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CONTACT:

Kim Lamberty (kim@quixote.org) 301-699-0042

Angela Howard-McParland (amcparland@sistersofmercy.org)

US' Faithful and Friends Call on Congress and DHS: Stop US Arms to Haiti

Faith-based networks and their partners demand legislative and administrative action to plug the arms pipelines sustaining gang rule in Haiti

Washington, DC---Today, representatives and partners of over 40 justice-concerned organizations and networks have united their voices to decry **Haiti's ongoing battle with guns and ammunition that have been illegally trafficked into the country from the United States.**

The broad coalition of faith leaders, faithful, and their partners started the day with a public prayer and call to action on Capitol Hill. Residents of 13 states and the District of Columbia gathered to hear testimony from the Haitian American community as well as faith leaders who have served in ministry in Haiti. They then conducted meetings with 15 Senate offices and presented a statement of their concerns and calls to action to additional congressional offices.

At the heart of their message in each case was the human face of Haiti's descent into gang rule from 2021 to the present. Over this period, the coalition reported, the tightening grip of heavily armed gangs produced an atmosphere of unrelenting terror that has made all forms of work, worship, education, play, and daily activities life-threatening and nearly impossible for the Haitian people. Gang activity has also choked key travel and supply routes, impeding or erasing the people's access to food and healthcare. **This tragic story has been made possible by the illegal import of arms from neighboring countries with an estimated 70% originating in the United States.**

The coalition is calling on both bodies of Congress to pass into law four pieces of pending legislation that could meaningfully reduce the flow of arms to Haiti. The bills they are supporting are the CATCH Act, ARMAS Act, Stop Arming Cartels Act, and Haiti Criminal Collusion Transparency Act. The co-organizers of this initiative see decisive legislative and executive action on this issue as a moral imperative in the name of human dignity and our fundamental responsibilities to act justly toward one another. They also recognize that doing our part to cut the arms pipeline, the lifeblood of Haiti's gang violence, is the most politically just, nonviolent, and cost-effective measure that the US can take to support our neighbor's transition to a democracy with free, fair elections. Such a transition would, in turn, increase political stability and reduce forced migration and the need to seek asylum throughout the region.

In addition to today's public gathering at the Capitol and meetings with congressional offices, the co-organizers have mobilized the submission of over 5,000 letters to Congress and the White House to date.

* ADDITIONAL CO-ORGANIZERS:

- CONGREGATION OF SISTERS OF ST. AGNES
- JUSTICE 4 AYITI
- PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL
- PAX CHRISTI METRO DC-BALTIMORE
- PAX CHRISTI USA GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORKING GROUP
- SEEDS OF HOPE IN HAITI
- SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

