

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

May 5, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20522

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to you with regard to the deteriorating security conditions in Haiti and urge you to prioritize efforts to help stabilize its security situation. The State Department must send a clear message that the United States continues to stand in support of a peaceful and democratic transition in Haiti. Therefore, we implore your leadership in supporting a safe environment for the Haitian people that will ultimately define the administration's priority to help secure a stable ally in the Caribbean.

We represent many Haitian-American families throughout hard-working communities that are very concerned with the ongoing political instability and the increasing gang violence in their home country. Many of our constituents have families and businesses in Haiti and are unable to travel due to the prevalence of violence, especially with the increase in kidnappings. American businesses operating in Haiti have communicated that the situation is so dire that they are looking at moving their business outside of Haiti. Recently, the international charity, Doctors Without Borders, announced it was suspending operations in Port-au-Prince due to gang violence. If left unchecked, the mass departure of U.S. and international businesses and humanitarian organizations could drastically worsen Haiti's already dire economic straits.

According to human rights organizations, five to ten people are abducted every day in Haiti. There were 225 kidnappings in the first three months of 2022. In February, Helen La Lime, the Special Representative of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti stated that gang violence "continues to plunge major urban centers into lawlessness and grief. Criminal armed groups have a strong hold on the economic and social lives of millions. Their indiscriminate use of abduction, murder, as well as sexual and gender-based violence, as a means to terrorize local populations in the fight to extend their territorial control is particularly abhorrent."

We commend the administration's recent efforts to help Haiti, including the enactment of the *Haiti Development, Accountability, and Institutional Transparency Initiative Act*, the inclusion of Haiti as a priority country in the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability that was required by the *Global Fragility Act of 2019* and the reprogramming of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds to support citizen security and law enforcement in Haiti. However, more must be done.

Therefore, we respectfully request that funds allocated to security programs in the Western Hemisphere in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022* (Public Law 117-103), are geared to prioritize projects that will strengthen the Haitian National Police and reinforce the capacity of their Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) unit in support of an Anti-Gang task force. In order to increase the chances of achieving a positive outcome, we encourage you to partner and collaborate with our international allies, such as Canada, the Dominican Republic, and Brazil.

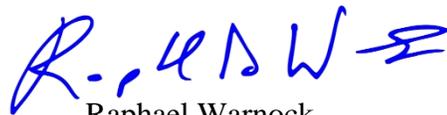
As the two oldest independent Republics in the Western Hemisphere, the United States and Haiti share a unique bond and are inextricably linked culturally and economically. It is imperative for U.S. national interests to ensure that Haiti becomes a stable and democratic neighbor.

We thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Raphael Warnock
U.S. Senator