

Over 16,000 Haitian migrants deported from Dominican Republic



Dominican soldiers prevent a Haitian migrant from entering their country, 2023. | Photo: Twitter/ @qool66_Leonardo

Port-au-Prince, February 24 (RHC)-- Haiti's Refugee and Returnee Support Group (GARR) has condemned the increased deportations of Haitian migrants from the Dominican Republic.

"It is as if there were a hunt for Haitians in the Dominican Republic. Day and night in Port-au-Prince, we see trucks unloading thousands of Haitians who arrived from that country. These comrades have no reference points and arrive empty-handed because they did not have time to collect their luggage," GARR spokesperson Sam Guillaume lamented.

Last year, Dominican Republic's authorities deported over 108,436 Haitian migrants, a figure that is three times higher than the one registered in 2016, when Haitians started fleeing their country due to the cholera epidemic and armed violence.

Just in January, about 16,892 Haitian migrants were returned to their homeland from the Dominican Republic by force, including 226 pregnant women and 70 unaccompanied minors.

“Haitians are imprisoned without previous notice when they are at medical appointments, at work, or even when they are walking down the streets,” Guillaume lamented, adding that many deported migrants held valid visas for the Dominican Republic.

“Sometimes even Dominicans who have no connection to Haiti are imprisoned to be deported because they have black skin and curly hair like Haitians,” the GARR spokesperson said and added that seeing so much racism is painful.

Over the last six months, GARR has documented cases of Haitian migrants beaten and being kept without food while remaining in custody in the Dominican Republic. Some of them accused officers of sexually assaulting them and destroying their identification.

In 2015, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) raised similar concerns, stressing that Haitians were kept under “deplorable health and hygiene conditions” in jails in the Dominican Republic.

“We urgently need that the international community helps us counteract this situation,” Guillaume stressed, recalling that the Dominican Republic may become a United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) member state in 2023.

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