

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2024

Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis:

We write to express our concern about the potential mass migration from Haiti to Florida. To curb the mass migration of Haitians desperately fleeing Haiti, we must address the root cause of the migration.

Life in Haiti is unfathomable. At least 80% of the country's capital, Port-au-Prince, is under the control of the criminal gangs.¹ Last year alone, there were nearly 5,000 murders, 2,000 kidnappings², and more than 310,000 people who had been internally displaced.³ Gangs have weaponized sexual violence against women and young girls and have threatened to start a civil war.⁴ Approximately 1.4 million Haitians are nearing famine.⁵ Finally, about 4,000 gang members were freed from Haitian jails during a mass jailbreak.⁶ These horrendous conditions are what is driving Haitians to flee their homes.

The crisis in Haiti has direct national security implications for the U.S. and has drawn a strong response from the Biden-Harris Administration. Specifically, the administration supported the establishment of a Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission, under Kenya's leadership, to pave the way for Haitian self-determination and security.⁷ Kenya will be supported by nations

¹ Associated Press, *Gangs in Haiti Try to Seize Control of Main Airport in the Newest Attack on Government Sites*, Politico (Mar. 4, 2024) <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/03/04/gangs-in-haiti-try-to-seize-control-of-main-airport-in-newest-attack-on-government-sites-00144796>.

² U.N. Integrated Office in Haiti — Report of the Secretary General, (January 15, 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/united-nations-integrated-office-haiti-report-secretary-general-s202462-enarruzh>.

³ International Organization for Migration, *Haiti: More than 60% of forced displacements happened in 2023, a year of growing brutality*, (January 25, 2024) <https://rosanjose.iom.int/en/news/haiti-more-60-forced-displacements-happened-2023-year-growing-brutality>

⁴ United Nations, *Haiti: Human rights deteriorating as gang violence spreads*, (February 9, 2024), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146407>

⁵ United Nations, *Chaos across Haiti amid high risk of famine*, (March 12, 2024) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147502>

⁶ Sam Meredith, *Haiti declares state of emergency after armed gangs storm two of the country's largest prisons*, CNBC, (March 4, 2024) <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/03/04/haiti-declares-state-of-emergency-amid-double-jailbreak-gang-violence.html>

⁷ Statement by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on UN Security Council Resolution Authorizing a Multinational Security Support Mission for Haiti, (October 2, 2023) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/10/02/statement-by-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-on-un-security-council-resolution-authorizing-a-multinational-security-support-mission-for-haiti/>

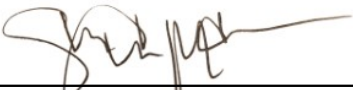
such as Canada, Germany, Spain, France, Jamaica, and Benin.⁸ In short, the MSS seeks to address the very insecurity that is causing Haitians to flee Haiti. However, the MSS cannot deploy to Haiti until the U.S. provides the funds it committed to support the mission.

Unfortunately, since October, Republicans in Congress have blocked funding for the MSS.⁹ The root cause of the mass migration is the insecurity in Haiti, and the only way to effectively prevent it is to get the MSS on the ground in Haiti.


We therefore urge you to join us in calling on Republicans in Congress to release their months-long hold on funds for the MSS. Every minute we refuse to provide the promised funds, the Haitian people suffer, and the security of Florida is threatened.

We look forward to working with you to help keep the Haitian people safe and Florida secure.


Sincerely,




Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress

⁸ Statement by Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield on the UN Security Council Press Statement on Haiti, (March 11, 2024) <https://usun.usmission.gov/statement-by-ambassador-linda-thomas-greenfield-on-the-un-security-council-press-statement-on-haiti/>

⁹ Michael Wilner and Max Greenwood, *White House warns Haiti force can't deploy until Republicans release funds*, Miami Herald, (March 7, 2024) <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/article286395655.html>

Lois Frankel

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