



Jamaica Council of Churches

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The Jamaica Council of Churches call for prioritization of the concerns of the people of Haiti

The Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) has noted the imminent staging of a high-level meeting of CARICOM leaders, to which the heads of the United States, France, Canada, and Brazil have been invited. We note the possibility of the absence of the Haitian Prime Minister and wonder whether adequate provisions will be made to ensure the full participation of the voices and perspectives from Haiti, including Haitian Civil Society representatives and the church.

The Council has once again reflected upon this situation and reiterates the need for the enhancement (qualitatively) and enlargement (quantitatively) of the capacity of the Haitian people to govern themselves. We have noted the long travail for freedom that the Haitian people have endured, which is now manifesting in the current humanitarian and security situation that has engulfed the country.

The path to be pursued by the current high-level meeting of leaders in Jamaica must employ the ethic of compassionate justice, which promotes the wholeness of the entire community and avoid any semblance of narrow political and economic interests. In short, all deliberations and actions must be centred around the recovery and well-being of the people of Haiti. Now more than ever, CARICOM must lead the way to encourage the international community to advocate for Haiti's international debts to be forgiven to allow fiscal space for nation-building.

It is the view of the Council that concerns regarding regional security and the restoration of peace and wholeness in Haiti are inextricably linked, and therefore, the balance between these two ideals must be found.

In addition, we call on the Churches throughout the region, in this holy season of Lent, to employ the prominent ritual of fasting as a catalyst which will lead to the liberation of the oppressed and relief for the suffering poor (Isaiah 58).

JAMAICA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Bishop Christine Gooden-Benguiche
President