

# **New Bedford man arrested after reports of person with pistol in waistband walking around**

"NEW BEDFORD – Patrol officers have arrested a man in the north-end sector for unlawfully carrying a gun.

On March 25th, at around 10 AM, a call was received regarding a man with a pistol in his waistband walking on County St. in the area of Coggeshall St. Shortly thereafter, Officer Michael Dane located a male who matched the description provided. Ofc. Dane approached the male and conducted a search, soon discovering that he was carrying a firearm in his front waistband.

The male was identified as JONATAS MENDES, 40, of Hazard Ct. MENDES did not have a license to possess the gun, which was a .38 caliber revolver. He was taken into custody and charged with carrying a loaded firearm without a license.

If you have any information you would like to share with the police, you can do so anonymously by submitting a tip on our website or by calling 508-99-CRIME."-New Bedford Police Department.

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## **New Bedford's Mayor Mitchell**

# reacts to offshore wind energy proposals and bids

NEW BEDFORD – In a Wednesday letter to Massachusetts state officials, New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell assesses the proposals of the offshore wind energy developers which have submitted bids under the Tri-State (Massachusetts-Rhode Island-Connecticut) offshore wind energy procurement.

By Email: [Elizabeth.Mahony@mass.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Mahony@mass.gov)

Elizabeth L. Mahony

Commissioner, Department of Energy Resources

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

100 Cambridge Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor

Boston, MA 02114

Re: Assessment of Economic Benefits Proposals in the Current Solicitation for Offshore Wind Energy Contracts – D.P.U. No. 23-42

Dear Commissioner Mahony:

Last August a group of business leaders from Greater New Bedford and I sent the attached letter to offshore wind developers who had expressed interest in submitting bids in the current solicitation for wind energy contracts. The letter described the types of investments we believed would best support the development of an offshore wind cluster in Massachusetts, and therefore should receive greater credit in the bid scoring process. As has been the case with previous solicitations, developers have presented their proposed investment commitments to my administration. I write to offer the City of New Bedford's general assessment of those commitments based on the criteria in the August letter.

The current solicitation will be the first since the legislature enacted *An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind*, which instituted long-overdue reforms to the solicitation of offshore wind energy contracts. Among other measures, the Act transferred responsibility for evaluating the bids from the state's utilities to the Department of Energy Resources. This no doubt will enhance the

subject to a more rigorous analysis than that applied by the utilities in previous solicitations. The Healey Administration has added other improvements, including by carving out “economic benefits” as a distinct scoring category worth fifteen percent of a bid’s total score. Together these policy changes reflect the widely held view that by elevating the importance of “economic benefits” in the solicitation process, Massachusetts can compete more effectively for industry investment. As the current solicitation involves the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island, it will be important for Massachusetts to remain mindful of this economic development imperative.

Under the new approach, the Request for Proposals makes clear that the Commonwealth will score economic proposals based on criteria that emphasize the size, certainty, duration, and multiplier potential of the investments, and whether they are in “economically distressed areas” of

opportunity for regions of the state, particularly Greater New Bedford, that have not enjoyed Greater Boston’s prolonged prosperity.<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest of course that investments in Greater Boston, or commitments of funds for state-wide purposes do not warrant credit in the scoring process,<sup>2</sup> but if the RFP’s preference for “economically distressed areas” is to mean anything, investments in regions outside of Greater Boston should receive additional credit.

The investment proposals for this solicitation vary in scale, duration and certainty, as well as the extent to which they are located in or directed to “economically distressed areas.” Under the more exacting scoring process now in place, they would be expected to receive different “economic benefits” scores. As we discussed in the letter to the developers, meaningful long-term investments that support the formation of an industry cluster should be accorded more weight than smaller commitments to fund regional non-profit programs, which tend to yield less long-term economic impact.

Of the developers who may submit bids in the current solicitation, three have come forward with investment commitments that address some of the criteria set forth in our August 2023 letter:

South Coast Wind is the only developer that has committed both to establishing its operations and maintenance base and marshalling its project in the Port of New Bedford. This commitment comes with the condition that in the multi-state procurement process, Massachusetts will purchase at least half of the project’s power. It intends to establish a project office here, but it will maintain its headquarters in Boston. The company has not made us aware of any other significant economic development commitments outside of Greater Boston.<sup>3</sup>

Avangrid Renewables intends to marshal its project from facilities in Greater Boston (Salem), where it also will maintain its headquarters (Boston), but it has made noteworthy commitments to New Bedford. It would operate a construction and logistics hub at the Foss Marine Terminal during the marshalling period. It also would establish a “services and maintenance hub” operated by the Danish marine services company SEMCO, as well as a CTV operation with New Bedford-based Shoreline Offshore. It has represented to us that it would commit the remainder of its O & M operations here, including its SOV base and control room, if Massachusetts agrees to purchase a sufficient share of its power. Finally,

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<sup>1</sup> The RFP also requires developers to mitigate the economic impact of their projects on commercial fishing and related businesses. We have long held that because for Massachusetts-based projects, this burden is borne almost exclusively by New Bedford, our City and Port should be prioritized for offshore wind investment.

<sup>2</sup> By the same token, insofar as developers include in their bids cash commitments to state-wide economic development funds, including those managed by the MassCEC, the “economically distressed areas” of Massachusetts should be prioritized in the ultimate disbursement of those funds, unless they are otherwise so restricted. Power purchase agreements should reflect this prioritization.

<sup>3</sup> South Coast Wind’s predecessor, Mayflower Wind, included in its bid in the second Massachusetts solicitation a commitment to facilitate the establishment of a undersea cable manufacturer in Somerset. We do not know whether the construction of this facility hinges on the success of South Coast Wind’s bid.

Avangrid would commit to securing the establishment of a fifteen-employee, tier 2 manufacturing operation at the former Berkshire Hathaway property.

Vineyard Offshore intends to marshal its project from facilities in Greater Boston (Salem),<sup>4</sup> and maintain its headquarters there (Boston). As for New Bedford, Vineyard Offshore has committed to establish its entire operations and maintenance base at the Foss Marine Terminal, including SOV and CTV operations. It already has a project office in Downtown New Bedford. It also has committed a million dollars to the New Bedford Ocean Cluster, and another million to the National Offshore Wind Institute in New Bedford.

Although each of the developers has made commitments to non-profit organizations across Massachusetts, the developers have not disclosed to us the full amounts of their cash commitments to support economic development programs.<sup>5</sup>

To achieve the Commonwealth’s economic development goals of the solicitation, that is, to help establish a lasting offshore wind cluster based in historically “economically distressed areas,” I believe that Massachusetts should award each of these three developers a share of the authorized capacity sufficient to secure the investment commitments they have made to New Bedford. The City and its economic development agencies have developed healthy working relationships with each company, and we are confident that those relationships will facilitate the successful construction and operation of the projects, and cooperative interaction with the fishing industry.<sup>6</sup>

We are grateful for the Healey Administration’s commitment to competing effectively for investment from the offshore wind industry. We in New Bedford have strived to become America’s leader in offshore wind, just as we are in commercial fishing. We believe that the development of a robust maritime cluster here will lead to the types of economic opportunities for Greater New

Bedford's residents that other regions have long enjoyed. We hope this assessment proves useful to you in your evaluation of how the bids for the current solicitation can contribute toward this goal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Mitchell

<sup>4</sup> Avangrid's and Vineyard Offshore's commitments to marshal their project from Salem portend a gap in major activity at the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal for two to three years after the Vineyard Wind project is complete. If it is infeasible for the terminal to share a significant amount of marshalling work, it will be important for the MassCEC to find cargo opportunities for the terminal, including from offshore wind projects based in other states.

<sup>5</sup> I note that we are not in a position to discern the degree to which the proposals depend on the timely completion of project permitting or financing, and we have no specific knowledge about the price of electricity the developers would supply.

<sup>6</sup> I express no opinion as to the strength of the developers' commitments to mitigate the impact of their projects on commercial fishing. As I have previously noted, it would be better if developers were required to make specific commitments to fisheries mitigation up front, rather than at the back end of the process. The developers should be expected to fund programs that preserve and grow the profitability of the fishing industry, including shore side businesses.

cc: Governor Maura Healey  
Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll  
Rebecca Tepper, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Yvonne Hao, Secretary of Economic Development  
Emily Reichert, Chief Executive Officer, MassCEC  
Bruce Carlisle, Director of Offshore Wind, MassCEC  
Mark Marini, Secretary, Department of Public Utilities, No. 23-42  
Members of the New Bedford State Legislative Delegation  
Alicia Barton, CEO, Vineyard Offshore  
Ken Kimmel, Vice President for Offshore Wind Development, Avangrid Renewables  
Michael Brown, CEO, South Coast Wind

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# Massachusetts State Police seek man wanted in connection

# **with nightclub homicide; \$5,000 reward**

"We and our partners at the Essex County District Attorney's Office, Lawrence Police, and the United States Marshals are seeking FRANKLIN LARAS for the Dec. 24, 2023 homicide of a 29-year-old man in a #Lawrence nightclub.

The U.S. Marshals Service is offering a \$5,000 reward for information about the whereabouts of Franklin Laras.

Please view the poster below and call law enforcement if you have info on LARAS or his whereabouts."-Massachusetts State Police.





# WANTED

## FOR HOMICIDE



### FRANKLIN LARAS

Age 27 (D.O.B. 12/05/1996)

Race: White Sex: Male

Height: 5'7" Weight: 190

Hair: Brown Eyes: Brown

Tattoos on Chest and Arms



The Essex County District Attorney's Office, Lawrence Police, Massachusetts State Police, and United States Marshals are seeking FRANKLIN LARAS for the fatal shooting of a 29-year-old man at Energy Lounge on Broadway in Lawrence early on the morning of Dec. 24, 2023. LARAS is actively attempting to avoid capture and should be considered armed and dangerous.

**THERE IS A REWARD OF UP TO \$5,000 FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO LARAS' ARREST**

If you have information about FRANKLIN LARAS or his whereabouts please contact law enforcement via one of the following numbers.

STATE POLICE: 1-800-KAPTURE (1-800-527-8873)

LAWRENCE POLICE: 978-794-5900 EXT. 629

UNITED STATES MARSHALS: 1-877-WANTED2 (1-877-926-8332)

*Massachusetts State Police photo*

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## Massachusetts State Police seize 4.5 kilos of cocaine,

# **arrest 52-year old, in early morning raid**

"A joint investigation earlier today resulted in the seizure of more than four kilograms of cocaine and the arrest of a Springfield man on trafficking charges.

This morning the Massachusetts State Police Gang Unit, Springfield Police Department Firearms Investigation Unit, and Western Massachusetts Gang Task Force executed a search warrant at 33 East Hooker St., Springfield. The team seized 4.5 kilograms of cocaine, 93 bags of heroin, and approximately \$4,750 in US currency suspected of being the proceeds of drug trafficking.

The target of the investigation, WILLIAM ARROYO, 52, was charged with trafficking a Class B substance (cocaine) over 200 grams and possession of a Class A substance (heroin), subsequent offense. ARROYO was booked at the Springfield Police Department and was expected to be arraigned today in Springfield District Court.

The investigation was part of the Massachusetts Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative."-Massachusetts State Police.

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# **58-year old Massachusetts woman dies after her car crashes into utility pole**

At around 5:43am on Wednesday morning, Carver Police, Fire



Department and emergency medical services personnel responded to a reported accident in the 240 Main St., which is part of Route 58.

Upon arrival, first-responders found a totaled gray Nissan Altima had crashed into a utility pole. The driver, a 56-year-old Carver woman, was raced by Carver EMS personnel to Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Plymouth where she was, unfortunately, she was pronounced dead.

A large portion of Route 58 was closed for hours while local and Massachusetts State Police did their investigation and the scene was cleared. It took until around 2:00pm before traffic was opened to one lane.

Police are withholding the name of the deceased pending notification to the closest kin. The cause of the crash is being investigated by the Carver Police Department and the Massachusetts State Police Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section.



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# **New Bedford Beach seasonal parking passes now available!**

The City has announced that seasonal parking passes for East Beach, West Beach, and Fort Taber Park are now available for purchase.

Residents of New Bedford can purchase passes for \$15, while those 65 and over can obtain them for just \$5. Greater New Bedford residents, including those from Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Freetown, and Assonet, can purchase passes for \$30. For all others, the price is \$60.

Passes can be purchased at several locations, including the Parks, Recreation and Beaches office at 181 Hillman St. Building 3, the Clerk's Office at City Hall, the Traffic Commission office at the Elm Street Parking Garage, and the Andrea McCoy Recreation Center at 181 Hillman St. Building 8 during open gym and recreation time.

City or area residents must bring their vehicle registration.

Advance purchases must be made with cash only at the above locations, while on-site purchases at the beaches starting in May can be made with credit cards only. Hourly and daily parking options are also available during the summer at Fort Taber and East Beach.

East Beach, West Beach, and Fort Taber, located in the South End of New Bedford, are popular spots for picnicking, swimming, sports, and games during the summer. Lifeguards will be on duty from May 25 to September 2.

For more information about parking passes or the beaches,

contact the Parks, Recreation and Beaches office at 508-961-3015.

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# **Massachusetts State Police robot dog “Roscoe” takes bullets in Barnstable for his humans**

“At noon on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, Massachusetts State Police Bomb Squad Troopers John Ragosa, Michael Rockett, and Stephan McKay responded to a residence at 24 St. Francis Circle in Barnstable to assist a SWAT Team comprised of local Cape Cod police officers with a situation involving an armed barricaded subject.

Upon their arrival the Troopers learned that the subject had fired upon officers with a rifle and barricaded himself inside the residence. The Troopers deployed two PacBot 510 tracked robots and a SPOT four-legged robot, commonly referred to as a robot dog, to assist in locating the subject inside the residence. Deployment of the remote-controlled robotic platforms allowed the team to safely gather crucial intelligence and provide situational awareness of the suspect and the home’s interior.



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*

The Troopers conducted interior and exterior robotic operations to systematically check the house. Trooper Ragosa first deployed the SPOT robot – one of two operated by the unit – through the two top floors of the residence and cleared them. Trooper Ragosa then deployed the SPOT –nicknamed “Roscoe” – into the home’s basement. Controlling SPOT remotely, he first cleared a closet in the basement and then was about to open another door when the male suspect suddenly appeared from a bedroom armed with a rifle.

The suspect attempted to knock Roscoe over and was eventually successful in doing so. After Roscoe was knocked down, the suspect, still carrying the rifle, began to ascend the stairs leading out of the bedroom. Unbeknownst to the suspect, SPOT robots have a self-righting function, and Trooper Ragosa was able to return Roscoe to his feet. Trooper Ragosa then began to walk Roscoe up the stairs behind the ascending suspect. When the suspect realized, with apparent surprise, that Roscoe was behind him on the stairs, he again knocked the robot over and then raised his rifle in the Roscoe’s direction. The robot suddenly lost communications.



The Troopers would later discover that that Roscoe had been shot three times by the suspect and had been rendered inoperable.

After shooting Roscoe, the suspect shot at one of the PacBot robots that was outside a sliding door, missing it and striking an above-ground pool in the backyard. SWAT operators subsequently introduced tear gas into the house; a short time later the suspect surrendered without further incident. He was taken into custody by Barnstable Police.



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*

At the request of Barnstable Police, Roscoe was left in place inside the basement until the State Police Crime Scene Services Section and Firearms Identification Unit documented the scene.

The incident provided a stark example of the benefits of mobile platforms capable of opening doors and ascending stairs in tactical missions involving armed suspects. In addition to providing critically important room clearance and situational awareness capabilities, the insertion of Roscoe into the suspect residence prevented the need, at that stage of

response, from inserting human operators, and may have prevented a police officer from being involved in an exchange of gunfire.

The following day, Trooper Ragosa brought Roscoe to manufacturer Boston Dynamics to have the company assist in removing the projectiles and to conduct a damage assessment. The company has expressed an interest in keeping Roscoe for research, and the process of replacing him with a new SPOT platform is underway.

Roscoe was one of two SPOT robots operated by the MSP Bomb Squad, which is assigned to the state Department of Fire Services. The Massachusetts State Police and the Department of Fire Services are committed to the use of advanced technology such as mobile robotic platforms to resolve hostile situations while reducing the threat to human life.”-Massachusetts State Police.



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*



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# **S&P cites New Bedford's 'very strong management' in affirming City's Bond Rating**

"NEW BEDFORD – A leading credit rating agency has affirmed the City's credit rating, pointing to New Bedford's effective leadership and strong economic prospects.

Standard & Poor's recently awarded New Bedford a AA+/Stable long term enhanced rating and affirmed its AA-/Stable underlying rating, giving the City high marks for financial health and management. Among the key metrics the City scored high on were: Very Strong management, Very Strong liquidity, Strong economy, and Strong institutional framework. S&P uses 10 grade levels in its evaluations, from General Default to Strong, Very Strong and Extremely Strong.

"The ratings reflect our view of New Bedford's very strong management with strong financial-management policies and practices – including its quarterly review of budget-to-actual reports; detailed five-year capital plan that it updates annually, including planned funding sources; (and) investment-management policy that adheres to commonwealth statutes," the 2024 S&P Global Ratings report states.

"New Bedford's economic profile has benefitted from the city's diversification away from its traditional dependence on port activities, as well as from the city's relative affordability and investments to support offshore wind development," the report also stated.

"These high marks are a testament to the professionalism and commitment of our finance and economic development teams,"

Mayor Jon Mitchell said. “Our disciplined management of the City budget and our efforts to expand and diversify the regional economy are producing tangible outcomes – notably lower interest rates that mean savings for taxpayers.”

The high credit ratings helped the City solicit several competitive bids and sell \$23.5 million worth of bonds and notes earlier this month. Proceeds will fund various capital projects.”-City of New Bedford.

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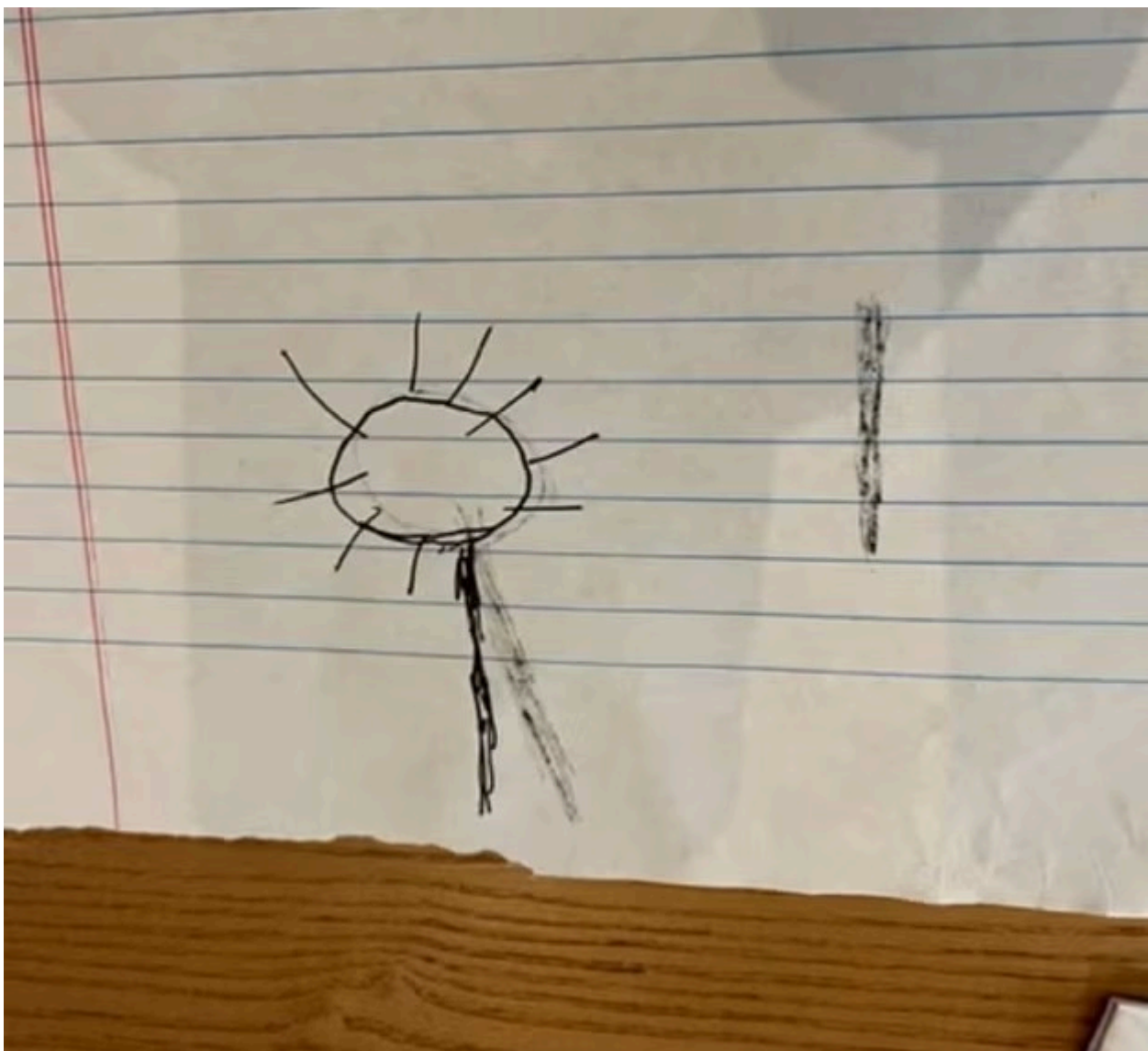
## **Boston jury indicts Ohio man for alleged participation in Rwanda Genocide that killed 800,000**

Defendant allegedly participated in killing of Tutsi men, women and children.

“BOSTON – An Ohio man was indicted today by a federal grand jury in Boston for a nearly three-decade scheme to conceal his alleged involvement in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, which left more than 800,000 people dead. The defendant was also charged with obstruction of justice and perjury for allegedly offering false testimony in the 2019 Boston trial of convicted Rwandan genocide perpetrator Jean Leonard Teganya.

It is alleged that the defendant participated in the killing of Tutsi men, women and children by striking them on the head with a nail-studded club and then hacking them to death with a machete.

Eric Tabaro Nshimiye, a/k/a Eric Tabaro Nshimiyimana, 52, of Uniontown, Ohio, was indicted on four counts of perjury; one count of obstruction of justice; and one count of engaging in a scheme to conceal material information from federal authorities. Nshimiye was previously arrested and charged by criminal complaint on March 21, 2024. Following an initial appearance in federal court in the Northern District of Ohio, Nshimiye was detained pending a detention hearing scheduled for March 31, 2024. He will appear in federal court in Boston at a later date.



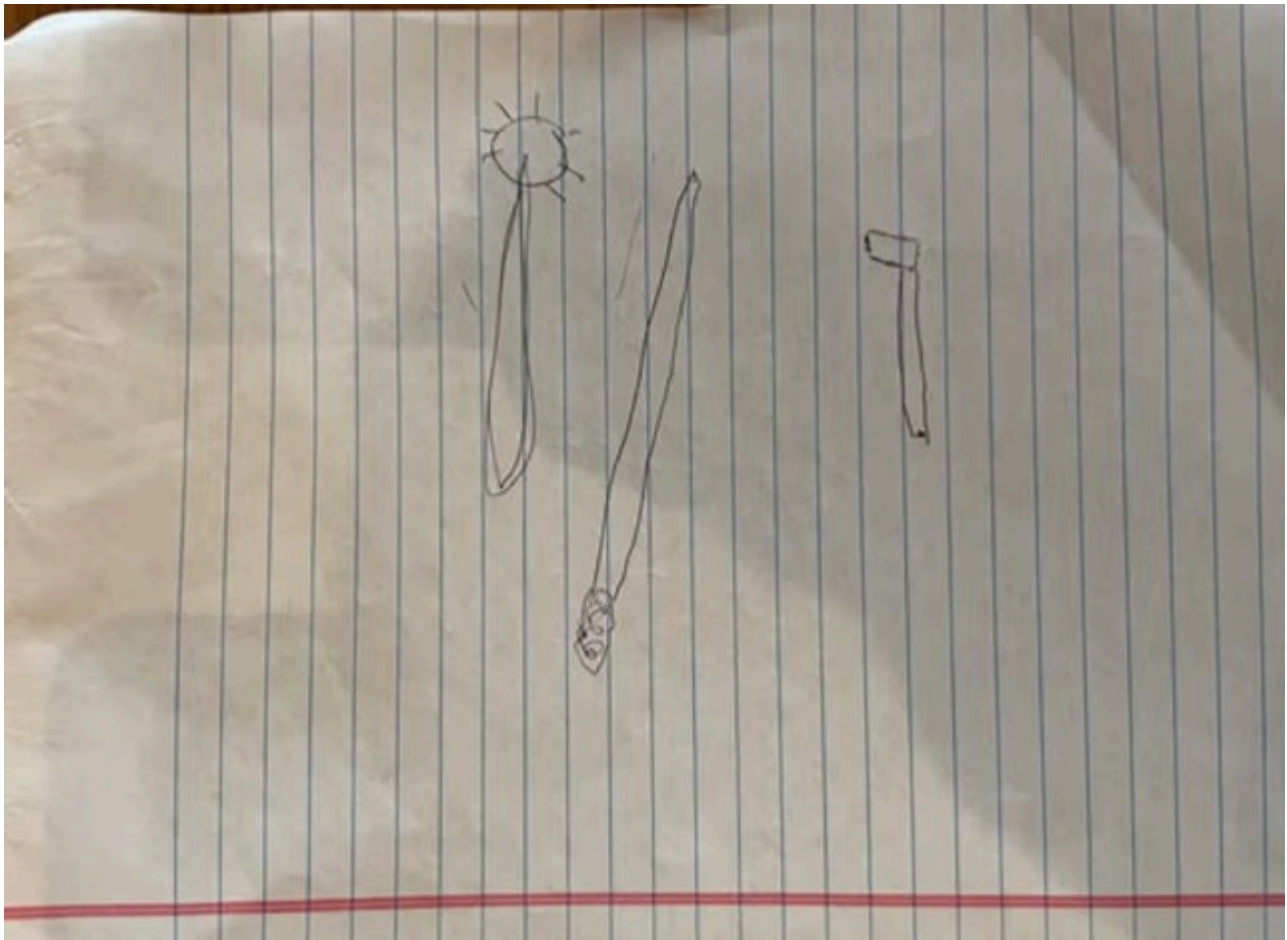
*A second witness drawing depicts the type of weapon Nshimiye allegedly used to kill, with victims including a 14-year-old boy the Ohio engineer had also helped murder (Department of Homeland Security)*

According to the charging documents, Nshimiye was a medical student at the University of Rwanda campus in Butare, Rwanda in the early 1990s. At that time, the country had significant ethnic division: about 85% of its population were Hutus, and about 14% were Tutsis. Both Nshimiye and Teganya were well-known student members of the MRND political party, the ruling Hutu-dominated party that incited the genocide, and the Interahamwe, the notoriously violent youth wing of that movement. According to court documents, in the spring of 1994, after the Hutu president's plane was shot down over Kigali, the country spiraled into one of the worst ethnic genocides in modern history. Members of the Hutu majority murdered approximately 800,000 Tutsis, including women and children, in a 100-day frenzy.

It is alleged that Nshimiye participated in the killing of Tutsi men, women and children by striking them on the head with a nail-studded club and then hacking them to death with a machete. The charging documents allege specific instances of Nshimiye's criminal conduct, including his murders of a 14-year-old boy and of a man who sewed doctor's coats at the university hospital. Witnesses in Rwanda recently identified the locations of the killings and drew pictures of Nshimiye's weapons. It is further alleged that Nshimiye both participated in and aided and abetted the rape of numerous Tutsi women during the genocide.

According to the charging documents, Nshimiye fled Rwanda in the summer of 1994, after an attacking Tutsi rebel group drove genocidaires into the Democratic Republic of Congo. Nshimiye made his way to Kenya where, in 1995, he allegedly lied to U.S. immigration officials to gain admission to the United States as a refugee. Nshimiye emigrated to Ohio and, in subsequent years, allegedly continued to provide false information about his involvement in the Rwandan genocide to obtain lawful permanent residence and ultimately U.S. citizenship. By allegedly concealing his crimes, Nshimiye has

lived and worked in Ohio since 1995.



*Witness drawing depicts the type of weapon Nshimiye allegedly used to kill, with victims including a 14-year-old boy the Ohio engineer had also helped murder. Department of Homeland Security photo.*

In 2017, the United States charged Teganya with fraudulently seeking asylum in the United States by similarly concealing his membership in the MRND and his involvement in the genocide. When called to testify at trial on Teganya's behalf in 2019, Nshimiye said that neither he nor Teganya participated in the genocide. Teganya was ultimately convicted of two counts of immigration fraud and three counts of perjury in April 2019. The complaint alleges that Nshimiye assisted Teganya in obstructing justice at Teganya's trial and falsely testifying about Teganya's involvement in the MRND. It is also alleged that Nshimiye perjured himself when he denied his own membership in the MRND and Interahamwe.

The charging document also alleges that Nshimiye made false statements to federal agents when he was recently interviewed about his activities before coming to the United States and about the documents he signed to obtain citizenship. In response to questions, Nshimiye allegedly continued to make false statements to conceal his involvement in the genocide.

The charge of falsifying, concealing, and covering up a material fact by trick, scheme or device provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of obstruction of justice provides for a sentence up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Each count of perjury provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes that govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy; Michael J. Krol, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England; Shawn S. Gibson, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Detroit; Matthew O'Brien, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service, Boston Field Office; and Denis C. Riordan, District Director of the Fraud Detection and National Security Division of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Boston Field Division made the announcement today. This matter was investigated with the assistance of the United States Interagency Human Rights Violators & War Crimes Center, the Copley, Ohio Police Department and the Summit County, Ohio Sheriff's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorneys John T. McNeil and Amanda Beck of the National Security Unit are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and



until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.”-Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **Senator Warren, Massachusetts Delegation Urge Biden to Expedite Visa Process for Haitians**

U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), along with the entire Massachusetts congressional delegation, sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Rena Bitter, urging them to expedite the processing of immigrant visas for Haitians – particularly for relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (LPRs). The request comes as Haiti has plunged further into chaos, with gangs reportedly uniting, ousting the country’s prime minister, and coordinating attacks that some warn could spark a civil war.

“We write to express our increasing concern regarding consular operations at the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti,” wrote the lawmakers. “We urge the State Department to expedite the processing of immigrant visas for Haitians, particularly for relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (LPRs).”

Haiti has already struggled with long-standing challenges that have contributed to the deterioration of its security situation, including one of the deadliest earthquakes in modern history, severe corruption, massive protests, and crippling debt. In 2021, the assassination of President

Jovenel Moïse plunged the country into a state of unrest. As of 2023, the country has had no democratically elected government, and gangs now control an estimated 80 percent of the capital city. The local population faces skyrocketing rates of homicides, kidnappings, internal displacement, cholera, and starvation.

“As you recently highlighted, Haiti presents ‘one of the most urgent challenges we face as an international community.’ The situation in Haiti demands urgent, creative solutions to ensure that, at a minimum, relatives of U.S. persons can be quickly processed and reunited with their families in the United States,” wrote the lawmakers.

This crisis has led many individuals to seek asylum in the United States. Massachusetts has one of the largest Haitian diasporas in the country, and many Haitian-Americans are desperately trying to sponsor family members still in Haiti. Thousands of Haitian relatives of U.S. citizens and long-term permanent residents (LPRs) are in the processing queue for family-based immigrant visas. However, the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince – the U.S. government’s only post in the country – has been operating on an emergency-only basis due to the ongoing security crisis and has suspended or greatly delayed the processing of most visa services.

“The State Department must implement stop-gap solutions to more quickly process visas for Haitians in need of urgent protection, even as the U.S. Embassy maintains minimal operations in Haiti,” continued the lawmakers. “We appreciate the scale and complexity of this issue and applaud the work the State Department has already done to explore creative solutions to address the backlog. Still, we urge the State Department to ensure that solutions are implemented with the urgency that this issue demands.”

Specifically, the lawmakers are recommending the State Department implement the following policy and operational

changes to visa processing in Haiti, including:

- Waive the personal, in-person appearance requirement, at least for Haitian immediate relatives of U.S. persons.  
Ramp up capacity for processing Haitian immigrant visas at a third-country post.
- Establishing a new location for in-person requirements besides the U.S. embassy, given the particularly high level of unrest in the neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince and the threat posed to those who leave their homes.
- Senator Warren has led ongoing efforts to protect the rights of asylum seekers and other migrants, and to hold the United States accountable to its humanitarian obligations:

In February 2024, Senators Warren and Markey sent a letter to U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations Chair Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Vice Chair Susan Collins (R-Maine), urging them to increase funding for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Shelter and Services Program (SSP) to \$5 billion in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations bill for fiscal year 2024.

In February 2024, Senator Warren and colleagues submitted an amendment to the Emergency National Security Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2024 that would provide \$5 billion for the FEMA's Shelter and Services Program without requiring U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to ramp up its detention and deportation efforts. Senator Warren worked with Senator Padilla and others to submit a similar amendment to the Fiscal Year 2024 Spending Package in March 2024.

In December 2023, Senator Warren, along with the entire Massachusetts delegation, wrote to FEMA raising concerns about a lack of federal funding for non-border states like Massachusetts experiencing a significant influx of migrants and requesting additional federal SSP funding for the Commonwealth.

In November 2023, Warren, Markey, Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.),

Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) sent a letter to DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Ur Jaddou, about several policy proposals to help address delays in issuing employment authorization documents.

In September 2023, Senators Warren and Markey applauded the Biden administration's redesignation of TPS for Venezuelan migrants.

In August 2023, Senators Warren and Markey and Representatives Katherine Clark (D-Mass.), Lori Trahan (D-Mass.), Seth Moulton (D-Mass.), James McGovern (D-Mass.), Richard Neal (D-Mass.), Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.), Jake Auchincloss (D-Mass.), Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.), and Bill Keating (D-Mass.) sent a letter to Secretary Mayorkas and Director Jaddou, urging them to expedite the processing of EADs for individuals paroled into the United States, which would lessen the strain on available humanitarian and housing resources.

In March 2023, Senator Warren and lawmakers submitted a public comment against the Biden administration's proposed rule to restrict asylum at the southern border. The senators called on the Biden administration to withdraw the rule in its entirety.

In January 2023, Senator Warren and nearly 70 other lawmakers sent a letter urging President Biden to reverse the administration's expansion of the inhumane Trump-era border policy known as Title 42 and to abandon the proposed asylum "transit ban" rule. The lawmakers also encouraged the President and his administration to work with Congress to develop safe, humane, and orderly border policies that enforce our immigration laws and uphold the right to asylum under domestic and international law.

In September 2022, Senator Warren led members of the Massachusetts delegation in a letter to DHS and FEMA calling for funding from the Emergency Food and Shelter Program to be

allocated swiftly to organizations assisting newly arrived migrants in Massachusetts.

In September 2022, Senator Warren released a statement condemning efforts to use asylum seekers as political pawns and committing to assisting communities in need.

In November 2021, Senator Warren stated her opposition to the continued use of Title 42 to expel asylum seekers and called for the Biden administration to rescind this policy.

In October 2021, Senator Warren joined Senator Menendez in criticizing the inhumane treatment of Haitian migrants and called on the administration to support long-term stability in Haiti.

In October 2021, Senator Warren called on Chris Magnus to commit to transparency regarding the investigation into the events in Del Rio, Texas during his confirmation hearing to be CBP Commissioner.