



Laura Raymond <haitideportationsletters@gmail.com>

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## Refugees International's comments on US proposed policy on resumed removals to Haiti

1 message

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Melanie Teff <melanie@refugeesinternational.org>  
To: haitipolicycomments@dhs.gov  
Cc: Felicia\_Escobar@who.eop.gov, comments@whitehouse.gov

Wed, Mar 16, 2011 at 7:05 PM

Dear Sir/Madam,

Refugees International is writing to express its deep concern about the proposed ICE policy for resumed removals to Haiti.

Refugees International conducted a research mission to Haiti in September 2010 to assess the conditions for people displaced by the earthquake of January 2011. Please find the link to our field report below:  
<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/policy/field-report/haiti-still-trapped-emergency-phase> <<http://mail.refintl.org/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.refugeesinternational.org/policy/field-report/haiti-still-trapped-emergency-phase>>

Our field report sets out many of the extreme difficulties still being faced by those displaced by the earthquake. It was written prior to the cholera outbreak and political violence surrounding the elections, so many of the conditions described in the report have in fact deteriorated since September.

We submit that this is not the time for the US to resume deportations to Haiti, particularly since there is no plan in place for reintegration of deportees and many of them have ended up living in already overcrowded displacement camps in inhumane conditions. The return of deportees at this time of humanitarian crisis in Haiti exacerbates the problems that the country is facing and distracts the Haitian authorities from the vital task of improving the conditions of those already living in the displacement camps and the enormous task of reconstruction. The death of at least one of the deportees from the US from cholera days after his deportation in January 2011 highlights the humanitarian reasons for not pursuing this policy at this time.

Further the proposed policy does not specify which crimes would make a Haitian national subject to deportation, and many of the Haitians deported in January 2011 had been convicted of offences that carried quite short sentences. There are no exceptions laid out in the proposed policy for particularly vulnerable groups who would have even greater difficulties in surviving back in Haiti.

Refugees International is also concerned about the impact that this proposed policy will have on the policies of other countries in the region that are currently hosting Haitians. In particular, the Dominican Republic hosts a large number of Haitians, and it has now lifted its moratorium on deportations. The Dominican Republic is now conducting deportations to Haiti without any due process, separating families, deporting unaccompanied children, failing to inform Haitian consular authorities of the deportations, and deporting people at night. US attempts to press the Dominican authorities to comply with international human rights standards in its treatment of Haitian nationals and people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic are being undermined by this change in US policy on removals to Haiti.

We urge the US Government to consider alternatives to detention, such as orders of supervision, in place of deportation to Haiti at this time.

Yours faithfully,

Melanie Teff  
Senior advocate  
Refugees International