



March 1, 2021

The Society of Haitian Neuroscientists is a US-based, international society of neuroscience professionals practicing in the fields of health care, biomedical science and education. Founded on a vision of equity and social justice in neuroscience, the mission of SHN is to promote the basic and clinical neurosciences in Haiti by the creation of conditions necessary for their advancement, to enhance and advocate for the neurological and mental health of all Haitian communities, and to foster collaborations between Haitian neuroscientists. The conditions in Haiti required for the fulfillment of SHN's mission include a peaceful, free and democratic state, respect for human rights, strong institutions of health and education, and national security.

SHN is highly concerned about the current social and political atmosphere in Haiti, and its impact on the health, rights and liberties of the Haitian people. We add our voice to recent statements by the Haitian Medical Association ([Association Médicale Haïtienne](#), AMH<sup>1</sup>), the Haitian Surgical Association ([Association Haïtienne de Chirurgie](#), ASHAC<sup>2</sup>), and other allied organizations which denounce acts of violence and other human rights abuses against the Haitian people. We are disheartened by the politically motivated gang violence, kidnappings, and deterioration of civic life in Haiti which are currently taking place in the midst of a controversy of constitutional interpretation that questions the democratic legitimacy of the current administration.

Events such as the postponement of parliamentary and local elections since October 2019 with ensuing presidential rule by decree for over a year, elimination of judicial power with closure of the Supreme Court and removal of judges across the nation, and open use of live ammunition and tear gas against protesters and journalists, threaten peace, democracy, justice and strong institutions in Haiti. Moreover, the social climate resulting from the current political crisis directly harms Haiti's healthcare system, and prevents the advancement of neurological and mental health care for the Haitian people in a multitude of ways, including:

- Directly threatening the safety of physicians such as:
  - Drs. [Laure Marie Medjine Daniel](#)<sup>3</sup> and [Hans David Thélémaque](#)<sup>4</sup>, who were both recently kidnapped for ransom,
  - [Dr. Marie Antoinette Gautier](#)<sup>5</sup> who was illegally arrested and imprisoned by the security forces of President Jovenel Moïse, and
  - [Dr. Ernst Paddy](#)<sup>6</sup>, a pediatrician who was assassinated following an attempted kidnapping.
- Forcing the periodic closure of Haitian [hospitals](#)<sup>7</sup>, [universities](#)<sup>8</sup> and medical schools during frequent periods of elevated violence and insecurity.
- Preventing the organization of medical conferences, such as the [indefinitely postponed inaugural meeting](#)<sup>9</sup> of the Haitian Foundation for the Development of Neurology and of Neurosurgery (FHADNNEC), and the ongoing cancellation of trauma care training courses by the Haitian Surgical Association (CAT-ASHAC).

The current sociopolitical crisis in Haiti exerts a profoundly negative impact on the foundations of sustainable development promoted by Haitian-American and Haitian Diaspora organizations like SHN.

We therefore call on the administration of US President Joe Biden, and the US State Department, to take the following actions that we feel will advance peace and democracy in Haiti, serve and protect the welfare of the Haitian people, and promote stronger ties between the US and Haiti:

- Affirm the right of the people of Haiti to sovereignty, and a free and democratic process for electing their leaders.
- Reaffirm the support of the U.S. for freedom of speech and the right to peaceful protest, and denounce all governmental and organized violence against protesters.
- Call for peaceful government transition and the organization of elections that restore the integrity of all branches of Haitian government.
- Condemn the violence, kidnappings and terror that have plagued Haitian civic life over the past year, and call for reinstatement and strengthening of the legislative and judicial powers established by the Haitian Constitution.

**Signed:**



Dr. Ernest J. Barthélemy, MD, MA, MPH

President and Co-Founder, Society of Haitian Neuroscientists

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