



**“AGAIN, HAITI AT THE CENTER OF OUR MORAL CONCERN:
SUPPORTING AND SEEKING JUSTICE FOR THE HAITIAN PEOPLE”**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING and position with Us that whatever other urgent moral concerns we have about oppression and resistance in the world, the Haitian people must remain at the center of our moral concern as African American people in ongoing active and effective ways. We take this position recognizing and respecting the existence of numerous sites of severe oppression and even genocidal campaigns against the different and vulnerable peoples of Africa and the world.

And we reaffirm our support of the struggles for the liberation and good lives for African peoples and others whether in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Palestine or among the Rohingya of Myanmar, the Uighurs of China, and anywhere else in the world. Indeed, it is a central moral imperative of our ancient sacred texts, *The Husia*, that we must bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place among those who are denied voice, devalued, threatened with erasure and oppressed in varied ways.

Haiti audaciously asserts itself in the history of humanity's long struggle for human freedom, breaking the back of their enslavement, assisting others in their liberation struggles and thus, opening the way for the unfolding defeat of this radical evil for the whole world. Yet, from the beginning of their victory, Haitians have been made villains, isolated, invaded and made to pay reparations for daring to

wage and win their freedom struggle. But, in truth, it is the world that owes them for their liberation struggle and revolution that expanded the realm of human freedom in the world.

Our commitment to solidarity in struggle with the Haitian people here and in Haiti is a long-term and ongoing practice and commitment. And it is important to remember that the struggle is not only for justice for Haitians here but also for the self-determination, sovereignty and development of Haiti, itself, which still suffers from imperialist imposition and exploitation.

Our active solidarity and support has taken various forms, including founding the Coalition in Solidarity with Haiti, initiated by our former chair of Organization and Alliance, Nana Mpinduzi Khuthaza; raising and donating funds to Haitian families, projects and various development activities and institutions, such as the Haitian Development Fund for the University of Fondwa, under the auspices of Father Albert J. McKnight. We also have sponsored, co-sponsored and participated in annual commemorations of the Haitian Revolution and Haitian Flag Day Celebrations, and rallies and demonstrations against the U.S. and U.N. occupation of Haiti. And we provide ongoing political education on Haiti through our community forums and continuing lectures and articles by this author; and visiting Haiti and bringing back Haitian images and narratives to share in order to

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build and strengthen relations with and concern for the Haitian people. And our work was recognized by Congresswoman Maxine Waters, a staunch and consistent supporter of Haiti and the Haitian people, who gave us an award of recognition in 2010 for our ongoing support in solidarity with the Haitian people.

At our recent forum on Haiti titled “Putting Haiti at the Center of Our Moral Concern: Actively Seeking Justice for the Haitian People”, we brought together Haitian and African American leaders and activists to discuss the state of the struggle around extending the TPS for Haitians and the need for increased and expanded initiatives in support of our Haitian sisters and brothers.

The participants included Seba Chimbuko Tembo, African American Cultural Center (Us); Ronald Claude, Black Alliance for Just Immigration; Pastor Cue, Black and Brown Clergy and Community Coalition; Rev. William D. Smart, Jr., Christ Liberation Ministries and SCLC-LA; and Seba Dr. Maulana Karenga, African American Cultural Center (Us). Although Guerline Jozef of the Haitian Bridge Alliance had committed, she was unable to zoom in. However, she had shared her work and position on the issues at a prior Black/Brown Coalition meeting and her position was shared in our discussion.

Drawing increased understanding and lessons in struggle from this forum, from other activists and organizations supportive of Haitians and from our own long-term initiatives, there are some basic

and essential efforts we must and ought to make which are vital to achieving justice and protecting the lives and rights of Haitian people. First, we must develop a pan-African commitment to the Haitian people, embracing the principle that African freedom is indivisible and that injury to one African people or person is an injury to all of us. Indeed, we are linked not only by our history and shared origins as African peoples, but also by our interrelated liberation struggles that we wage separately and in solidarity against anti-Black racism, White supremacy, imperialism and other anti-human forms of oppression, and by our overarching and linked liberation struggles for a new world of shared and inclusive good.

Also, although we can and do argue the clear value of Haitians to this country and economy as workers, it is morally imperative that we not make this their major or only value. For above all, we must stress their status and inherent and transcendent value as fellow human beings, bearers of dignity and divine endowment, and worthy of rightful recognition and of the highest respect of their persons, lives and human rights.

Moreover, we as African Americans must see and accept our vanguard role in this struggle to resist and defeat racism and the freedom-denying illusions and impositions of the U.S. empire, this world-encompassing system of oppression. For as we said in the 1960s, we’re on the front line of the struggle, deep in the belly of the beast, and in waging our

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liberation struggle we expand the realm of freedom and justice for everyone.

Furthermore, in our solidarity work and struggle with and for Haitian people, we must always consult them and work with them to realize their agendas and aspirations. For each people must be at the head and center of their own liberation struggle. As history and current practices show, there is a wide array of supportive activities we can engage in including: education and advocacy; offering and donating funds, materials and services of varied kinds; supporting legislative initiatives such as the current Senate Bill 4814 to extend TPS for Haitians for three years;

forming community alert teams to announce and monitor ICE presence and activities; accompanying our sisters and brothers to court and hearings and visiting them in detention to reaffirm our concern and support; and urging our faith communities to increase their support and offer sanctuary where possible.

|ESPECIALLY MUST THEY AND WE BE in the vanguard of our efforts to place and keep our Haitian brothers and sisters at the center of our moral concern and our righteous and relentless struggle for an inclusive and shared good in this society and the world.▲

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