

*Re: Haitians are fleeing their country. Their president is the source of the problem, Feb 10.*

Your article dubs President Jovenel Moise as “among the worst in recent memory”, claiming he dissolved parliament and refuses to allow elections. This contradicts the facts.

Many of Haiti’s political problems stem from a flawed constitution which created an imbalance between the branches of government and dysfunctional decision-making processes. Consequently, small groups of legislators can block elections, effectively allowing their own body’s term to expire without new members elected, leaving Presidents to govern without parliamentary oversight. This has happened to five successive Presidents since 1987 and to President Moise last year. By law, Presidents have no authority to stop the legislature from being disbanded when this occurs.

Despite the obstacles, President Moise has been the driving force pushing to get elections funded, scheduled and held, and is working with the U.S., the Organization of American States and the UN for on-ground support and monitoring to ensure free, credible elections. Moise will not run in those elections, his single term ends in February 2022.

Constitutional reform is also urgently needed to resolve the fundamental problems with our governance structures which have created a weak democratic system and political dynamics that don’t deliver for the country. 90% of Haitians agree with reforming the constitution. A national referendum on the new draft is scheduled for April.

Haiti has immense challenges, but the President has tangibly fought corruption, including opening the notoriously corrupt and politically connected energy sector to transparent competition for the first time. And he is spending his remaining political capital creating lasting change in Haiti through changing constitution: the only real way to finally establish checks, balances and a functioning representative democracy.

Ambassador Bocchit Edmond, Haitian Ambassador to the United States of America

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