

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

As members of the House Appropriations Committee, we write to request that you intensify U.S. diplomatic attention to address the ongoing crisis in Haiti and alleviate its negative impact on the Dominican Republic.

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, the term of the assassinated president Jovenel Moïse expired, which many fear will create a power vacuum and a hostile political environment in Haiti. In our view, preventing the collapse of Haitian institutions requires coordinated, international and diplomatic support. This support must be committed to ending gang violence, strengthening civil society, rebuilding democratic institutions, and recovering from the devastation caused by natural disasters, political upheaval, and debilitating poverty.

We are profoundly concerned by the mounting challenges facing Haiti in the wake of several crises, and by the impact on its neighbor the Dominican Republic. Haiti's institutions are under severe stress, and its people are suffering widespread civil unrest, daily crime and gang violence, kidnappings, inadequate health care, and shortages of necessities such as food, medicines, and fuel. The shortages of essential goods that Haiti is experiencing would be worse were it not for the efforts of Dominican authorities to keep the border secure, while remaining open to legitimate commerce. We have been informed that both Haitian and Dominican authorities have asked for help in protecting their shared border by accommodating the orderly transportation of goods, cross-border commerce and travel, and the interdiction of trafficking of contraband and persons, which will enhance the internal security of both countries.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask, within all applicable rules and regulations, that you work closely with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and other relevant agencies in assessing the current capabilities of Haiti's border patrol, customs, and security agencies. We also welcome your recommendations on how to enhance U.S. training, and technical and material support to our Haitian and Dominican counterparts. Furthermore, we request an assessment of how we can help both countries improve monitoring and enforcement capabilities on land and maritime borders.

Additionally, we would note that the House-passed State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2022 specifically designates funds to help both countries address

burdens on the healthcare system. We will continue to work on ways to address these issues in the Fiscal Year 2023 bill.

It is crucial that we work with others in the international community to ensure that Haiti emerges from the many crises that it has endured, and that we assist in stabilizing this important region in our hemisphere. We believe that focusing on securing international support for Haiti, helping to stabilize the border, and continuing to assist both Haiti and the Dominican Republic in continuing to provide their life-saving humanitarian services, are all critical parts of resolving these current challenges.

We thank you for your attention to this matter of utmost importance.

Sincerely,



Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress