at UM School of Law, stated: "The right to life should not be selectively applied depending on one's citizenship status or a prior bad act. The U.S. government has a basic obligation not to deport anyone to death. Our country must live up to its human rights commitments and immediately halt any and all deportations to Haiti".

"Wildrick T.Guerrier's death was enough of a tragedy," said Susana Barciela, Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center's Policy Director. "Resuming deportations to Haiti not only risks more deaths but will burden a Haiti still reeling to find food, jobs and shelter for earthquake survivors." Jean Robert Lafortune added: " Why is the Obama administration continuing the double standard and discrimination of the Bush era? Aren't Haitians deserving human beings?" "A civilized nation does not and should not deport anyone to a possible death sentence from cholera" continued Steve Forester of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti. Family members of the detainees will be there to ask the same questions.

**For information:** Please call Marleine Bastien at (305)756-8050 , Carrie Bettinger-Lopez (305) 281-9856, or Beatriz Carta-Wagman (305)776-2248

Supporting Organizations: FIAC, FANM, HAGC, Alternative Chance, UM Human Rights Clinic, UM Immigration Clinic, American Friends Service Committee, Center for Constitutional Rights, Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, Haiti Solidarity, Jobs With Justice

#### **About Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center**

Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center (FIAC) has been fighting for the American dream since its founding in 1996. One of the nation's largest non-profit immigration law firms, FIAC represents vulnerable immigrants at no charge. This direct service work informs its broader policy work. FIAC influences national policy; successfully litigates or otherwise challenges patterns of abuse; and educates the public about the impact immigration laws and directives have on our communities. FIAC is dedicated to protecting and promoting the basic rights of immigrants.

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