Mamdani fires Haitian workers after Trump administration revokes their legal status

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Last Friday, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani announced that Haitian city employees who had their Temporary Protected Status (TPS) revoked by the Trump administration would be removed from their jobs. While the exact number of terminated employees has not been reported, news sources say the number is over a dozen and the final toll could rise to the hundreds.

"The City of New York was forced by federal law, as recently decided by the Supreme Court, to review the work authorization of Haitian TPS holders and separate from any employees who have not established alternative paths to legal work," Mamdani said in an August 7 press statement.

With this announcement, Mamdani assumed the role of enforcer of the anti-immigrant policies of the fascistic Trump administration and the far-right majority on the US Supreme Court. On June 25, in *Mullin v. Doe*, the court upheld the decision of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to end TPS status for some 350,000 Haitian and 50,000 Syrian immigrants, stripping them of their work permits and making them subject to immediate deportation. On July 27, the DHS implemented the Supreme Court ruling by terminating TPS for Haitians and Syrians.

In his August 7 announcement, Mamdani made no appeal for protests or other solidarity actions in defense of Haitian workers, let alone calling for strike action by the city's powerful working class. He did not even say the city would take legal action to protect the jobs of Haitian workers and block their deportation back to Haiti.

While avoiding any suggestion that workers and youth mobilize to defend Haitian workers, he said, "Only President Trump has the power to restore TPS or grant 'Deferred Enforced Departure' to affected TPS holders." He thus urged Haitians and their defenders to direct their appeals to the author of the anti-immigrant rampage, the same fascist who has accused Haitian immigrants of eating the pets of Americans and called Haiti a "shithole country" that is "filthy, dirty, and disgusting."

On Monday, speaking at an unrelated press conference, Mamdani said he had spoken to Trump by phone to reiterate his appeal. Political olive branches to Trump are nothing new for Mamdani, who has met with Trump twice in the White House and boasted of their "partnership."

The response from the Trump administration was quick and predictable. Lauren Bis, assistant secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, issued a statement saying, "For decades, this program has been abused by Democrats as a de facto amnesty program to allow foreigners to remain in our country forever. The president will continue to enforce our nation's laws and put Americans first."

Mamdani's August 7 announcement was a complete reversal of a pledge he made just weeks before to oppose the removal of TPS and defend Haitian immigrant New Yorkers. On June 25, the day of the Supreme Court decision upholding the revocation of TPS, Mamdani donned a Haitian flag pin and spoke at a rally called by the 1199 SEIU union and immigrant advocates. Addressing himself to Haitians, he said:

> As we face down a Supreme Court ruling that just opened the door to fear, instability and the threat of deportation for so many, New York City will do everything in our power to fight back … City Hall will stand with you and stand up for you. You are not going to face this alone, and I am also here.

During his mayoral campaign, Mamdani presented himself as a defender of immigrants, including a video

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tour of the section of Brooklyn known as “Little Haiti.”

Mamdani has made a practice of accompanying announcements of austerity measures and the ditching of campaign pledges in accordance with the demands of Wall Street with tributes to workers and youth impacted by such decisions. Several weeks ago he lavished praise on low-paid paraprofessional school aides in one breath, and in the next stated his opposition to a City Council bill granting them a one-time $10,000 bonus, claiming the bonus violated the anti-strike Taylor Law.

In his August 7 announcement terminating the jobs of Haitian workers, he similarly hailed the “Haitian community” as an “indispensable part of New York City.”

Some 120,000 Haitians reside in New York City. Thousands work in healthcare, including city facilities, and thousands more work in public schools, construction, hospitality and other industries. Many have been living in the US for more than a decade and have children who are US citizens by birth. In New York State, there are 40,000 former TPS-holding Haitian immigrants, with at least 5,400 residing in New York City.

The United States has repeatedly intervened in Haiti, sending troops, occupying the country and propping up brutal dictators subservient to US corporate interests. As a result, the country is without a functioning parliament or executive branch. It is under the control of violent gangs sponsored by rival warlords in the Haitian ruling class. The U.S. State Department has a Level 4 “Do Not Travel Advisory” for Haiti, its highest, citing crime, terrorism, kidnapping, unrest and limited healthcare. Haitians living in the US who are forced back to the country face mob violence and possible death.

Just days ago, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) launched a pogrom against Haitian immigrants focused on Springfield, Ohio, which has a large concentration of refugees from the country. Hundreds of people were fitted with GPS-tracking ankle bracelets and some were reported to have had their driving privileges rescinded.

The targeting of Haitians in Springfield is the culmination of a fascistic campaign initiated by neo-Nazis and elevated to national policy by Trump and Vice President JD Vance. In August 2024, members of the neo-Nazi Blood Tribe marched through Springfield carrying swastika flags and semi-automatic rifles. Trump pledged to revoke the Haitians’ legal status and deport them. That threat is now being implemented.

Mamdani, who calls himself a “democratic socialist” and is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), was elected on a growing wave of opposition among workers, youth and sections of the middle class to the capitalist status quo, disgust with Trump and both capitalist parties, and rising sympathy for socialism. Major factors in this process are opposition to the assault on immigrants and on democratic rights more broadly, revulsion over the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza, opposition to militarism and war, hatred for the billionaire oligarchy, and anger over ever worsening economic and social conditions for the broad mass of the population.

Mamdani and the DSA are the initial beneficiaries of this political radicalization. They are, however, neither socialists nor opponents of US imperialism. Their role, as a faction of the Democratic Party—a party of the military and intelligence apparatus—is to head off and block an independent movement of the working class and bind social and political opposition to the Democratic Party.

Their program—based on the false presentation of socialism as capitalism with some social reforms attached, and the claim that the Democratic Party can be turned into a party of the working people—reflects the interests not of the working class, but of privileged sections of the professional middle class. They are not for expropriating the oligarchs and establishing working class power, but rather for obtaining a bigger share for themselves of the wealth extracted from the working class.

With every passing day, the conflicting class interests between workers and the Mamdani administration are emerging more sharply in the center of global capitalist finance.

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