



HAITI, HOPE IN ACTION!

Considering the growing logistical challenge to travel in and out of Haiti, we would like to express our solidarity with the Haitian people, where violence, terror, and hunger hold an entire country prisoner. And we embrace with compassion the small Passionist presence there to ensure our unwavering hope, prayers, and support for Fr. Rick Frechette and the medical personnel who work tirelessly helping everyone especially the children in two hospitals, the Saint Damien Children's Hospital, and the Saint Luc Family Hospital, which remain open despite the enormous difficulties in this very dramatic moment.

Tension remains very high in the country, increasingly unstable and dangerous, largely controlled by military gangs, who obtained the resignation of interim Prime Minister Ariel Heny but reject the transition plan proposed by the Caribbean nations and the USA.

Attacks carried out by armed gangs on the country's main prisons and other critical infrastructure allowed gang leaders and other prisoners to escape. It is a continuous escalation of violence; the inhabitants are de facto prisoners of the gangs in the slums or forced to flee from their homes. People have been caught in crossfire, gangs have taken over roads and neighborhoods: burning, killing, raping, taking over schools, threatening, mongering fear in residents thru continued atrocities: i.e. waving decapitated heads in public, burning bodies, gang-raping women in public view.

The impact of this violence on children continues to be of particular concern. In 2023, 167 children were killed and injured by bullets. Some were executed by gangs or so called "self-defense" groups for their suspected support for rivals. The recruitment of children into gangs remained extremely worrisome. It seems as if there is no safety from the violence!

Among this escalation of violence, schools, public services, and local businesses were forced to close; an orphanage run by sisters was told by gangs to evacuate as they would be taking over. Displacement moved thousands into insecure camps on the streets. Many have found shelter with families, but in very crowded conditions.

Fr. Rick and other religious are trying to relocate the displaced to the countryside, away from the violence of the capital and towns. There were over 500 children welcomed into the NPH (Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos) orphanage. Some of them managed to escape from gang violence together with their parents. Others lost their mom or dad in street shootings.

People are unable to get to the market for food and supplies; malnutrition is increasing in children. Infectious disease has been rampant due to unsanitary water and non-serviced sewage canals in Cite Soleil in particular.

We expressed our expectation and hope for the deployment of the Multinational Security Support mission (MSS mission) to Haiti as soon as possible, as it had been requested by Haiti and authorized by the Security Council through resolution in 2023.



There is an urgent need to create security conditions conducive to an inclusive political process, and free and fair elections in Haiti.

And yet, deployment of such a MSS mission to aid the Haitian National Police, led by Kenya with troops pledged by some other countries has been still held up by a court challenge raised in Kenya.

We continue to listen to and learn from our colleagues from like-minded organizations in Haiti whenever it is possible, so that they can provide us grass-root reports and other information. We attempt to keep the issues of Haiti on the front burner and strive to make sure that those who have power at the UN Security Council would hold their feet to the fire. As pope Francis said: *“What would induce anyone, at this stage, to hold on to power only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so?”* (LaudatoSi, n. 57)



We hope that this first, small group of courageous, caring, and creative young men can grow and strengthen our presence and mission in Haiti, delivering hope-oriented ministry to people in need.

Let's kindly assure them and all those who deliver life-saving assistance in Haiti and witness to the wisdom of the Christ Crucified and Risen by our closeness, solidarity, and prayers in this very concerning security situation. Let's offer an hour of prayer for Haiti on the first Wednesdays of the month.

May the vision of saint Paul of the Cross ignite a fire within our hearts. May his spirit enlighten our minds and keep us strongly committed to set a new path toward a brighter and stronger future for Haiti and our Passionist presence in that country.

*MIREKL on behalf of the General Council
as liaison with JPIC world,
work, and wonder*

Ss. Giovanni e Paolo, 18th March 2024

We explore all options to support and assist Fr. Rick in his ministry and service to the people of Haiti.

We keep in prayer our four Haitian students: confr. Diderot Auguste (SCOR), who is studying in El Salvador, and confrs. Samuel Joseph, Adenald Fleury and Daniel Cadet (PAUL), who are studying in the United States. These three students from PAUL were in fact relocated to the USA for their safety and security to provide them a better environment for the Passionist formation: a sense of community, friendship and belonging to the great history and spirituality of the Passionist charism.

**RICHARD
FRECHETTE**

HAITI



Richard Frechette

HAITI

The God of Tough Places,
the Lord of Burnt Men