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**The People's National Party Demands Urgent Action From The Government of Jamaica
Regarding Haitian Asylum Seekers**

Kingston, Jamaica. March 11, 2024: The People's National Party (PNP) urgently calls upon the Government of Jamaica to address the pressing humanitarian crisis in Haiti, and for a transparent and effective process to handle the Haitian Refugees.

Jamaica is a State Party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, which lays down rules which Jamaica as a signatory must follow. However, there has been a significant failure to do so in relation to the Haitian Refugees arriving in Jamaica. In particular, for the second time the Ministry of National Security recently refused to grant asylum to 37 Haitian asylum seekers.

The Government's position has denied the Haitians several basic human rights, including the right to be heard as well as the right to be represented, resulting in a dangerous, non-transparent process which has no place in a constitutional democracy. We endorse and reiterate the position and concerns taken by the group Freedom Imaginaries published on March 4, 2024 in that the Government should take into consideration the current situation and thus we also call for a rights-based framework based on the following four main pillars:

1. Full and Inclusive implementation of the Refugee Convention, including the suspension of the forced returns of the Haitian people who arrive here in Jamaica;
2. Access to territory and efficient asylum-seeking procedures;
3. Solidarity and shared responsibility; and
4. A durable solution which takes into account Jamaica's limited capacity to absorb large numbers of migrants/refugees.

This situation has also given rise to increasing concerns as it relates to Haiti benefiting from the full membership of CARICOM which it was accorded on July 3, 2002. Article 45 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) states that members of CARICOM are entitled to land for six months if they fit certain criteria. This calls for a special dispensation to be accorded to the Haitians, in keeping with the objectives of the RTC. Indeed, the recent announcement of the March 31, 2024 removal of the 6-month rule to allow for complete freedom of movement within the Community further the need for a special dispensation for the Haitians.



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We therefore call on the Government of Jamaica to establish, along with fellow CARICOM members, a regional agency to assist and to advise on the handling of Haitian Refugees, as well as to devise a transparent and efficient procedure to help those who are seeking asylum in Jamaica or other CARICOM member states.

Additionally, the Government should continue the dialogue within CARICOM to develop a coordinated plan of action to resolve the dire situation in Haiti, our dear and close neighbour.

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