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Know Your Rights + Safety Tips

Harassment and threats against the Haitian community are escalating, stoked by hate speech from anti-immigrant extremists. Here are some steps you can take to protect yourself and your family. These are general guidelines and should NOT be taken as legal advice; for individual legal assistance, you should consult a lawyer.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911. Regardless of your immigration status, you have the right to call 911 in an emergency situation. The police can respond to you rapidly and get you access to emergency medical care, if needed.

If a person has threatened **or harassed you**, and/or **caused physical harm to you or your property**, you should:

Seek Safety.

- ▶ Get to a safe space and seek medical assistance if you need it.
- ▶ Stay calm and take steps to protect yourself, without escalating the situation, if possible.
- ▶ Try to get to a public space if you are not already in one. If it is dark, move towards a lighted area if you can.
- ▶ Seek help from those around you by asking someone to stay as a witness.

Document.

- ▶ Document what happened as safely as you can. Take pictures, record audio, video, or write down the person's name, license plate, or any other identifying information you may be able to safely obtain.
- ▶ If you are unable to record, write down what was said to you, as soon as you can. Be sure to write down the date, time, location, and any other details you remember. The sooner you can do this after the incident and the more detail you can include, the better.

- ▶ If the harassment is online, take a picture or screenshot of the post and save it.

Report the incident.

- ▶ Make a police report. The police are not always helpful, but documenting what happened can be helpful to you later on.
 - Ask for the name and badge number of the person taking the report, and for a copy of the report, or for a report or complaint number you can reference later.
- ▶ Share your report with a trusted local advocacy organization if there is one.

Speak to an immigration lawyer.

- ▶ If you or a family member is a victim of a crime, ask an immigration lawyer about any remedies that may be available to you.

If a private person—that is someone who is **NOT** a law enforcement official—asks you for immigration papers, you:

- ▶ **DO NOT** need to give them that information. Private citizens have no authority to demand such information from you.
- ▶ If the person claims to be a law enforcement official, ask to see their badge, and do not answer any questions.
- ▶ Document the situation, following the guidelines listed above.

If you have contact with someone who **IS** a law enforcement officer or ICE agent:

- ▶ **Stay calm and do not run.** If safe to do so, take pictures or videos of the encounter.
- ▶ If you have valid immigration documents, like a valid work permit or green card, you should always carry it with you. However, you should avoid carrying documents from your home country, like a foreign passport.
- ▶ **You have the right to remain silent. DO NOT** answer any questions or sign any documents without first speaking to an attorney. You should not answer any questions about where you are going or traveling to. However, some states have laws that require you to share your name or identity documents with law enforcement officials.
 - The laws around the requirement to identify yourself vary between states and localities. If you have any questions about the law in your state, please contact an attorney.
- ▶ If you are stopped while driving a car, you may be asked to show your license and registration papers.
- ▶ You have the right to ask if you are being detained or arrested. If the answer is no, you are not being detained or arrested, ask if you are free to leave.

If you experience harassment by your **landlord, employer, or someone who works in a business,** like a bank, you should:

- ▶ Document what happened, following the guidelines above.

- ▶ Each state and the federal government have laws that may protect you when you experience harassment from people who you have a business relationship with. Consult an attorney to find out if your rights have been violated.

If you experience any of the above:

- ▶ Consult with an attorney to find out what options you may have.
 - The American Bar Association maintains a [Lawyer Referral Directory](#)
 - Go to the state bar website for your state and look for “legal services.”
 - You can also Google your state’s name and “state bar attorney referral service.” For example:
 - [Florida state bar attorney referral services.](#)
 - [New Jersey state bar attorney referral services.](#)
 - [Massachusetts state bar attorney referral services.](#)
 - For immigration attorneys go to, [American Immigration Lawyers Association](#) or the [Executive Office for Immigration Review | List of Pro Bono Legal Service Providers.](#)
- ▶ Documenting the events can help an attorney determine whether the law can help you.
- ▶ Some legal claims have a statute of limitations (meaning a deadline by which you must bring your claims to court), so do not delay seeking legal advice.

Resources

- ▶ To learn more about federal protections against national origin discrimination: [Department of Justice Website on National Origin Discrimination.](#)
- ▶ For bystanders and allies: [Right to Be Bystander Training.](#)
- ▶ For more Know Your Rights information: [National Immigration Law Center.](#)
- ▶ To learn more about states that have stop and identify laws refer to the [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#), which published a list of [stop and identify state statutes](#) that was current as of its publication in 2018.