

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2024

Ms. Ur Mendoza Jaddou
Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Department of Homeland Security
5900 Capital Gateway Dr
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Dear Director Jaddou,

Due to the increasingly dangerous security situation in Haiti, we are writing to urge the Biden administration to issue individual emergency humanitarian parole status for a limited number of pre-screened and pre-approved Haitian orphan children into the United States, to be united with their adoptive families.

These orphans and their adoptive parents have done everything necessary to create the conditions for their legal entry into the United States. However, they are unable to obtain the final documentation required for travel – Haitian Passports and Haitian Travel Authorization letters – due to the central government's institutional collapse and the ongoing mass civil unrest in the capital Port-au-Prince.

Our stakeholder engagement indicates that there are as many as 101 children in Haiti matched to U.S. families who fit the description and require emergency humanitarian parole status to enter the United States without a Haitian passport. To be clear, these children are not refugees, but rather the legal family members of American citizens, and we urge your consideration to expedite parole authority for this pressing issue impacting families in our districts.

As you know, these potential adoptee families for Haitian orphans have already undergone a rigorous screening process and have obtained:

- A USCIS approved Form I-800A, Application for Determination of Suitability to Adopt a Child from a Hague Adoption Convention
- A USCIS approved Form I-800 (Petition to Classify Convention Adoptee as an Immediate Relative) - effective approval from the U.S. to proceed with the adoption.
- A completed application with the Haitian adoption authority l'Institut du Bien-Etre Social et de Recherches (“IBESR”) to adopt and be matched with a child.¹

While the next step for these families is to obtain a U.S. Immigrant Visa for the child by submitting a visa application to the consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Port au-Prince, this requires the orphan adoptee to have a Haitian Passport and Haitian Travel Authorization letter (exit letter) from the IBESR. Those documents are impossible to obtain given the current security environment in Haiti and the rapid deterioration of the rule of law in Port-au-Prince. We have engaged with stakeholders on the ground who report that the Haitian Ministry of Internal Affairs building has been severely burned and that the IBESR has been vandalized and looted. We have also received notification that the IBESR has ceased normal operating activity.

There is precedent for issuing emergency humanitarian parole status in the specific context of adoptions from Haiti. In 2010, the Department of Homeland Security issued targeted and limited emergency humanitarian parole on a case-by-case basis after the Haiti earthquake. It applied towards two groups of children:

¹ This typically includes a packet of documents on the child to the family and to USCIS, including a birth certificate, relinquishment papers, a physical exam, court documents, and parental death certificates if applicable.

- Children who were legally confirmed as orphans eligible for intercountry adoption by the Government of Haiti and were being adopted by U.S. citizens, and possessed the following:
 - o Full and final Haitian adoption decree
 - o Government of Haiti custody grant to prospective adoptive parents for emigration and adoption
 - o Notice of Approval Form I-600A, Application for Advance Processing of an Orphan Petition
- Children who were previously identified by an adoption service provider or facilitator as eligible for intercountry adoption and were matched to U.S. citizen prospective adoptive parents with these details:
 - o Significant evidence of a relationship between the prospective adoptive parents and the child AND of the parents' intention to complete the adoption
 - o Evidence from Haitian authorities of the child's availability for adoption
 - o Notice of Approval form I-600A, Application for Advance Processing of an Orphan Petition

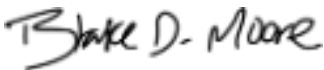
We urge USCIS to replicate the terms of this 2010 decision on emergency parole authority issued on a case-by-case basis as soon as possible, knowing that the U.S. government has a well-established precedent for allowing the entry of pre-screened, pre-approved Haitian orphans of U.S. citizens who lack official documentation.

Consular staff based in Haiti also need to move quickly to process these cases in the event that non-essential diplomatic personnel have to be evacuated from the country.

The longer these orphans linger without a guardian, we believe the likelihood increases that gang members and organized crime syndicates use compromised documents to kidnap these orphans and hold them hostage from their adoptive family in the United States. Images from the recent looting of the IBESR office in Port-au-Prince confirm that confidential information of adoptive parents and children was shared publicly. This puts both the children and their adoptive families in danger.

My colleagues and I call upon the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security to work together on a combined operation to expedite travel for these eligible orphans, who are already legal adoptees of U.S. parents, out of Haiti. Should you need anything from our offices or casework teams, please do not hesitate to contact us.

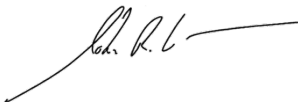
Sincerely,



Blake D. Moore
Member of Congress



Mike Lee
United States Senate



John Curtis
Member of Congress



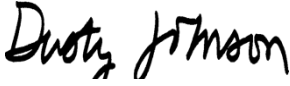
Mitt Romney
United States Senate



Burgess Owens
Member of Congress



Celeste Maloy
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress



Corey Mills
Member of Congress




Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress



Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



Mike Lawler
Member of Congress



Mike Flood
Member of Congress



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

April 26, 2024

The Honorable Blake D. Moore
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Moore:

Thank you for your March 27, 2024 letter to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

In your letter, you urge the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to work together to expedite travel to the United States for Haitian children currently in the process of being adopted by U.S. citizen parents.

USCIS' role in the immigration process for adopted children includes determining suitability and eligibility of prospective adoptive parents and determining eligibility of the child to immigrate to the United States in coordination with DOS. For additional information, visit <https://www.uscis.gov/adoption>.

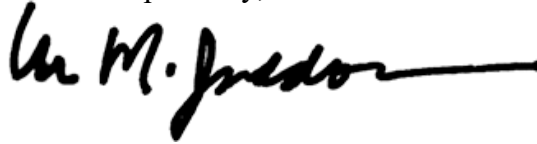
USCIS is actively monitoring the situation in Haiti. In consultation with DOS and other U.S. government partners, USCIS is considering all available options for continuing case processing for certain Haitian children being adopted by U.S. citizens through the Hague Adoption Convention process, which may enable certain adopted children's lawful entry into the United States. As signatories to The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention), the U.S. and Haiti must abide by Hague Convention mandates as well as Haitian and U.S. laws, in considering available options.

We recognize that in 2010, there was a Haiti Orphan Parole Program, as discussed in your letter. We also note, however, that there are many distinctions between the situation in 2010 and the circumstances present today, including that Haiti has since become a party to the Hague Adoption Convention, and there are numerous considerations being examined at this time. As you recognize in your letter, proper handling of the current situation requires coordination across departments, including DOS, DHS, and Department of Health and Human Services. USCIS is working tirelessly with our U.S. government partners to navigate the current circumstances to explore viable outcomes.

The Honorable Blake D. Moore
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Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The cosigners of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director