

## **HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: APRIL 6-25, 2007**

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### **Haiti in better shape because of UN: Canadian diplomat Wednesday, April 25, 2007 CBC News**

The UN has helped to increase political stability and personal security in Haiti but the country continues to be in a fragile state, with daunting economic challenges, Canada's ambassador to the UN said Wednesday.

John McNee, who led an advisory group from the UN Economic and Social Council on a four-day trip to Haiti last week, told reporters at UN headquarters in New York that the situation in the country is more hopeful than even a few months ago.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, known as MINUSTAH, along with the help of international aid, has been able to achieve a "measure of political stability" and a "considerable increase in security" in Haiti, McNee said.

But McNee said Haiti needs to find long-term answers to its deep economic problems.

"We were all struck by the developmental challenges in Haiti," he said. "The situation remains fragile. In fairness, we should stress the fragility of it."

The real challenge, he said, is increasing employment in Haiti, and if the economic situation could be improved, then people could be persuaded not to get involved in criminal activity.

McNee said tourism and agriculture are two sectors that, if developed, could help to pull Haiti out of poverty.

There are already signs that tourism may be making a small comeback and the country once produced a high grade of coffee and could do so again, he said.

A crackdown by UN forces and Haitian police on armed criminal gangs has helped to improve security, particularly in the capital, Port-au-Prince, McNee said.

#### **400 gang leaders arrested**

Since the start of this year, more than 400 gang leaders have been arrested.

This week, UN peacekeepers and Haitian national police arrested a reputed gang leader, Belony Pierre, who had been on the run since February. He faces charges of murder and kidnapping.

The advisory group went to Haiti to assess economic and social development strategies for the country as well as the work of the UN mission and international assistance. It met the president, prime minister and many members of the Haitian cabinet.

McNee said it was able to visit Cité Soleil, a notorious slum area in the capital recently made safer by the arrests of gang leaders. A visit to the slum by foreign observers would have been unthinkable even four months ago, he said.

McNee said there is no question that the UN mission is making a difference in Haiti.

"It's clear that MINUSTAH is playing an essential role at the present time. It would be premature to start thinking of winding it up," he said.

The UN mission in Haiti was established in October 2004 after an insurgency forced then president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to go into exile. The advisory group, which also visited Haiti in 2005, was tracking progress since its last visit.

According to the Foreign Affairs department, Canada is contributing up to 100 civilian police officers to the stabilization mission in Haiti.

"Haiti is now Canada's most important long-term development assistance beneficiary in the Americas, and the second largest in the world [after Afghanistan]," according to the department's website.

**Fighting for the Rule of Law in Haiti**  
**An exclusive Haiti Information Project interview with**  
**Haiti's leading human rights lawyer, Mario Joseph**  
**by Darren Ell**  
**Haiti Information Project**  
**April 25, 2007**

Mario Joseph became a human rights lawyer in the wake of Haiti's 1991 coup d'État, helping victims prepare their cases and articulate their demands at a time when human rights law was not even taught in law school. In 1995, he founded the Bureau des avocats internationaux (BAI) which seeks to defend the poorest members of Haitian society. He is outraged by the hypocrisy of the Canadian, American and French Governments who were behind the 2004 coup d'État; but he is determined to bring to justice all those who attempted to destroy Haiti's young democracy and who continue to violate the rule of law today. He spoke to Darren Ell from the offices of the BAI in Port-au-Prince.

Darren Ell: Help us understand the roots of human rights abuses in Haiti. First of all, does Haiti have the same human rights jurisprudence as Canada or the US?

Mario Joseph: There are small differences, but Haitian law is drawn from the same European system as other countries. Our legal codes are more or less copied from the Napoleonic codes. Unfortunately in Haiti we haven't been prolific with legislation.

DE: So the laws exist, but they're often not applied.

MJ: Exactly. For example, currently in Haiti there's a debate over amending the Constitution. Why on earth are we discussing amending a constitution that is not even being applied? Let's apply it first to find out if amendments are required. There's also another problem: justice exists only for people who can afford it. The great majority of human rights victims are poor but they can't afford a lawyer. We're talking about 32 coup d'États in our history which have involved massive human rights violations. If you go into a Haitian jail today, you will see that everyone is poor. It's people who stole a banana or committed some other crime, and they'll spend their whole life in jail. For the middle class and the rich, it's a different story: they have access to lawyers and things work out for them.

And in Haiti there is no real legal aid. Because of the poverty in Haiti, we have few lawyers. Few people have the opportunity to complete their studies. The Bureau des avocats internationaux is the only group in Haiti working in a formal way on human rights cases.

DE: In a country of 8 million people where tens of thousands of murders and rapes have been committed in the last several years?

MJ: There is no other group. There is no one else here working for the poor of Cité Soleil, Raboteau or elsewhere. This is why we have such a problem with impunity in Haiti.

DE: Can you put this problem of the non-application of law into a historical perspective for us?

MJ: Foreigners have always come to Haiti as saviors ; even Christopher Columbus tried to convert everyone to Christianity. Once here, foreign powers establish local allies, then begin changing and manipulating the legal system to suit their needs. To oppress the population, methods are put in place so the law doesn't have to be respected. Look at the last coup d'État : the first thing Latortue did was undermine the tribunals and put pressure on the judicial system. Father Jean-Juste was arrested in October 2004. He was arrested for murder. There was no police report. No one knew the name of the person he supposedly killed. There was nothing ! The case came before the judge and he courageously freed Father Jean-Juste one month later. Subsequently, the Justice Minister, Bernard Gousse, ordered that this judge's cases be given to other people. In Haiti, we have judges with expensive cars and fancy jeeps, but there are others with nothing because they refuse to sell out.

DE: It sounds like the era of Louis XIV in France where all that was required was for the King to issue a "lettre de cachet" announcing you were arrested and that was it.

MJ: During the coup, people were arrested like this all the time — without warrants or with illegal or expired warrants. Yvon Neptune, the Prime Minister, was arrested without a warrant. It's awful ! Moreover, the justice system was used to legitimate these illegal procedures. All these people — Father Jean-Juste, Bob Molière, Jean-Marie Samedi — were run through the Prosecutor's Office. In Haiti though, the Prosecutor's Office is simply a rubber-stamping stopover on the way to prison. In the case of Father Jean-Juste, I got a call saying he was before the Prosecutor in Pétienville. I live nearby, but by the time I got there, he was already in prison.

That's the situation we're up against. The laws exist, but the justice system is completely muzzled. Judges who disobey the government are fired whereas the government — the executive branch — is supposed to ensure the correct application of the law ! Don't forget that in December 2005, the interim President, Alexandre Boniface, dismissed five Supreme Court justices. This is completely illegal! Then they were replaced without following constitutional procedures. New judges were simply appointed and the current government has done nothing to change the situation.

DE: All these people are still in place ?

MJ: Yes. The Latortue regime fired over 300 judges and police chiefs. The first thing Latortue did was get rid of people who supported or who were appointed by Aristide. A lot of pressure was put on others. Since I worked on cases for Lavalas supporters, I was called the " rat's lawyer [the " chimères' lawyer ]. They couldn't fire me or erase my knowledge, so they used psychological pressure.

DE: During the time of Aristide, did judges obtain their positions legally ?

MJ: Yes and no. The constitution was only being partially applied. There is a constitutional procedure for the nomination of judges requiring the consent of assemblies in different departments throughout the country. This wasn't being respected. The Minister of justice was making recommendations and Aristide was granting commissions to judges. This is not a secure way of putting judges in place. I criticized it myself. I told Aristide to find a better way. If the President has the power to put judges in place, these judges will do his bidding in order to protect their positions. This is not healthy for a democracy. We must respect the constitution : the population must participate in the nomination of judges. I support the election of judges.

DE: And with the Latortue regime, these questionable practices worsened.

MJ: The Latortue regime turned the world upside down. Justice and the rule of law were thrown out the window. It was a dictatorship. And don't forget: the 'civil society' groups and the upper classes were constantly demanding 'justice' during Aristide's term, calling him a predator, accusing him of all sorts of human rights violations. Then they got into power and they carried out the most unimaginable acts! The coup d'État created a huge mess and now we have to work twice as hard to make up for lost time. The problem of the non-application of law is still with us. Presently, there are no trials. Over 1,000 people have been arrested in recent months, but the justice system is incapable of carrying out a trial. All sorts of cases are pending.

DE: When a country goes through 32 coup d'États in 200 years, does a tradition of non-respect for law develop among those that are supposed to apply the law.

MJ: Definitely. People in power are lax in their application of the law. Few people in government respect the judiciary. They look down on it. The judicial branch of government is used to launch political careers and legitimate power. They know the system is weak, that if they commit a crime they can avoid prosecution. And in the end, it's the population that suffers.

The poor majority of Haiti see things very differently than the elites. Take the 2004 coup d'État as an example. The people were demanding that Aristide's mandate and the constitution be respected. The upper classes were demanding Aristide's departure. That's the problem. The illiterate population of Haiti — the 'rabble' — were calling for law and democracy whereas the others were calling for anarchy!

People in power have traditionally had little respect for justice in Haiti. Even today the executive is calling for changes to the Constitution while the population is demanding that they simply apply the existing Constitution ! If you read the Haitian Constitution, you will see it is very progressive and socialist. It takes into consideration all major UN and OAS human rights treaties and conventions. But what do we have now ? We have a battle over the 48 hour rule. This is the rule by which anyone arrested must be charged or appear before a judge within 48 hours to establish probable cause. It doesn't take a genius to understand why this is a good rule! Why on earth would it even be debated ? Only dictatorships would consider not respecting such a rule ! Those in power right now are upset that this regulation is in the constitution. They want to change the constitution so they can find a way to keep their political enemies in prison.

A resident of Cité Soleil who declined to give his name, condemns the MINUSTAH killing of four women in the Bwa Neuf market in January 2006. Mario Joseph is in possession of 22 death certificates from a more recent MINUSTAH killing of civilians on December 22nd, 2007. According to the agreement signed between MINUSTAH and the Latortue regime, MINUSTAH has legal immunity for such crimes, leaving victims with no recourse for justice.

Madame Amanus Mayette has been fighting for the release of her husband, former Parliamentarian Amanus Mayette, since his arrest three years ago. The BAI is currently working with 116 documented

political prisoners in Haitian jails, all members of the Fanmi Lavalas Party, imprisoned by the Latortue Regime. The list is partial, the actual number being much higher. Mr. Mayette was accused of murder in the massacre of "La Scierie," a fictive event created by the NCHR, a Canadian-funded organization.

DE: Let's talk about a legal problem very important to Haiti : the violation of human rights law, the kinds of crimes that take the justice system beyond common criminal law.

MJ: This is a very troubling issue for Haitians. Take MINUSTAH for example. I don't even know where to begin ! I have in my hands the text of the agreement signed in April 2004 between MINUSTAH and the Government of Haiti. It gives complete immunity to MINUSTAH. I'm currently working on the case of July 2005 massacre in Cité Soleil. MINUSTAH still hasn't looked into the case. Not only that, but neither the victims nor BAI can file a case against MINUSTAH because they're immune.

DE: So what do you do ?

MJ: That's the problem. MINUSTAH cannot be legally brought before the Haitian courts. So what are we supposed to do ? What procedure do we use ? I've prepared the July 2005 cases but nothing has been done because MINUSTAH can't be judge and accused at the same time. With these immunity agreements, MINUSTAH is playing both roles: judge and accused.

DE: It sounds very confusing. Even you, perhaps the most articulate person in Haiti on this matter, you're having difficulty knowing what to do.

MJ: Exactly. Take the example of Jimmy Charles, arrested without a warrant by Brazilian UN troops, turned over to the police, only to end up riddled with bullet holes. What happened next ? MINUSTAH did the inquiry. This is why the inquiries are tainted. It's as though the Haitian State no longer existed. The authority of MINUSTAH, Canada, France and the US has created a situation where the State has lost all of its authority.

In other human rights cases, it's also difficult because the justice system is unaffordable for the poor of Haiti. If you're rich or important and your rights aren't respected, there is justice. Conversely, if you're powerful and you abuse human rights, you can find ways to avoid the consequences of your actions. But in the Bureau des avocats internationaux, we're calling people to account. We're busy and we have many victims who pay us nothing, but we're moving ahead. We are going to call Gérard Latortue to account, as well as the CSPN (The Higher Council of the National Police) and the Police itself.

DE: Are the recent prosecutions of Toto Constant and Carl Dorelien important for your work?

MJ: Very important. Moreover, in the past people were terrified of speaking out. That fear is disappearing. People here are demanding that dictators, human rights abuses, killers and rapists be called to account. We must do it. Just watch. I guarantee it: Gérard Latortue and his henchmen will face justice for what they did while in power. We are preparing all the cases.

DE: Your strategy is to push the system.

MJ: Exactly. And we've got to pressure the Government of Haiti as well. For example, according to the top UN representative in Haiti and head of MINUSTAH, Edmond Mulet, MINUSTAH had Préval's

blessing when it carried out the December 22nd massacre. That being the case, we are preparing a case against the Government of Haiti. Even if the State didn't give the order, they have done nothing to correct the situation or to investigate these crimes. The potential presence of criminals in a neighborhood does not give MINUSTAH a green light to open fire on civilians! The Government will be pursued for crimes against humanity if indeed they gave the order.

DE: What about the scale and nature of the crimes of the coup period? You have crimes committed by foreign governments, foreign troops and local actors on a scale difficult for any legal system to deal with. How do you proceed?

MJ: We're looking at strategies used after the tragedies of Rwanda, Yugoslavia and elsewhere. This is why we're building every case now. We're going to make noise, solicit the conscience of the international community. We'll set up tribunals to judge the perpetrators of the crimes of the coup of 2004. It's a huge undertaking. We have many powerful enemies such as the Canadian, French and American Governments who don't want their citizens or their ministers and officials condemned. But we're counting on our friends.

DE: What cases are you are working on presently?

MJ: We're working with political prisoners right now. We're at the appeal stage with René Civil, Amanus Mayette and Father Gérard Jean-Juste. With many others, we've just opened the cases. We're petitioning the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the OAS in the case of former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune. We're also following the murder cases of activist Jimmy Charles and journalist Abdias Jean, both killed by the Latortue regime.

DE: So your work now is heavily concentrated on the consequences of February 29th, 2004.

MJ: Absolutely. The coup brought with it huge numbers of murders and rapes. If The Lancet cited 8,000 murders in Port-au-Prince between 2004 and 2006, we have to double this number to reflect what happened throughout the country. Rape itself was used as a political weapon. When husbands are displaced or in hiding, women are vulnerable. Aside from raping women, the henchmen ordered children to have sex with their mothers or sisters. These were serious crimes.

Then there's the political prisoners. We've worked for over 200 already who've been locked up for their political affiliation, for refusing to accept the coup d'État and for demanding a return to democracy. There's also the case of La Scierie. The Canadian Government funded the NCHR — now the RNDDH — to prepare the cases of La Scierie, a case which led to the imprisonment of Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, Minister Privert and deputy Amanus Mayette. Mr. Mayette has been jailed for three years without charge!

DE: They're still paying the price for this fabrication.

MJ: To this day. It is incredible that so-called democratic and civilized countries like Canada, France and the US would participate in the disinformation campaign that led to the kidnapping of Aristide.

DE: Countries which subsequently said nothing during two years of massive crimes. Before the coup, Aristide is called a dictator. Then a real dictator is installed, his people kill and rape thousands, and no one says anything.

MJ: And the hypocrisy! For example, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peter MacKay, criticized Haiti for the imprisonment of Yvon Neptune after Latortue left power, but said absolutely nothing before, not even during Neptune's near-fatal hunger strike. It's pure hypocrisy! I don't understand how a globalized world can function with such hypocrites in power. These crimes would never be tolerated in Canada, France or the US, so why are these governments allowed to commit them in Haiti? They continue their dirty work in Haiti today by saying nothing about political prisoners or the summary killings in Cité Soleil by the UN forces (MINUSTAH).

DE: I've been to Cité Soleil four times in the last few weeks during which time MINUSTAH has arrested 70 people, calling them "criminals" and "gang members." We talked to people who said their neighbors and family members were being arbitrarily arrested, that they were never involvement in crime at all. I haven't found any journalists asking MINUSTAH officials about the nature of these mass arrests.

MJ: The media says nothing. They're giving MINUSTAH the freedom they need to arrest arbitrarily without warrants, to kill and rape, to do what they want. Take the case of Jimmy Charles, who was arrested by MINUSTAH and later riddled with bullets. We found him like that at the General Hospital. This has been happening since Aristide was kidnapped. In Cité Soleil today, MINUSTAH is violating human rights. They're killing people. They decide who lives and dies. The government, the media and even the International Community act as if this is normal, as if these people should be punished. Take for example the case of the massacre of December 22, 2006 carried out by MINUSTAH.

DE: You're working on this case right now?

MJ: Yes. I have 22 death certificates in my possession. It's a complicated case because the Latortue Government signed immunity agreements with the UN. I thought Préval would change the situation, but he hasn't. The question is this: with such a free hand given to MINUSTAH, what role does the State play after a massacre like this? We've got people with bulletholes all over their bodies but no journalists going down to find out how it happened.

DE: But we'll see this type of coverage on a website like HaitiAction.net.

MJ: Yes, and sites like IJDH, thanks to people like Wadner Pierre, Lovinsky Pierre Antoine, Kevin Pina and others. But that's it. Even human rights organizations aren't interested.

DE: I try to imagine a crime like this in Canada. It would be on the front pages for weeks.

MJ: Absolutely. We've got unarmed innocent people, young children, being shot to death.

DE: It seems as though the only reason given for these massive assaults on unarmed people is that "criminals" or "bandits" or "gang members" are present in the community.



MJ: Since the coup d'État, these terms are used as if they represented specific crimes. They are used to justify killing. Even if there are slight differences between Haitian law and Canadian or American law, our legal systems share all the same principles. You're innocent until proven guilty. If a verdict hasn't been declared, you cannot be treated like a criminal. Criminals must be arrested, judged and sentenced. Since the kidnapping of Aristide, the process of legal accusation has been reduced to name calling: the word "chimère" is used like a death sentence. This is how all the political prisoners, members of Lavalas, were rounded up during the coup. Their names were announced on the radio! If your name was on the radio, you had to hide right away. This is no way to carry out an arrest warrant ! If a judge issues a warrant, it must be kept secret, not announced on the radio ! This is how Prime Minister Neptune was arrested. In his case, he knew he had done nothing wrong. He called the Police Chief and said, "If you have a warrant, here I am." It was the same for Amanus Mayette.

Today the situation has changed. Now they're looking for 'bandits', the pretext used for the December 22nd massacre, and everyone is looking the other way. It's as though the US and Canadian Embassies no longer existed, as though the International Community was no longer in Haiti. When Aristide was in power, these groups did nothing but condemn human rights violations. Now, one would think these violations had ceased. And what about inquiries ? The question of excessive force is not even raised concerning MINUSTAH.

DE: The problem is also that people outside of Haiti trying to understand these matters are at the mercy of the mainstream media who are scooping up MINUSTAH's press releases and the UN News Service articles.

MJ: I was recently in Miami and I read the smear campaign against Amaral. These propaganda campaigns are directed against Haiti in general. When they show MINUSTAH giving food to people in Cité Soleil — just as Brazilian troops did in their own country — it is done to hide the fact that they're killing people, to hide the reality of the military occupation.

DE: We've seen it recently in Cité Soleil. They carry out mass arrests for days, then come in with water bottles, doctors and dentists.

MJ: And journalists and photographers. This is a conspiracy. It's not a new conspiracy. It goes back to 1804, the year of our independence. No one wanted Haiti to give a lesson to the world. Bush talks about freedom and liberty, but Haiti is the mother of liberty. We even helped Miranda and Bolivar achieve independence for Venezuela. The conspiracy includes the way Haiti is presented to the world : images of misery only, never images from Pétionville where people are better off. This tells the world that Haiti should be placed in quarantine. This conspiracy continues today with the consent of the Haitian Government who are for the most part brokers for foreign governments.

DE: There are many activists and supporters in the US and Canada who want to see an end to this conspiracy. Do you have any specific messages for them?

MJ: I have been able to advance in my work thanks to these people, people like you who come here looking to gather and spread good information. Ours is a battle of information. The entire kidnapping of Aristide was pulled off because of a battle of information. Progressives and activists must keep their eyes wide open. Our enemies are still there. There is an enormous amount of lying and propaganda.

Foreigners have to read our media very scrupulously because the society is very polarized. The perspective of the poor majority is absent from the media. Even here in Haiti, I know people who consider themselves democrats, socialists, progressives, and they were completely duped by the media. They bought the lie about Aristide. Independent media is very important. It was crucial in helping us tell the world the truth about Haiti. It allowed American and Canadian activists to pressure their governments so that the situation could improve.

It is crucial to sensitize your populations to the real situation in Haiti. My colleague Brian Concannon moved back to the US after the 2004 coup d'État. After 9 years in Haiti, he realized that crucial work had to be done in the US, telling people the incredible damage the coup d'État did to our young democracy. I encourage people to come to Haiti. Even a few weeks can affect people strongly. I always make myself available for people. I put them in contact with progressive individuals and organizations. I've met many progressive people at the World Social Forum in Brazil and Venezuela, people who openly criticize their own governments, people like Anthony Fenton and Yves Engler in your country, Canada.

The struggle for democracy isn't over at all. People voted for Préval in 2006 but he is more interested in talking with imperialist powers than fixing internal problems. We still have hundreds of political prisoners. Very little real change has occurred since Latortue left power. Haiti wants to participate in a globalized world, but not with the hypocrites who have been undermining our democracy. We are looking for people to help us construct democracy and the rule of law, not the contrary.

**Wanted gang leader arrested in Haiti**  
**UN News Centre**  
**Crackdown on gang activity**  
**April 23, 2007**

Haitian National Police officers this weekend apprehended a gang leader who had been on the run since late February when law enforcement officials and United Nations peacekeepers seized control of his headquarters in Cité Soleil, the notorious slum area in the capital, Port-au-Prince.

The arrest of Belony Pierre, who led a gang in the Bois-Neuf area of Cité Soleil, “marks another significant step forward in the fight against Haiti’s armed gangs,” the Secretary-General’s spokesperson Michele Montas told reporters today in New York.

Haitian police arrested the suspect in St. Michel de l’Attalaye, 100 kilometres north of Port-au-Prince, and he was transferred immediately to the capital where he faces charges of murder and kidnapping.

The UN mission, known as MINUSTAH, assisted in his transfer and subsequent detention at police headquarters in Port-au-Prince by providing additional security.

In recent months, MINUSTAH has stepped up efforts to crack down on criminal gangs in violence-ridden Haiti; since the start of the year, more than 400 gang members have been arrested.

## **9 dead, dozens injured after ferry hits sandbar off Haitian coast**

**The Associated Press**

**International Herald Tribune**

**April 25, 2007**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: A ferry packed with more than 300 people hit a sandbar off Haiti's southern peninsula and pitched passengers overboard, killing at least nine of them and injuring dozens, officials said Wednesday.

The ferry was pulling out of port Tuesday when it hit a sandbar off the town of Jeremie, local official Jean Christin Joassin told the private Radio Metropole. The impact caused the ferry to tip to one side, tossing dozens of people — including several children — into the sea.

Rescuers recovered nine bodies and were searching for more, though the number of missing was unknown, Joassin said. At least 47 people were hospitalized.

The 560-ton ferry, built to hold 250 people, had been making a weekly trip to the capital of Port-au-Prince and was loaded with commercial goods. It later returned to shore after being pulled free by a larger boat.

As word of the crash spread, thousands of frantic people rushed toward the port, and police used tear gas to disperse them, Radio Kiskeya reported.

## **430 Haitians Get By on Ms. Riza's Annual Salary**

**Paul Wolfowitz and Haiti**

**By BRIAN CONCANNON**

**Counterpunch.com**

**April 25, 2007**

The controversy over World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz and the payraise (to \$193,590/year) to his Bank colleague and domestic partner, Shaha Riza, has focussed on the propriety of Mr. Wolfowitz' involvement in the promotion and raise, and the apparent hypocrisy of Mr. Wolfowitz lecturing against corruption in World Bank borrower countries while engaging in questionable practices at the Bank (see a good article in the Washington Post by William Easterly). But there has been very little discussion about the propriety of an institution whose mission is to fight poverty to be paying anyone that much money, and the hypocrisy of the Bank in general telling poor countries to cut salaries for nurses and teachers while it paid such high staff salaries.

The absence of these issues from the debates may be explained by the absence of the voices of the Bank's supposed constituents- the poor of Haiti and countries like it. The debates have been exclusively framed by relatively wealthy journalists, officials and policy makers living in relatively wealthy countries, with no input from the poor the Bank is supposed to be helping.

The World Bank compares the relative wealth of countries with a figure called per capita GNI (or Gross National Income), which is roughly a country's annual wealth produced divided by the number of people living there. According to the Bank's website, Haiti's per capita GNI is \$450, so on average 430 Haitians get by on Ms. Riza's annual salary.

The World Bank does not release its general salary information, and although Ms. Riza's salary is probably at the high end of the scale, it is a high scale to begin with. The Bank defends its salaries by saying that its employees live in expensive cities with high rents, and that it needs high salaries to attract the employees it wants- people with excellent resumes and world-class financial and management skills- who are also coveted by the private sector.

Although financial and management skills are vital to the successful operation of any financial institution, the World Bank is not just any bank- its success is supposed to be measured not by profits but by reducing poverty. The Bank has financial policies, but it also has political, moral and social policies: it tells poor governments how much they can spend on healthcare (and implicitly, how many citizens will die of preventable diseases), on education, clean water, roads, etc.

Solid analysis of the financial data is essential for making good economic, moral, political and social policy decisions, but the decisions require other skills as well, including an understanding of the implications of those policies beyond the spreadsheets. Someone making \$193,000 year would have only a limited understanding of what healthcare cuts mean to the 430 Haitians struggling to getting by on their share of that amount, a share that leaves no room for health insurance.

I have no reason to doubt that the Bank's employees do a good job of financial analysis, but there are plenty of reasons to doubt that the institution is effectively fulfilling its poverty-fighting missions. Many of its borrowers are poorer now than they were when the Bank started to help them. Global

inequality, as well as death by preventable disease, increases every year. In recent years, countries that have had the opportunity to escape the Bank's "help" have been willing to pay billions of dollars to do so.

This scandal might be a good opportunity for the Bank to reflect on what kind of an institution it is, and what kind of people it wants to attract. It may find that by emphasizing its mission over salary, that it can find people with the technical skills who are willing to accept as part of their compensation the knowledge that they are working to fight poverty.

Brian Concannon Jr. is a human rights lawyer and directs the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, [www.ijdh.org](http://www.ijdh.org)

**Cuba, Haiti to Expand Cooperation**  
**Prensa Latina**  
**April 25, 2007**

Havana, The Cuban ministers for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation met Tuesday Jean Renald Clerisme, Haiti's minister for Foreign Affairs and Religion.

The visitor held official talks with Cuban Minister Felipe Perez Roque with whom he signed an agreement.

Haiti FM Pays Official Visit to Cuba

He also checked with the head of MINVEC, Minister Marta Lomas, the state of bilateral ties and cooperation, namely in health and education.

This first visit will help strengthen relations between countries, which share cultural ties and membership in the Non Aligned Movement.

He will also meet with other state officials and visit places of historic and cultural interest in line with the busy agenda began Monday by counterparts from Iran, Malawi and Egypt.

**Intensive Diplomatic Work in Cuba**  
**Prensa Latina**  
**April 23, 2007**

Havana, Apr 23 (Prensa Latina) Authorities and high ranking officials from Iran, Malawi, Haiti and Egypt started in Havana on Monday activities aimed at strengthening bilateral relations with Cuba.

Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Manouchehr Mottaki, and his Cuban peer Felipe Perez Roque met in Havana.

Mottaki laid a wreath at the Monument of Cuba's National Hero Jose Marti at the Revolution Square.

On her part, Malawi's Foreign Minister Joyce Hilda Banda is expected to meet with President of the Cuban Parliament and with Education Minister Luis Ignacio Gomez.

Also on Monday, Haiti's Minister of Foreign Relations and Cult, Jean Renald Clerisme, will hold talks with Cuban officials and sign a ministerial agreement.

Cuba and Haiti have long-standing relations of brotherhood and cooperation, mainly in health and education.

For his part, Deputy Foreign Minister of Egypt, Hatem Aziz Seif El Nasr, is expected to sign a visa exemption with authorities of the Island.

A cooperation protocol between the Raul Roa Garcia Higher Institute of Foreign Relations and the Egyptian Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic Studies Institute is also expected to be signed today.

On Sunday, the Egyptian high ranking official met with Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque on an agenda including issues linked to the Non Aligned Movement, currently presided over by Cuba. Egypt will assume NAM presidency in 2009.



**Haiti FM Pays Official Visit to Cuba**  
**Prensa Latina**  
**April 24, 2007**

Havana, Apr 23 (Prensa Latina) Haiti's Minister of Foreign Relations and Religion Jean Renald Clerisme starts an official visit to Cuba on Monday invited by his counterpart Felipe Perez Roque, with whom he will hold talks and ink an inter-ministerial accord.

Clerisme's first official visit to Cuba will strengthen links between the two nations, which share strong cultural ties and are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, an official source reported today.

Their agenda includes meeting with other leaders from the Cuban Communist Party, the State and Government and visiting sites of historic and cultural interest, and on Tuesday Clerisme is expected to hold official talks in the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Cuba has a historic relation with that Caribbean nation, the first one to become independent in the Americas, which includes important links of cooperation in health and education, stated the note.

**Haiti is taking « a new significant step in the struggle against armed gangs », according to the UN**

**25 avril 2007**

**AlterPresse**

P-au-P, — The arrest of gang leader Belony Pierre on the 21st of April at St Michel de l'Attalaye (North in Haiti) by the national police « marks a new significant step in the struggle against armed gangs » in Haiti, estimated The United Nations in a note transmitted to haytian on line agency AlterPresse.

The Struggle against gangs in Haiti « has intensified during the last months, with the support of the United Nation's Mission for Stabilisation in Haiti (MINUSTAH) », as has been indicated to AlterPresse by a dispatch of the UN News Centre.

The MINUSTAH has supported the national Police during the transfer and the detention of Belony Pierre to the head quarter of the judicial police in Port-au-Prince, where he has to stand trial for murder and kidnapping.

Belony Pierre was fugitive since the end of February 2007, when MINUSTAH forces and the police took over control of his bastion in the Cité-Soleil (periphery north of the capital).

Belony Pierre is already the fifth gang leader who has been arrested by the Haitian police and UN soldiers since the launch of a wave of military and police operations in the slums of Cité-Soleil.

Johnny Pierre Louis, alias Ti Bazil, is the first out of these gangs to be neutralized by the order troops. His arrest has taken place on the evening of the 18th of February 2007, while thousands of Haitians took part in the carnival festivities.

Johnny Pierre Louis is considered to be the lieutenant of gang leader Evens Jeune, alias Ti Kouto, who has been arrested on the 13th of March 2007, in the commune of Cayes in the southern administrative region. After his transfer to Port-au-Prince, in the afternoon of that same day, Evens Jeune has already been presented to the public prosecutor's department of the capital, where he has answered questions to a judge who's in charge of his file.

In the beginning of April 2007, gang leaders like Alain Cadet, alias Pinochet, Jean Tony (Lieutenant of Belony) and William Baptiste, alias Ti Blanc, have also been incarcerated during the Easter festivities.

Meanwhile, police authorities are still after other bandits, like Jean Tony, Yoyo Piman, Wilson, Amaral Duclonat and Blade Nazon.

A television message showing pictures of these gang leaders is being shown on hertzian television channels of the Haitian capital since several weeks, asking the population to cooperate with the order troops to arrest the persons concerned. [me rc apr 04/25/2007 15:59]

## **Haiti : Which Strategy to Reduce Poverty ?**

**By Wooldy Edson Loudior**

**Alter Presse**

**Translate from French by Menno Ernst**

**April 25, 2007**

P-au-P., -- On Thursday 12th April, the Haitian minister of Planning and External Cooperation, Jean Max Bellerive, has launched the preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

The context of this initiative is characterized by high costs of living, the increase or instability of prices from primary goods, the skepticism towards promises of international donors and the desperation among Haitians. The result is that more and more Haitians are willing to put their lives at stake and attempt to reach the USA coast or the Dominican Republic, in order to escape their « growing » misery.

The administration of President René Garcia Préval and Prime Minister Jacques Édouard Alexi keeps waiting, impatiently, for donations which are promised to them by countries, organizations and other donators of the international community.

It hopes that this PRSP equips them with the fundamental device that forms the foundation for processes of granting loans and debt relief by the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in favor of governments from countries with small revenues, such as Haiti.

In order to realize this, the government intends to open, « between now and December 2007 », a « national dialogue » about conditions and priorities of the country and the necessary strategies to promote growth and, most important, reduce poverty, one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of the United Nations (UN).

This new project will also establish a cooperation program which will serve as a framework for the relations of Haiti with his financial partners and for its needs and sources of financing.

ICF, predecessor of PRSP

PRSP is the predecessor of the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF), created by the transition regime immediately after the fall of ex-president Jean-Bertrand Aristide on February 29, 2004. Afterwards, in July 2004, it was presented by the interim authorities during the donor conference in Washington.

The ICF was mainly centered on the organization of elections to terminate the political transition and also to the process of structural reforms in state institutions in accordance with specific macro-economic objectives. At the end of interim period, a Social Appeasement Programme (PAS) was also theoretically integrated.

The reforms have been oriented to the objective of redressing the economic crisis situation the country was confronted with and, more in particular, the social strata of the most disadvantaged areas.

The ICF was also created to serve as a bridge which could lead the new government from the latest elections towards the elaboration and implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).

Meanwhile, during the donor reunion held at Port-au-Prince on the 25th of July 2006, national and international social movements, such as the Haitian Platform to Advocate for an Alternative Development (PAPDA), Jubileo Sur América (JSA) and the Popular Democratic Movement (MODEP), demonstrated against any extension of the ICF, which they considered to be « in accordance with the neoliberal politics » of the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB).

On the 20th of July 2006, the European-Haitian Cooperation (CoE-H) had published a document in the same context, in which questions were raised about the ICF.

This mixed platform made of European and Haitian organizations criticizing the initiative's « lack of participation from civil society, from its start until its implementation, its succession and its evaluation, in the course of the last two years » (from 2004 until 2006).

They also regretted the absence of any process of consultation from the direction council of the ICF with « the poorest and most marginalized sections of Haitian civil society, those who are supposed to be the largest beneficiaries of the ICF ».

#### Questions and concerns of the social movements

The release of the PRSP reopens the debate between the Haitian government and the « anti-neoliberal » or « alternative » social movements about which development politics should be adopted and implemented in the country.

The predecessor of the PRSP, the ICF, is also being questioned in many other ways. One could, for example, wonder if « the audit and the independent evaluation of the ICF, in which donors themselves are engaged, has actually taken place in February 2006 » and what results are being produced.

Another question concerns the approach that will be adopted in the elaboration process and the implementation of the « national » strategy to reduce poverty, in a country where more than half the population has an income less than one dollar a day.

Which sectors of national life the government is intended to involve in the « national » dialogue about the PRSP ? Only the private sector, the executives, the experts, the donors and the international financial institutions, like it was the case with the ICF ? Or also organisations of the civil society, the citizens, particularly the poor themselves, who are the primary affected, are they invited as well to participate in the dialogue ?

The social movements are already starting to worry that this new project will be nothing more than a repeat of other governmental programmes, like the Social Appeasement Programme (SAP) and the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme, which they consider, just like the ICF, as total failures, as well in their design and application, as in terms of concrete and structural results in their concrete struggle against poverty. [wel me gp apr 25/04/2007 08:00]

**Savannah Pays Tribute to Haiti**  
**WTOC11, Savannah, Georgia**  
**April 24, 2007**

Back in the Revolutionary War, Haitians came to Savannah to help fight the British.

Now, Savannah is paying tribute to Haiti with a new monument planned for Franklin Square downtown. Members of the Haitian- American Historical Society from Miami are in town this week to tour and visit our city, and see where this monument will be placed.

The date was October 9, 1779, and Haitian-Americans say it's an honor to be remembered.

"The Haitians shed their blood for the country and city of Savannah," Daniel Fils-Aime told WTOC.  
"When the country was fighting for it's independence, we came."

Haiti's minister of culture was also in Savannah this past weekend. The monument should be in place by the end of the year.

Reported by: Don Logana, [dlogana@wtoc.com](mailto:dlogana@wtoc.com)

**Opinion**  
**April 25, 2007**  
**Assistance for Haiti**  
**The Dominican Today**

The 13th Meeting of Ministers of the Rio Group and the European Union ended last week in Santo Domingo with a proposal of an additional 25 % increase in aid for the development of the Republic of Haiti.

In this manner the donor countries accepted a proposal from the Dominican Republic where it relied on a Resolution highlighting the international community's efforts in helping the neighbor State recover from the critical economic situation that affects it and the social and political instability which it has been subjected to for already more than two decades.

Dominican Republic is the country most concerned with the situation that prevails on the other side of the dividing line shared with Haiti.

Hundreds of thousands of Haitian citizens have crossed into Dominican territory fleeing terrified from the poverty and lack of basic opportunities in that Nation. It's the international community's duty and commitment to come to the aid of Haiti.

For that, important economic resources and massive technical assistance are needed to orient the Haitian institutions towards the road to stability and democratic governance.

The Rio Group in its encounter in Santo Domingo understood the Dominican government's call for the need to allocate financial resources in addition to those it already promised to help the Haitian people.

According to what he raised in this international conclave, the Dominican Foreign Relations minister Carlos Moral Troncoso, Haiti in the decade of the 1970s received more tourists than the Dominican Republic, also affirming, that an industrial model of development in the environs of the border similar to what prevailed between Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic with the so-called twin or complementary plants, must be repeated.

Promoting investments along the entire Dominican-Haitian border is an effective way to contribute to the economic development of the neighbor State and the concept of twin plants is a viable option to produce jobs and opportunities on both sides of the border.

The main problem that our Nation confronts, and it's there for all to see, is the worrisome migratory flow of Haitian nationals towards Dominican territory in search of a better life.

Recently, and for the sake for providing the tools for the sister nation to promote the development of its economy, the United States Congress approved the so-called initiative Haitian Opportunity Partnership Encouragement Act (HOPE). This legislation is a type of Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) for Haiti. HOPE would seek preferential treatment in U.S. territory to exports originating from Haiti.

The establishment of export industries throughout the Dominican-Haitian border represents, with this Initiative that the United States promotes, an opportunity for both countries to stimulate the bi-national cooperation by means of the intra-border and trans-border development on the island called Hispaniola.

**Ex-Haiti consul rejects racist label of Dominicans**  
**The Dominican Today**  
**April 23, 2007**

Santo Domingo.- The ex- Haitian consul in the Dominican Republic said the defenders of the Haitian immigrants rights exaggerate when they blame Dominicans of being racists.

Edwin Paraison said there is a “small” group in the country which exploits the supposed dangers that the presence of the neighboring nation’s immigrants pose for the Dominican Republic.

The ex-consul made his statements in an interview for the D'Agenda program on Channel 37.



**Dominican, Haitian bishops demand a stop to illegal immigration**  
**The Dominican Today**  
**April 24, 2007**

Santo Domingo.- The Dominican and Haitian Episcopal Conference yesterday asked the authorities of both countries to reduce the migration flow, that the bishops say is "massive, anarchical and illegal." They also requested legislation that respects the right to a name and a nationality.

In a joint statement, the Dominican and Haitian bishops ask both governments to solve the great problems affecting these countries and demand the creation of jobs and improvements in health, education, housing and natural resources.

They also request legislation without ambiguity, to respect the right of each person to have a name and a nationality. "It's necessary to seek the solution to the great problems, such as that each person has an identity card as a citizen," they say in the document.

Both conferences met in Port-au-Prince from April 15 to 17, where they held a Eucharist in that capital's Cathedral, with the participation of a large number of priests, monks and nuns, laypersons, Haiti's president René Preval, Government officials and diplomats.

The Dominican and Haitian bishops said the Church is currently feeling the pain and the sadness of lamentable occurrences such as abuses, injustice, manipulation of information, corruption in the border, the trafficking of humans, drugs and guns and acts of violence. They say what's most lamentable it's the tendency to blame the other and to see people and institutions who, in their personal interest, exploit both people's poverty.

## **Young survivors bring Little Haiti church to tears**

**BY JACQUELINE CHARLES**

**Miami Herald**

**April 24, 2007**

Isemaelite Vassor, Lifaite Lully's mother, center, cries during a Sunday service. Lully died after a perilous journey from Haiti in hopes of reaching U.S. soil. One by one they walked in: five girls in spring flower dresses with their hair neatly braided, nine boys in black slacks and white shirts. No one noticed the children -- ages 10 to 17 -- until the priest interrupted his homily.

"These are the kids from the boat," the Rev. Reginald Jean-Mary told a packed Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Church just as the children took their seats up front.

At their first visit to the Little Haiti church, the young survivors -- who had remained nameless and faceless since they arrived from Haiti on a rickety wooden sailboat that washed up on Hallandale Beach March 28 -- brought tears to Notre Dame's parishioners.

Emotions ran deep at the Sunday services -- just one day after 1,200 mourners had come to the same church to bury the one known man who didn't survive among 102 who arrived on the trip: Lifaite Lully, 24.

The children didn't speak but gave church members an insight into their harrowing journey through a song they asked to sing in their native Creole.

"Deliver me, oh Lord. I feel I am drowning," the children sang, some choking back tears. "Water is getting to my neck. I feel like I am stuck in mud. I don't have anywhere for me to rest my head. A lot of people are making me suffer, they turn me into an enemy. They put me in jail for nothing."

As the Haitian children -- all designated as "unaccompanied minors" by immigration authorities -- sang, parishioners joined in and teared up.

Some in the crowded church wailed loudly as if they, too, were reliving the trip that Haitians on board said took 22 days -- much of it without food or water, at one point cooking rice with saltwater.

Before they sang, with Lully's grief-stricken mother sitting in the front row, the children looked toward her, and in a show of solidarity each donned a T-shirt bearing Lully's image and the Haitian community's message for equal treatment. They wore the T-shirt over their donated clothes.

"They have experienced a lot of trauma at sea," said Jean-Mary, who asked officials at Boystown, where the children are being detained, to allow them to attend services at Notre Dame.

Jean-Mary hopes the rare outings will give the children, reared in the Catholic faith, a sense of hope and allow them to cope with their unknown future. He did not allow anyone in church to take photos of the children or to ask them anything about their trip. They were immediately escorted out of church after the service.

"Coming to church is a good opportunity for them to see people, to see the Haitian community and not feel as if they are alone," he added.

For Haitian Americans at Notre Dame -- many of them survivors of their own perilous journey to Florida -- the children were a bittersweet symbol: the hope of a better tomorrow mixed with the sorrow of their uncertain future.

Since the migrants' arrival, Haitian and immigrant activists have stepped up calls for the Bush administration to change its policy of detaining Haitians and to release all of the migrants -- especially the children.

"The first priority for us is to try and get the children reunited with family members. However nice a shelter is, it's never the same as a home where you know people and you feel more comfortable with them," said Deborah Lee, one of the attorneys at the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center representing the youngsters.

But she and FIAC executive director Cheryl Little admitted that winning the legal fight to remain in the United States will be an uphill battle.

"It's especially difficult for children because most arrive extremely traumatized and they are not entitled to a free lawyer, a guardian and they are facing a very complex legal system," Little said.

## **EU lifts freeze on 233M euros in aid for Haiti**

**April 24th, 2007**

**by Tarique International**

**Prensa Latina**

Port Au Prince, The European Union (EU) has lifted its freeze on 233 million Euros meant for infrastructure projects in Haiti over the next six years (2007-2013), according to the Radio Metropole station.

European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner made the announcement after the 13th Rio-EU Group ministerial meeting in the Dominican Republic, the Haitian radio station reported Monday.

Diverse Dominican and Haitian organizations exhorted during the meeting that the financial aid fulfill the agreement in the fixed periods.

President Rene Preval has insisted, since he was inaugurated in the poorest country of the hemisphere, that it needs international help as more than 75 per cent of the population lives in abject poverty.

The international community has not provided so far the one billion USD promised at the first Donors Conference in Washington for 2004-2006, nor the additional 750 million USD pledged at the last donors conference held in Port au Prince in 2006.

## **Migrants from Haiti going against tide**

**BY FRED GRIMM**

**Miami Herald**

**April 24, 2007**

Four weeks ago, I watched as firemen, like pallbearers, carried away the body of an anonymous immigrant who had washed up on Hallandale Beach. Nothing remained of his futile attempt to reach Florida but a tragic irony: If he had survived his journey, he would have been sent to federal lockup to await deportation.

By his actual funeral in Miami on Saturday, Lifaite Lully had become a symbol of the maddening disparity in the treatment of Haitians able to make landfall in the U.S. and the wet-foot dry-foot policy that allows Cubans to stay. Lully's 101 surviving companions have been under arrest since they came ashore.

Two weeks later, 20 Cuban boat people who made it to Miami were paroled the next day.

It was Lully's funeral Saturday, but the eulogies were really about the living, full of demands for justice and equal treatment for Haitian boat people. Down here in South Florida, where local civic and religious leaders rail about the stark unfairness of wet-foot, dry-foot, a change in the policy seems almost inevitable.

### **COLD NEW ATTITUDE**

But we live in a bubble, away from the harshening national attitudes toward leaky borders and undocumented immigrants. Even as ministers at Lifaite Lully's funeral spoke of brutal inequities facing Haitian immigrants, Rudy Giuliani, a one-time champion of immigrant rights, was on the campaign trail in Iowa paying homage to a cold new attitude. The New York Times reported that Giuliani, in his quest for the Republican presidential nomination, has adopted a hard line toward amnesty for illegal immigrants.

Giuliani and other national political leaders know an unforgiving sentiment on immigration has roiled the country.

Stateline.org reports that so far this year, legislatures in 18 states have passed 57 new laws aimed at employment and benefits available to illegal immigrants. More than 1,100 bills, some stunningly onerous, are still pending. Legislators frustrated with Washington's failure to deal with illegal immigration are taking matters into their own clinched fists.

Arkansas has prohibited the state from doing business with any company that hires illegal immigrants. The Georgia Senate passed a bill forcing judges to investigate defendants' immigration status. Tennessee senators approved a bill requiring employers to verify a worker's immigration status. A bill pending in the Alabama House would allow police to impound illegal immigrants' vehicles. The Texas Legislature may rope local law enforcement into enforcing federal immigration laws. A referendum proposal gaining momentum in Arizona would revoke the business license the first time any company is caught hiring illegal immigrants.

## A TURN TO THE MEAN

The climate, outside South Florida and a few other urban enclaves, has turned mean. Even a cheery-sounding USA Today-Gallop poll last week finding 78 percent of respondents approved giving illegal immigrants a path toward citizenship dims on closer examination.

That majority includes 42 percent who would first require illegal immigrants to return to their home country.

That's also reflected in the only immigration reform bill with life in Congress, which would require immigrants to learn English, pay back taxes and go home before they get a shot at legal residence. And that's way too permissive for politicians riding the anti-immigration wave.

It makes talk of a special exception for Haitian boat people seem a little wistful.

**Exiled Aristide to get PhD**  
**News24, South Africa**  
**April 25, 2007**

Johannesburg - Former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was set to receive a PhD in African languages on Wednesday from the University of South Africa (Unisa).

Aristide has been living in South Africa since being ousted from Haiti in 2004.

President Thabo Mbeki was due to attend Aristide's graduation on Wednesday evening.

Aristide was appointed a research fellow at the university in October 2004.

The former Catholic priest was forced into exile after years of protests about his rule culminated in a violent rebellion in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince in early 2004.

After 2½ months in Jamaica, he arrived in South Africa in May 2004 to a red-carpet reception from the government and has been living here since then with his family and bodyguards as a guest of the government.

'Man of the past'

In 2006, Aristide said he wanted to return to Haiti, claiming at the time that the success in elections of his ally President Rene Preval was a vote for his return.

In a February interview with the London Review of Books he ruled out a return to a full-time political career in Haiti, expressing a preference for a post in education.

Preval has left the door open to Aristide's return, but the United States has expressed its concerns about the return of a "man of the past". - Sapa-dpa

**Mbeki guest of honour at Aristide graduation**

**Mbeki and his wife were guests of honour at Aristide's graduation ceremony**

**SABC News, South Africa**

**April 25, 2007**

Jean Bertrand Aristide, the ousted Haitian president, has been conferred a doctorate degree in Literature and Philosophy at the University of South Africa (Unisa).

President Thabo Mbeki, his wife Zanele, and Naledi Pandor, the education minister were guests of honour at the ceremony.

Aristide was appointed an honorary researcher at Unisa's College of Human Sciences in October 2004. Since he fled Haiti, he has been in South Africa as a guest of the government.



**EU Unfreezes Funds for Haiti**  
**Prensa Latina**  
**April 23, 3007**

Port au Prince, The European Union (EU) unfroze 233 million euros, devoted to infrastructure projects in Haiti, for the next six years (2007-2013), according to Radio Metropole station.

European superintendent Benita Ferrero-Waldner made the announcement after the 13th Rio-EU Group ministerial meeting in the Dominican Republic, the Haitian radio station reported.

Diverse Dominican and Haitian organizations exhorted during the meeting that the financial aid fulfill the agreement in the fixed periods.

President Rene Preval has insisted, since he was inaugurated in the poorest country of the hemisphere, that it needs international help more than 75 percent of the population that lives in abject poverty.

The international community has not provided so far the \$1 billion it promised at the first Conference in Washington for 2004-2006, nor the \$750 additional million of the last donors conference held in Port au Prince in 2006.

## **In Haiti, loyalists long for dictator's return**

**The Associated Press**

**International Herald Tribune**

**April 21, 2007**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Haitians danced in the streets to celebrate the overthrow of dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier, heckling the tubby, boyish tyrant as he was driven to the airport in a black limousine and flown into exile in 1986.

Most Haitians hoped the rapacious strongman known as "Baby Doc" had left for good, closing a dark chapter of terror and repression that began under his late father, Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier.

But now, a handful of loyalists are campaigning to bring Duvalier home from exile in France, launching a foundation to improve the dictatorship's image and reviving Duvalier's political party in the hopes that one day he can return to power democratically.

His backers concede life in Haiti could be brutal for Duvalier's opponents but are nostalgic for the relatively stable period the country experienced, compared to the upheavals of recent years.

"Since Jean-Claude left, there's no work, no food, no nothing. Only burning tires, people getting killed and kidnappings," Jesus Duvernois, 71, said at a gathering last week to mark Papa Doc's 100th birthday. "Without Duvalier, there is no country."

Dozens attended the gathering in a house in a leafy suburb of the Haitian capital, including ex-military officers, a leader of the Duvalier regime's ruthless militia and Baby's Doc's French fiancée, Veronique Roy. They sipped fruit punch, tapped their canes to old Haitian compa tunes and pined for the past while looking at black and white photos from the Duvalier era.

"I'm going to die a Duvalierist, but I hope Jean-Claude comes back before that happens," said Yvette Jean Phillippe, 63, who prays for Baby Doc's return.

But hatred for the former regime runs so deep in Haiti that it is highly unlikely the 55-year-old would ever be voted into power. Victims of the Duvalier regime are offended even by the suggestion.

"The only reason he should come back is to go to jail for all the money he stole and the people he killed," said Bobby Duval, a former soccer star who was starved and tortured while locked up for 17 months under the Duvalier regime for speaking out against human rights abuses.

The younger Duvalier was named "president for life" at age 19 following his father's death in 1971. An estimated 60,000 people were killed during the 29-year father-and-son dictatorship, while many others were maimed by the dictatorship or forced into exile. If Duvalier returns, many Haitians believe he would be arrested and charged with murder and misappropriation of US\$120 million in public funds — allegations he has denied.

His supporters founded the Francois Duvalier Foundation late last year to promote positive aspects of the dictatorship, including the creation of most of Haiti's state institutions and increased access to

education for the country's black majority. Loyalists also offer pro-Duvalier lectures for youths and want to start a Duvalier-themed library and Web site.

Duvalier's National Unity Party was recently reconstituted and plans to enter candidates in December's Senate race. That would mark the party's first participation in a national election since Duvalier was toppled 21 years ago.

The party hopes he can one day democratically reclaim power. But while Duvalier, who is living in Paris, announced in 2004 his intention to return to Haiti, he has denied plans to run for president.

Haiti has embraced democracy since the Duvalier regime, but the transition has been rough. The country has suffered through repeated coups, a brutal right-wing military regime and a bloody 2004 uprising that toppled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Today, U.N. peacekeepers provide the only real security. Haiti has only a few thousand police for a country of 8 million. Unemployment and despair are rife, leading thousands of Haitians to flee to the United States in rickety boats each year.

The democratically elected government of President Rene Preval, a one-time anti-Duvalier crusader who was elected last year, has struggled to stamp out street violence.

Duval, the ex-soccer star who now runs the L'Atletique d'Haiti sports academy for poor youths, said Duvalier's return — however improbable — would only deepen Haiti's turmoil.

"If you really want to polarize this society, bringing back Baby Doc would do it," he said.

**IACHR encouraged by efforts to improve human rights situation in Haiti**  
**Caribbean Net News**  
**Saturday, April 21, 2007**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has concluded a visit to the Republic of Haiti at the invitation of the government of that country. This visit took place between April 16 and 20, 2007. The delegation was led by Rapporteur for Haiti, Sir Clare K. Roberts, Commissioner, accompanied by staff members of the Executive Secretariat.

The aim of the Commission's visit was to obtain general information concerning the human rights situation in Haiti, and in particular, to conduct follow-up observations on the issue of administration of justice in Haiti since the Commission published its report on the issue in March 2006, *Haiti: Failed Justice or the Rule of Law? Challenges Ahead for Haiti and the International Community*, and further to conduct an assessment of the situation of women and children in Haiti.

Based upon the information gathered, the Commission considers that the situation of the administration of justice still requires immediate and long-term measures to adequately address structural and institutional weaknesses. The current system and the absence of a state sponsored legal aid service continue to constitute challenges for the respect of human rights and the effective access to justice by the Haitian population.

In terms of the situation of women and children, the Commission received information about the prevalence of different forms of violence and discrimination against women and children in Haiti. Particularly in light of a child's protected status under domestic and international law, the Commission found that a majority of children in Haiti are deprived of their fundamental rights.

Regarding public security, the Commission notes an improvement in the situation in Port-au-Prince from previous months. The Commission commends the Government's initiative to establish a joint police-justice task force to enhance coordination and cooperation in the state's fight against kidnapping, which has led to the recent prosecution and conviction of seven individuals for this crime.

Further, the delegation was informed of renewed efforts by the police and UN peacekeepers to exert control over once gang-dominated areas of Port-au-Prince, such as Cité Soleil. At the same time, urgent measures remain to be taken by the state to install adequately equipped police stations.

The Commission commends the elected government of Haiti on its efforts with the support of the international community to set an agenda for the strengthening of the rule of law in Haiti and the steps taken to improve the situation of the administration of justice to render justice effective and accessible to the greater population of Haitians.

The Commission especially notes the recent presentation to parliament of draft legislation on the independence of the judiciary and the establishment of the school of magistrates and hopes that these bills will be given special priority, in order to ensure the independence of the judiciary, a prime ingredient for building democracy and fostering the effective rule of law.

However, many of the deficiencies and obstacles noted in the Commission's justice report remain to be addressed. In this connection, the Commission underscores the need to increase the budget for strengthening and reform of the justice sector, in order to ensure that sufficient resources are available to undertake a number of these reforms.

Notwithstanding the positive steps taken by the government of Haiti, there exists a critical need to provide basic social services to the population, which constitutes an inextricable link to the enjoyment of civil, political, social and economic rights. The Commission underscores its earlier finding that, without addressing the most immediate social and economic deficiencies, there is little hope of solid and sustained improvements in the state of security, justice and the rule of law.

With respect to prison conditions, the Commission is seriously concerned with the conditions in Haiti's National Penitentiary and police station holding cells. The National Penitentiary, built to hold no more than 800 people, is currently holding more than 2,500 detainees, some 2418 of which are still awaiting trial. This situation constitutes a flagrant violation of the Haitian criminal code and international human rights obligations.

The Commission urges the State of Haiti, with the support of the international community, to take immediate and concerted measures to address the extremely poor detention conditions, as well as to proceed to review the judicial status of the prison population without further delay, so as to evaluate files and organize swift judicial proceedings to dispense with cases presently constituting a flagrant violation of the American Convention.

The Commission expresses its grave concern about the egregious violations of the rights of children to be free from arbitrary detention, whereby boys and girls as young as 10 years of age are being held in prison facilities rather than the legally designated rehabilitation center, Centre d'accueil, which is not functional at present.

Consequently, the Commission calls on the State, with the concerted effort and support of the international community, to take prompt and adequate measures to address the high figures of prolonged pretrial detention of minors and the lack of a functioning rehabilitation center for these individuals.

With regard to the situation of women and children, the information received revealed the existence of widespread discrimination in Haitian society. This discrimination is present in all aspects of public and private life and affecting women's and children's equal access to basic services such as education, shelter and primary healthcare, as well as equal political participation.

Moreover, violence against women and children, including sexual, physical and domestic violence is extremely prevalent in Haitian society. The delegation also received reports of the prevalence of interpersonal and intrafamily violence against women.

Both state and non-state sources reported that this is still a silent issue due to the ostracism the victim can face when reporting the crime and a mistrust in the capacity of the justice system to provide an effective remedy. The phenomenon of domestic violence is still widely tolerated in Haitian society and constitutes one of the worst manifestations of discrimination against women.

The Commission commends the measures taken by the Minister of Women's Status and the Rights of Women to improve the condition of women in Haiti, including the implementation of her ministerial plan and ongoing support of the National Network on Violence Against Women.

However, the Commission was informed that the lack of legal aid and a shelter for women are pressing needs. In this connection, the Commission welcomes the appointment of a new police commissioner on women's issues, and the Haitian National Police's launching of a pilot program in two police stations to provide special services for women, including women victims of violence.

The Commission also welcomes the creation of the special unit for minors and encourages the Government to allocate necessary funding to these special units of the police to adequately respond to the rights of women and children.

During the visit, the Commission successfully organized a roundtable event to discuss and debate current conditions and recent developments in the administration and reform of the justice system in Haiti.

The event had the full support and participation of the Haitian State, in particular, the President (a.i.) of the Supreme Court and the Secretary of State for Justice made presentations. Presentations were also made by the Forum du Citoyen, a civil society network focusing on judicial reform, and the Rapporteur on Haiti of the Commission.

The Commission expects that this event will contribute to the ongoing national dialogue on the administration and reform of justice in Haiti.

Following the onsite visit, Secretariat staff will hold a two-day seminar on the inter-American human rights system with officials and functionaries from various Government ministries and agencies. The seminar will aim to build the capacity of relevant Government authorities charged with the responsibility of responding to communications regarding human rights issues and cases with the inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The Commission will continue to provide training and technical assistance to a coordinating body at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to improve communication and reporting procedures between the State and the Commission regarding human rights obligations of the state.

**UNICEF and partners help child domestic workers in Haiti regain their rights**  
**UNICEF**  
**April 20, 2007**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti – Andre does not know his real name nor how old he is. His mother died when he was young and he says he was sent to work for another family because his father was unable to take care of him.

Children in domestic service, known as ‘restaveks’ (meaning ‘staying with’ in Creole), are commonly found in Haiti. There are an estimated 173,000 Haitian children like Andre, representing over 8 per cent of children between 5 and 17 years of age.

Most children in domestic service come from the countryside and are sent to live with other families in the hope of a better life.

**Economic hardship**

In reality, the move often lands children in a worse situation. The first to wake up and last to go to bed, restavek children spend their days doing gruelling housework.

Besides working without pay, Andre says he was not provided with basic necessities like clothes and shoes and was forced to sleep on the floor. He recalls how his ‘host mother’ would spit on the ground and tell him he had to finish an errand before the saliva dried.

**Vulnerable to exploitation**

The exploitation of children in domestic service is compounded by economic hardship in Haiti, with many of the receiving families living in poverty themselves. Over half of the population lives below the \$1-a-day poverty line, and 76 per cent live on less than \$2 a day.

In 1994, Haiti ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, without adequate protection, children in domestic service remain vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse.

“Restavek children are deprived of the most basic child rights – the right to be cared for by their parents, the right to play, the right to express themselves and the right to be free from physical and sexual abuse,” declared UNICEF Haiti’s Chief of Child Protection, Njanja Fassu.

**Education and psychosocial support**

Psychosocial care and support for children in domestic service is a priority of UNICEF in Haiti. Most restaveks are not able to exert their rights or even voice their needs.

Jean-David (not his real name), was 11 when he left his family home. When asked what childhood activities he enjoys, Jean-David responds timidly, “I like cleaning.”

“We need to work on de-programming. Children are used to leaving a room when a host family member walks in,” says Director Wenés Jeanty of Foyer Maurice Sixto, a UNICEF-supported centre for children in domestic service. “The child domestic’s opinion doesn’t count and that’s why they rarely speak. Here we try to change this behaviour; we try to teach them how to relate to others and to recover their self-esteem.”

Child domestic workers feel further isolation from the social stigma of being a restavek. Andre, who finally escaped his abusive host family with the help of his brother, has since gone back to school. “I can’t talk about my experiences to my classmates or anyone. I don’t want anyone to know,” he confides.

### Reunification with parents

The Foyer Maurice Sixto programme emphasizes the importance of reuniting children with their biological families. In the worst cases, the centre finds alternative host families.

Jean-David recently visited his mother through a UNICEF-supported initiative that seeks to reunite restavek children with their families. “It had been four years since I hadn’t seen my mother, so it was very exciting,” he recalls. “I was surprised by the house – it was smaller.”

Separated for as long as 10 years from their parents, some restavek children return home only to discover that their parents have died.

UNICEF also supports programmes that work with host families to improve the quality of life for children in domestic service. Jean-David says he has a good relationship with his host family because they allow him to go to the Foyer Maurice Sixto centre every day. Learning to read and write has changed his life, he says, adding that he feels good at the centre “because here all children are the same.”



## **Haiti slum residents enjoy new peace, want more**

**Friday, April 20, 2007**

**By Joseph Guyler Delva**

**Reuters**

**Caribbean Net News**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (Reuters): Residents of Haiti's largest slums are enjoying more undisturbed nights since UN peacekeepers cleared out armed gangs, but they still want to see food, jobs and other hoped-for benefits of the new peace.

UN troops have dismantled a number of street gangs in the capital's sprawling slums since the beginning of the year and forced dozens of feared gang leaders to flee.

But residents say a dearth of social and economic programs may yet hamper efforts to achieve durable stability in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas.

"It's true the security situation has considerably improved, but you can't eat security. You need food and jobs and schools," said Mackenzy Pierre-Paul, a 32-year-old resident of Cite Soleil, Haiti's largest slum.

"The government and the international community need to rapidly invest in social programs to keep this peace," Pierre-Paul said.

The slums of Port-au-Prince have been gripped by gang violence periodically since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was pushed from power by an armed rebellion in 2004.

Under increasing international pressure to control the slums, UN troops sent to Haiti after Aristide was ousted launched an offensive more than two months ago that wrested control of Cite Soleil, Martissant and other shantytowns from the gangs.

Some of the most powerful gang leaders, among them Evens Jeune and William "Ti Blan" Baptiste, were arrested.

When the gangs ruled, gunfire often rang out at night and residents cowered in their flimsy shacks, afraid to sleep or move.

### **BIRTHDAY PARTY**

Now schools that had been closed for years have opened their doors. Residents who fled the area are returning, shops have reopened and the street markets are bustling again.

UN troops and Haitian police play with children in the streets in areas where they would not have dared set foot three months ago.

Marijo St-Fort, 37, said she organized a small birthday party for her 10-year-old son Michael this month, for the first time in five years.

"We did not have enough food and drinks to distribute to our guests, but we played music all night and had fun until 1 o'clock," she said. "It would have been unthinkable when the population was living under gang rule. Now we feel free, even though we still go hungry and penniless."

Some residents believe their situation has a better chance to improve because peacekeepers and Haitian police control the streets.

"It was a very good thing to chase away the armed gangs ... because you can't have development, job creation and social progress in places controlled by heavily armed bandits," said Bazil Banatte, who lives in the Bwa Nef area of Cite Soleil.

## SHARING LOOT

But some Cite Soleil residents express nostalgia for the rule of the gang leaders, who sometimes shared out kidnapping ransoms and other loot.

"The international community and the government have failed so far to fill the vacuum left by the gangs who used to help the population," said Mirlande Augustin, 27, a mother of four.

There are efforts being made to address the deep social needs, but progress is slow.

President Rene Preval has complained about delays in the disbursement of international funds pledged for Haiti, a nation of 8 million people where most live on less than \$2 a day.

"If the donor community and the government do not provide an alternative to the youngsters in the forgotten slums, violence and criminality will always be an option," said Renan Hedouville, head of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said this month the Bush administration would provide \$20 million to fund social and economic programs in Cite Soleil.

Yele Haiti, a foundation created by Haitian hip-hop artist Wyclef Jean, is distributing food, cleaning streets and paying scholarships for several thousand poor children.

"But only a massive investment program can bring about a structural change in the slums," said Max Henry Dieufene, a Cite Soleil carpenter.

**Officials Visit Haiti as Part of UN Efforts to Boost Economy, Status of Women**  
**04/19/2007**  
**Caribbean Press Releases**

Washington -- Officials from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and Division for the Advancement of Women have arrived in Haiti as part of the world body's efforts to help the country as it works to consolidate democracy.

A delegation from the Ad Hoc Advisory Group of ECOSOC is on a four-day mission to assess Haiti's economic and social development strategies, according to a news release from the UN Mission in the country (MINUSTAH), which was established in October 2004 after an insurgency forced then President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to go into exile.

Led by Canadian Ambassador John McNee, the team is working to evaluate the current situation in Haiti and assess the post-conflict reconstruction challenges faced by the country.

Among other tasks, the Group will examine the work of the UN country team and international assistance by all players on the ground, including follow up to recommendations made after it conducted a visit to Haiti in 2005.

In another development, a high-level delegation from the Division on the Advancement of Women met today in Port-au-Prince with the senior UN envoy to the country, Mr. Edmond Mulet.

This delegation, which arrived on Monday, is in Haiti to work in close collaboration with the Government to implement the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Haiti, which joined the pact in 1981, is scheduled to report to the committee which monitors it next year.

Source: un.org

**Haiti is top issue in today's Dominican capital summit**  
**The Dominican Today**  
**April 20, 2007**

SANTO DOMINGO.- The 13th Rio Group and European Union Meeting begins this Friday morning in this capital and soon after the opening ceremony headed by president Leonel Fernandez, Dominican Foreign Relations Minister will introduce the Haitian topic, the country's main proposal for the event.

In the meeting, that will verify the advances in Haiti's institutional development, the almost 50 Foreign Relations ministers will start the session.

Dominican Republic's interest is to take advantage of the senior European officials' presence to stress the need to expedite economic assistance for its Caribbean island neighbor.

In a luncheon held yesterday Foreign minister Carlos Morales and his Haitian counterpart Jean Rénald Clerisme defined the joint work program to be carried out in the coming months through the Mixed Bilateral Commission.

**Govt approves US\$15mn IDB water and sanitation loan - Haiti**  
**Business News Americas**  
**Friday, April 20, 2007**

The Haitian parliament has ratified a US\$15mn loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to expand potable water and sanitation services in four departments, national potable water service Snep director Pierre-Philippe Jean told BNamericas.

Now that the finance has been approved, Snep will be able to award a contract to a company to identify needs and carry out feasibility studies for the works in three of the departments - Artibonite, Nippes and Ouest - said Jean.

Six companies originally submitted bids for the studies, but Snep has already decided on a company they would like to award the contract to.

However, the selected proposal must receive the go-ahead from the Haitian public works and communications ministry as well as the IDB before the contract can be awarded, the director added.

In the meantime, project studies have already begun in the Grand'Anse department with local funding, said Jean.

These studies will allow for the definition of a list of cities for each department in which the works will be carried out, BNamericas reported previously.

In addition to the IDB loan, the World Bank will provide a US\$5.0mn grant to cover works in the Sud department, previous reports indicated.

The communities themselves will establish mechanisms to cover operation and maintenance costs for infrastructure built under the project, which is expected to take five years to complete.

The program will also provide resources to strengthen Snep, which is responsible for providing potable water and sanitation services to departments outside of national capital Port-au-Prince.

The IDB loan will be for 40 years, with a 10-year grace period. Annual interest will be 1% for the first 10 years, and 2% thereafter, according to IDB documents.

By Michael Ford

## **U.N. peacekeeping: Every soldier's dream?**

**23 Apr 2007**

**Reuters AlertNet**

"It's every Nepalese policeman or soldier's dream to serve with a U.N. peacekeeping mission. There's so much competition but also rampant favouritism and nepotism," says Nepalese policeman Sushil Kumar Khanal. His country is one of the top five contributors of personnel to U.N. peacekeeping missions, according to the BBC's five-part series on peacekeeping.

It's not the only South Asian country to be at the top of the list when it comes to serving under the U.N. flag. Together, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Nepal make up 40 per cent of police, troops and staff on the ground.

One of the attractions is the pay and, in some cases, relatively good living conditions.

"(Without serving in a peacekeeping mission in Haiti), I don't think my savings from my service at home would have helped that much - whatever we make (in Nepal) is hardly enough to survive," Khanal is quoted as saying.

In Haiti, he and his colleagues could relax in swimming pools or nearby beaches after their eight-hour shift or on their days off. And back home, Khanal built a house and sent his children to good schools with the help of the \$85-a-day salary he earned in Haiti.

The U.N. pays governments \$1,028 (£513) a month for each peacekeeper - more for specialists - plus extras for equipment and personal weaponry. This amount is unlikely to be an attractive salary for policemen and soldiers from richer countries.

But it's not just about the money. Peacekeeping is certainly a "much-desired assignment" in Bangladesh just like in Nepal, but it's also important for the country's image abroad, according to Fazle Elahi Akbar, a former general in the Bangladeshi army, cited by the BBC.

Some missions are known as an easy option, such as the so-called "Five-Star Mission" in Cyprus. The operation is considered relatively safe and carried out on an island full of tourists.

It's a different story in places such as Haiti and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where U.N. troops went as far as engaging in battles in order to enforce peace - a significant departure from the 1990s passive style of peacekeeping.

A battle between the U.N. and armed gangs in Haiti's Port-au-Prince slum of Cite Soleil earlier this year, resulted in some civilian casualties. In DRC, Maj Gen Patrick Cammaert took over the mission in early 2005 and set about enforcing the principle that "U.N. forces are impartial and not neutral". U.N. forces ended up fighting militias in the eastern part of the country.

But how are peacekeeping missions formed in the first place?

A request for a mission is put before the U.N. Security Council, which votes on whether it agrees in principle to the mission. This is the first resolution. If the vote goes through - and isn't vetoed by one of the five permanent Council members - then the U.N. secretary-general dispatches an assessment mission. The resulting detailed plan and rough budget is put before the Council for a second vote. A 'yes' vote to this second resolution (called a mandate) formally authorises the mission. The BBC's Patrick Jackson explains the lengthy process.

Only after the mandate has been approved can the U.N. Secretariat contact countries who may be contributing troops and equipment to the mission, according to Jean-Marie Guehenno, head of UN peacekeeping operations, in a debate with John Bolton, former U.S. envoy to the United Nations.

But even once this lengthy process is over, there's a lot more to do. Housing needs to be found or built, finances sorted out, people recruited and so on. Which is why it may take six months to deploy the 3,000 peacekeepers that Sudan has agreed to accept for Darfur.

**Officials visit Haiti as part of UN efforts to boost economy, status of women**  
**United Nations**  
**April 18, 2007**

Officials from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and Division for the Advancement of Women have arrived in Haiti as part of the world body's efforts to help the country as it works to consolidate democracy.

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**In Haiti, burying the dead is a luxury**  
**Funerals cost more than most earn; some bodies abandoned**  
**By Stevenson Jacobs**  
**The Associated Press**  
**April 19 2007**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti · Life has always been a struggle for Haiti's poor. These days, death isn't much easier.

The city morgue is under-refrigerated, jammed to capacity with unclaimed corpses and so short of funds that workers don't have paper masks to ward off the stench.

Deforestation has inflated the price of coffin wood, and hundreds -- possibly thousands -- of deaths in street violence are pushing up the price of funerals. Robbers plunder graves for coffins to resell, and families try to thwart them by smashing the coffin before it is covered with earth.

Some bereaved families are taking out high-interest "funeral loans," falling deep into debt to send off relatives with the dignity many were deprived of in life. Others have to abandon their dead on a dusty field known as Titanyen, a Creole word meaning "less than nothing," on the edge of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

A funeral now costs around \$540, more than most Haitians earn in a year. Cremation is only for the wealthy.

Haiti's largest public morgue, built to hold 390 cadavers, often has nearly 500, many strewn on the cement floor for lack of space. The dead include shooting victims, AIDS victims and babies who never saw their first birthday.

It costs a relative \$27 to pick up a body if it was dropped off at the morgue, and \$47 if the morgue had to collect it off the street. As a result, few bodies are ever claimed by relatives. They end up in a common grave outside the capital, along with those dumped at the Titanyen field.

"If the families don't have money to claim the bodies, they simply never show up," said morgue director Sergo Castor.

Marie Nicola's son was found dead in the street, his skull bashed in by unknown assailants in the taxi he was driving. The 62-year-old unemployed mother said she does not know whether she will be able to afford a decent burial.

"After you pay the morgue, you have to buy clothes for the body, a coffin and pay the church and the cemetery. We don't have anything, so it's very hard," Nicola said outside the morgue as relatives consoled her.

Outside the morgue, freelance undertakers with battered old hearses stand ready to haggle over a funeral price. It's an uncontrolled market.

"Sometimes you can see the economic situation of the person and you can negotiate a lower price. I'm human, too, so it affects me when people want to bury a relative but can't pay," said Carl Fanfan, an undertaker.

The Rev. Rick Frechette is a Catholic priest with the Illinois-based charity Friends of the Orphans, which runs an orphanage and a children's hospital in Haiti.

Trying "to do something a little more human for those that have died," the group makes coffins from papier-maché instead of wood and provides free burials for about 40 people a month, Frechette said.

Nicola said she'll ask relatives to chip in for her son's burial.

"If it's not enough then we will sell what we can," she said softly. "I will give him a good funeral if I'm able to."

## **Developing Haiti's Bel Air**

**16 Apr 2007**

### **Norwegian Church Aid - Norway**

More 40 wells providing water for 70,000 residents, tree planting, women's health activities, HIV and AIDS projects and more – Norwegian Church Aid is embarking upon a broad development project in Haiti.

Norwegian Church Aid has received a large grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to carry out a comprehensive and integrated development project in Bel Air, a poor area in the centre of Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince. A total of ten million Norwegian Crowns (nearly USD 1.7 million) will fund the first ten months of the project.

Work will be carried out in cooperation with Norwegian Church Aid's Brazilian partner organisation Viva Rio, the Soros Foundation and local Haitian organisations. Norwegian Church Aid has worked together with and supported Viva Rio's projects in Brazil since 1999, notably on an integrated development project in six districts in Rio de Janeiro that promoted culture, health and education.

#### **Reducing violence**

Viva Rio's main purpose is to reduce the occurrence of violence in Brazil through information campaigns, fundraising, small arms destruction and work to change police attitudes. Viva Rio is also a specialist in advocacy activities towards local and national authorities to reduce handgun proliferation.

"This project is a constructive initiative that will hopefully kick-start local development in the district of Bel Air, an area that is marred by poverty and violence. It is most exciting to be able to draw on Viva Rio's experiences and knowledge base in Haiti. This south-south approach is relatively new to Norwegian development strategy," says Johan Hindahl, Norwegian Church Aid's programme coordinator for Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

"We aim to mobilise women in local networks, promote local development, reduce violence and weapons use and use this project as an example that the rest of Haiti may draw experience from," says Hindahl.

#### **Stadium renovation**

The first phase of the project has been divided into four modules and aims to renovate a football stadium and build 40 wells to ensure access to clean water for the district's 70,000 residents. Two of Norwegian Church Aid's water engineers travelled to Port-au-Prince Monday 16th April to carry out an initial assessment and decide upon how best to provide the water solutions. The Brazilian battalion of the UN peacekeeping forces in Haiti, MINUSTAH, will provide their technical expertise and manpower to assist with some of the drilling.

Hindahl notes that some scepticism remains towards the initiative – from countries such as the USA, France and Canada, and stemming from these countries' involvement in Haitian politics during the 19th and 20th centuries.

"This scepticism is not found towards countries such as Brazil, although the Brazilian-led MINUSTAH forces present in Haiti are a subject for debate," says Hindahl.

**Large Chinese contingent arrives in Haiti**  
**Radio Jamaica**  
**April 16, 2007**

A large contingent of Chinese police has arrived in Haiti to support the UN peace keeping forces there. The 95 Chinese officers bring the total of Chinese officers in Haiti to 125.

China has contributed more than one thousand officers since the UN mission was established in October 2004 following an insurgency which forced then President Jean Bertrand Aristide into exile.

The troops come as the UN force continues to clamp down on armed gangs which have been operating in slum areas of the country.

## **Great expectations: (dis)integrated DDR in Sudan and Haiti**

**15 Apr 2007**

**Reuters and AlertNet**

Humanitarian and development donors, policy-makers and practitioners are increasingly advocating so-called integrated missions in transitional or post-conflict contexts. Such missions are being described as 'the new reality' for UN operations. Proponents of the integrated model are convinced that a system-wide approach to programming in post-conflict contexts can reduce the likelihood of conflicts resuming. More specifically, there is a growing sense that integrated approaches to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) can enhance the work of the two primary UN contributors – the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

While few observers dispute the desirability of integration in principle, many practical constraints confront integrated missions on the ground. In the two countries where integrated approaches to DDR are being piloted – Haiti and Sudan – interventions recently stalled. Despite the elaboration of comprehensive guidelines to help navigate the process, there appears to be comparatively little consensus on how integration should be defined, or how it can be operationalised. The 'new reality' of integration has been a hard pill to swallow.

A number of lessons are emerging from the recent experiences of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and the UN Stabilisation Mission for Haiti (MINUSTAH). In both cases, weaknesses in political leadership within and outside the UN, the absence of clear direction from headquarters, competing understandings of DDR among managers and practitioners and confusion over financing mechanisms have all limited effective integration. Despite optimism among diplomats and senior UN officials in New York and Geneva, there are growing concerns on the ground that 'integrated' DDR missions are in fact 'disintegrating'.

To integrate or not to integrate?

The impetus to integrate UN missions arose from a long-standing debate over how best to close the relief–development gap in humanitarian and post-conflict recovery contexts. The drive to integrate and 'join-up' was also fuelled by a conviction among some donors that the relapse of post-conflict countries into war had as much to do with incoherent and uncoordinated UN stabilization and recovery efforts as with structural factors in the countries themselves. The former Secretary General Kofi Annan referred to this as a 'gaping whole' and regularly lamented the lack of inter-agency cooperation.

From the beginning, the agenda was UN-specific. Early examples included efforts to promote greater synergies between the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. At the level of planning and programming, the integration of humanitarian, development, peacekeeping and fiscal priorities was encouraged in Common Country Assessments and UN Development Assistance Frameworks. Early experimentation reinforced the conclusion that the 'form' of integration should follow 'function' and that standardised templates were to be avoided.

Predictably, these early initiatives were afflicted with a host of growing pains. Whilst officials at the headquarters level lauded the coherence and coordination brought about by integration, there were

fierce disagreements at the country level over how to convert plans into practice. Was integration expected to promote joint planning and prioritisation, joined up programmatic interventions, or both? Managers and practitioners complained that the parameters of integration were unclear, and that few guidelines were issued to support the process. Tensions surfaced between UN agencies over mandates and priorities, particularly in resource-scarce environments.

### Integrating DDR in Sudan and Haiti

Although disagreements persist over what exactly DDR is expected to achieve, there is a consensus that it has a central function in transition and peace-support operations. In fact, there is a widespread – if empirically unfounded – conviction that DDR is causally associated with preventing renewed war in fragile post-conflict contexts, reducing victimisation and promoting durable reintegration of ex-combatants.

The UN has long had a lead role in DDR. It launched its first mission in 1989, in Central America, and has since undertaken or supported DDR in more than 20 countries. Lessons emerging from past DDR operations emphasise the importance of improving predictability and coordination among political actors and implementing agencies. The sheer range and variety of state and UN actors and budget lines involved in DDR, and the frictions that can ensue, seemed to make a coherent approach imperative.

DDR was identified as a prime candidate for 'integration' because it theoretically spanned the security-development continuum. A UN inter-agency working group on DDR composed of more than fourteen UN departments, agencies and non-governmental agencies was established in 2004. By 2006, the group had crafted operational guidelines – the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) – to define a 'common and integrated international approach to support national DDR efforts'.

A two-pronged approach was adopted. First, in order to generate the necessary political and normative conditions for integration, DPKO and UNDP encouraged donors to adopt recommendations in UN Security Council resolutions endorsing 'joined-up' operations. Second, DPKO and UNDP headquarters strongly advocated for the creation of 'joined-up' DDR Units/Sections within UN country missions in two pilot countries – Sudan and Haiti. It was expected that unified 'decision-making mechanisms' could readily translate policy prescriptions into practical interventions.

### DDR in Sudan

The case for an integrated approach to DDR in Sudan was firmly embedded in various legal documents, including UNSC Resolution 1590. The preconditions for DDR were also theoretically enshrined in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ending Sudan's civil war in the south. National commissions were established in 2005 and 2006 to oversee DDR in the north and south of the country, and an UNMIS DDR Unit – comprising DPKO and UNDP – was set up to guide the process. By the beginning of 2007, it was expected that over 91,000 government and rebel troops would be involved.

The reality on the ground was far more complex than anticipated by drafters of UNSC Resolutions and CPA supporters. Neither the Sudanese government in Khartoum nor the Sudanese People's Liberation

Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Juba demonstrated much serious interest in supporting DDR. The UNMIS DDR Unit soon discovered that there were far more armed groups than originally anticipated, including a combination of SPLA factions, pro-Khartoum militia, pastoral self defence groups and others deliberately excluded from the CPA. The issue of civilian disarmament was exempt from the CPA, and the integrated DDR Unit struggled to define a coherent way forward.

Within the DDR Unit, tensions emerged between the DPKO and UNDP over the best way forward. The UNMIS DPKO contingent endorsed the conventional top-down approach prescribed by the CPA. UNDP – together with a number of local organisations – advocated for an alternative model that included a 'community security fund' and the promotion of needs-based disarmament. This emphasised local and participatory approaches to defining 'community security needs', and supported 'development' incentives in exchange for voluntary disarmament. UN policy makers and practitioners admit that, despite their best intentions, very little has been achieved over the past two years beyond the approval of a national DDR policy.

### DDR in Haiti

MINUSTAH adopted an integrated approach to DDR, as prescribed by UN Security Council Resolution 1542. But planners and practitioners quickly realised that the preconditions for DDR did not exist. Unlike Sudan, there had been no 'conflict' per se, there were no clearly defined armed groups and there was no peace agreement to guide the process. Nevertheless, an approach was developed by the new national commission on disarmament and the integrated DDR Section. The initial focus was on the former armed forces, the FADH, which had previously been 'demobilised', albeit unsuccessfully, by the US military in the mid-1990s. They also focused on Haiti's disparate armed gangs.

From the beginning, it was acknowledged that this was no ordinary DDR process. The situation on the ground defied conventional approaches. The country's estimated 170,000–210,000 weapons and 15,000 gang members and former FADH troops were highly dispersed. In the face of pressure from the UN Security Council, the SRSG and donors to 'do something', the integrated DDR Section began to come unstuck. The original proposal adopted elements of a classic DDR programme, emphasising the formal cantonment of 'ex-soldiers' and some gang members. It also emphasised a community-centred strategy to reduce violence, similar to that piloted by UNDP in 2003. But with disagreements over the direction, content and financing of the intervention, the DDR programme failed to launch.

The integrated DDR Section rapidly fractured. Those on the DPKO side continued to argue for the encampment and reinsertion of former FADH troops and 'hard-core' gang members. Funding was provided from the assessed MINUSTAH budget, and was administered by DPKO even though start-up funds had been supplied by UNDP. Meanwhile, UNDP staff began to promote 'community violence prevention and development committees' around the country. The integrated DDR Section was thus effectively administering at least two separate programmes. In 2007, several bilateral donors began supporting the UNDP intervention, though it is too early to say whether the new approach will be more effective than the last.

### Integration inertia

Achieving genuine integration requires a clear, shared understanding of what it actually means in practice. There are still fierce disagreements within the UN over whether integration constitutes an 'enabling framework' for planning and prioritisation, a mechanism to promote coordination or the de facto 'merging' of administrative and operational polices and programmes.

DPKO and UNDP view DDR differently. Military planners often adhere to a narrow reading, focused primarily on the technical aspects of disarmament and demobilisation, including arms collection, registration and the cantonment and discharge of ex-combatants. In addition to sticking to the letter of UNSC resolutions and peace agreements, they tend to reproduce operational procedures dividing areas of operation into discrete units that do not necessarily correspond to administrative boundaries.

Meanwhile, development agencies are believed to adopt 'softer' approaches to DDR – focused primarily on reintegration and enhancing the absorptive capacities of areas of return. UNDP tends to be more innovative in its approach to DDR, having experimented in dozens of countries with bottom-up and community-centred violence reduction, weapons collection and reintegration programmes since the mid-1990s. The agency also operates within administrative boundaries that are recognised by governments, but which are at odds with DPKO planning.

The fact that there are different conceptions of what is and is not DDR has implications for how programmes are ultimately planned and executed, and for the division of responsibilities between agencies. For example, in UNMIS and MINUSTAH, DPKO claimed the lead for disarmament and demobilization, while UNDP was assigned responsibility for reintegration. This division of labour reflected the comparative advantages of each agency. This is a necessary, but insufficient, condition of integration. Although some efforts were made to link planning and programming in both Sudan and Haiti, segmented understandings and expectations of what DDR was expected to achieve resulted in at times acrimonious disagreements both within and outside the integrated DDR Sections.

Another widely acknowledged obstacle to 'integrated missions' relates to financing. In virtually all cases, the funding of DPKO-led DDR is via assessed budgets pending a UN Security Council resolution. As such, disarmament and demobilisation are frequently adequately covered with resources controlled by DPKO. By way of contrast, UNDP often arranges its budgets according to annual development planning processes and voluntary bilateral contributions executed either directly by the agency or through the government of the country in question. In both Sudan and Haiti, additional 'preparatory' funding was provided by UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) for direct execution.

In each case, there were disagreements over who to report to, how funding should be accounted for, and the adequacy of funding for resource-intensive activities such as 'reintegration'. If assessed and UNDP resources could be transferred to integrated DDR Sections/Units in a more predictable fashion, as some UN officials in New York believe is possible, it is likely that a more holistic and comprehensive management approach would emerge on the ground.

Recent experiences of UNMIS and MINUSTAH remind us that 'post-conflict' environments are exceedingly challenging contexts for any intervention, not least integrated DDR. In such cases, conventional or 'classic' DDR focused exclusively on ex-combatants may not be the most appropriate course of action. Grounded and bottom-up approaches, such as those emphasising 'community security'



or 'community-centred violence reduction', may be more important. Where the political will for DDR is lacking, alternative approaches may be required. In the case of both UNMIS and MINUSTAH, the ruptures between DPKO and UNDP were shaped as much by function as by form. A renewed focus on clarifying the expectations of integration, the division of labour and the nature of financing could vastly enhance effectiveness in the future.

Robert Muggah is based at the Graduate Institute of International Studies (University of Geneva) and Queen Elizabeth House (University of Oxford). He is also project coordinator of the Small Arms Survey and a regular consultant to multilateral and bilateral agencies. His email is: [muggah@hei.unige.ch](mailto:muggah@hei.unige.ch).

**Over 40 countries will address Haiti's situation in Dominican summit**  
**The Dominican Today**  
**April 16, 2007**

SANTO DOMINGO.- The 13th Ministers Meeting of the Rio Group which begins tomorrow in this capital will try to establish if Haiti has obtained enough institutional and technical advances for the international community to start funding its development, said Dominican Foreign vice-minister Alejandra Liriano yesterday.

The official said the issue of the situation of the Haitian migrants in Dominican Republic would not be addressed in the event, because it's a bilateral topic that can be approached by the two countries in their Mixed Bilateral Commission.

Liriano said the international community wants guarantees that what happened in the past will not be repeated, when funds given to Haitian governments ended up in private hands.

She said the 47 Latin America and European Union countries which will be represented in the event - 30 of them at level of minister- are ready to concretely address Haiti's poverty.

**Report: Gunmen kill Haiti journalist with NYC paper**

**By STEVENSON JACOBS**

**Associated Press**

**Newsday, NY**

**April 14, 2007**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- A journalist with ties to ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's political party was shot to death in his bed in northern Haiti, local radio reported Saturday.

Johnson Edouard, a correspondent for the pro-Aristide weekly newspaper Haiti Progres, which is based in Brooklyn, was killed before dawn Friday in the port city of Gonaives, 170 kilometers (105 miles) north of Port-au-Prince, reported Radio Kiskeya, citing relatives of the journalist.

Edouard, who also served as a spokesman for Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party, was reportedly sleeping when gunmen broke into his home and shot him several times in the head and throat. The killers escaped through a window.

Police have yet to establish a motive or identify suspects. However, David Francois, a Fanmi Lavalas leader in Gonaives, called Edouard's killing "a political execution" in an interview with Radio Kiskeya. He gave no further details.

Aristide was forced to flee the country in 2004 amid a three-week rebel uprising that began in Gonaives, Haiti's third-largest city.

Many former rebels who helped overthrow Aristide live in Gonaives, which is also a base for armed gangs blamed for a string of recent killings.

Haiti Progres is distributed in Haiti and the United States. Its publisher was an ambassador-at-large under Aristide. Calls to the newspaper's office went unanswered Saturday.

Attacks on journalists are common in Haiti but have dropped since the 2006 election of President Rene Preval, according to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists.

In January, freelance photographer Jean-Remy Badio was shot to death in a Port-au-Prince slum after receiving threats from gang members. Badio had photographed gang members days before his killing, which remains unsolved.

## **Arrest of gang members aids peace in Haiti**

**By Stevenson Jacobs**

**The Associated Press**

**South Florida Sun Sentinel**

**April 14, 2007**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti · As their two white armored cars push deep inside Haiti's largest slum, the Brazilian U.N. peacekeepers peer over their rifles for enemy gunmen amid spray-painted slogans saying "Down with the U.N."

But the graffiti seems to be contradicted by the smiles and waves from gaunt women and children fetching water with plastic buckets.

Two months ago, U.N. peacekeepers couldn't set foot in Cite Soleil without waging gunbattles with armed gangs who controlled the seaside slum by Haiti's capital. "We used to take fire all the time," Lt. Jose Serrano told an Associated Press reporter accompanying the patrol he was leading.

Now his unit has gone more than 60 days without taking fire, and Cite Soleil is enjoying its most tranquil period since a 2004 revolt ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and led to the deployment of 9,000 U.N. peacekeepers.

The reason for the quiet, says the United Nations, is its February offensive and the arrest of 400 suspected gang members, including several leaders wanted for a string of killings and kidnappings in Port-au-Prince.

The gangs, at least for now, are out of commission in Cite Soleil. A blue U.N. flag flies from a bullet-scarred school-turned-military base. A few days after Serrano's patrol passed through, U.N. special envoy Edmond Mulet made his second visit to the slum, and painted over a gang mural of a Kalashnikov rifle as onlookers cheered.

When Serrano was first deployed to Haiti in December, gunmen would fire at the tires of his armored car. No resident dared speak to the soldiers for fear of being labeled an informer.

"Now they actually look forward to seeing us. It's better for them, better for us," he said.

Alfred Jean-Daniel, an unemployed 24-year-old who lives in a shack made of scrap metal, said: "If the gangs come back, that will only bring problems, and we don't need any more problems."

But the peacekeepers aren't letting their guard down. A radio crackles and the armored cars screech to a stop. The soldiers spill out onto a dusty, sunbaked alley and creep block by block in search of gunmen. All they get is grins and quizzical stares from onlookers.

The peacekeepers' problem is to distinguish gang members from unemployed youths hanging out on street corners. "The bandits are still here," Serrano said. "They didn't all leave. It makes our job hard because we don't know who is a bandit and who isn't."

It's the same difficulty U.S. forces face in Iraq. Another Iraq parallel lies in the likelihood that if the peacekeepers leave too soon, the enemy will regain control.

"Previous experience has shown that if we leave too early, we have to come back again," Mulet said during his visit. "We'll stay here some time until everything is in place."

The U.N. mandate in Haiti expires in October, but the Security Council is certain to renew it. About 9,000 troops and civilian police officers from more than a dozen nations -- mostly Jordan, Brazil, Bolivia, Sri Lanka, Guatemala and Chile -- serve in the mission. Fifteen have died in Haiti, several of them in clashes with gangs.

Keeping the peace in the long run will depend on how fast foreign donors and Haiti's government can alleviate poverty. It's so severe that mothers feed their malnourished infants "cookies" made from sun-dried mud to stop their hunger pangs.

"This is a great turning point in Haiti's history," the Guatemalan diplomat told AP. "This is only the beginning, to get rid of the gangs' leaders ... Now it is a matter of development and assistance to the population."

Last week, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said improved security is allowing Washington to begin a \$20 million program of job creation and education to help Cite Soleil "turn away from dangerous pursuits and toward ... a better life."

Dr. Jackie Saint-Fleur, the medical director at Cite Soleil's only functioning hospital, has seen gunshot victims slow to a trickle since the U.N. offensive. But he wonders how long the peace will last.

"The origin of the violence in Cite Soleil is poverty," Saint-Fleur said. "If you want to end violence in Cite Soleil, you have to provide for the people."

**China's peacekeepers to Haiti complete tour of duty, return home**  
**People's Daily Online, China**  
**April 14, 2007**

Ninety-five members of China's fourth contingent of peacekeepers to Haiti arrived on Saturday morning at Changle International Airport in Fuzhou, capital of east China's Fujian Province.

The team completed its task with honors, said sources from the Public Security and Frontier Defense General Detachment of Fujian Province, the supplier of the riot police.

China's fourth contingent of peacekeepers to Haiti was made up of border police from Fujian Province in east China. They had been in the Caribbean island state since last August.

Thirty members with the fifth contingent of peacekeepers from Guangdong Province to Haiti left on April 3. They have been joined by another group that departed on April 12.

China has participated in the UN peace-keeping missions in Haiti since October 2004.

**More Chinese police arrive to serve with UN Mission in Haiti**  
**UN News Centre**  
**April 13, 2007**

13 April 2007 – The United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH) today announced the arrival of nearly 100 Chinese officers, including seven women, who are serving with a Formed Police Unit (FPU) in the Caribbean country.

The 95 new police, who joined a group of 30 FPU members of the same contingent that arrived last week on 4 April, brings the total number of Chinese officers in Haiti to 125.

China has contributed more than 1,000 officers in Formed Police Units since the Mission was established in October 2004 after an insurgency forced then President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to go into exile.

The latest contingent, replacing one which has rotated out, comes from Guandong Province. Prior to their deployment to Haiti, its members underwent a five-month training course covering language, shooting, driving and combat/defensive tactics.

## **UN patrol welcome in slum streets of Haiti**

**By Stevenson Jacobs**

**Associated Press**

**Boston Globe**

**April 13, 2007**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- As their two white armored cars push deep inside Haiti's largest slum, the Brazilian UN peacekeepers peer over their rifles for enemy gunmen amid spray-painted slogans saying "Down with the U.N."

But the graffiti seems to be contradicted by the smiles and waves from gaunt women and children fetching water with plastic buckets.

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The reason for the quiet, says the United Nations, is its February offensive and the arrest of 400 suspected gang members, including several leaders wanted for a string of killings and kidnappings in Port-au-Prince.

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**Crowds mourn drowned Haitian man  
Survivors should be allowed to stay in U.S., they say  
By Macollvie Jean-François  
South Florida Sun-Sentinel  
April 22 2007**

Miami · Back in Haiti, Lifaite Lully often took his blind father's hand at bath time, to lead the 72-year-old to a pail of water warming in the tropical sun. It was one of many chores the last-born child took on as his parents' health began to fail.

When talk of a boat sailing to the Bahamas began circulating, relatives encouraged Lully, 24, to take the journey that ended with his drowning off Hollywood beach March 28.

"He was not a stingy person," his mom Isemaelite Vassor, 51, said. "Everyone knew that if he made it, he would send a little something to those back home."

The hope Lully represented for his family was not lost on the 700 mourners who packed Little Haiti's Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Church on Saturday for his three-hour funeral. His death less than a mile from U.S. shores renewed calls for changes in immigration policy to prevent more migrant deaths.

Speakers at the funeral invoked Lully's fate to demand that the 101 other Haitians who took the risky sea voyage with him - and survived - be released from detention.

"They are human beings like everyone else," the Rev. Reginald Jean-Mary, Notre Dame's pastor, said in a funeral homily given in Creole and English. "The death of Lifaite is not an accident in history. It is a grain of wheat that fell to the ground so that we can sow the seeds of love, of eternal harvest, of unity and peace."

Jean-Mary brought attendees to their feet with a passionate call for the U.S. government to grant Haitians temporary protected status, which allows people from some nations in the Americas, but not Haiti, to remain in the United States legally because of adverse conditions at home.

The survivors from the March landing are being held at a detention facility in Pompano Beach. Most have passed interviews that may entitle them to asylum hearings, community activists say.

Lully's mother, who came to Florida to attend her son's wake and funeral, said the boy spoiled her and his father, Cadeau Lully.

When his parents' health flagged, he took over the household chores and gave them money he earned from the few construction jobs available from time to time in their region. His father gave up farming when glaucoma led to blindness. His mother, a vegetable and meat vendor, suffered from hypertension and swollen joints.

Isemaelite said she would most likely have to go back to her vending in GrosŒ Sable, their hometown in northwestern Haiti. As she sat in church, the mother of six swayed back and forth. The mother of six

also said she hoped the people who made the perilous trip with her son would have better luck in America.

"It would've been better if he hadn't left," she said. "Give them a chance, even though mine is dead," she said. "If he had made it, I would've hoped he'd get to stay."

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**'The Only Certainty in Haiti is Uncertainty Itself'**  
**The Embassy, Canada**  
**By Brian Adeba**  
**April 11, 2007**

Dressed in a light blue shirt with the sleeves rolled up, Carlo Dade cuts the image of a down-to-earth hombre who chooses his words carefully, giving you a sense that the answer that emanates is a well-thought out one. That's the only give-away that he's the executive director of the Canadian Foundation of the Americas, better known as Focal. He's friendly enough for the purpose of the occasion, yet distant enough—and I mean a respectable one—to be an executive director. In other words, you can call it playing your cards close to your chest, or to be a little liberal, being careful as most people at the helm of major corporations are.

But Focal is not just any Canadian think-tank. Its focus is hemispheric in nature, meaning it covers the Americas—including Latin America and the Caribbean. In an area of the world where the left is rising again, where former socialist leaders are re-branding themselves as modern saviours of the masses, and where Hispanic populations are growing in numbers, Latin America is an important part of the hemispheric equation Focal covers. But does Latin America really matter to Canadians?

"The connections are there, the importance is there. But whether or not it registers, I don't know," says Mr. Dade, who became executive director of Focal about two months ago. He took over the reigns from Eduardo del Buey, who is now director of communications for the secretary general of the Commonwealth, Don Mackinnon, in London.

Mr. Dade quietly points out that Latin America is currently the largest recipient of Canadian foreign direct investment, especially in the mining and banking sectors where there is a heavy concentration of Canadian companies. But apart from this, Mr. Dade believes Canadians should care about Latin America because we are literally tied to the region.

"Given modern communications, what happens in the region tends to affect us faster," he says.

"It's our backyard."

He adds that Latin America is also important to our relationship with the United States, stressing that it is the only place Canada and the U.S. can work together "without the Europeans being around, a place to distinguish ourselves."

"How does that affect our relationship with the States? For instance, we always knew that if you are sending a consular officer to Miami and Los Angeles, you probably want the person to speak Spanish. But if you are sending a consular officer to Chicago, to New York, to Denver, to Seattle, should Spanish also be a requirement? Well, yeah, it's turning out that you probably need a Spanish-speaking officer."

As the new man at the helm, Mr. Dade says he hopes to place Focal on par with other major North American think tanks on hemispheric affairs. Himself a veteran of policy affairs, Mr. Dade has worked for the World Bank, mostly on research projects on Latin America. He's also worked for a think-tank

and a U.S. intergovernmental agency that placed him in charge of its programs in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

With Haiti out of the limelight recently, I wondered if the country is now in much calmer waters, to which Mr. Dade replied that the only certain prediction about Haiti is uncertainty itself, though he pointed out that there is a lot to be optimistic about. The recent elections, the transition to the administration of René Préval and the projected four per cent growth in the island nation's economy are all positive developments that should be lauded. But Mr. Dade warns that Haiti still needs a long-term commitment from countries like Canada.

Though he now deals expressly with Latin American affairs, Mr. Dade started out his career as a would-be expert on Middle East Affairs. He took Arab studies at the graduate level in the United States and spent a stint at a university in Jordan, where he learned to speak Arabic. In one corner of his office, facing his desk, hangs a picture of the Roman ruins of the ancient city of Petra in Jordan. It catches my eye as I prepare to walk out, and I read out aloud the Arabic writing, which simply says, "Petra, Jordan."

"You are not too bad either," he says, adding that he believes Arabic is much easier to learn than French.

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**With drumming and sacrifices, Haiti's Voodoo practitioners gather for yearly pilgrimage**  
**The San Diego Union Tribune**  
**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
**April 9, 2007**

SOUVENANCE, Haiti – Every year in early April, scores of Voodoo followers flock to a dusty village and surrender themselves to the spirits in a pilgrimage marked by drumming, chanting and animal sacrifices.

Wrapped in white satin scarves, hundreds of pilgrims from across Haiti made the journey this year to Souvenance, 90 miles north of Port-au-Prince, for a five-day cycle of ceremonies that culminated Sunday.

Voodoo is the underpinning of Haitian culture, offering an array of gods for believers, style and subject matter for artists and for some politicians a means of controlling the people.

Founded by ex-slaves from the kingdom of Dahomey – now the West African nation of Benin – Souvenance is home to one of Voodoo's most important rituals, which coincides with the faith's annual Rara carnival, when bands of costumed drummers and dancers roam the countryside.

At Souvenance, followers chant and dance to appease Voodoo's pantheon of spirits, called “loas.” Church leaders often sacrifice a bull or goat to honor the warrior-spirit Ogoun.

Voodoo is one of Haiti's three constitutionally recognized religions, along with Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

A large number of Voodoo priests, or “oungons,” worked closely with Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude during the 29-year family dictatorship that ended in 1986.

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**Golden Gate man deported to Haiti to be reunited with family in Canada**  
**By Ryan Mills**  
**The Naples Daily News, Florida**  
**Sunday, April 8, 2007**

Angelene Dorcelian with her newborn son Woodson and her daughter Widney, 21 months, and the rest of her children at her home in Golden Gate City Wednesday April 4, 2007. Dorcelian's husband, Louis, was deported to Haiti while she was pregnant with Woodson. He is on track to be reunited with his wife and children in Canada by early summer, officials from a local immigrant rights organization said.

Louis Pierrot Dorcelian, 40, was arrested and deported to Haiti in December 2006, leaving his pregnant 27-year-old wife, Angelene, alone to care for the couple's three children. Angelene is also taking care of two of Louis' children, from a previous relationship, who immigrated to the United States from Haiti just days before his arrest.

Some officials believe the deportation was unwarranted because Louis, who arrived in the United States in 1997 by boat, is married to a permanent resident and was in the process of having his status in the country adjusted.

Since her husband's deportation, Angelene has been struggling to make ends meet, relying on donations from strangers and the help of her father, she said.

But in recent weeks, Angelene's cousin, a physician in Canada, has agreed to sponsor Louis' immigration into Canada, said Adrien Alpendre, a counselor with the Jerusalem Haitian Community Center, an East Naples organization that helps members of immigrant communities with social and economic issues.

Canadian officials are finishing the required paperwork and Louis is scheduled to take a medical exam in Haiti in late April or early May, Alpendre said.

"After that it is a matter of a few weeks — not months, weeks," Alpendre said.

Typically it takes 13 months to 20 months for a Haitian resident to get approved to immigrate to Canada, Alpendre said. Because Louis had been approved for refugee status in Canada before his deportation, the Canadian officials were flexible, he said.

Once Louis arrives in Canada, the Jerusalem Haitian Community Center plans to help reunite Angelene and their children with him, Alpendre said.

Angelene, who gave birth to the couple's fourth child on Feb. 27, said she is looking forward to seeing her husband again and moving to Canada, even though she doesn't know much about the country.

"I have no choice. I have to go," Angelene said. "I cannot wait. We've been married for seven years and we've never been separated from each other."

To help raise money and prepare for the move, the organization has established the “Friends of the Dorcelian Family Committee,” Alpendre said.

So far the Jerusalem Haitian Community Center has helped raise about \$5,000 for the Dorcelian family, officials said.

“We’re talking about transporting seven people to Canada,” Alpendre said, “and she will have to have some money in her pocket until the Canadian social services take over.”

Life has been difficult in Haiti for the past four months, Louis said through a translator during a telephone interview. He said he is grateful to all the people who have helped his family since his deportation.

“I feel very bad that I cannot meet these people who helped my wife. I wish I could give them a big hug,” Louis Dorcelian said. “I believe what they did for my wife, I cannot give it back to them, but God will give it back to them.”

The Dorcelian case has become a cause celeb for the Jerusalem Haitian Community Center. Jacques Sinjuste, the center’s executive director, said that when Louis Dorcelian lands in Canada, it will be time for the organization to celebrate.

“Hopefully Louis can get in Canada as soon as possible,” Sinjuste said. “I will be very happy and I will be in Canada to meet him. That will be satisfaction for me because we’ve put hundreds of hours into this case.”

The Jerusalem Haitian Community Center is planning on hosting a fund-raising concert for Angelene on April 29, but the details of the concert haven’t been released.

Anyone interested in joining the “Friends of the Dorcelian Family Committee” should contact the Jerusalem Haitian Community Center at (239) 430-1421.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Friday, April 20, 2007**

**ALL CHARGES DROPPED AGAINST FORMER HAITIAN PRIME MINISTER  
TWO YEARS AFTER LAW STUDENTS AND ATTORNEYS LODGE COMPLAINT WITH  
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION**

The San Francisco Bay Area IndyNews

Many political prisoners continue to suffer in dismal prison conditions.

San Francisco, CA: April 20, 2007. After years of illegal imprisonment and unsubstantiated charges, former Haitian Prime Minister Yvon Neptune is a free man. A Haitian appeals court has ruled that all charges against him must be dropped, due to the unconstitutional manner in which they were filed.

Charges against former Minister of the Interior Jocelerme Privert were also dropped.

“While Neptune is free, many others are not,” stated University of California Hastings law student Jens Iverson. “Neptune’s release is a case study in how international pressure and attention can help those caught in a dysfunctional justice system, where many prisoners are simply forgotten and left to rot.” U.C. Hastings Professor Naomi Roht-Arriaza stated that “the partnership between renowned Haitian attorneys such as Mario Joseph, human rights experts and willing law students has proven to be truly effective. But much remains to be done.”

On April 20, 2005, law students at the University of California, Hastings, along with Haitian and U.S. attorneys filed a petition with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) on behalf of Neptune. Neptune had been illegally imprisoned since June 2004. The law students’ petition requested immediate action on the part of the Commission to prevent further endangerment of Mr. Neptune's life. In addition to calling for the former Prime Minister’s immediate release from arbitrary detention, the petition asked for international oversight and supervision of Haitian prisons in order to improve their dismal conditions.

Mr. Neptune’s continued detention placed his life in substantial danger. He survived at least two assassination attempts, as well as a prison massacre and a prison breakout since his arrest. While the Yvon Neptune was eventually released from prison due to the worldwide outcry at his illegal imprisonment, charges remained lodged against him.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHCR) decided in November 2005 to declare the present case for Yvon Neptune admissible with respect to Articles 5, 7, 8, and 25.1 of the American Convention and to proceed with the examination of the merits of the case.

In November 2006, at the request of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHCR), the Bureau des Advocats Internationaux, the Institute for Justice for Democracy in Haiti, and the Hastings Human Rights Project for Haiti, submitted their support for referral of the case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

“The Appeals Court victory is not the victory that Mr. Neptune and his co-defendants deserve, and the prosecutor had recommended, because it does not recognize the absence of evidence against them,” explains Brian Concannon of the Institute of Justice and Democracy in Haiti, a co-filer of the complaint before the Inter-American Commission that brought Neptune’s plight to worldwide

attention. “But it is a victory, because it ends almost three years of legal struggle, including over two dangerous years in prison for Mr. Neptune and Mr. Privert. Credit is due Mario Joseph and his legal team at the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux, but the lawyers never would have had their day in court without the persistent pressure applied from outside Haiti.”

The IACHR is conducting an on-site visit to Haiti from April 16-20, 2007 to observe the human rights situation. The IACHR is charged by the Organization of American States (OAS) to examine and report on human rights in the western hemisphere. The Commission investigates claims of human rights violations, makes recommendations to governments, and refers cases to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The Commission investigated the violations of Neptune’s rights and referred the case to the Court. That case will remain active due to the suffering Neptune endured and the overriding concerns regarding Haiti’s defective justice system.

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For additional information or a copy of the petition, please visit [IJDH.org](http://IJDH.org), [HastingsHumanRights.org](http://HastingsHumanRights.org) or contact:

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Notes to the editor:

The original petition was filed by the Hastings Human Rights Project for Haiti (HHRPH) in conjunction with attorneys from the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and Bureau des Avocats Internationaux. (BAI).

Hastings Human Rights Project for Haiti (HHRPH) was created in 2004 by students and faculty at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law to provide students with practical experience in human rights litigation. First, second, and third year law students work with human rights attorneys and Hastings faculty advisors to bring human rights cases before international courts. It is currently producing a report on MINUSTAH, the peacekeeping force in Haiti.

The Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) works with the people of Haiti in their non-violent struggle for the return and consolidation of constitutional democracy, justice and human rights, by distributing objective information on human rights conditions in Haiti, pursuing legal cases, and cooperating with human rights and solidarity groups in Haiti and abroad.

The Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI) represents victims of human rights violations in Haitian courts. The BAI's most successful case to date is the 2002 trial of the Raboteau massacre, which led to the convictions of fifty-three men, including the top military and paramilitary leaders of the 1991-1994 dictatorship. BAI was founded in 1995 and has its main office in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

<http://HastingsHumanRights.org>

**Haiti Prime Minister Visiting OAS, Lauds the Organization's Support**  
**Caribbean Press Release**  
**Trade & Investment forum for Haiti in September**  
**April 5, 2007**

Washington -- April 5, 2007 -- Haiti's Prime Minister Jacques-Édouard Alexis, on a visit April 4 to the headquarters of the Organization of American States (OAS), thanked the hemispheric organization for its longstanding support of Haiti. The Prime Minister expressed the appreciation of President René Préval's government during a meeting with the OAS Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Albert R. Ramdin.

"We are encouraged by the strengthening of those ties," Prime Minister Alexis said in an interview after the meeting, referring to the cooperation between Haiti and the OAS. The Haitian Prime Minister underscored the importance of OAS role over the years, including its help in promoting the return to constitutional order and its support toward the successful holding of elections.

Ambassador Ramdin described Prime Minister Alexis' visit as an expression of the continued strong commitment between the OAS and Haiti. The OAS will continue to support important projects in that country, he said, noting in particular efforts related to the civil registry and production and distribution of identification cards as well as to the strengthening of Haiti's electoral system and electoral machinery.

The visit by the Prime Minister "gave us an opportunity to discuss in a wider context the relationship between the OAS and Haiti; the importance of the security environment; and the promotion of a more positive image of Haiti as a country with opportunities for investment and economic growth," said the Assistant Secretary General, who chairs the OAS Haiti Task Force. Ramdin noted that the appointment of a new OAS country representative in Haiti—Trinidad and Tobago diplomat Arthur Gray—and the current streamlining of the OAS country office will further strengthen that commitment.

The Assistant Secretary General also spoke about plans to visit Haiti next week, when he hopes to discuss in more detail with the Haitian authorities a trade and investment forum that will be staged in Haiti next September. The Haitian Prime Minister also noted the importance of this event, which is being coordinated by the OAS, and said support is being mobilized from both the private and public sector to ensure the success of the initiative.

On the visit to the OAS, the Haitian Prime Minister was accompanied by a contingent that included advisors Ambassador Raymond Valcin and Jacky Lumarque and Haiti's Permanent Representative to the OAS, Ambassador Duly Brutus. Valcin is a former Permanent Representative to the OAS and Lumarque is Dean of Haiti's Quisqueya University.

Source: [oas.org](http://oas.org)

**Australia, U.S. to Transfer Refugees**  
**By ROD McGUIRK**  
**Associated Press**  
**Marshall News Messenger**  
**April 18, 2007**

CANBERRA, Australia — Australia and the United States have approved a plan to move a few hundred refugees to each other's jurisdiction, the two countries said Wednesday.

Australia said it was a bid by both nations to deter asylum seekers, but critics charged it would likely spur an even bigger wave of migrants.

Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews said in a statement that the mutual assistance arrangement was signed Tuesday, but U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack called the deal an "informal agreement" that "does not create legal obligations."

"The arrangement does not call for an exchange or a swap of individuals," he said. "And no person ... who is referred would be forced to accept resettlement."

No referrals have been made yet, McCormack said.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Richard Towle described the deal as "novel," telling Australian Broadcasting Corp. television the United States is "a highly desirable resettlement outcome for many people."

Under the deal, around 90 asylum seekers — Sri Lankans and Burmese — currently held at an Australian-run immigration detention camp on the Pacific island nation of Nauru could be resettled in the United States if they qualify as refugees. Up to 200 such people could be sent each year.

Australia, in turn, would resettle up to 200 Cubans and Haitians annually from asylum seekers who are intercepted at sea while trying to get to the U.S. and held at the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The prospect of being flown halfway around the world to an unfamiliar country with few cultural links to their homelands would deter Cubans and Haitians from risking the trip to the U.S., Prime Minister John Howard said.

"People who want to come to Australia will be deterred by anything that sends a message that getting to the Australian mainland illegally is not going to happen," he told reporters.

Opposition legislator Tony Burke said many asylum seekers headed for Australia would be more than happy to end up in the U.S. and predicted even more migrants.

Refugees intercepted at sea are taken to Australian island camps while their asylum applications are assessed. Howard's government tries to find other countries willing to take them, but many are eventually allowed into Australia.

Andrews said the plan would not present Australia as a back door to the United States because refugees might also be sent to other countries.

The arrangement was not a refugee-for-refugee exchange, and there was no requirement that the number of refugees transferred be matched by the number received, said Andrews' spokeswoman, Kate Walshe.

Bill Frelick, Human Rights Watch refugee policy director, said Australia and the United States wanted to further avoid their responsibilities under the 1951 Refugee Convention — claiming they already breached it by housing asylum seekers offshore with no access to the national legal systems.

"The trade deal violates the spirit of the legal obligation not to expel a refugee, except for national security reasons and only after a decision in accordance with due process standards," Frelick said in a statement.

Howard says Australia accepts 13,000 refugees a year. The United States received asylum applications from about 55,000 people among the 303,400 who sought refuge in 50 industrialized countries, the U.N. refugee agency said last month.

**Norwegian Church Aid Bringing Water to 70,000 in Haiti**  
**Christian Today**  
**by Maria Mackay**  
**Tuesday, April 24, 2007**

(NLGInternational) Norwegian Church Aid is radically changing the face of daily life for thousands in Haiti through a wide range of ongoing and soon-to-begin projects including the construction of 40 wells providing water for 70,000 residents, women's health activities, and HIV and Aids projects.

The charity has been aided in carrying out its work by a substantial grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A total of ten million Norwegian Crowns (nearly \$1.7m) will fund the first ten months of the project as the NCA sees through a comprehensive and integrated development project in Bel Air, a poor area in the centre of Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince.

Work will be carried out in cooperation with Norwegian Church Aid's Brazilian partner organisation Viva Rio, the Soros Foundation and local Haitian organisations. Norwegian Church Aid has worked together with and supported Viva Rio's projects in Brazil since 1999, notably on an integrated development project in six districts in Rio de Janeiro that promoted culture, health and education.

Viva Rio will bring its expertise in reducing violence in Brazil to the streets of Bel Air.

"This project is a constructive initiative that will hopefully kick-start local development in the district of Bel Air, an area that is marred by poverty and violence," said Johan Hindahl, the NCA's programme coordinator for Haiti and the Dominican Republic. "It is most exciting to be able to draw on Viva Rio's experiences and knowledge base in Haiti. This south-south approach is relatively new to Norwegian development strategy.

"We aim to mobilise women in local networks, promote local development, reduce violence and weapons use and use this project as an example that the rest of Haiti may draw experience from," adds Hindahl.

The first phase of the project, divided into four modules, will see the renovation of a football stadium and the construction of 40 wells to ensure access to clean water for the district's 70,000 residents.

An initial assessment was carried out by two of Norwegian Church Aid's water engineers who travelled to Port-au-Prince last week and will now decide upon how best to provide the water solutions.

The Brazilian battalion of the UN peacekeeping forces in Haiti, MINUSTAH, will provide their technical expertise and manpower to assist with some of the drilling.

## **Cuban Refugees Get Hero's Welcome, Haitian Refugees Turned Away (Editorial)**

**By: Ben Terrall**

**Haiti Analysis**

**April 16th, 2007**

On March 28, 101 Haitians landed on a South Florida beach after a grueling 22-day voyage which claimed the life of one of their fellow travelers. But unlike Cuban émigrés who make it to U.S. soil (who are generally allowed to stay in the country and to apply for green cards after a year), these destitute Haitians have been detained by immigration officials for "expedited removal."

This stark contrast in treatment between Haitian and Cuban refugees is one of Washington's more glaring immigration policy double standards. As Florida author Carl Hiaasen recently wrote, "Illogical, unfair and racist in practice, it's also been a boon to people-smugglers with fast boats, and to other profiteers."

The U.S. has historically viewed Haiti as a problem since the Caribbean nation won its independence and became the first black republic. The defeat that Haitians handed French colonists in 1803 presented an example that slaveowners to the north did not want to see inspire sons and daughters of Africa in the U.S.

U.S. alliances with sweatshop owners and other big businessmen were critical to the February 29, 2004 U.S.-backed coup which ousted the democratically-elected Haitian government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. That military takeover was the culmination of a destabilization campaign bankrolled by the Bush Administration which involved political attacks on Aristide and his Lavalas Party (by far the largest political formation in Haiti) via Haitian and U.S. media, an aid embargo, and funding for anti-Lavalas groups. In its work to realize a better life for the poorest through increased social spending, doubling of the minimum wage and other progressive programs, the Lavalas government, rooted in the radical traditions of liberation theology, stood at odds to the pro-business agenda of the dominant powers in Washington.

In a March 2004 congressional hearing on aid to Haiti, Rep. Eliot Engel, head of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, said "I cannot think of a country or subject more deserving of Congress' full and sustained attention than our neighbor, Haiti." But as with U.S. "attention" to Iraq, it is hard to see how Haiti would be worse off if it had not been a focus of U.S. foreign policy. As in the buildup to the Iraq campaign, honorable members of congress defended Haiti's sovereignty and opposed the Bush regime's campaign to destabilize the Aristide government. But those progressive representatives, mostly members of the Congressional Black Caucus, were a minority and could not turn the tide.

In the years prior to the coup the ex-military remerged, launching attacks on civilians and Haitian police loyal to the government. As during the previous anti-Aristide coup in 1991 (also carried out by forces with links to U.S. intelligence and military), mass killings and brutal torture of Lavalas supporters led to a mass exodus from the country. In the midst of that crisis, a representative of UNHCR, the UN agency on refugees, recommended "a suspension on any forced returns to Haiti, including those who have been rejected for asylum or picked up at sea."

U.S. immigration policy has consistently turned Haitians away from its shores. Following the 2004 coup, throughout the interim period (2004-2006) violence was meted out heavily against supporters of the ousted government. The political instability also caused a further erosion of Haiti's fragile economy and state infrastructure. For job growth to occur, as Aristide proposed in his 2001 inauguration speech, Haiti needed political stability.

In spite of having sponsored forces behind the carnage in Haiti, the Bush administration continues with its harsh immigration regime for Haitians.

Conversely, Washington's "open door" immigration policy for Cubans has become a mechanism for undermining the Cuban government. Correspondingly an ideologically driven U.S. trade embargo on Cuba has worsened the economic situation in which many Cubans see no choice but to come to the U.S.

Not even the most anti-Castro Republican would claim that paramilitary killers are attacking civilians in Havana. Yet in Port-au-Prince, Gonaïves, Cap-Haïtien, and areas in the north of Haiti members of the ex-military and death squads remain active. Even though Rene Preval, a progressive associated with Lavalas, was elected President last year with the support of Haiti's poor majority, political appointees from the interim government dominate many state ministries and the Haitian police force remains deeply infiltrated by former FAd'H and human rights violators.

Jan Ting, an assistant commissioner for refugees, asylum and parole at the Immigration and Naturalization Service during the first Bush Administration, recently admitted that U.S. policies single out Haitians for "undeniably harsher treatment."

United States human rights attorneys, such as Philadelphia-based attorney Tom Griffin and Colorado-based attorney Desiree Wayne have been outspoken in their support of Haitian refugees. In January they submitted legal motions calling for all deportation proceedings against Haitians be dropped, stating that "protecting Haitians from forced return is imperative."

The U.S. Congress now has a chance to undo the harmful policies of the past. Florida Rep. Alcee Hastings and 16 cosponsors have introduced the Haitian Protection Act of 2007, H.R.522.IH, in the U.S. House of Representatives, which would grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to an estimated 20,000 Haitians facing deportation from the United States.

TPS is granted by the Executive Branch to provide relief to nationals of countries suffering natural disasters or political violence. The status suspends deportations of people who have overstayed their visas or entered illegally, for renewable 12-18 month periods. TPS provides important relief to such visitors, their families and their governments, at very little cost to U.S. taxpayers. It would allow Haitians in desperate straits to keep working to support themselves, and to keep sending money back to their families. It would thus reduce pressure on scarce jobs and government services in Haiti.

As the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) points out, "Haiti is more than qualified for TPS." In addition to the political violence of recent years, the half-island nation is by any measure the poorest country in the Americas, largely because of resource extraction and labor exploitation at the hands of "the international community." Haiti is also extremely vulnerable to more natural disasters:



Tropical Storm Jeanne killed over 2,000 people in 2004. Nonetheless, Haitians have never received TPS. By contrast, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador, all more prosperous and stable than Haiti, received TPS following natural disasters since 1999. The presidents of all three countries reported that TPS was critical to their recovery by keeping remittances immigrants send back home flowing.

## **The Freedom of the Press Barons: The media and the 2004 Haiti coup**

**By: Isabel Macdonald**

**The Dominion**

**April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

In February 2004, the US, Canadian and French governments supported an illegal coup d'état that overthrew Haiti's democratically elected government of the Lavalas party, led by Jean-Bertrand Aristide. In late 2003, "civil society" groups--financed and supported through US and Canadian government-funded "democracy enhancement" programs--began calling for Aristide's ouster. They were joined in early February 2004 by armed terror squads. In the pre-dawn hours of February 29, 2004, President Jean Bertrand Aristide, who had been elected with 92 per cent of the popular vote, was forcibly removed from Haiti on a US government airplane, while Canada's Joint Task Force 2 secured the airport.

Critics of the 2004 coup d'état in Haiti have argued that biased international media coverage played a role in justifying the coup and Canada's involvement. However, in interviews that I conducted as part of a research trip to Haiti in late 2005 and early 2006, many of the leaders of the US, Canadian and French government-backed movement that toppled Haiti's elected government went much further in their assessment of the media's role of the media in the coup.

In the eyes of Guy Philippe, the US Special Forces-trained commander who led the armed movement against Aristide, the "international media, the media leaders helped us a lot. And thanks to them we were able to overthrow the dictator. And without them I don't think that we could have." Leaders of the aforementioned "civil society" groups also emphasized that the media were very important in their movement. The Association National des Medias Haitiens (ANMH), an association of the owners of the largest Haitian commercial media stations in Port-au-Prince, was formally a member of the anti-Aristide "civil society" coalition. In the lead-up to the coup, the ANMH, which meets weekly, acted as a space of "co-ordination, decision making, enabling the different commercial media outlets to forge agreements" and enabling a "very strong impact on public opinion," according to one of its members. As the association's vice president explained, "It was our own way as the media to combat the dictatorship". She added that the ANMH media owners "made it our job to cover all the demonstrations" against Aristide.

Many anti-Aristide demonstration organizers report that they were able to advertise their events for free on these stations, and many of the 184-affiliated media organizations had a policy of refraining from identifying the anti-Aristide demonstrators' numbers (particularly if they were not impressive). As one ANMH media owner explained, "we always support the pro-democracy demonstrations," and "sometimes we advance fantastical numbers because we don't want the public to draw the wrong conclusion." He added that if a group has 10 people but they want you to say 2000 or 300,000, if you say 10...you can make enemies, you can damage the group and their credibility. It can create animosity, so it's better not to talk about...if the media are interested in the greatest number of people coming out...they will talk about how [the demonstration] is just starting.

In this context, one anti-Aristide demonstration organizer reports that at one demonstration in January 2003, "we were 20," but when they called in to the radio, "we said we were thousands."

In contrast, many Haitian commercial media organizations did not cover the pro-Lavalas demonstrations that were taking place around the same time and which were, according to independent journalist Kevin Pina, often much larger in size. In fact, in the lead-up to the coup, they instituted an ANMH-wide ban barring Aristide, the president of Haiti, from speaking on the airwaves. When the ANMH stations did provide coverage of pro-Lavalas events, meaningful media access for Lavalas-affiliated organizers was completely precluded. The ANMH's Radio Signal FM continued to report on Lavalas events; however, the goal of this coverage was, in the words of one of its journalists, "to be there at the chimere's [an epithet commonly used to refer to Lavalas supporters as gangsters] demonstrations because [we] had to inform the population that there was a risk...Aristide's partisans are known to be violent and we described their violence—that's all." ANMH journalists whom I interviewed reported heavy editorial pressures from their bosses.

Several Canadian and international newswire journalists told me they relied on the ANMH radio stations, particularly the association's Radio Metropole station, around the time of the coup. One deputy bureau chief at a major international newswire agency stated that the agency's staff reporter in Haiti "relied heavily on Radio... Metropole, [sweatshop owner and coup leader André] Apaid's radio stations;" it made him "wonder if we could trust any of what we'd been reporting." However, many international journalists, including Canadian journalists, were relying on this wire service in the lead-up to the coup.

Canadian journalists' reliance on ANMH sources has a broader institutional dimension. The Haitian media owners' association has a longstanding relationship with Réseau Liberté, an NGO whose staff includes CBC and Radio Canada journalists, and which is financed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). According to CIDA, this Canadian tax-payer funded alliance between Canadian journalists and the anti-Aristide media owners cartel is sowing the seeds for the development of "professional journalism," which is a cornerstone of the Canadian government's promotion of "democracy" in Haiti. US and Canadian government-sponsored "democracy promotion" is generally acknowledged by critical researchers to promote a model of rule by elites, in which popular participation is curbed. In other words, these programs seek to export the very same undemocratic systems that are a hallmark of political life in the US and Canada. It could be said that Canada promotes the "professional journalism" needed for "democracy" by supporting the Haitian equivalents of Conrad Black.

## **Protest for Haitian Refugees in front of USCIS Headquarters in Miami**

**By: Kim Ives**

**Haiti Analysis.com**

**April 4, 2007**

About 800 Haitians and their supporters rallied in front of the headquarters of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on the corner of 79th Street and Biscayne Boulevard in Miami to demand the immediate liberation of 101 Haitian refugees who landed at nearby Hallandale Beach on March 28th.

Most of the refugees are being held in an immigration holding center in Pompano Beach and are threatened with immediate deportation back to Haiti. The refugees spent three weeks at sea on a leaky, open sailboat, including 12 days without food.

Dozens of speakers lambasted U.S. policy as racist and hypocritical for automatically deporting Haitian refugees while Cuban refugees are routinely released into the community and granted asylum.

Many of the speakers called on the U.S. Congress to grant Haitian refugees Temporary Protected Status. TPS waives immigration restrictions on the victims of natural disasters and political upheaval, both of which Haiti has experienced in recent years. It has been granted and renewed in recent years to refugees from Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Burundi, Sudan, Liberia, and Somalia.

Called and led by the Haitian community organization Veye Yo, the spirited demonstration featured a speech by the Rev. Gérard Jean-Juste, who led Veye Yo and Haitian Refugee Center during the 1980s when the Haitian refugee crisis reached its zenith.