

Law Leaves Thousands of Dominicans of Haitian Descent Stateless



Santo Domingo, February 5 (RHC-teleSUR) -- Thousands of Dominican-born children of undocumented immigrants from Haiti have been left stateless after the deadline to apply for regularization in the Dominican Republic passed this week.

Dominican authorities said the move follows a longstanding political battle against illegal immigration from neighboring Haiti. According to the new legislation, people without birth certificates issued in the country will not be considered national and be subject to deportation.

However with the passing of the controversial law, which some human rights groups have described as a "racist" move to expel people of Haitian descent from the Dominican Republic, leaves thousands as non-citizens in the country in which they were born.

According to official figures only 5,345 people had applied to normalize their status by early January, out of the estimated 110,000 people eligible to apply.

Several demonstrations have been carried out to reject the bill, including Dominicans of Haitian descent who were born and raised in the country.

The Dominican government says the new law could affect as little as 24,000 people, a number that human rights organization says is too big already.

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