



Family Action Network Movement, Inc. (FANM)

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September 6, 2019

Prime Minister Hubert Minnis

Sir Cecil Wallace Whitfield Centre

Linda Diane Mackey, Consul General

P O Box CB 10980

Nassau, N.P., The Bahamas

via email primeminister@bahamas.gov.bs

Cc: Bahamian Consulate in Miami: bcgmia@bellsouth.net

Dear Prime Minister Minnis,

Let us first convey our deepest concerns for the devastations caused by Hurricane Dorian, and our deepest sympathies for the loss of lives that threw so many families in mourning. As you know, there is a sizeable Haitian community in the Bahamas. Some have been there for generations and they have contributed to building the Bahamas' infrastructure and thriving communities. Our agency has received several SOS from residents there because they are scared to seek help because of their immigration status. In light of the serious damages caused by Hurricane Dorian, we write to ask that you put a moratorium on all deportations and refrain from asking for work permits when immigrant families seek assistance to protect immigrant communities as the Bahamas prepares for the hurricane relief efforts.

Access to hurricane relief efforts after a natural disaster is a fundamental human right, seeking these services should never lead to detention or deportation. Fear in the Haitian immigrant communities is at an all-time high and, without intervention, will prevent needy families from accessing vital services, including asking for shelter in public facilities, when needed, and protecting or assisting others. In this environment, immigrant residents and their families may not take life-saving steps to go to shelters, and access emergency aid efforts, unless the Bahamas makes specific public assurances that immigration enforcement is suspended. Such assurances are critical to the ongoing safety of all residents during this humanitarian crisis and necessary so that resources can be focused on life-saving activities, preventing the loss of property to the extent possible, and assisting with a speedy recovery of the affected region.

As we unite and mobilize to support the island in this time of grave crisis, we, the undersigned organizations remain confident that you will heed our calls to put a moratorium on all deportations, profiling, and intimidation that will hinder to persons to seek assistance, report crime, and contribute to the rebuilding efforts.

Sincerely,

Marleine Bastien, MSW, LCSW

Executive Director

Family Action Network Movement, FANM



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Supporting Organizations

Ira Kurzban, Immigration Attorney

Kurzban Immigration Sourcebook

Alana Greer, Community Justice Project

Leonie Hermantin, Sant La Neighborhood Center

Isabel Vinent, Florida Immigrant Coalition

Marcia Olivo, Miami Workers Center

Andrea Mercado, New Florida Majority

David McDougal, Miami Climate Alliance

Jonatan Fried, We Count

Resilience Force/ National Guestworkers Alliance

Thomas Kennedy, FLIC Votes

Tessa Painson, Haitian American Community Development Corporation

Archdeacon Jean Fritz Bazin, Episcopal Diocese of S Florida

Bud Conlin, Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees

Stephanie Phadael, Families Rights Network

Rosie Appolon, Bethel Church

Jimmy Mertune and Tina Lorquet, Vwa Ayiti

Brax Tinkler, Power U

Lourdes Villanueva, Redland Christian Migrant Association

Jonathan Alingu, Central Florida Job with Justice

Trenise Bryant, Miami Workers Center

Nancy Metayer, Climate Justice Program Manager, New Florida Majority

Jack Lieberman, 350 South Florida

Progressive Jewish Action

South Florida Labor Community Alliance