

*Haitian Refugee Center
Sant Refijie Ayisyin, Inc.*

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September 30, 1991

William P. Barr,
Acting Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
10th Street & Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Barr:

This letter is written to urge you to grant temporary protected status to Haitian nationals presently in the United States whose deportation is imminent, until we can be assured the political situation in Haiti is stable.

Early this morning we learned that there has been an attempted coup in Haiti. To the best of our knowledge, Aristide is in hiding and dozens of innocent Haitians have been shot and killed by members of the army. Aristide's whereabouts is not known at this time.

Aristide's life has been seriously threatened on numerous occasions since he took power. Unquestionably, the situation in Haiti is volatile; Aristide is clearly not in control of the government. Given recent events in Haiti and that country's political past, one must conclude that the lives of innocent Haitian nationals are now very much at risk.

Until Haiti passes this crisis and confidence in its government is restored, it is unconscionable to forcefully return Haitians to their country. We believe that granting Haitian nationals in the U.S. temporary protected status is a vital precautionary measure to ensure that no one's life is needlessly jeopardized.

Under the immigration reform bill which recently passed, you have the authority to provide a temporary safe haven in the U.S. for individuals of a foreign state providing there exist "extraordinary and temporary conditions in the foreign state that prevent aliens who are nationals from returning safely." INA §244A, 8 USC §1254A. We believe such conditions currently exist in Haiti.

Salvadoreans have been granted the temporary protected status we are now requesting for Haitians. Several other groups, including Poles, Cubans, Ethiopians, Ugandans, Lebanese, and Nicaraguans have had their deportation suspended by our government in the past. It is fervently hoped that in the interest of fairness and justice, Haitians too will finally be offered protection by our government.

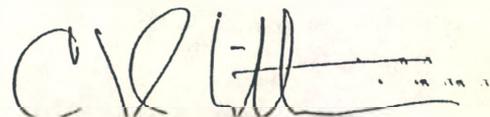
The United States played a constructive role in ensuring democratic elections in Haiti this past December and U.S. Ambassador Alvin Adams has been an outspoken advocate for positive change in Haiti. Our support for democracy in Haiti should be every bit as important as our support for democracy in other nations struggling for change. Now is the time to extend that support to include protection to Haitians currently in the U.S. who fear returning to their country until conditions stabilize.

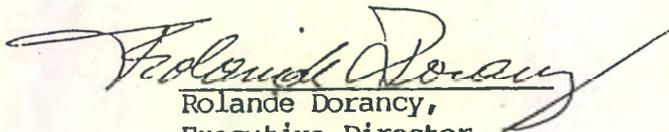
Many of our clients who fled Haiti for political reasons, while desperately hoping to eventually return to Haiti for good, are very fearful of returning at this time. These individuals know all too well how dangerous the political situation in Haiti is today. They know that those who profited under the deposed Duvalier dictatorship and who long for a continuance of its aristocratic ways are seriously attempting to take over.

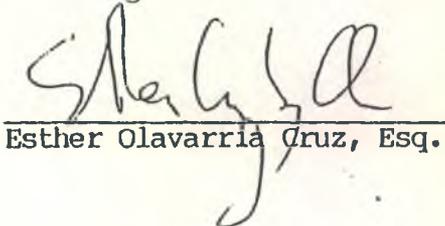
Despite the political upheaval in Haiti over the years, Haitians have never been extended the protection we ask of you at this time. We therefore urge you, in keeping with our nation's humanitarian traditions, to recognize the current political upheaval in Haiti and to grant the Haitians residing in the United States temporary protected status.

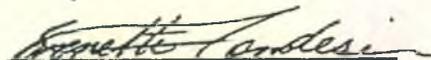
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Cheryl Little, Esq.


Rolande Dorancy,
Executive Director


Esther Olavarria Cruz, Esq.


Evenette Mondesir, Esq.