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Dominican president bars Haitian ex-leader from his country

Президент Домініканської Республіки заборонив колишньому лідеру Гаїті в'їзд у свою країну

Президент Домініканської Республіки Луїс Абінатер заборонив колишньому тимчасовому прем'єр-міністру Гаїті Клоду Жозефу, який зараз є кандидатом у президенти Гаїті, в'їзд до країни, що ще більше посилює напруженість між двома державами, які ділять острів Гаїті. Указ, підписаний президентом Домініканської Республіки, забороняє також в'їзд до країни 12 гаїтянським лідерам. Це відбувається в той момент, коли Гаїті стає дедалі нестабільнішою після вбивства 7 липня 2021 року його президента Гаїті Жовенеля Моїза.

<https://apnews.com/article/caribbean-haiti-dominican-republic-assassinations-luis-abinader-bb905687bc7434905a31d8c50aba8e16>



Then Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph speaks during a memorial service for the late Haitian President Jovenel Moïse, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, July 20, 2021. Dominican President Luis Abinader signed an order on Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022, that has barred Joseph, now an aspiring presidential candidate, from entering the country. (AP Photo/Matias Delacroix, File)

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — The president of the Dominican Republic has barred Haiti's former interim prime minister — who is now an aspiring presidential candidate — from entering the country, a move that further heightens tensions between two nations that share the island of Hispaniola.

The order against Claude Joseph that was signed Wednesday by Dominican President Luis Abinader also bans 12 Haitian gang leaders from entering the country. It comes as Haiti is becoming increasingly unstable following the July 7, 2021, assassination of its president, Jovenel Moïse.

Joseph welcomed Abinader's ban on Thursday.

“He ranks me as enemy No. 1 of the Dominican racists. It is not a sanction. It’s an honor. I receive it in the name of fathers Dessalines, Toussaint and Christophe,” he tweeted, referencing Haitian revolutionary heroes.

Abinader’s order, which authorizes the president to ban anyone from entering the country if they have a criminal record or pose a threat to national security, is the latest tussle between Joseph and Dominican officials.

Joseph, who was foreign affairs minister when Moïse was slain, became interim prime minister for a brief period with the backing of police and the military.

When Ariel Henry was installed as Haiti’s prime minister nearly two weeks after Moïse’s killing, Joseph reverted to being minister of foreign affairs. He stepped down following an acrimonious exchange with Dominican officials following a tweet in November 2021 in which Joseph suggested that the Dominican Republic wasn’t a safe country.

Dominican officials bristled at the allegation, and ties between the two countries have since soured, especially given a spike in Haitian migrants crossing over to the Dominican Republic as they flee deepening poverty and a spike in gang-related kidnappings and killings since Moïse’s assassination.

The influx of migrants also has led to an increase in racist and xenophobic incidents in the Dominican Republic against Haitians and those born in that country to Haitian parents.

In February 2022, Abinader announced his administration would build a multimillion-dollar, 118-mile (190-kilometer) wall along the Haitian border. The announcement came months after Abinader warned at the United Nations’ General Assembly that “there is not and will never be a Dominican solution to the crisis in Haiti.”

Since stepping down as foreign affairs minister last year, Joseph has become increasingly critical of Haiti’s prime minister on social media and has demanded answers from the ongoing investigation into Moïse’s death.

He recently founded a new political party, Committed to Development, with the aim of running for president when elections are held at a still-unspecified date.

He spoke about the increasingly tense relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic during a political gathering on Saturday.

“Haiti will never be transformed into the backyard of the Dominican Republic,” Joseph said. “I oppose the hegemonic and dominating will of the Dominican racists. I remember asking President Luis Abinader to stop speaking ill of Haiti in his official speeches.

“I must clarify that our battle is not aimed at the entire Dominican Republic. The two nations are condemned to live as brothers. We fight against condescending racists and ultranationalists. I pay tribute to the Dominican elites who recognize the existence of anti-Haitian racism in their country.”

Associated Press reporter Dánica Coto in San Juan, Puerto Rico contributed.