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H.E. Mrs. Linda Thomas-Greenfield,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative,
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

29 April 2021

Excellency,

As United Nations representatives of congregations of Catholic Sisters, Brothers, priests and partners in mission, many of whom have active ministries in Haiti, we write to express our deep concern over the rapidly escalating unrest in the Republic, and to seek your support in facilitating a response that prioritizes the safety, well-being, and freedom of the Haitian people. We have been alerted to the increasingly volatile situation on the ground by our colleagues in the Conference of Religious in Haiti and several of our ministry partners there. Over the last few weeks, we have been in close communication with them in order to listen to the experience of the Haitian people and to gain deeper insight into the complex and evolving circumstances with which they are grappling.

Here is what we are hearing...

The number one concern expressed by our mission partners in Haiti is security. People are living with the constant threat of random acts of violence – daily kidnappings, killings, rapes, and other forms of intimidation. They are avoiding traversing the streets –even to attend to daily needs– for fear that they will not return home alive.

There is no protection for citizens and no real governance of the country. With more than two thirds of the parliament dissolved, dictatorial rule by decree having ensued, the closure of the judiciary and tribunals, and rampant police corruption, no one is working for the safety and well-being of the people. Haiti is in a state of utter chaos, the trajectory of which the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince has described as “a descent into hell.”

Earlier this month, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Haiti issued a long statement on the unrest and violence in Haiti. One sentence seems to capture the essence of what Haitians are experiencing on a daily basis. It reads: “...The country is at the edge of an explosion. The daily life of the people is death, assassinations, impunity and insecurity. Discontent is everywhere, in almost all areas.”

Our Haitian colleagues have expressed very clearly that, **given the current state of affairs, free and fair elections are impossible at this time.** The insistence of the United States and other members of the international community on expeditious conduct of elections is incompatible with what Haitians are experiencing on a daily basis. They know that free, fair,

and transparent elections cannot possibly occur amid such fear, violence, and corruption.

Addressing the violence and restoring public safety is paramount, and a prerequisite, to holding any referendum or elections. Haitians urge the international community to recognize this reality.

Civil society and religious leaders have been advocating for Haiti to have a **national dialogue on constitutional reform**. To achieve sustainable political progress for the Republic, such a dialogue must bring all sectors to the table and secure a concrete commitment to principles and practices of good governance. As one of our partners voiced, “Haitians are victimized people who want to be actors.” Their capacity for leadership is strong, and their participation is essential.

Haitians are suffering violence on all levels. Their very lives are at risk. We call on the international community to stand in solidarity and work in partnership with the Haitian people to help mediate a process that will restore their safety and well-being. Only when the primacy of public safety and dialogue have been recognized and addressed will any electoral process ultimately allow them to move forward as a nation.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, **at this time of transition to a new US ambassador to Haiti, the Haitian people hope that the** Biden-Harris administration appoints an ambassador who understands the country, its history, culture, current state of affairs, and its many needs and aspirations – someone who can truly work with the people of Haiti to bring their nation’s true potential to fruition.

We also request that members of the Security Council hold an Arria-formula meeting to address the complex nature of Haiti’s struggles and concerns at this time, while taking into account its long history of instability, injustice, inequality, and poverty. We believe this hearing format would be well-suited to meeting the urgent need for the Security Council to hear directly from citizens and civil society organizations on the ground in Haiti.

We would like to **request an opportunity to meet with you (in the first half of May if possible) in order to address the concerns and recommendations above in greater detail.** Please let us know at your earliest convenience when you might be available to speak with us, either in-person or virtually. We can also arrange for you to hear directly from some of our partners in Haiti.

We are grateful for your attention and consideration and look forward to working alongside you for a good outcome for Haiti. Please contact us at: info@jcor2030.org.

Sincerely,

The following members and partners of the Justice Coalition of Religious:

Sheila Smith, RSCJ, Casa Generalizia della Societa del Sacro Cuore
Catherine Prendergast, DC, Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
James Claffey, Congregation of the Mission
Mary Patricia Flattery, CND, Congregation of Notre Dame
Winifred Doherty, RGS, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
Frank McCann, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
Barbara Bozak, CSJ, Congregations of St. Joseph
Durstynne Farnan, OP, Dominican Leadership Conference
Kevin Cawley, CFC, Edmund Rice International
Rohan Dominic, CMF, Fondazione Proclade Internazionale-Onlus
Cynthia Mathew, CJ, and Janet Palafox, IBVM, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Loreto Generalate

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Teresa Kotturan, SCN, Sisters of Charity Federation
Amarachi Grace Ezeonu, SND, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Mary Jane Caspillo, MMS, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries
Jean Quinn, DW, UNANIMA International
Marides Santos, SSpS, and Paulus Rahmat, SVD, VIVAT International

Cc: H.E. Mr. Robert Keith Rae, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations
H.E. Mr. José Alfonso Blanco Conde, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the
United Nations
H.E. Mr. Nicolas de Riviere, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations
H.E. Mr. Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramirez, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations
H.E. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the
United Nations