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U.S. to Extend Haitians' Post-Quake Immigration Status

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Haitians who received a special American [immigration](#) status after last year's earthquake will be allowed an additional year and a half to live and work in the United States while their country struggles to recover, the Obama administration announced on Tuesday.

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since Jan. 12, 2010, the date of the earthquake. Under this new extension, Haitians who arrived in the country as late as Jan. 12, 2011, and had lived here continuously since then will be eligible to apply.

Janet Napolitano, the secretary of homeland security, said in a statement that she was expanding and extending the program out of concern that Haitian immigrants' "personal safety would be endangered by returning to Haiti."

But Homeland Security Department officials said they would continue to deport Haitians who had been convicted of violent crimes or were repeat offenders and had also been ordered removed by an immigration judge. Deportations of Haitians were suspended after the earthquake but resumed in January. After a two-month pause after a deportee died of choleralike symptoms shortly after arriving in Haiti, immigration officials once again resumed the deportations in April.

The extension will not be granted to people who have been convicted of a felony or at least two misdemeanors. It will expire on Jan. 22, 2013, officials said.

About 48,000 Haitians living in the United States have secured temporary protected status since the earthquake, and an estimated 10,000 more would be eligible under the extension, officials said Tuesday, adding that application guidelines would be issued this week.

Immigrant advocates who had lobbied for the extension applauded the decision, though some also urged the administration to halt all deportations.

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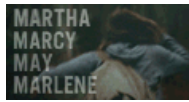
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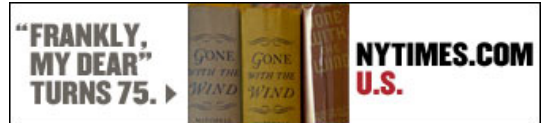
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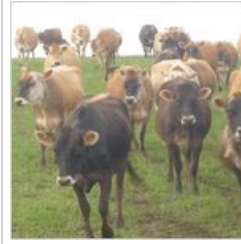
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