

Mr. Luis Almagro
Secretary General
of the Organization of the American States (OAS)

Washington, DC

01/27/2022

Mr. Secretary General,

It is with a great sense of duty and urgency, as Haitian citizens and inhabitants of the great collective promise that is the American continent, that we write this Letter to you.

Today, as the aspiration to restore representative democracy in Haiti, “*an indispensable condition for the stability, peace and development of the region*”, is most threatened, the spirit of “*American solidarity and good neighborliness*” on which the OAS is founded is of utmost importance.

We believe it is paramount that the grave intricacies of the regicide against democratically elected President Jovenel Moise, the ensuing instability in Haiti, the arbitrary leadership of Dr. Ariel Henry, and the indispensability of a credible election process be exposed to your office.

Mr. Secretary general, the ramifications of this murder are deep and far-reaching, and they should be well heeded by the members of the Organization you lead, given that « *an act of aggression against one American State, is an act of aggression against all American States* ».

On the morning of July 7th, 2021, while Haiti woke up to the unthinkable, with a palpable sense of shock, terror and disorientation, it was all of America that had collectively been the victim of a brutal crime, of a ruthless violation of the principles we advocate for in this noble Forum.

The assassination of President Moise is beyond a mere — albeit tragic — murder of a *single* Head of State, but rather a potent threat to representative democracy in the entire region, the effects of which will continue to cascade for decades to come and continue to span further and further across the continent, causing increased migrations and accrued porosity to drug and arms trafficking, and provide fertile soil for terrorism.

In the citizenship, places of residence, geographical movements, and places of arrest of the orchestrators and perpetrators of this crime, it is no less than six of the Organization's Member States that are now involved in this case: Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Panama, and the United States.

This multinational dimension removes any limitations of the assassination to the strictly internal jurisdiction of Haiti, and impules full legitimacy for OAS to take a stance without the risk of infringing on national sovereignty, explicit in article 1 of the Charter.

It is our conviction that all Member States have a responsibility to assess the alarming risk facing Haiti today and the dangers it poses to America as a whole if upcoming elections were to be organized by the current Prime Minister.

In its article 2-b, the Charter of the Organization determines an essential purpose of the OAS to be its duty to "*provide for common action on the part of those States in the event of an aggression*".

Considering this, a position and action by the OAS would align with its duty to put into practice the principles on which the Organization is founded and be coherent with its oath of fulfilling regional obligations.

Silence and inaction from the Organization would come in direct conflict with article 3-b which calls upon all Member states' solidarity to allow for the exercise of representative democracy in individual states.

Mr. Secretary general, the days that followed this heinous act were not a time for partisan political discourse, but were instead a time for national togetherness, for grieving and regaining national composure. The urgent challenge was to avoid immediate disruptions such as looting and violence while setting in motion the processes to bring all culprits to face justice.

Seven months on, the momentum and the efforts to find the truth have been voluntarily derailed and twisted into a conduit for impunity. Seven months on, the urgent challenge is now more than the fight for justice: it is preventing Haiti from falling into complete chaos, it is guaranteeing the possibility of representative democracy to survive in the country and the region.

Since his installation as Prime Minister, Dr. Ariel Henry has actively impeded the investigation into the President's assassination, by decelerating the ongoing efforts and all out revoking the officials leading the process, including in the Judiciary branch.

Like his blatant obstruction, the early allegations on his involvement in the plot are now verified. Phone calls on the night of the crime between the Prime Minister and a key suspect in the investigation, Mr. Joseph Felix Badio, are an established fact and new allegations concerning further involvement are still unraveling. The Prime Minister has yet to react to the information that Mr. Badio visited him at his official residence four months after the crime, while there was a standing warrant for his arrest.

Testimonies by other recently arrested suspects shed a gloom light on the active role played by Dr. Henry in eliminating the President who named him. While the Prime Minister claims he is devoted to pursuing Justice and to organizing credible elections, his refusal to answer questions, to shed light on the accusations, or include the members of the civil society in his unilateral unchecked leadership tell a different story.

In fact, Dr. Henry has single handedly engaged in revoking all the official figures involved in leading the investigation, including the three signees of this Letter. While we were in office, we fought every day for justice for the President. The Prime Minister ensured that we, along with others that similarly made justice a priority, were pushed out.

Mr. Secretary General, we believe the peoples of Haiti and of America deserve to know the truth, and that we, collectively, have a responsibility to send an unequivocal signal against this type of aggression and upkeep the promotion of democracy.

We would humbly and wholeheartedly ask that the OAS stand, in its spirit of continental solidarity, to ensure a fair, inclusive and transparent electoral process may be put in place by credible transition leadership, instead of a person's whose very legitimacy is so strongly put into question.

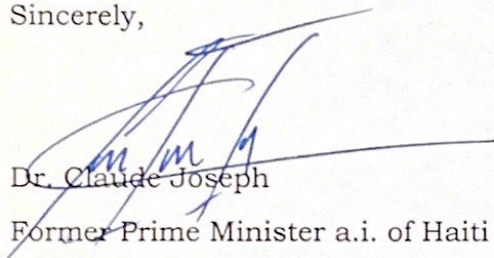
Democracy in Haiti is the only pathway to ensuring our people and the people of the region can retain their aspirations to Education, Employment and Dignity.

This tragic event is the ultimate test, if there was any, by which the OAS can assert its relevancy today, and apply its unique capacity to change course for the region when it is the most at risk of derailing towards authoritarianism and falling into the hands of criminal cartels.

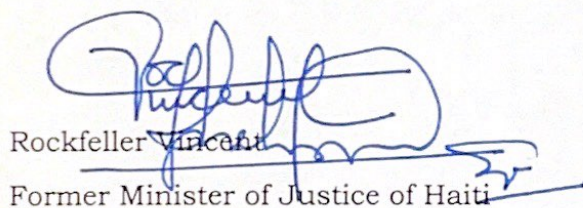
Mr. Secretary general, there has been one notable consensus among all stakeholders, domestic and international, regarding the current Haitian crisis: any sustainable solution will stem from an open, inclusive, and sincere dialogue, leading to elections. However, sincere dialogue, like elections, requires fundamental trust between the interlocutors, between voters and leaders. Without this mutual trust, nothing solid can be built; conversation fades into an exchange of empty words, and ballots become a farce.

Considering the afore mentioned suspicions of the acting Prime Minister's involvement in the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, Dr. Henry does not have the trust of the Haitian people. We sincerely hope the 14 million Haitians will not stand alone and unheard in this fight to salvage Democracy, the Rule of Law, and Dignity in our country and in the region.

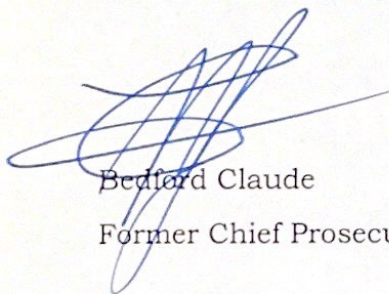
Sincerely,



Dr. Claude Joseph
Former Prime Minister a.i. of Haiti
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Haiti



Rockfeller Vincent
Former Minister of Justice of Haiti



Bedford Claude
Former Chief Prosecutor in Port-au-Prince