March 9, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As 709 religious leaders and 99 faith-based organizations across the United States, representing diverse faith traditions and beliefs, we write to express our deep concern about the targeted detention and deportation of Black migrants, and the expulsions of Haitians at the border under policies carried over from the previous administration, especially as we celebrated Black History Month. With every deportation and expulsion flight, we are placing lives at risk and abdicating from our moral and legal obligations to provide protection. We urge you to take immediate action to save Black migrants' lives by exercising your authority to halt deportation flights and stop expelling Haitians under Title 42.

We welcomed and celebrated President Biden’s January 21, 2021, Executive Order and Acting Secretary of DHS Pekoske’s memo directing ICE to comply with a 100-day moratorium on deportations and setting a meaningful shift in enforcement priorities. These actions send a message that we are turning a page, moving away from policies born of racism and xenophobia that violate migrants’ rights, toward a human-centered approach that honors the dignity of all people. We know that Black migrants are disproportionately locked up in our immigration jails, abused, and forced out of the country with little to no access to justice. The Biden administration’s shift in immigration priorities and imposing a 100-day moratorium on deportations gave those we care for a reprieve from being sent to countries they do not know, or where their lives are in danger.

We are deeply dismayed that expulsions and deportation flights have not ceased. Lawfully, DHS can act to right a preventable wrong and immediately stop all deportation and expulsion flights that are scheduled to go to Haiti, Jamaica, Cameroon, Angola, and to other unstable nations. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) flights are death flights and the individuals that have been sent back to Haiti, Somalia, Cameroon, Mauritania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among other nations, have had their human, legal, and civil rights violated. The Guardian spoke to some migrants brutally mistreated by ICE:

Cameroonian asylum seekers who they said were tortured by being forced to approve their own deportations. The asylum seekers described being forced to the floor and having their fingers inked and pressed on to deportation documents they had refused to sign.

The recent halt of a deportation flight to Africa, in recognition of the need to investigate serious allegations of coercion and abuse from immigrants slated for deportation, was welcomed. However, deportations and expulsions to Jamaica, Haiti, and other unstable nations continue. The Miami Herald reports that the Biden Administration is in the process of deporting 1,800 Haitians, including families with children.

Continuing these policies is reprehensible. The clear targeting and prioritization of Black migrants for deportation after the Biden Administration has also made a point of imbuing U.S. government policies with racial equity—and during Black History Month—makes this decision all the more incomprehensible.

Our diverse faith traditions teach us the importance of not just welcoming, but also caring for, the most vulnerable people living among us. Jewish tradition calls on us to welcome the stranger, to treat immigrants fairly, and to empathize with the widow, the stranger, and the orphan because we ourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt.

In "A Prayer for Cameroon and the Cameroonian People," Valery Nodem of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) writes:
Lord our God, we raise our voices to you and pray for your people affected by the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. Violence in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon over the past few years has left families in mourning, destroyed communities, limited access to education for hundreds of thousands of young people, and plunged millions of people into despair….Those who have managed to flee the violence to seek refuge, asylum and security in the United States are brutally pushed back and sent back to Cameroon. Protect those who have been…sent back to the same crisis, we pray. Amen.

Protect those who have been sent back, and stop expulsions and deportations. This is the moral, ethical, and humane thing to do.

Sincerely,

Faith Organizations
Adorers of the Blood of Christ, US Region
Adrian Dominican Sisters
Alianza Americas
Amos Project
Associate, Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity
Beyond Borders
Bridges Faith Initiative
Caminando Juntos - Presentation Sisters Hispanic Ministry
Central Presbyterian Church
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America
Christ the Servant Catholic Church, Peace and Justice Committee
Church of the Holy Spirit
Church World Service
Congregation of St. Joseph
Congregation of the Mission
Crossing Borders - Dubuque
Cuyahoga County Progressive Caucus
Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Denver Presbyterian Mission & Ministry Work Group
Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Dominican Family
Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (ENEJ)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Faith Commons
Faith Communities Organized for Sanctuary
Faith in Public Life Ohio
Faiths for Safe Water
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY
Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Great Lakes Pioneers Detroit
Grey Nun of the Sacred Heart
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Hyattsville Mennonite Church
Immaculate Heart of Mary
Illinois Women Religious against Human Trafficking
Immaculate Heart Community
Indivisible CLE
Jewish Voice for Peace of Chicago
Journey With Migrants Mission Partnership from Denver Presbytery
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church
Main Street Congregational Church UCC
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity
NACCE-Roosevelt-Freeport Church of Christ
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Ohio Immigrant Alliance
Order of Saint Francis
Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church
Pax Christi Austin
Peace Action Group of Plymouth Church Seattle
Peacemaking Committee at MSPC
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Plymouth Church Welcoming Migrants Committee
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
Presbytery of the Pacific
Priests of the Sacred Heart
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator
Quixote Center
RDC
School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic Midwest Province
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of Mercy Solidarity Committee
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA
Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange County
Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood, NY
Sisters of the Holy Names, USON Leadership Team
Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate
Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sisters of the Presentation
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet LA Province
St. Camillus
St. Francis Xavier RC Church, New York
St. Matthew Catholic Church
The Church of the Good Shepherd
The Hat Project
The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
Touro Synagogue
Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA)
Uncage and Reunite Families Coalition
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association
Unitarian Universalist Church Nashua
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ
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Clare Duffy, Holy Spirit Catholic Church

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Sister Assunta Riley, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
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Maureen O'Meara, Miami Valley UU Fellowship
Lydia Clista
Gary Benjamin
Joan Hilton
Dr. Jill Johnson
Joseph Soza
Janet Futrell, Lower Miami Church of the Brethren
Sheilamarie Tobbe, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland
Sister Jacquelyn Gusdane, Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States
William Ross, Miami Valley Unitarian Univers
Karen Hartman
Jo Marie Chrosniak, HM
Michael Smalz
Sister Sharon Havelak, Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania
Brittnee Pankey Qualls
Teresa Phillips
Rev. James Nelson, Christ UCC, Orrville
Sister Marilyn Gottemoeller, Sisters of Mercy
Steve Simmons
John Keenan

Oregon
Ms. Sarah Rohrs, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem
Rev. Jennifer L. Gingerich, Salem Mennonite Church
Sister Phyllis Jaszkowiak, Sisters of the Holy Names
The Rev. Cecil Prescod, Ainsworth United Church of Christ
Roberta K. Smith
Doug Christiansen, Holy Trinity Catholic Parish
Kaye Exo, Bridgeport UCC, Portland OR
Susan Heath
Ms. Sarah Deumling
Debi Stromberg, Creator Lutheran & SE Portland Youth Collective
Nancy Kyle, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis
Linda Patrick
Ms. Kathleen Mitchell
Gary LaVenture
Debbie Pauls
Therese Fenzl
Provincial Leadership Team Kathleen Cordes, SHCJ
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Linda Clark
Marjorie Nafziger
Interim Music Director Virginia Feldman
Kenneth Crouse, First Congregational UCC
Judy Kushner, Christ Our Light Church

Pennsylvania
Rev. Sandra Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Rev. Paul Hagedorn, Tabernacle Lutheran Church
Ms. Irene Lucas, Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church
Dr. Nadine Anderson
Jeff McLaughlin, Presbyterian (PCUSA)
Sister Bridget Connor, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Sister Joyce Bell, IHM Social Justice Coordinator
Layperson Benita Campbell
Dr. Carla Campbell, Unitarian Society of Germantown
Sister Mary Justice Przybocki, Felician Sisters of North America
Pat Lupo, OSB, Benedictine Sisters of Erie
Sister Mary Kennedy, OSF Srs. of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Rev. Thomas Lang
Brian Joye, Catholic Congregation
Rev. Sandra Mackie
Ruth Anne Bryant
Sister Anna Marie Lesutis, Sisters of Mercy
Jasper Perry-Anderson
Margarita Rose
Mary McKenna, Holy Cross Parish, Philadelphia
Michelle Dugan, Society of the Holy Child Jesus
Ms. Vonny Eckman, United Church of Christ
William Calhoon
Sister Hollis Ann Chenery, Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary
Sister Julia C. Lanigan, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Sister Jeanette Bussen, Sisters of St. Joseph
Marianne Kitzmiller, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Pat Connolly
Sister Mary McMahon, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Barbara Brigham, Medical Mission Sisters
Anna Marie Lesutis, Sisters of Mercy
Social Justice Coordinator Betsy Wiest
Danat Brysch, Felician Sisters
Sister Suzanne Susany, Sisters of St Francis of the Neumann Communities
Rev. Richard Sindall, Presbyterian Church USA
Maria Ceci, Pastoral
Bernice Stadler, St. John Neumann Church
Rev. Ruth Sheets
Sister Anne Zita Crudden, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Nancy Shane
Sister Mary, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart

South Dakota
Andrine Stricherz
Fr. Ed Witt SJ

Texas
Sister Rose Gansle, Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament
Sister Sharon Altendorf, Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the BVM US Province
Ms. Jane Van Praag
Sister Margery Race, Dominican
Mrs. Renee Stern, Congregation Brith Shalom
Sister Rosemarie Goins, Felician Franciscan Sisters of North America
Thomas Nieland, UUFHC
Rebecca Adams
Sister JT Dwyer, Daughters of Charity
Sister Regina Hlavac, Daughters of Charity
Sister Beatrice Donnellan, Sisters of the Holy Spirit
Sister Peggy Kenny
Geraldine Klein
Leadership Team Member Sister Miriam Mitchell, Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate
Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese
Rev. Nicole Crouch, United Methodist Church
Linda Reid
Rabbi Nancy Kasten, Faith Commons
Judith McCullough, Dominican Family
Kay Arnold, Pax Christi Austin
Terry Burton, Interfaith Welcome Coalition
Leslie Russell, Kessler Park United Methodist Church
Dr. Susan Baxley, Kessler Park United Methodist Church
Sister Margaret Nealon, Sisters of the Holy Spirit
Sister Rosaleen Harold

Tennessee
Jo Hendricks, OPA Dominican Sisters & Associates of Peace
Sister Margaret Turk, RSM Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Vermont
The Venerable Catherine Cooke, Cathedral Church of St. Paul- Episcopal
William Ramsey

Virginia
Mr. Bill Barbieri, Our Lady Queen of Peace
The Reverend Gene Anderson, Episcopalian
Mrs. Marynell Bryant, Rock Spring United Church of Christ
DeeDee Tostanoski, Our Lady Queen of Peace
Ms. Mary Campbell, Capital Caring
Terry Grogan
Coordinator John Horejsi, Roman Catholic
George Horey, Roman Catholic
Celeste Kearney, Quixote Center
Mrs. Joan Mahal
Dr. Mary Susan Carlson, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church Haiti Committee
Rev. Deacon Duff G. Eakes, United States Old Catholic Church COS
Archer Heinzen

Washington
Ms. Sherry Bupp, St. Louise Catholic Parish, Bellevue, WA
Sister Judith Desmarais, Sisters of Providence
Pastor Anne, Lutheran Church in the San Juans
Rev. Ashley Birk, First Presbyterian Church
Miss Rachel Williams, Mercer Creek
Ms. Shary B, Christ Our Hope Seattle
Dr. Joanne and Jim Cortese, Faith Action Network WA
Sister Judith George, Catholic Sister
Helen Stoll, Bethany Lutheran Church Bainbridge Island WA
Karen Curry
Lorraine Johnson, Gethsemane Lutheran
Religious Sister Charlyne Brown, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary
Alice Woldt, Trinity United Methodist Church; Faith Action Network
Mr. Robert Brown
Ann Hostler
Donna L. Chappell, SP
Ellen Newell
Sister Mary Rita Rohde
Patrick Henry
Pastor Rachel Williams, Mercer Creek Church
Sherry Bupp
Michael Betz, Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship
Judith Desmarais, Sister of Providence
Sister Pat Millen, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Wisconsin
Rev. Jeffrey Dodson, First Congregational Church UCC
Sister Margaret Ann Arnold, School Sisters of St. Francis
Sister Janet Petersen, School Sisters of Saint Francis
Sister Nina Shephard, FSPA
Sister Maureen McDonnell
Sister Christa Cunningham, OP, Dominican Sisters
Rev. Glenn A. Danz, United Church of Christ
Tomorrow River Conference Representative Phyllis Christie, Good Shepherd Lutheran
Lois Aceto, Sisters of St. Dominic Racine
Ms. Deb Martin
Patricia Belongie
Cathy Peterson
Helen Malcheski
Sister Nancy Hansen, School Sister of St. Francis
Otto Seifert, Pax Christi
Rev. Gene Donahue, SJ
Joyce Frohn
Sister Mariluta Lorenz, SSSF
Rev. Joseph Mattern, Casa Esther Catholic Worker
Rev. Sonja Ingebritsen, Community of Hope UCC
Sister Margaret Hansknecht
Rev. Valerie Showalter
Sister Mary Frances Maher, Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity
Jan Gregorcich, SSND
Judith Russell
Sister Julia Rice, School Sister of St. Francis
Sister Ruth Battaglia, CSA
Ann Lacy, Plymouth United Church of Christ, Madison, WI
Pastor Frederick Trost, United Church of Christ
Sister Angela Behen, Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Ann Prophett
Donna Veatch, Wisconsin United Methodist Church
Carol Martell
Rheda Schultz, Plymouth UCC Madison WI
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Connie Molbeck
Sister Helen Malcheski
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**Wyoming**
Rev. Michelina Laws, PC(USA)