

Dominican President Abinader Announces 15 Measures to Confront Illegal Migration and Guarantee National Sovereignty in the Face of the Haitian Crisis

April 6, 2025

Santo Domingo – Dominican President Luis Abinader, fulfilling his firm commitment to guarantee peace, security and national sovereignty, announced on Sunday (April 6, 2025) a set of “15 firm, clear, but necessary measures,” in order to protect the Dominican Republic and ensure respect for the country's laws.

In a [message](#) addressed to the Dominican people, the president reinforced border surveillance with 1,500 soldiers, in addition to the 9,500 who already serve on the border.

"This will send a clear and non-negotiable message: Haitian criminal gangs will not find refuge in our land. The violence that destroys Haiti will not cross into the Dominican Republic," he said during the speech broadcast by a network of television, radio and official social media networks.

The president explained the acceleration of the construction of the border wall, instructing the Minister of Defense to immediately seek bids to build 13 additional kilometers to the 54 kilometers of wall already built, in order to prevent any threat that might cross into Dominican soil.

"Whoever facilitates irregular human trafficking will face the strictest consequences. For this reason, we have included in the draft reform of the Labor Code that is being discussed in Congress mechanisms of monitoring and sanctions that will make it more costly for employers to fail to comply with the law," he warned.

As a fourth measure he explained is the presentation in the National Congress next week a draft reform of the existing migratory legal framework to urgently apply tougher sanctions against government officials, civilian or military, who facilitate or participate in the entry of undocumented immigrants, as well as against organizations or individuals who are repeat offenders in the illegal trafficking of person. “In addition, we will establish harsh sanctions for offenses not covered in current legislation, such as owners of homes or commercial premises who rent their properties to people with irregular immigration status.”

"As you know, for almost two years we have not issued visas from our consulates in Haiti, because they have been closed since 2023. The problem is irregular entry; therefore, we must be firm. We recommend that those who are in our territory in an irregular condition must leave voluntarily, or they will be sought and repatriated," he said.

To this end, 750 new migration agents are being incorporated into the General Directorate of Migration (DGM), and migration control offices will be installed in all provinces, to expand the operational capacity of the DGM.

"We know that for many the border presents an opportunity for trade. The opening of binational markets has been, for years, a bridge for trade; but it has also allowed some to cross not to exchange goods, but with the intention of staying in our territory outside the law," he said. It's time to strengthen the rules governing border exchanges.

As a seventh provision, he announced the modification of the regulations for the operation of the markets, to ensure that it is an open door to trade, but not for irregular migration. *"We will be fair, but also firm. The law only has value when it is enforced. It is evident that to face the migratory challenge, border controls alone are not enough. We must also uproot the crimes that feed it,"* he emphasized.

President Abinader indicated in his speech that, in order to guarantee the investigation and prosecution that lead to exemplary convictions of all crimes and exploitation linked to irregular migration, as an eighth measure he will suggest to the Attorney General's Office to create the Specialized Prosecutor's Office for Migration Affairs. He maintained that, since this is a problem that requires the cooperation of all, as a ninth measure, he will request the collaboration of local governments to expand the efficiency of repatriations throughout the national territory.

As a tenth provision, the president announced that he is also instructing the creation of a Citizen Observatory on the Functioning of Migration Policy, to supervise compliance and propose corrective measures from civil society. *"This observatory, which will operate with absolute autonomy and independence, will be coordinated by the journalist Miguel Franjul."*

The president said that Dominicans have the right to receive medical attention without being displaced. *"We cannot continue to practice a liberality that compromises our resources."*

He reported that, in order to control the influx of people with irregular migratory status to public hospitals, he ordered as an eleventh measure to establish a protocol, which should be ready for application on Monday, April 21, which obliges the staff of the hospitals of the National Health Service (SNS) to require that persons seeking care present identification and work authorization documents and proof of address; in addition, a fee will be agreed upon for all services provided.

In the event of not meeting any of these requirements, he specified, the patient will be treated and, once recovered, repatriated immediately. *"An immigration agent will be established in each hospital to ensure compliance with this protocol."*

"The rights of Dominicans will not be displaced. Our identity will not be diluted. Our generosity will not be exploited. Solidarity has limits," he warned in his message to the nation.

He stressed that the Dominican economy is growing and is an example for the region. But he insisted that the development of the nation cannot rely on illegality and lack of control. So, he pledged to impose order on the presence of undocumented workers in sectors that boost the economy.

To achieve this, he ordered as a twelfth measure to begin by studying the Dominican migration regulations in the face of the current situation in Haiti. *"We have decided to appoint Dr. Milton Ray Guevara as coordinator of a commission that will carry out this task."*

Faced with concern about the loss of jobs for citizens caused by irregular migration, which cannot be ignored or minimized, he ordered as a thirteenth measure to promote a wage increase of 25% in the free zones and 30% in the tourism sector, within the ongoing tripartite discussions on wages. The president referred to these proposed wage increases as a step toward "the Dominicanization of employment," *"because when work is valued and paid well, it attracts people."*

President Abinader said that poor Dominicans should have to choose between receiving government assistance or earning a salary, because a better life may mean receiving both. To this end, he announced as provision number fourteen, to guarantee that the beneficiaries of the Supérate social welfare program can accept jobs in the construction and agricultural sector without losing their government assistance.

He pointed out that, for too long, agriculture and construction have depended on illegal labor and that rural production and city construction can no longer depend solely on manual labor that incentivizes irregular migration. *"We must continue to change that reality, accelerating the process of agricultural mechanization and incorporating low-labor-intensive construction techniques."*

As the fifteenth measure, President Abinader reported that the fund administered by the National Development and Export Bank (Bandex), created in his government for these purposes, and which has lent 2.8 billion Dominican pesos so far, will be expanded to provide associations and cooperatives of producers with the resources of their technological transformation. *"The private construction and agricultural sectors must agree with the government on their industrialization and mechanization in a prudent period of time."*

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"To the Dominican people I say: yes, we understand your concern, because it is our concern too. We are working with tireless perseverance, and we will do so to the end. To the international community we say: do your duty. Haiti needs help, because the Dominican Republic cannot and should not bear the burden of a crisis that does not belong to it," President Abinader insisted.

He said that there will be those who criticize him or demand that they bear a burden of a crisis that we have not created. *"To them we say: we have already carried too much, but never sacrificing the security, stability and well-being of the Dominican people."*

"This is the time for determination. This is the time for unity. For no nation can solve its problems divided, and no challenge finds a solution in indifference. The migration problem requires more than criticism without proposals; it demands collaboration, responsibility and action," he proclaimed.

In that order, the president proposed that everyone—politicians, businessmen and civil society—strengthen the National Pact for the Formulation and Execution of State Policies in the Situation in Haiti signed at the National Palace in 2023. *"With this Pact we seek to bring order where for decades there was disorder. A Pact to guarantee solutions without ceding sovereignty, a Pact to enforce the law firmly and fairly. Let's all collaborate, because history will judge us, not by what we criticize, but by what we were able to build together."*

"To all the Dominican people I say: let us trust in our strength, in our unity, in our right to decide our destiny. Because this nation has defended its identity and security before. And we will defend it again. And we will always defend it. And we will do it with our heads held high, with the law in our hands and with our hearts in the homeland," he said.

After acknowledging that many Dominicans are concerned about the threat posed by Haiti, the irregular migration it causes, and the burden that this represents for the country's hospitals and schools—as well as the risks to security and the weight on the national economy—he assured that he shares these concerns.

"Because we know what happens beyond our border. We know that Haiti is going through the darkest hour in its history, through multiple crises. A security crisis, due to the criminal gangs that control its territory; an environmental crisis, due to deforestation and lack of water; an economic crisis, due to the lack of means of production," he said.

"A political crisis," he added, *"due to the absence of democratic institutions, and the worst of the crises, the crisis of abandonment, caused by the irresponsible attitude of the international community that has left Haiti to its own fate. None of these crises are caused by us, but they all have consequences that do affect us."*

He condemned that, for too long, warnings were ignored, the border remained vulnerable, and laws were not enforced. In addition, the problem was allowed to grow without answers, without solutions, without leadership.

"That ended with me. Because to lead is to assume the cost of doing the right thing when it is easier to look the other way. No government had acted with the firm responsibility with which we are acting today", said the head of state.

He said that the border is more guarded than ever, because the Government keeps thousands of soldiers under permanent surveillance; because they are building the wall that many others did not even dare to promise; it maintains continuous operations to repatriate thousands of undocumented immigrants, and President Abinader has raised his voice in all international forums to demand action from the international community.

"I never acceded to the pressure to stop deportations from international organizations and governments. I was the only president who did not sign the migration treaty presented at the 2022 Summit of the Americas. We increased the number of military personnel on the border by 30% and tripled their salaries," *he said*.

In addition, "we bought armored vehicles, vehicles and equipment as it had not been done in decades. Our nation is acting more responsibly than ever in the face of a problem that seems impossible to solve. A perfect storm on an island shared by the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere with its collapsed government; and us, the country with the highest economic growth in the Americas."

But in the face of that storm, he proclaimed, the Dominican Republic will not surrender nor kneel.

He said that, "today we are summoned by an unavoidable duty, a challenge that we did not choose, but that we must face with courage and determination: the challenge of an irregular migratory displacement of a people whose streets have been taken over by violence, abandoned to despair, where order has succumbed to chaos."

The president stated in his message to the Dominican people that this problem and its effects cannot be ignored, but neither can disorder and insecurity be allowed to cross borders.

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This document is an informal translation of a summary [prepared and published](#) by the Presidency of the Dominican Republic. This material was compiled and distributed by Vision Americas LLC on behalf of the Dominican government. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.