



**PRESS STATEMENT  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Wednesday, October 18, 2023**

**Government of Jamaica Provides Safe Return for third Group of Haitian Nationals who landed in Portland**

The Government of Jamaica is noting with concern what appears to be a trend among groups of Haitians arriving on the island via boat, where each group reported their destination other than Jamaica.

Since July, three groups of Haitian nationals each numbering about thirty (30) or more people have landed on Jamaica's north-east shores, claiming their intended destination was to be elsewhere. In addition, the government is also wary of individuals suspected of piloting the vessels who have had a history of being removed from Jamaica for illegal entry on previous occasions.

On Tuesday, October 17, 2023, the latest group of thirty-eight (38) Haitian nationals were safely returned to their country.

Their arrival at Long Bay in Portland activated the Ministry of National Security response through the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and Passport Citizenship and Immigration Agency (PICA), along with representatives from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, to see to their safe processing by immigration officials.

Immigration checks confirmed that the captain of the vessel was the same individual who had piloted the boat that arrived in September and that other members of the group were also repatriated from Jamaica previously.

Investigations are ongoing to determine whether this may qualify as an organized operation to smuggle persons from Haiti to other countries including Jamaica.

Following the completion of the immigration processing, health screening and security vetting, the group was denied entry in accordance with the applicable legal framework. Arrangements were made through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade with the Government in Haiti to facilitate the group's safe return.

The group was transported by military vessel and handed over to Haitian authorities on Tuesday, October 17, 2023.

The Government of Jamaica reiterates its commitment to working with the Government of Haiti to secure a sustainable approach to restoring the rule of law in Haiti, thereby reducing the need for Haitian nationals to flee their country.



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The group of thirty-seven (37) Haitians who arrived in Jamaica on July 10, 2023, and subsequently applied for asylum, continue to receive support while the refugee determination process is underway.

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For more information:

Contact the Minister with Responsibility for Information

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