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# Statement by Secretary Johnson Concerning His Directive to Resume Regular Removals to Haiti

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Following the tragic January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) temporarily ceased removing Haitian nationals to Haiti. On April 1, 2011, ICE announced the resumption of removals on a limited basis of Haitians with final orders of removal and convicted of a serious crime, or who posed a national security threat. Since that time, the situation in Haiti has improved sufficiently to permit the U.S. government to remove Haitian nationals on a more regular basis, consistent with the practice for nationals from other nations.

Yesterday I directed that, effective immediately, enforcement decisions with respect to Haitian nationals should be, consistent standard practice, guided by my memorandum dated November 20, 2014, "Policies for the Apprehension,

AILA Doc. No. 16092260. (Posted 9/22/16)

Detention and Removal of Undocumented Immigrants.”

These policies prioritize the removal of convicted felons, individuals convicted of significant or multiple misdemeanors, and individuals apprehended at or between ports of entry while attempting to unlawfully enter the United States.

Consistent with law, individuals who express a fear of return to Haiti will be screened by a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) asylum officer to determine whether they possess a credible fear of persecution or torture. Those determined to have a credible fear will be referred to immigration court for removal proceedings where they may apply for asylum or other forms of relief.

Haitian nationals currently covered by Temporary Protected Status are unaffected by this change in policy. Specifically, those Haitian nationals who have been continuously residing in the United States since January 12, 2011 and currently hold TPS may remain in the United States and are not subject to removal. These TPS beneficiaries also remain eligible for employment authorization. TPS for Haitian nationals has been extended through July 22, 2017.

DHS will continue to promote safe, orderly avenues for Haitian nationals seeking to immigrate to the United States, including through Haitian Family Reunification Parole, which allows certain beneficiaries of approved family-based petitions to be paroled into the United States up to two years before their visa priority date becomes current.

DHS and the Department of State are working with the Government of Haiti and other key partners to resume removals in as humane and minimally disruptive a manner as possible.

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