

HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: NOVEMBER 12 -23, 2005

U.S. Embassy workers return to Haiti
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
The Seattle Post Intelligencer
Tuesday, November 22, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- The U.S. Embassy said Tuesday that security in Haiti has improved enough for diplomatic employees evacuated earlier this year to return in time for elections.

The State Department in May and June ordered the evacuation of an unspecified number of employees and their families for security reasons.

Some politicians and human rights groups called on Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council to delay the elections because of lack of preparation and security.

In the past 18 months, more than 1,200 Haitians have been killed because of gang violence and political chaos, the Roman Catholic Justice and Peace Commission reported.

More than 7,500 U.N. peacekeepers and police have been in Haiti since June 2004 to keep order. They arrived four months after the Feb. 29 overthrow of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide.

Haiti's first elections since Aristide's ouster have been set for Dec. 27, after three postponements. On Monday, however, the Provisional Electoral Council declined to confirm the date officially. It said it needed more time to fix a timetable.

Haiti expected to set vote for Dec. 27

Haiti's prime minister was expected to announce today that the nation's presidential and legislative elections would be postponed until Dec. 27.

BY JOE MOZINGO

Miami Herald

November 17, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE - Under withering U.S. and French pressure to put a new government in office by Feb. 7, Haitian officials have tentatively agreed to postpone presidential and legislative elections until two days after Christmas, foreign advisors said.

Prime Minister Gérard Latortue was expected to announce the decision today, although there was still some debate about the date, given that many Haitians will be visiting families far from their designated polling places during the holidays.

If the decision stands, it could significantly diminish voter turnout and threaten the legitimacy of the new government to replace President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was ousted in a violent revolt last year.

TIME RUNNING OUT

Yet preparations for the elections have been so beset by controversy and mismanagement that Dec. 27 is virtually the only date by which the balloting can be held and still have time for a runoff on Jan. 31, if no candidates win more than 50 percent of the vote.

The runoff date would allow only a few days to resolve the virtually inevitable disputes over the results and still inaugurate the new president on Feb. 7 as required by Haiti's constitution. With 35 presidential candidates, the margins between each are likely to be close, and observers expect at least some candidates to cry foul.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has told the interim government that it's critical to put a democratically elected government in the National Palace by the deadline in order to assure its political legitimacy. France is also pushing to meet the Feb. 7 deadline, its officials have said.

U.N. electoral advisors say it's still possible, albeit barely, to hold an election little more than five weeks from now. But some Haitians insist that is unrealistic.

"I don't think it's possible," said Patrick Féquiere, a member of the Provisional Electoral Council. "We still need to hire 40,000 poll workers. That's a lot to do -- and train them too!"

DATE QUESTIONED

Some observers question why Haitian officials and U.N. electoral advisors, who spent months registering 3.4 million voters, would hold the first round during the holidays, when many leave the capital.

"The 27th is a weird, weird day," said Robert Fatton, Jr., a Haiti expert and political science professor at the University of Virginia. "I don't see why they don't wait until the end of January when they are ready."

Fatton said he doesn't understand "the obsession" with having a new government by Feb. 7, when it is clear that Latortue is planning to relinquish his power when elections are complete. He said it's far more important to have an election that is seen as legitimate.

The elections were originally set for Oct. 9, then postponed to Nov. 20, although officials floated other dates as well.

The ballots only went to the printer on Monday after a fight over whether Dumarsais Simeus -- a Haitian American who runs a \$100 million food empire based in Texas -- could run for president.

Simeus is a naturalized American citizen, but Article 13 of the Haitian Constitution says citizenship is lost by naturalization in another country.

The electoral council denied his candidacy in September. He appealed to the Supreme Court, which unanimously ruled that the council did not have enough evidence to reject him. But on Saturday, the council released its final list of 35 presidential candidates -- and he was not on it.

'SHAMEFUL ATTEMPT'

In a news release Simeus called the move "another shameful attempt by this same small clique of power-hungry anti-democracy forces to mastermind the outcome of Haiti's presidential election."

Simeus and his attorneys insist that his U.S. passport should not negate his Haitian citizenship. He plans to petition Rice and other foreign leaders to pressure Latortue to allow him to run. He also said he might go to a judge to force the council to abide by the Supreme Court's ruling.

If he succeeds, it would likely further stall the process.

EX-LEADER'S MOMENTUM

While the bureaucrats scramble to prepare, the candidates are campaigning in earnest. No comprehensive political polls have been made public, so it is difficult to know whether there is a clear front-runner.

But many observers say former President René Préval, a leftist and Aristide ally, seems to be the candidate to beat.

"Préval is the front-runner, no doubt," said Félix Ulloa, resident director of the U.S.-funded National Democratic Institute of International Affairs, which helps parties organize in Haiti. "Even the right-wing say they're okay with him."

Oddly, Préval is running as an independent, not on the ticket of Aristide's Lavalas Family party, which supported his winning presidential bid in 1996. "He wants to break with Aristide," Ulloa said.

Aristide has not endorsed a candidate or the elections as a whole. But residents from the slum of Cité Soleil -- a stronghold of his supporters and a place that has been militantly opposed to the election until recently -- marched in support of Préval earlier this month, according to news reports.

LAVALAS CONTENDER

The official Lavalas candidate, Marc Bazin, is also considered a heavyweight contender. Bazin lost to Aristide in the 1990 presidential election and later worked as a minister in his administration. He has vowed to free all political prisoners, which Lavalas party leaders have been demanding for months.

The sideshow over Simeus' citizenship has given him much free publicity in Haiti and there's anecdotal evidence that he might have support in poor neighborhoods, where some residents have said they want a "rich" president because he will be less susceptible to Haiti's notorious corruption and cronyism.

U.N. takes over violent Haiti slum after clash

16 Nov 2005

Reuters AlertNet

By Joseph Guylor Delva

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Nov 16 (Reuters) - U.N. troops on Wednesday took control of a Port-au-Prince slum where four people were killed in clashes between U.N. peacekeepers and criminal gangs, U.N. officials said.

Troops have established a permanent presence and around-the-clock patrols in the slum of Cite Militaire, near the downtown area of the capital, in an effort to quell violence by criminal gangs, said Lt. Col. Jorge Smicelato, a spokesman for the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti.

The measure was taken a day after gunmen opened fire on a U.N. patrol in the area, which has been controlled by armed gangs for months. Four people, described by authorities as "bandits," were killed on Tuesday when U.N. troops returned fire.

"From now on, our troops are going to station here and conduct patrols 24 hours a day to bring back peace and security here," said Smicelato, who is with the Brazilian contingent.

"Now the situation is calm. We registered absolutely no incidents. Our troops are there and will stay there," he said.

Hundreds of people have died in political and gang violence since Haiti's last elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was forced from office in February 2004. A U.N. peacekeeping mission, now comprised of some 8,000 troops and police, was sent to the poor Caribbean nation to restore order.

Haiti is struggling to organize elections to choose a new president and legislature to replace an interim government appointed after Aristide's departure.

Stephan Lacroix, a spokesman for the electoral council, said on Wednesday that the council would like the presidential elections to be held on Dec. 27, with a possible run-off on Jan. 31. The elections had been scheduled for Nov. 20, but violence, lack of security and general chaos have caused delays.

Several killings and kidnappings have occurred in the past few months in Cite Militaire, which has been a refuge for gangs forced to flee other areas where Haitian police and U.N. troop patrols have been more effective.

UN reclaims Haiti slum after 4 deaths

By Carib News

Carib World Radio

Nov 22, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti.....According to reports, UN troops eventually took control of a Port-au-Prince slum where four people were killed in clashes between UN peacekeepers and criminal gangs.

Lt. Col. Jorge Smicelato, a spokesman for the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti, maintained that troops had established a permanent presence and around-the-clock patrols in the slum of Cite Militaire, near the downtown area of the capital, in an effort to quell violence by criminal gangs.

The measure was taken a day after gunmen opened fire on a UN patrol in the area, which has been controlled by armed gangs for months. Four people, described by authorities as "bandits," were killed when U.N. troops returned fire.

Hundreds of people have died in political and gang violence since Haiti's last elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was forced from office in February 2004. A UN peacekeeping mission, now comprised of some 8,000 troops and police, was sent to the poor Caribbean nation to restore order.

Haiti is struggling to organize elections to choose a new president and legislature to replace an interim government appointed after Aristide's departure.

Several killings and kidnappings have occurred in the past few months in Cite Militaire, which has been a refuge for gangs forced to flee other areas where Haitian police and UN troop patrols have been more effective.

Haiti Fixes 'Final and Firm' Date for Ballot

By Carol J. Williams

Times Staff Writer

Los Angeles Times

Newsday.com

November 18, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — The government Thursday set balloting for Dec. 27, paving the way for a nationally elected leader to take the reins of power by a Feb. 7 deadline.

The first round of presidential, parliamentary and local balloting was likely to scuttle holiday travel plans for some Haitians, and its timing raised concerns that there might be a pause in ballot counting to observe New Year's Day, which is also Haiti's independence holiday. A runoff will follow Jan. 31.

But the long-delayed announcement of an election date was mostly received with feelings of relief: that an end could be in sight to the power struggles and chaos that have lately beset this poorest of Western Hemisphere countries.

Haiti has been without an elected president since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide went into African exile Feb. 29, 2004. It has also lacked a functioning legislature for four years. Gang violence has devastated the capital's teeming slums and paralyzed commerce.

Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, the retired U.N. official who has been assigned the task of preparing elections, told journalists that the Dec. 27 vote — already delayed three times — was "final and firm."

In the 15 years that democratic elections have been attempted in Haiti, voting has been held on Sundays. But Christmas and New Year's fall on the first Sundays after election organizers expect to have ballots and ID cards ready, so officials settled on the Tuesday between the two holidays as the last date allowing time to hold and tabulate both rounds and then inaugurate a new president Feb. 7, the end of the current government's mandate.

The council preparing the vote has forbidden vehicular traffic on election day to lessen the risk of drive-by shootings at the polls. If the vote had been scheduled on a holiday, the driving ban would have kept families from visiting relatives.

"The bigger question is how the counting will be done," said Wendell Theodore, a commentator for Radio Metropole.

Officials with the U.N. and the Organization of American States say they fear claims of fraud if results are not clear by Jan. 1 and the vote count is suspended for holiday celebrations.

Elections were originally planned for early October, but infighting among the members of the election council, supposed to maintain neutrality, prompted delays, as did squabbles over the eligibility of

several high-profile presidential hopefuls. Processing of voter ID cards has also been painfully slow, with most of the 3.3 million registered voters still waiting for their credentials.

Doubts remain whether the new dates will stand. The candidate lists were approved only this week.

Despite the delays, and a 200-year history of despotic rule, Haitians appear eager for another chance to choose their own leaders. The presidential field includes 35 contenders, many of them figures from past regimes.

"I don't know who are the good ones and which ones are trying to fool us, but we want this vote," said Dieudonnee Oclore, a 29-year-old cashier.

Haiti: International election observation mission
Source: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Relief Web
Date: 22 Nov 2005

Planned Project Summary Information

Project number: HT-32894

Branch: Americas Branch

Country: Haiti

CIDA's ODA Priorities: 100% - 402 - Democratic institutions and practices

CIDA's Sectors: 100% - 15062 - Elections

Project Approval Date: June 2005

Anticipated Project Duration: 1 year

Estimated Project Value: \$5.5M

Project Implementation: Unsolicited Proposals Mechanism - Elections Canada

Competitive Contracts during the implementation of this project: No competitive contracts are planned

Project Description: The goal of the project is to support efforts by the Government and civil society to strengthen democracy and good governance in Haiti. The purpose of the project is to support the democratic process in Haiti by supporting the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) and Haitian authorities in their responsibilities relating to the organization, monitoring, and conduct of free, fair, and transparent municipal, legislative, and presidential elections in 2005. To help create an enabling environment, a series of concerted political, security, electoral, economic, and social measures must be defined. Organizing an international election observation mission should be one of these measures, to establish a climate of confidence, encouraging Haitians to take part in the vote, register, and turn out at the polls. The proposed model calls for election observation before, during, and after the various elections.

Project Impact: In the long term, Haitians and Haitian political parties are expected to mature politically. This will allow more democratic government and greater stability in Haiti.

Project Outcomes:

Support for the electoral process will result in the following outcomes:

1. Haiti's electoral process will be evaluated impartially and objectively;
2. The electoral process will be credible and accepted by the people, political forces, and the international community;
3. A democratically elected government will be put in place;
4. Haitians and the international community will feel more confident.

Project Outputs:

1. A multinational steering committee will be made up of heads of electoral organizations and independent electoral commissions, or their representatives. This steering committee will be able to observe all aspects of the electoral process, to determine the actual implementation status of the process, and to advise on how to improve elections;
2. An executive team in Haiti will be able to implement and coordinate observation activities in a timely manner, to analyze reports from observers, and to report to the multinational steering committee;
3. Up-to-date information will be available on the progress of preparations for elections throughout Haiti.

Development Officer: Jean Bienvenue, 819-997-0791

Internet Publication Date: November 22, 2005

Triumph of self-interest in corrupted Haiti

Nothing will change because no candidates represent a broad constituency.

By David Doherty

The Minnesota Daily

November 21, 2005

always read about Haiti written in the United States with the jaded eye of someone who has lived and worked in rural Haiti for almost four years. I was not in the Presidential Palace when Jean-Bertrand Aristide accepted a woulib (free ride) from the U.S. Marines, hence I cannot comment on the competing scenarios of abdication or abduction. I do feel the need to dispel the urban myth that continues to be foisted upon the American public by Kevin Pina, Ira Kurzban and others who are blinded to the truth either by ideology or because they are paid performers.

In Nov. 16's "Love him or Haiti him, Pina comes to town," Christopher Larson describes Haiti as "a society where the masses want the return of their rightful president and the reinstatement of their government." It's a nice catchphrase, but it does not reflect the reality I have experienced. Outside of the poorest slums in Port-au-Prince, support for Aristide is razor thin at best. Even in the communities where his support is believed to be strongest, those loyalties are based on a misguided belief that Aristide cares about anyone other than Aristide. What is more certain is that this loyalty is immediately transferable to any personality who preaches a populist message. If one leaves the confines of Port-au-Prince and travels to other areas where 70 percent of the population lives, Aristide and the Lavalas movement are completely discredited.

One anecdotal fact says more a lot about the state of democracy. The most popular figure in the country is Jean-Claude Duvalier. Just as many in Russia wax sentimental for the "good old days of Stalinism," Haitians are drawn to the relative stability of an autocracy. Aristide and the Lavalas movement were a revolution in name only. In practice, it was more of the same corruption and human rights abuses that have characterized Haiti throughout its 200 years of independence.

Haiti will still bleed after the next electoral exercise because whichever person assumes the mantle of leadership, we can be certain of one thing: Self-interest will trump national interest. Nothing will change because none of the 35 approved candidates represent a broad constituency or have shown the slightest interest in galvanizing the population. They preach populism when Haiti needs pragmatism.

David Doherty resides in Camp Perrin, Haiti. Please send comments to letters@mndaily.com.

The rise and fall of Haiti's `savior'

The author deftly chronicles Aristide's transformation from a perceived messiah to a master manipulator.

BY DON BOHNING

The Miami Herald

Nov. 20, 2005

NOTES FROM THE LAST TESTAMENT: The Struggle for Haiti.

Michael Deibert. Introduction by Raoul Peck. Seven Stories. 448 pages. \$22.95 in paper.

Notes from the Last Testament should convince all but those few remaining foreign believers in former President Jean Bertrand Aristide -- many of whom were on his payroll -- that he was just one more would-be tyrant in a long line of self-serving and corrupt Haitian leaders.

The book has problems, particularly an overload of Haitian history and culture that distracts from what essentially is a memoir. But this is a minor flaw in Deibert's powerfully documented exposé of what amounts to Aristide's criminal rule of Haiti.

Deibert was the Reuters news service correspondent in Haiti as well as a contributor to several foreign newspapers. He got to know leaders of Aristide-financed slum gangs, called chimeres, who were, as Deibert documents, on call for word from the National Palace to disrupt an opposition demonstration or carry out other nefarious tasks on Aristide's behalf.

As Deibert observes in recounting the infamous massacre of an opposition group in St. Marc a few weeks before Aristide's flight to exile on February 29, 2004: Haitians ``were forced to endure unimaginable agony so that one man -- with the aid of a small cadre of killers for hire, corrupt officials and cynical, avaricious foreign advocates -- could attempt to build his own personal empire on the ruins of what was once a country."

Aristide, a former Roman Catholic priest, came to power in a December 1990 presidential election generally regarded as the only free and democratic election in Haiti's 200 years of independence. He won by more than some two-thirds of the popular vote by an electorate that hailed him as a savior.

Deibert deftly chronicles Aristide's transformation from a perceived messiah to a master manipulator as he moved to consolidate his control over the hemisphere's poorest country. Even before he was overthrown by a military coup seven months after taking office on Feb. 7, 1991, there were clear signs he was not the savior that many had hoped. Among the early signals was his call to supporters for street violence to thwart an attempted coup by Roger LaFontant, an old-line backer of former dictator Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier.

Those answering the call destroyed the historic cathedral in downtown Port-au-Prince and burned scores of people in old tires.

After his ouster in September 1991, Aristide went to Venezuela, where he soon wore out his welcome, spending the remainder of his three-year exile in Washington. The Clinton administration restored him

to power in the fall of 1994, following an invasion by 20,000 troops. Bitter that the United States would not accept the extension of his term for the three years spent in exile, he increasingly took on the mantle of his authoritarian and corrupt predecessors.

He was elected president again in November 2000, a largely sham vote boycotted by the opposition, in which he ran against six unknown candidates. Anti-Aristide sentiment grew, though, and negotiations began for his departure in late 2003, and on Feb. 29, 2004, in a plane provided by the United States, he left for eventual exile in South Africa, where he remains. But after his departure, and as duplicitous as ever, Aristide claimed he had been ``kidnapped."

Don Bohning is a former Herald Latin America editor and author of the recently published book: *The Castro Obsession: U.S. Covert Operations Against Cuba 1959-1965*.

Immigrant Laborers From Haiti Are Paid With Abuse in the Dominican Republic
By GINGER THOMPSON
New York Times
November 20, 2005

The tobacco fields are being planted a little late this year because the Haitian immigrants who work them were driven away by threats of a lynching.

The troubles in this farm town in the country's northwest started in late September, with allegations that a Dominican worker had been killed by two black men. Too angry to wait for a trial, local Dominicans armed themselves with machetes and went out for vengeance.

"Where there are two Haitians, kill one; where there are three Haitians, kill two," said leaders of the mobs that descended on the immigrants' camps, the Haitians here recalled. "But always let one go so that he can run back to his country and tell them what happened."

Several Haitian workers were beaten by the Dominican mobs, said Jacobo Martínez Jiménez, an immigrant organizer. One Haitian, Mr. Martínez said, drowned when he fell into a river as he tried to get away. At least half of the town's 2,000 Haitian workers fled, as they said they had been warned to do, back across the border to Haiti, which shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. Hundreds of others hid in the hills to the east, hoping that Dominican tempers would cool so that they could return to their jobs.

The attacks on Haitians here provide the most recent example of what international human rights groups describe as the Dominican Republic's systematic abuse of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent. In recent years, those organizations report, tens of thousands of Haitians have been summarily expelled from the country by individuals and the government, forcing them to abandon loved ones, work and whatever money or possessions they might have.

"We do all the work, but we have no rights," said Victor Beltran, one of about 150 Haitian immigrants, most of them barefoot and dressed in rags, who had taken refuge in a rickety old barn. "We do all the work, but our children cannot go to school. We do all the work, but our women cannot go to the hospital.

"We do all the work," he said, "but we have to stay hidden in the shadows."

Among those who have been deported, said Roxanna Altholz, a lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley, are Spanish-speaking Dominicans who were born to Haitian parents but have never visited Haiti, much less lived there.

At the root of the problem, Ms. Altholz said, is that Haitian immigrants and their Dominican-born children live in a state of "permanent illegality," unable to acquire documents that prove they have jobs or attend schools or even that they were born in this country.

In October, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued an opinion that the Dominican Republic was illegally denying birth certificates to babies born here to Haitian parents, and ordered the government to end the practice.

Human Rights Watch has also published extensive investigations of the mass expulsions, and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed concerns about Haitian children being denied access to education and medical care.

"Snatched off the street, dragged from their homes, or picked up from their workplaces, 'Haitian-looking' people are rarely given a fair opportunity to challenge their expulsion during these wholesale sweeps," Human Rights Watch reported in 2002. "The arbitrary nature of such actions, which myriad international human rights bodies have condemned, is glaringly obvious."

Several Roman Catholic priests here have been threatened with legal action, including expulsion from the country, after the authorities found that they had illegally obtained birth certificates for dozens of Dominican-Haitian babies by falsely declaring them to be their own. One of the priests has also been receiving death threats, prompting the church to move him out of the country temporarily for his safety.

"By keeping Haitians in a limbo of illegality, the government can do whatever they want with them," said the Rev. Regino Martínez Bretón of the Jesuit-run agency Solidaridad Fronteriza, in Dajabón, a city on the Dominican border. "The government can bring as many Haitians here as they want and then throw them away when they don't want them anymore."

Racism helps fuel the anti-immigrant sentiment, human rights groups say, since Haitians tend to have darker skin than Dominicans and are therefore often assumed to hold a lower social status.

The two countries have been volatile neighbors for most of the last two centuries, beginning with Haiti's domination of the Dominican Republic after its independence from Spain in the early 1800's. A century later, Rafael Trujillo, then the Dominican dictator, ordered the executions of some 37,000 Haitians in what many historians have called a ruthless campaign of ethnic cleansing. Indeed, the river that separates Haiti from the Dominican Republic is called Massacre River because of the slaughter.

Although anti-Haiti talk has since become a standard part of Dominican politics, the police and the military have made fortunes trafficking Haitians into the country to supply labor for agriculture and construction. Haitians here, desperate to escape the poverty and upheaval in their country, often say they have little choice but to accept Dominican exploitation.

Meanwhile, Dominican workers have been slowly pushed out of work by Haitian immigrants who will work for less, and so they are leaving their homeland in droves on rickety boats headed toward Puerto Rico, even though the Dominican Republic is one of the fastest growing economies in the Caribbean.

Nationalist talk by the elite and frustration among unemployed Dominicans drive most attacks on Haitians, human rights groups say. And while one Dominican government after another has promised change, human rights investigators charge that they have all failed to guarantee Haitian immigrants and their Dominican-born descendants basic protections.

Guatapanal is not the only place where immigrants have experienced the Dominican Republic's version of mob justice. In August, on the outskirts of Santo Domingo, the capital, four Haitian men were gagged, doused with flammable liquids and set on fire. Three of the men, from 19 to 22 years old, died of their injuries. Soon after, Haiti temporarily recalled the leader of its diplomatic mission in the Dominican Republic to protest what it described as a "growing wave of racist violence" against its people.

After a Dominican woman was stabbed to death in May not far from here, Dominican mobs went on a rampage, beating Haitian migrants and setting fire to their houses. Before the next dawn, police officers and soldiers went door to door pulling some 2,000 Haitian migrants from their beds and loading them onto buses bound for the border.

At least 500 of those deported, Father Martínez said, were legal guest workers and Dominican citizens.

"It was a disaster," said Andrés Carlitos Benson, a Dominican-born university student who lives in Libertad. "We showed them our university identification cards, and they tore them up in front of us and told us to shut up, or they were going to beat us.

"They took parents away and left their children," he added. "They took old people out of their beds without any clothes."

Stung by mounting international criticism, President Leonel Fernández of the Dominican Republic has publicly expressed concern that some of his government's deportations of Haitians have violated international standards on human rights.

Still, his government rejected the ruling by the Inter-American Court. Other Dominican officials have said that their government was struggling with scant resources to secure its porous border and stop the surging flow of Haitians, which they blame for rising crime rates and overburdened schools, hospitals and housing.

A statement in late October by the Roman Catholic Bishops Conference of the Dominican Republic also said, "Our nation has a limited capacity to absorb excessive immigration," and pleaded for help.

"This is a very sensitive subject," said Ambassador Inocencio García, who is in charge of Dominican-Haitian relations at the Foreign Ministry. "I can tell you with all sincerity. We have institutional problems. We are making efforts to correct them. But in no way can the government of the Dominican Republic be characterized as one that does not respect basic rights."

Ambassador García said in an interview that a majority of poor Dominican children did not have birth certificates. But he did not respond to charges that Haitian children were routinely denied such documents.

The mayor here in Guatapanal, José Francisco Pérez, described the Haitians coming into this town as "an invasion." He said Guatapanal had 2,000 Haitians and only 500 Dominicans.

Area landowners stopped hiring Dominican workers for \$10 a day because Haitians accepted less than half that, he said.

"Now instead of hiring 40 Dominican workers for a field, they hire 400 Haitians, and the Dominicans are left with nothing," Mr. Pérez said. "There's too many Haitians. If the government is not going to help us get rid of them, then we will do it ourselves."

Some landowners criticized the attacks by the Dominicans, and they have brought back many of the workers who fled.

"The problem is that there is no real justice," said Francisco Cabrera, who rents a few dozen acres of tobacco land here and uses Haitian laborers. He said the police rarely tried to stop attacks on them. "So people take justice into their own hands."

Polivio Pérez Colon, 36, one of the Dominican overseers who led the mobs against the Haitians, said they did not mean the immigrants any real harm. But he agreed that the Dominicans here felt outnumbered.

"They are people who do not use bathrooms," he said, referring to Haitians, many of whom live in shacks without running water and electricity. "They walk around drinking and making a lot of noise at night. Sometimes the men dance with each other."

"It's not that they are all bad. But they have to submit to our way of life. If not, these problems will keep happening."

Photos: Many children of Haitian workers are denied birth certificates despite being born in the Dominican Republic.; Haitian farmworkers in Guatapanal, Dominican Republic, were threatened with lynching in September after two Dominican laborers were killed under uncertain circumstances. (Photographs by Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)

Map of the Dominican Republic highlighting Guatapanal: Abuse of Haitians by Dominicans has been reported in Guatapanal.

OAS Urged to Rein In Police, Peacekeepers

Jim Lobe

Inter Press Service News Agency

November 16, 2005

WASHINGTON, Nov 16 (IPS) - A dozen U.S. rights groups, attorneys and activists have submitted petitions to the human rights arm of the Organisation of American States (OAS) to take urgent measures to protect Haitian civilians from U.N. peacekeepers and the Haitian National Police.

The petitions, which were filed with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Tuesday, are directed against Brazil and the United States. As the commander of the U.N. Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Brazil is accused of complicity in dozens of killings since late 2004. The United States is cited for arming the Haitian National Police (PNH) which, according to the groups, has been responsible for most of the violence.

Both countries are committing substantial violations of the American Convention on Human Rights, according to the petitioners.

They allege that dozens of unarmed civilians have been killed during raids by both MINUSTAH and the PNH into poor sections of the capital, Port-au-Prince, that have remained loyal to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was ousted from power in early 2004, and his party, Fanmi Lavalas.

"Despite the official claims made by PNH and MINUSTAH spokespersons that the aim of these operations is to neutralise armed, 'gang' or 'bandit' elements in these neighbourhoods," according to the groups' complaint, "those killed by PNH and MINUSTAH forces include a long list of unarmed men, women, and children."

"In many cases, these victims were not 'collateral damage' of the operations, accidentally caught in crossfire, but rather they were intentionally targeted and killed..." asserted the complaints submitted by the National Lawyers Guild, Global Exchange, and the Institute for Justice and Democracy, among others.

The groups said they had prepared dozens of affidavits by victims, eyewitnesses, including Haitian journalists, and family survivors, as well videotapes taken at the scene of the raids or shortly afterwards.

"MINUSTAH's role is to protect Haitian civilians," said National Lawyers Guild attorney Kasey Corbitt, who helped draft the petitions. "Instead, the troops are actively participating in campaigns of terror on the Haitian people or turning a blind eye to atrocities committed by the PNH in conjunction with members of the former military."

The petitions are also backed by two members of the U.S. Black Congressional Caucus, Reps. Barbara Lee and Maxine Waters, both long-time supporters of Aristide. Given the ongoing violence, Waters told reporters Tuesday, "I don't understand how they can possibly hold democratic elections."

Aristide was ousted in early 2004 during an insurrection by former soldiers and flown into exile aboard a U.S. military jet after U.S. troops, who had been rushed to Port-au-Prince, informed him that they could not guarantee his protection. Many of his supporters, including Waters and Lee, have charged that the U.S. and France conspired to remove the president, who is currently living in South Africa, both from power and from Haiti itself.

An initial multinational force consisting of troops from the U.S., France, Canada, and Chile assumed peacekeeping duties in the major cities immediately after Aristide's departure. They were replaced after several months by the 7,000-man Brazilian-led MINUSTAH, whose mandate was to support the interim government of Prime Minister Gerard LaTortue, a former Haitian diplomat who had been living in the United States for most of the last 30 years.

His government's mandate has been to maintain order, jumpstart the economy, and prepare elections to take place next month. Despite substantial progress by the U.N. in registering voters, however, the government has largely failed in these tasks. With much of the countryside and even the major cities still under the control of local strongmen and their private militias, it remains unclear whether the election, if it goes forward, can be free or fair.

Aristide's supporters have long charged the interim government, and particularly the PNH, with targeting their leaders and activists, among them former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and the Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, both of whom have spent more than a year in jail without trial. The George W. Bush administration itself has called on the government to either try or release them -- so far, however, to no avail.

Most of the repression against Lavalas, which most analysts believe remains by far the most popular party among the vast majority of Haitians who live in absolute poverty, has been directed against suspected pro-Aristide gangs, or so-called chimeres, that continue to dominate or protect -- depending on the observer's political orientation -- entire neighbourhoods in slum areas, including Cite Soleil and Belair in the capital.

Beginning in December 2004, MINUSTAH forces, along with U.N. Civilian Police and sometimes PNH units, have carried out raids in these districts to assert the government's authority there and disarm suspected gang members.

While MINUSTAH and the PNH have generally blamed any civilian casualties resulting from these raids on the gangs themselves, some community residents and other witnesses have charged that the uniformed forces have been responsible for most of the deaths and serious injuries.

The complaint filed by the groups details 13 such incidents between September 2004 and the end of August 2005, the most notorious of which was a controversial Jul. 6 raid by MINUSTAH forces into Cite Soleil to apprehend Dread Wilme, a chimere leader, who was killed in the raid.

The operation, in which the groups claim more than 300 MINUSTAH soldiers and as many as 20 armoured personnel carriers and a helicopter took part, resulted in the deaths of as many as 63 people, according to community activists cited by Seth Donnelly, who was leading a U.S. labour delegation to Port-au-Prince at the time.

He also quoted staff at a nearby hospital run by Doctors Without Borders as saying they had treated 26 people who had been injured during the raid, 20 of whom were women and children. In an interview after the raid, MINUSTAH commander Lt. Gen Augusto Heleno Riberio Pereira denied that any civilians had been shot by his troops.

In August, according to the petitions, the PNH carried out a series of four massacres with the help of civilian "attaches" armed with PNH machetes in various Port-au-Prince districts.

The worst of these took place Aug. 20 when the police interrupted a USAID-funded soccer match, ordered several thousand spectators to lie down and then summarily executed an undetermined number identified by informers as "bandits". In each case, according to the petitioners, MINUSTAH troops in the area failed to intervene.

For its part, the director of the U.N. operation in Haiti, former Chilean foreign minister Gabriel Valdes, has acknowledged receiving reports of executions allegedly carried out by PNH personnel, as well as complaints against MINUSTAH itself. He has said inquiries have been initiated in each case, but no findings have been published to date.

While the current petitions are directed solely against Brazil and the U.S., Donnelly said the groups would soon file petitions against the PNH, as well. (END/2005)

**Canada increases its support for electoral process in Haiti(2005-54) News Release
ReliefWeb**

**Source: Government of Canada
16 Nov 2005**

OTTAWA - International Cooperation Minister Aileen Carroll and Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew today announced that Canada will contribute \$6.75 million to support the electoral process in Haiti. Through Canada Corps, Canada will deploy up to 300 short-term observers to monitor the upcoming elections. This funding will also support Elections Canada's on-the-ground coordination of observers and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) deployment of 1,200 electoral security agents.

"Canada is committed to ensuring that the upcoming Haitian elections are conducted in a free, fair, and transparent manner, reflecting the democratic will of Haitians," said Minister Carroll. "Recognising the special relationship between Canada and Haiti, we have once again increased our contribution to strengthen the democratic process in Haiti, knowing that it will improve the lives of the Haitian people. I invite qualified Canadians to apply to become observers of this historical vote."

"Canada recognizes the importance of the ongoing electoral process in Haiti for the reconstruction and stability of the country," stated Minister Pettigrew. "Observation is vital to the success of the elections. Canada will play a key role in the international observation effort."

Of the funding announced today, \$4 million will be provided by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), including \$2 million through Canada Corps for short-term observers. Another \$2 million will go to Elections Canada to support the on-the-ground coordination. A further \$2.75 million will be provided by the Foreign Affairs/Global Peace and Security Fund and managed by the UNDP for the provision of electoral security agents as well as radio repeaters and other communications equipment.

Last June, Elections Canada was selected to establish the International Mission for Monitoring Haitian Elections (IMMHE), as officially announced at the Montreal International Conference on Haiti. The IMMHE will publish a final report that will assess key areas in Haiti's electoral processes.

The deployment of the election observers reflects the importance of Haiti's election to the country's future, as well as Canada's commitment, through Canada Corps, to bring Canadian skills and expertise to the world. Canada Corps was also mandated to help young Canadians bring their enthusiasm and energy to the world, as well as to ensure that qualified Canadians of all ages and backgrounds can, in the spirit of volunteerism, offer their skills and ideas in support of Canadian development priorities. Building on CIDA's partnerships with Canadian organizations, a global citizenship program is being planned.

Canadians who are interested in applying to be part of the Haiti mission should do so, before the end of day on Friday, November 18, 2005, through CANADEM's website at www.canadem.ca. Please note that certain qualifications will be required.

Today's announcement brings the Government of Canada's total contribution for the election process in Haiti to \$29.5 million. This is part of Canada's commitment of \$180 million over two years for Haiti's reconstruction and development efforts, including \$154 million in support of the transitional government's Interim Cooperation Framework and 100 civilian police officers for the Mission of the United Nations for stabilization of Haiti.

Funding for this initiative was provided for in the February 2005 federal budget and is therefore built into the existing fiscal framework.

Information

Andrew Graham, Director of Communications, Office of the Minister of International Cooperation,
Telephone: (819) 953-6238

Media Relations Office, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Telephone: (819) 953-6534, E-mail: info@acdi-cida.gc.ca

James Christoff, Press Secretary, Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, (613) 995-1851

Media Relations Office, Foreign Affairs Canada, (613) 995-1874

Haiti's ex-security chief jailed for three years in US for money laundering
Caribbean Net News
Tuesday, November 22, 2005

MIAMI, USA (AFP): The former security chief for exiled Haitian ex-president Jean Bertrand Aristide has been sentenced by a US court to three years in prison for laundering drug trafficking money.

Oriel Jean, 40, was given a comparatively mild sentence after cooperating with US federal authorities investigating a drug smuggling operation partly based in Haiti.

At his sentencing hearing in Miami last week, US District Judge Jose Martinez praised Jean's "good work" for the US government.

Aristide's security chief from 2001 to June 2003, Jean was sentenced on Friday. He was extradited to the United States after being arrested in Toronto in March 2004, 10 days after Aristide was ousted and fled Haiti during an uprising.

Earlier this month, the Haitian interim government filed a lawsuit in Miami accusing Aristide of drug trafficking and embezzling public funds.

Haiti: The Most Expensive Elections to Date May Yield Little Benefit
US Newswire
NCHR
11/21/2005

To: National Desk

Contact: Jocelyn McCalla of the National Coalition for Haitian Rights, 212-337-0005; 862-452-7196
or jmccalla@nchr.org

NEW YORK, Nov. 21 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Haiti is lurching towards national elections that may cost the impoverished country as much as \$100 million. "These elections may be the most expensive Haitian vote to date," says Jocelyn McCalla, executive director of the National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR), "but conditions for stable democratic progress barely exist. Consequently, electoral democracy may not trigger the functional democracy that Haitians yearn for."

In a report released today entitled Haiti: Lurching Towards 2006, the NCHR notes that Haiti suffers from several important institutional deficiencies that hamper the establishment of a rights-respecting regime. These include a small, corrupt and unwieldy police force whose effective size remains a relative mystery since it collapsed before rebel advances in 2004. Corruption, abuse and maladministration are the defining features of the Haitian legal and penal system. "In Haiti, justice is for sale," says Mr. McCalla, "they just don't bother putting up the 'for sale' sign."

"It's great that the international community has poured so much money into Haiti's elections. This should be seen however as a down payment. Bringing Haiti back from the brink of state collapse will require more than an electoral exercise. Political and socio-economic stability will be achieved only if the state institutions that anchor a modern democratic nation get substantial and substantive investment."

According to the NCHR, this means significantly reforming, strengthening and expanding the police force and the judiciary. But even then these institutions will remain years away from being able to fulfill responsibly and independently their mission. Therefore the UN presence in Haiti should be extended for several more years, and adjusted yearly in accordance with verifiable progress towards the establishment of the rule of law. Haiti and the UN should share equal responsibility for state failure or progress. In addition to investing substantively in infrastructure, health and education, Haiti must tap the Haitian Diaspora's wealth of skills and resources for public sector reforms and economic development. Finally Haiti's northern and Caribbean neighbors should adopt and implement temporary migration measures that give Haiti the time and space needed to provide a decent and sustaining environment for all Haitians.

For further information, contact: Jocelyn McCalla, (212) 337- 0005; (862) 452-7196; Email: jmccalla@nchr.org

Haiti Elections: Now Haitians Can Give Their Opinion Online
PR Web Newswire
November 20, 2005

www.HaitiElection2005.com showcases all the Haitian presidential candidates and gives the Haitian Diaspora a new way to voice their opinion about the 2005 Haitian Elections.

(PRWEB) November 20, 2005 -- For the past few months, the subject of every Haitian conversation has been the Haiti elections. Who will be the next elected president of Haiti on February 7th 2006?

One surprising factor of every presidential election in Haiti is that the majority of the Haitian population living outside of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, have no idea who the candidates are or what they look like.

For the Haitian Diaspora, the Haitians living outside of Haiti, the hottest topic for this year's Haiti elections is "Dual Citizenship".

According to the Haitian Constitution, becoming a citizen of another country is more like filing for divorce, a divorce that Haitian-Americans are clearly against.

In order to collect the opinion of all Haitians from the various communities around the world, Woodring Saint Preux, the owner of Haitian Search Engine www.fouye.com decided to build a separate website and dedicate it to the 2005 Haiti Elections.

www.HaitiElection2005.com features all 54 Haitian candidates, with pictures of each candidate, and invites the Haitian people to give their opinion and let the world know who they think is the most qualified person to represent them in the "Palais National" (The Haitian National Palace).

Having a separate website dedicated to the Haitian elections is a great way to allow Haitians with Internet access to voice their opinion about it.

If you are curious to know how Haitians really feel about each individual candidate www.HaitiElection2005.com will give you a rough idea.

With "dual citizenship" being such a big issue in the 2005 Haitian elections, it is important for the Haitian people with no real voice in Haitian politics, those of us leaving outside of the main land, the "Diaspora" who cannot vote, to express their sentiments.

Aside from the list of Haitian presidential candidates, www.HaitiElection2005.com also features a searchable list of all the Haitian political parties, a forum, campaign photographs, and a comment section that collects visitor input about each individual candidate.

As soon as the election is over and a President is elected and inaugurated in Haiti, www.HaitiElection2005.com will be closed to comments and will remain online only as a reference.

If you have a comment about the Haiti Elections, try to get it in before February 7, 2006. If all goes well, Haitians will be singing "hail to the chief" in Creole and our doors will be closed.

If you want to know what the Haitian Netizens think about the 2005 Haiti Elections, hop over to www.HaitiElection2005.com and find out for yourself.

Rights group says civilians killed

Human rights activists filed a petition before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights accusing peacekeepers of killing civilians in Haiti.

BY PABLO BACHELET

Wed, Nov. 16, 2005

WASHINGTON - A group of lawyers and human rights activists filed petitions before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Tuesday accusing Brazilian peacekeepers in Haiti of killing civilians and the U.S. government of arming security forces who abuse human rights.

The group also alleges that U.N. troops under Brazilian command have "directly participated in civilian killings" or provided "crucial logistical support" to Haitian security forces involved in massacres.

The petitions accuse Brazilian troops of killing at least seven civilians in a shootout on June 29 in the Bel Air district of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

The group also accuses Washington of supplying weapons to the Haitian National Police, whose members have been accused of participating in several massacres.

The allegations are based on eyewitness reports and partially corroborated by video evidence shot after the killings, according to the petitioners.

U.N. troops were either directly involved in civilian deaths in six other neighborhoods or failed to protect innocent civilians as they were being targeted by Haitian security forces, according to the petitions.

U.N. commanders vehemently deny they are targeting civilians. Clashes between peacekeepers and armed groups of Haitians increased this year as U.N. units tried to move into Port-au-Prince slums largely controlled by supporters of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The petitioners include the National Lawyer's Guild, which promotes human rights, and the leftwing Global Exchange as well as several attorneys.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, a part of the Organization of American States, can ask member states to pay reparations and refer cases to the Inter-American court in Costa Rica.

More children will be vaccinated in Haiti thanks to a donation from Relief Web

Source: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Date: 22 Nov 2005

JapanPort-au-Prince, 22 November 2005 - The Government of Japan has donated to UNICEF US\$ 1,8 million to support the Extended Programme of Immunization (EPI) in Haiti. Exchange of Notes was signed in Port-au-Prince between the Chargé d'Affaires ai of Japan and UNICEF Representative. The ceremony was presided by the Minister of Health of the Government of Haiti and was attended by other partners in EPI including Ambassadors of Spain and Brazil in Haiti, representatives of USAID, French Cooperation and PAHO/WHO. This is a second donation from Japan after an amount of 2,2 millions granted last year to support the same Programme.

The money will be used to buy vaccines and equipment needed to help in routine vaccination activities. Provision and maintenance of the cold chain as well as transport and distribution of vaccines and accessories to health facilities throughout the country will be covered until December 2007.

This donation represents a tremendous contribution to the health of children in Haiti, especially the most vulnerable ones, explained Adriano Gonzalez-Regueral, UNICEF Representative in Haiti. "Only 45 percent of the population has access to drinking water and merely 10% has access to electricity with coverage limited to the capital city Port-au-Prince. Chronic malnutrition with severe or moderate stunting affects 42 percent of children under five. Insalubrity, contaminated water and malnutrition make children even more vulnerable to diseases such as polio, measles, diphtheria and tetanus. Vaccination is one of the best means to insure that children do not die of these preventable diseases. We are very grateful to the Government and the people of Japan for this much needed donation. But, actors at all levels need to make an effort in order to insure that thousands of children in some urban areas have access to vaccination. In those areas health services have been seriously disturbed or interrupted because of violence and insecurity".

This cooperation is essential for Haiti because it has to do with children who represent the future of the country", said Masato Futaishi, Chargé d'Affaires ai of Japan in Haiti. "The Ministry of Health needs cooperation from all its international partners. UNICEF is doing a very important work in Haiti in improving health of children and mothers as well as in promoting their rights".

Haiti has the lowest indicators of human development in the Region of Latin American and the Caribbean. Diarrhea, malnutrition, respiratory infections are the main causes of death for children under five. Coverage in electricity is very low and Haiti doesn't have high tension interconnections between big cities and other areas. Not only vaccines have to be available, but they still have to reach all children in a proper condition, including those poorest children living in the most remote areas. Only 32 percent under 5 children in Haiti are immunized and more than 12 percent have never received one dose of vaccine.

For more information, please contact:

Grégory Médor, Assistant to the Cooperation Unit,
Japan Embassy in Port-au-Prince,

Tel : 245 3333. E-mail : japaneco@hainet.net

Sylvana Nzirorera, UNICEF Haiti Communication Officer.

Tel : 245 3525. E-mail : snzirorera@unicef.org

U.N. Haiti peacekeepers kill 4, arrest 33

By WILLIAM M. REILLY

UPI U.N. Correspondent

November 17, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Nov. 17 (UPI) -- Following an eight-hour firefight in Port-au-Prince, U.N. peacekeepers counted four dead gang members and arrested 33 others.

The United Nations said there were casualties among non-combatants or U.N. personnel. The arrested were turned over to local police.

The U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti, known by its French acronym of MINUSTAH, said the battle erupted Tuesday in the Pele zone of the Cité Militaire area when the blue helmets, inspecting a barrier under construction, came under attack by men firing heavy weapons.

Several U.N. search and security operations were conducted over the weekend in which one suspect was killed, two people wounded, nine others arrested, weapons seized and stolen vehicles recovered.

Two other U.N. posts also came under attack Tuesday but there were no casualties, said MINUSTAH.

The peacekeeping force was established by the U.N. Security Council last year to help re-establish peace in the impoverished Caribbean country after an insurgency forced elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to go into exile in February 2004.

The mission has been hindered by unrest in poor sections around the capital city.

Haiti's justice system in collapse

Nov. 19, 2005

Author: Tim Pelzer

People's Weekly World Newspaper

Two years after a U.S.-backed coup ousted democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's judicial system is in a state of collapse.

According to William Quigley, law professor at Loyola University of New Orleans, "The justice system is in shambles at this point, worse than six months ago when it was terrible — no trials are being held and none anticipated. People who are arrested can only expect jail unless they are willing to try to bribe their way out. All justice is being put on hold until after the elections," slated for mid-December at the earliest.

A good case study is Father Gerard Jean-Juste, a Catholic priest associated with Aristide's Lavalas movement. Quigley spent time in Haiti last year helping defend Jean-Juste, who had been charged with "inciting violence" and other offenses because, his supporters say, he opposed the U.S.-installed regime of Gerard Latortue and stood up for the rights of the poor.

While a judge eventually threw out the charges for lack of evidence, Jean-Juste was re-arrested this year and is currently sitting in jail without being charged with any crime.

Brian D. Concannon Jr., director of the Oregon-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, agrees the justice system has collapsed. "Everyone is ignoring the constitution, from the prime minister to the minister of justice, the judges and prosecutors," he said. He estimates the government is holding over 100 political prisoners.

However, a human rights monitor based in Haiti, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the number of political prisoners is higher.

"Amnesty [International] generally defines a prisoner of conscience as someone in detention solely because of their political beliefs, actions or affiliations," the source said. "Prisoners who fit this category are not numerous."

At the same time, the typical prisoner is a male between the ages of 17-30 who is sitting in prison simply because he comes from a poor neighborhood where the Lavalas Party enjoys strong support, and therefore is seen as a party supporter, the source said. "Their detention can be seen as part of a larger campaign of repression against the poor, but international human rights groups would not likely categorize them as prisoners of conscience."

Another example of the justice system's breakdown occurred recently with jailed deposed Prime Minister Yvon Neptune. After being held for over a year without being charged, Neptune finally won a court ruling that a judge should try him for his alleged offenses. However, UN human rights monitor Thierry Faggart said that the constitution requires that Neptune be tried by a jury.

Faggart noted that, in general, the justice system “barely functions” and that “the state of the judiciary is so bad that people have lost all hope in it.”

While critics blame the collapse of Haiti’s judicial system on the country’s interim government, they also say the U.S. and Canada share responsibility. In the report, “Haiti: Human Rights Investigations,” released earlier this year by the University of Miami Law School, then-Deputy Minister of Justice Philippe Vixamar told investigators that the U.S. and Canada are playing key roles in the justice system, paying the salaries of high officials. He also said that the Canadian International Development Agency had assigned him his job and was paying his salary.

In addition, Canadian police lead the UN police mission responsible for training and overseeing the Haitian National Police (HNP), which commits regular human rights abuses, including massacres, human rights groups charge. According to the Catholic Institute for International Relations, “Many of the 5,000-strong force have links to the previous military or have been involved in drugs rackets, kidnappings, extrajudicial killings or other illegal activities.” The U.S. supplies arms to the HNP.

Concannon said that since the U.S. overthrew Aristide in February 2004, “the human rights problems of a dictatorship have returned with a vengeance, to the great detriment of most Haitians.”
tpelzer@shaw.ca

Haiti: UN peacekeepers mount new anti-gang operation in capital
UN News Centre
18 November 2005

Continuing their anti-gang operations in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, United Nations peacekeepers launched another raid in the Cité Militaire area yesterday after intense firing during the night sowed panic among residents.

During the raid, troops of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) detained some 50 suspects, 40 of whom were later released, and seized a M16 sub-machinegun, two pistols and 2,000 cartridges. Two people were wounded.

The area was later reported calm but the UN troops remained there.

Earlier this week, 200 UN peacekeepers waged an eight-hour gun battle with heavily armed men who attacked them in Cité Militaire, killing four of the assailants.

MINUSTAH was set up by the Security Council last year to help to re-establish peace in the impoverished Caribbean country after an insurgency forced elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to go into exile in February 2004.

Colin Powell's Former Chief of Staff Col. Wilkerson on Haiti: Defends U.S. Role in Ouster of President, Claims Aristide's "Will to Power is Excessive Even Obsessive"

Democracy Now!

Tuesday, November 22nd, 2005

We speak with Colin Powell's former chief of staff, Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, about the overthrow of Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide in 2004. Wilkerson defends the U.S. role in Haiti at the time. Aristide has maintained he was ousted in what he calls a modern-day kidnapping in the service of a coup d'etat backed by the United States. [includes rush transcript]

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, served as chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell from 2002 to 2005.

AMY GOODMAN: We're talking to Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff of former Secretary of State Colin Powell from 2002 to 2005. Now, in this time, Colonel Wilkerson, not only did we see the invasion and occupation of Iraq, but we also saw the democratically elected president of Haiti ousted, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. And you were the chief of staff of Colin Powell at the time. Bill Fletcher of TransAfrica has said about Powell's legacy, quote, "Why was he leading the charge, pushing President Aristide out the door? Why was he not instead using his office as a way of stabilizing the situation and bringing about peace?" What do you know of what happened February 29th, 2004, when the Aristides were forced out of the country?

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I will have to tell you that I think Secretary Powell saved a great many lives on both sides, if there are two sides. There are more than two sides in Haiti. Secretary Powell was all for and was pushing hard for some sort of reconciliation, some sort of reconciliation where we could recognize the democratically elected government of Aristide and Aristide could himself step back from the brink, a brink that he had been largely responsible for creating, and things could improve in Haiti and the government that was in existence at that time could continue in office.

Once our ambassador, Ambassador Foley, who was one of the people who changed my opinion forever about the foreign service -- our ambassador in Liberia did the same thing for me in Monrovia, such brave people. They're braver than people I have even known sometimes in combat. And Ambassador Foley, at great risk to himself, personal risk, counseled President Aristide, talked with President Aristide, confronted him with the situation that Aristide was going to meet on the morn, so to speak, confronted him with the devastation that was likely to take place, and President Aristide, to his credit, made the decision to take Ambassador Foley's offer and to leave the country.

I know he said a thousand things different from that in the subsequent weeks and months and years, but this was a situation fraught with all kinds of chaos, and Secretary Powell and the United States government and our ambassador in Haiti, in particular, did a marvelous job, I think, under the circumstances, of preventing what could have been widespread bloodshed and getting Aristide out of the country.

One testimony to that was the fact that even though on the surface we had had all of these rancorous relations, supposedly, with France, much on the part of Secretary Rumsfeld's having stiffed the French on almost everything they wanted to do in the way of military liaison and so forth, the French were willing to come in and help us with the situation in Haiti and to provide troops for stabilizing that situation, because they, too, understood how desperate the situation was.

AMY GOODMAN: But this --

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: So I disagree completely with the characterization that TransAfrica put on this situation.

AMY GOODMAN: This all happened after the Aristides left. Why not bring in these forces before? We were only talking about a couple of hundred thugs that were moving in on the capital?

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Aristide was the focal point. Aristide was the person who needed to be removed from Haiti, and even he understood that. In the conversation he had with our ambassador, he understood that. He knew that he was the lightning rod, and that if he didn't remove himself from the island, there was going to be a lot of bloodshed.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, of course, he would contest every point.

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Of course, he would.

AMY GOODMAN: I went to the Central African Republic, and he told the story of basically what he described as being forced out of Haiti at the time, that you had this small group -- I mean, these were not a large number of people -- small group, known killers, people like Jodel Chamblain, who was found guilty of murder in absentia for the murder of the Justice Minister, Guy Malary, in 1993; Antoine Izmyery. These were people who were known -- certainly Colin Powell also knew them -- had been back during the first coup, had been there negotiating with those involved in the coup. This was not the overall sentiment of the Haitian people, and he said it was the U.S. that pressed him to leave, that pushed him out, that put him onto this plane with U.S. military and security. He had no idea where was going until he was dumped in the Central African Republic.

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: I can't imagine a man like Aristide, whose will to power is excessive, even obsessive, saying anything differently. Colin Powell, as you said, did know the situation in Haiti, probably as well as anyone in America. Colin Powell made the decision based on our ambassador in Haiti's very clear presentation of the circumstances, and the President made the decision ultimately, and it was a good decision, and I would stand by that decision.

Haiti is a situation that picks at all our hearts all the time. Haiti is right next to being a failed state. And because of its proximity to the United States, we know what that failure means. And Haiti is not apparently capable of coming out of that situation. It's a situation that, as I said, drags at all our hearts, but in this particular instance, I think a good decision was made, a decision that prevented further bloodshed that would have been widespread had it not been made.

AMY GOODMAN: Why say that the president, Aristide, had an obsession with power? This was a man who was the democratically elected president of Haiti, certainly got a higher percentage of the vote than President Bush got in this country.

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Please, don't refer to the percentage of vote as equatable to democracy, as equatable to the kinds of institutions we have reflecting democracy in America. Hitler was elected by popular vote.

AMY GOODMAN: I spoke to the head of the Steele Foundation. That was the American foundation that provided the security for the people around President Aristide, who was not allowed to send in reinforcements. Again, since we're talking about such a small group of people who are moving in on the capital, the Steele Foundation felt he could be secured, but the U.S. government stopped Aristide's own security from being able to come in.

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Aristide felt like he couldn't be secured. That's the only -- I was privy to the cables that come in from our ambassador. I was privy to some of the information that the secretary let me know about what was happening down there in terms of telephone calls and so forth. Aristide made the decision deep into the night that his life was in danger and that the bloodshed that would occur would probably fall at his feet, and so Aristide made a mutual decision with our ambassador to leave the country.

AMY GOODMAN: Why would --

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: Despite what he says now, that's what the record reflects.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, I don't doubt he felt threatened, but he felt threatened, as Kenneth Kurtz said, who was the head of the Steele Foundation, on our program, that they were not allowed to bring in the security. Why wouldn't the U.S. government allow the security to be brought in? This was the president of the country.

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: That's a question you should address to George Bush, because I'm unfamiliar with the circumstance you're talking about. I know about all of the elements that were converging. I know about all of the different elements that Aristide had excited to converge. I don't know this story about private security people, who were willing to come in at the last moment and guard Aristide. I heard some information to that effect after the situation occurred, but I am unable to comment on that with any accuracy, because I'm not familiar with exactly what you are talking about.

AMY GOODMAN: And Gerard Latortue, the person who was put in charge in Haiti and his connection to the United States, how he was chosen?

COL. LAWRENCE WILKERSON: That's a process that unfolded after Aristide was removed, and again, I don't have any profound insights into that.

AMY GOODMAN: We're talking to Lawrence Wilkerson, who is the colonel who was the chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell from 2002 to 2005.

**Supporting a Leftist Opposition to Lavalas:
The AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center
and the Batay Ouvriye
by Jeb Sprague
Haiti Action Committee
UPDATED: November 18, 2005**

For many activists, academics, and labor historians in the 1980's the AFL-CIO became referred to as the AFL-CIA. Founded in 1961 the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) was the AFL-CIO's foreign organizing wing for Latin America and the Caribbean. Along with its counterparts in Africa, Asia, and Europe, AIFLD was used to undermine leftist trade movements, support dictators such as the Duvalier's and back military coups in Chile and Brazil.

Throughout the Cold War, the CIA heavily infiltrated AIFLD, as discussed in Phillip Agee's 1984 whistle blower *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*. Agee fingered Serafino Romauldi as being involved in AIFLD throughout the 1940's, 50's, and 60's as a known CIA asset heading up AIFLD at one point. In 1984, with 'Baby Doc' Jean-Claude Duvalier's consent the Federation des Ouvriers Syndiques (FOS) was founded as a conservative pro-business union with the assistance of AIFLD.

Following the departure of 'Baby Doc,' the State Department feared radical labor unrest in Haiti so it increased funding for the FOS. In June of 1986, the State Department, at a White House briefing for the chief executive officers of major corporations, requested AIFLD's involvement in Haiti because "of the presence of radical labor unions and the high risk that other unions may become radicalized." [1] Members of Duvalier's secret police and the Tonton Macoutes heavily infiltrated the FOS.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding, often funneled through AIFLD, to Haitian unions such as the Confédération Autonome des Travailleurs Haïtiens (CATH) and the FOS. According to Thomas Carothers in his 1994 article, "The Ned at 10", the National Endowment for Democracy "believed that democracy promotion was a necessary means of fighting communism and that, given sensitivities about U.S. government intervention abroad, such work could best be done by an organization that was not part of the government."

During the first 7 months of the Aristide administration (before the Cédras coup), CATH under the sway of Auguste Mesyeux held a campaign of demonstrations against the government known as the Vent de Tempête (Wind of the Storm). This was the first attempt to put pressure on the Aristide government, mounted by a U.S. funded union. In March of 1992, following the first coup against Aristide and a brief suspension of funding, AIFLD reactivated its \$900,000 program supporting conservative unions in Haiti. Beth Sims in her 1992 policy report "Populism, Conservatism, and Civil Society in Haiti," writes "CATH was once a militant, anti-Duvalierist federation", but in 1990 a conservative wing took over with backing from AIFLD. Following increasing criticism over its international organizing activities the AFL-CIO disbanded AIFLD and its counterparts, and created in their place the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS), more commonly known as the Solidarity Center, in 1997, supposedly giving a new face to its international organizing campaigns. The Solidarity Center, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was launched with the goal of "work[ing] with unions and community groups worldwide to achieve equitable, sustainable, democratic

development and to help men and women everywhere stand up for their rights and improve their living and working standards." [2] Attempting to wipe away its dirty Cold War history, the AFL-CIO had grouped together its former four regional institutes, including AIFLD, under one roof.

As pointed out in Harry Kelber's six-part series, the "AFL-CIO's Dark Past," the Solidarity Center employed many past AIFLD members such as Harry Kamberis, a former Department of State employee who had been involved in fighting leftist unions in South Korea and the Philippines. [3] The Solidarity Center also funneled over \$154,000 to the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), a right wing union, which led a strike in 2002 attempting to overthrow the democratically elected government of President Hugo Chavez. Between 1997 and 2001 the NED provided \$587,926 to the Solidarity Center. Kim Scipes, an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Purdue University and a leading critique of the Solidarity Center, argues that while "considerable evidence that AFL-CIO foreign operations have worked hand in hand with the CIA, or that AFL-CIO foreign operations have benefited U.S. foreign policy as a whole or supported initiatives by the White House or the State Department" it has been a top ranking group within the AFL-CIO that have guided foreign operations, refusing to report on their operations to rank and files members. [4] The murky tradition of subverting democratically elected governments during the cold war would continue on with the Solidarity Center.

The Solidarity Center (ACILS) would approach labor organizing in Haiti from a different angle than its predecessor, AIFLD. During much of 2000 and 2001 the Solidarity Center refused to operate in Haiti. Yonnas Kefle, the labor attaché at the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince, from February 2000 to October 2001, explains, "I tried to involve the Solidarity Center but they refused to work in Haiti at this time."

With USAID funding as its primary income source for its projects in Haiti, the Solidarity Center, by 2004, had restarted operations in Haiti, cooperating with a union that had strong leftist credentials, the Batay Ouvriye.

In 2003 the Solidarity Center engaged in a NED-funded study of labor conditions in Haiti; analyzing the history of the domestic labor movement, women in the work force, rural labor codes, and the debate over reforming the aging labor codes. [5] The study utilized Solidarity Center interviews with the Batay Ouvriye that predated to 1999. The study failed to critically analyze the role of USAID and the U.S. in supporting sanctions against the Haitian government in 2001, which was a prime factor for the shortfall of payments to the public workforce and leverage used towards the Free Trade Zone Initiative. The study, entitled "Unequal Equation: The Labor Code and Worker Rights in Haiti," while putting forward many important points in regards to the antiquated labor codes, relied heavily on interviews with the Batay Ouvriye, the formerly Duvalier sponsored Federation des Ouvriers Syndiques (FOS), and the formerly AIFLD-supported Confédération Autonome des Travailleurs Ha*tiens (CATH).

Batay Ouvriye in Kreyòl translates roughly as the "worker's struggle." Since 1994, Batay Ouvriye has been associated with organizing sweatshop workers and others in Haiti, where some of the most exploitative and low wage garment industry jobs exist in the entire Western Hemisphere. Not a formal union, the Batay Ouvriye calls itself a "workers organization." Originally initiated as an office space in Port-Au-Prince for organizing workers in 1994, the Batay Ouvriye Federation was founded in May of 2002.p>Organized upon anarcho-syndicalist principles, the Batay Ouvriye has had a clear ideological

line of advocating for the control of industry and government by federations of labor unions through the use of direct action, such as sabotage and general strikes. Ideologically opposed to working with or under any form of government, the Batay Ouvriye has focused its attention primarily on organizing workers in the garment industry. Syndicalism has long existed as a revolutionary political strain in the Caribbean as discussed in Frank Fernandez 2001 book "Cuban Anarchism." Running contrary to its own ideology the Batay Ouvriye leadership in 2004 began accepting monetary aid and oversight from a foreign government, the United States, and its foreign labor operative, the Solidarity Center.

So what would the Solidarity Center want with a radical syndicalist union in Haiti? How could the Solidarity Center justify to its State Department and USAID oversight the funding of such an organization? The Solidarity Center's support for the Batay Ouvriye seemed a far cry from its predecessor AIFLD's approach in working with conservative unions such as the CATH and the FOS.

The Batay Ouvriye had numerous victories in organizing against multinationals, which were exploiting Haiti's cheap labor. In the weeks before the February 2004 coup, the Solidarity Center and Batay Ouvriye's sub-grantee Sokowa were deeply involved in a campaign against Grupo M, a company that sold to U.S.-based companies Levi Strauss and Sara Lee. In December 2004, 300 workers at the Codevi Free Trade Zone in northeastern Haiti had been out of work for six months as a result of their attempts to form a union. As Batay stated in an October 1st statement, that "amongst others....\$3,500" was channeled to Sokowa by the Solidarity Center to help the fired workers.

Throughout 2004, the Sokowa Union underwent a labor struggle in the Grupo M factories in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. While Sokowa sought much-needed wage increases for its workers, Grupo M threatened to close down its CODEVI free trade zone. Work stoppages were held in response and a campaign to pressure Grupo M into negotiation, in which the Workers Rights Consortium and the Solidarity Center were successful contributors. On February 5, 2005, Sokowa and Grupo M negotiated a contract. In a March 2005 report, Charles Arthur of the Haiti Support Group, a key Batay Ouvriye backer in Europe, stated, "The US Solidarity Center is co-coordinating some low-key pressure on Michael Kobori, Levi's Global Code of Conduct director, to let him know of concerns relating to Levi's non-action on increasing orders." [6]

But for all its good work in organizing in the garment industry, one important theme separated Batay Ouvriye from the majority of popular organizations in Haiti. Batay Ouvriye was adamantly and ideologically opposed to any cooperation with the Aristide government, or for that matter any leftist or populist government that was democratically elected. With its backing for the Batay Ouvriye, the Solidarity Center was able to kill two birds with one stone. (1) The Solidarity Center was able to claim the credentials of supporting a legitimate labor struggle to organize workers in Haiti's miserable garment industry. (2) While simultaneously supporting a group that adamantly opposed and organized against the largest and most popular party of the poor in Haiti, Fanmi Lavalas, a pariah for Haiti overseers at the U.S. Department of State.

The U.S. Department of State has oversight on all "democratic enhancement" funding, which is funneled through USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives into groups such as the Solidarity Center. Gerry Bart, head of the Haiti desk at USAID's main office in Washington, D.C., explains that "it's kind of a negotiation between USAID and the State Department... The democratic assistance money comes from the State Department."

Following the 2000 elections and 2001 inauguration of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Convergence Démocratique (an internationally financed and trained coalition of opposition political parties) pressured the OAS and the international donor community into engaging in sanctions against the elected government of Haiti. While the Aristide administration continually complied with OAS requests, the sanctions held, having a long lasting and harsh effect upon the national and local economies. The capability of the government to pay the wages of its public workforce and come through on many of its goals fell through.

By April, 2002, doctors from the main Port-au-Prince hospital went on strike, and by May teachers went on a one-day strike for more than 13 month's back pay. These 13 months corresponded closely with the cut off of international aid in 2001 to the government. The Bush Administration, using its veto power on the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) board of directors, blocked the release of already-approved loans for health care, education, and water. \$500 million in development assistance and \$146 million in loans for water, health, and education were cut off.

The Aristide administration, inheriting a poverty-stricken country burdened with international debt, was forced to take the blame for the effects of the austerity measures that had been pressured, and some would argue imposed, upon it. Emerging economies, such as Argentina's, suffered tremendously from the institution of economic reforms backed by the international financial community. This was a common theme in neo-liberal economic reforms carried out during the 90's, with long lasting effects on much of the developing world. While the Lavalas government was able to resist many of the "reforms" which were being forced on it, this became increasingly difficult in 2001 with the discontinuance of foreign aid to the government, which had long depended on aid for much of its budget.

While the capability of the Haitian government to function properly declined because of these cuts, social unrest increased and international groups such as the Solidarity Center and others began to criticize the Haitian government on a number of issues. Many of the accusations that Solidarity Center made against the Haitian government were problems that stemmed from the actions of their own funding source, USAID and the United States government. Through collecting on out-dated debts to past dictators, pressuring the Haitian government towards the maintenance of low wages, privatization, the firing of half of Haiti's civil servants, and then pushing for the cut-off of nearly all international aid to the Haitian government, the United States and institutions such as the World Bank subjugated the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere to what it called "financial responsibility" and "fiscal austerity measures."

While it was not uncommon for leftists to criticize Aristide, Preval, or Lavalas for cooperating with international reforms, Batay was different in that they refused to coalesce behind the elected government when it faced an openly coordinated and heavily financed campaign of political destabilization led by the U.S. government and other international donors. The international donor community, along with the United States, heavily financed the opposition to Aristide's government, most notably organizations within the Convergence Démocratique and Group 184.

At "training sessions," funded and organized by the International Republican Institute (IRI) in the Dominican Republic throughout 2002, 2003, and early 2004, an opposition to Aristide's government was coordinated and formulated plans to organize, protest, and campaign against the government.

Meanwhile a small group of rebels, with connections to the Group 184, CIA, and the death-squad Front pour l'Avancement et le Progrès Haïtien (FRAPH), came out of the Dominican Republic to invade Haiti in January of 2004. With the sovereignty of Haiti under attack, soon after the 2004 coup, the Batay Ouvriye was itself on the U.S. bank roll.

In September 2005, Mario Pierre, a representative of the Batay Ouvriye in New York City, explained that he knew nothing about U.S. funding for his organization. He stated: "The Batay Ouvriye does not receive any funding from the U.S. government." When asked if the Batay Ouvriye might have a leadership or a group of organizers that made these decisions and could be questioned about them, he stated: "The Batay Ouvriye has nothing like that. We have no leaders." Batay Ouvriye has presented itself as a utopian worker's alternative to Fammi Lavalas, the majority political party of the poor in Haiti. Utilizing the example of the Free Trade Zone constructed along Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic, Batay Ouvriye argues, as have others, that the Aristide administration sold out, betraying the popular movements that had voted it into power. As Haïti-Progrès stated in July 2003, the first of seventeen free trade zones was being constructed "near Haiti's northeastern border town of Ouanaminthe, development of what was once the most precious farmland in this barren, hungry corner of the country."

Few observers realized the immense constraints the international community had placed on Haiti in the Debt-For-Development Initiative that was being pushed hard by the U.S. Department of State. The only alternative the government of Haiti had was to continue on, with an unadjusted sky rocketing debt. World Bank officials have explained that the government's inability to pay was compounded by the withdrawal of international aid to the government. While the "international community" ripped apart Haiti like a wild pack of cheetahs, the Aristide government came under increasing domestic criticism.

An underlining dichotomy in Batay's message was their claim at being a democratic organization, representing "small workshops, shantytowns, and peasants," yet opposing all elected government and all elections. A mystery has been the role of its leadership. While its members claim to have no leadership or central structure, from numerous communiqués and interviews, it is obvious that a central leadership does exist within Batay Ouvriye, although an unelected and arguably unaccountable leadership.

In a March 2004 meeting held in Port-au-Prince between Batay Ouvriye and a group of journalists and NGO representatives, a de facto leadership of the Batay emerged. Speaking primarily was Didier Dominique, alias Paul Philomé, a prominent spokesperson, and Yvonne Castera, alias Yannick Etienne, a frequent traveler to the United States. A third unnamed spokesperson from Batay Ouvriye stated that he was "close with Evans Paul." Evans Paul a leading figure of the Convergence Démocratique and a founder of the Konvansyon Inite Demokratik (KID), was a prime backer of the ouster of the Aristide government in February 2004. Batay Ouvriye's "workers" who sat in on the meeting, according to a member of the Quixote Centre Delegation "were not permitted to speak to us one-on-one nor voice their opinions independently of Batay's supervision or prompting during the meeting." Overseeing the meeting was a representative of the Solidarity Center, a U.S. citizen, Jeff Hermanson.

The Batay Ouvriye, while claiming to be a workers movement, has always stood against elections and the democratic process. Much like the Convergence, the Batay Ouvriye, instead of waiting for elections, chose to call for the resignation and downfall of the Lavalas government. While the Aristide administration won the vote overwhelmingly in the 2000 election, Batay Ouvriye claimed that the Lavalas administration was an "occupation" government and that the "elections were one step backward." In explaining their opposition to the Lavalas government, Philomé stated in the March 2004 meeting that "we had worked to denounce all of the plans that the Fanmi Lavalas government had, we denounced them and fought to make sure those plans were not successful, and we also took positions so the government can leave the country because we felt that the Aristide government was a government that accepted impunity for the factory owners, and they also were accepting and signing all sorts of contracts even though it was bad for the country."

Either by mistake or by design, the Batay Ouvriye played a role in destabilizing the elected government in Haiti and, following the coup, helped to facilitate the creation of a fractured left. Many of their low-level organizers, like Mario Pierre, were not aware until September 2005 of the U.S. funding for their organization.

USAID is the primary funding source for the Solidarity Centers activities in Haiti. As Sasha Kramer pointed out in her October 2005 article, "The Friendly Face of U.S. Imperialism: USAID and Haiti," supporting alternatives to Lavalas is an important first step in further destabilizing the popular movement's widespread support. Through its sponsored camps, Kramer documents how USAID has worked to "undermine existing community programs in an attempt to de-legitimize the demands of the Lavalas movement in the eyes of the international community. This strategy is exemplified by USAID's description of their activities in Petit Place Cazeau." [7]

The assault upon Lavalas and the popular movements in Haiti, movements now rooted in the history and folk songs of the Haitian poor, was a long-term encirclement. It holds significant similarities to what happened prior to the first coup against Aristide in the early 90's and late 80's. The ubiquitous web of funding, grantees, and sub-grantees, while often aimed at legitimate problems in Haiti, has had the obscured role of reinstating the rule of the elite over the island nation. Aid funding is ambiguous by nature, having multiple goals and outcomes. By propping up and supporting small sectarian movements, the USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and the U.S Department of State, which has oversight on all "democratic enhancement" funding at USAID, aims to destabilize the larger popular movement as a whole.

Following the February 2004 coup, while the Batay Ouvriye inked a money arrangement with the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center, unions that backed the ousted government such as the FAENNE and worker's from the bus drivers union were forced into hiding, being murdered and assassinated by the death squads of the newly U.S.-installed de facto government of Gérard Latortue.

In a July 2005 statement, the Batay Ouvriye attempted to justify its working with the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center, while openly acknowledging the AFL-CIO's murky past. The authorless statement from the Batay Ouvriye explained that the AFL-CIO's funding "apparatus is controlled, in the final analysis, by the ruling classes in the United States... Since these 'solidarity' practices have reached the point of developing relations with grassroots workers organizations, we are faced with the obligation of managing them, while they inevitably attempt to manipulate these relations variously in order to

recuperate them. So, it is up to us to correctly handle these relations in the working class' interest and on a permanent basis." [8] Somehow the Batay Ouvriye's leadership felt that only it could best manage U.S. labor funding.

The Batay Ouvriye has failed to respond to questions concerning its U.S. funding source and relationship with the Solidarity Center. In an attempt to control the damage done by the uncovering of its relationship with a Department of State and USAID funded organization, David Wilson, an organizer for Batay Ouvriye's U.S. backer "The Grassroots Haiti Solidarity Committee", released an article on November 11th, 2005. [9] Wilson's article continues to ignore the refusal of the Solidarity Center and Batay Ouvriye to account for all the funding that has been provided. A website and a November public forum in New York City have since been organized by the Batay leadership and its supporters to continue the cover up of this funding relationship. Paul Philomé, a leader of the Batay, also recently signed up using his alias, Didier Dominique, to speak at the 2006 World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela, undoubtedly to continue Batays attempts at portraying itself as a "revolutionary" force in Haiti.

When asked why the Solidarity Center did not work with pro-Lavalas unions, a member of the Solidarity Center, who wished to go unnamed, used the term "revolutionary ideologues" to describe the unions who backed the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Ben Davis, head of the Solidarity Center's operations in the Caribbean and Latin America during the February 2004 coup, refused to comment. Currently he is working as an 'in country representative" for the Solidarity Center in Mexico City.

Currently the Senior Program Officer for the Americas at the Solidarity Center is Samantha Tate, a National Security Education fellow and a Fulbright fellow from 1999-2001, who researched Indonesian child labor and media organizations following the fall of the Suharto dictatorship. Refusing public accountability, Tate, along with the Solidarity Center's grant management department, will not comment on the amount of funding provided to the Batay Ouvriye or when and how their relationship began.

In September 2005, Tate, an employee of the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center, contacted my academic department chair at California State University of Long Beach, attempting to isolate and discredit this research.

[1] <http://rightweb.irc-online.org/analysis/2004/0403ned-haiti.php>

[2] See NED website and American Center for International Labor Solidarity
<http://www.ned.org/grants/04programs/web-multi04.html>

[3] <http://www.laboreducator.org/darkpast.htm>

[4] <http://www.monthlyreview.org/0505scipes.htm>

[5] Unequal Equation: The Labor Code and Worker Rights in Haiti

[6] <http://www.labournet.net/world/0503/haiti1.html>

[7] <http://counterpunch.org/kramer10142005.html>

[8] Sur l'AFL-CIO, Son Rôle Nationalement et Internationalement, la Crise Actuelle par rapport aux Intérêts de la Classe Ouvrière

[9] David Wislon, "Haitian Labor Group Confronts US Lavalas Backers"

Texans lend a hand in bid to help Haiti

By BOB RAY SANDERS

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

November 20, 2005

SOUTHLAKE -- Cars lined both sides of the street outside of Southlake Mayor Andy Wambsganss' home Thursday night as some of the town's notables and international luminaries gathered for perhaps the most unusual political event ever staged around these parts.

The invited guests had come to lend their support to a presidential candidate.

You're asking yourself, "What so unusual about that?"

Well, the person they had come to support -- morally and financially -- is not a candidate for office in this country. He is running for the presidency of Haiti.

I've written before about Dumarsais "Dumas" Siméus, the Southlake resident and Mansfield business owner who has returned to his native country in hopes of becoming the elected leader who can set Haiti on a path of recovery from abject economic and political poverty.

Haitian government officials have done practically everything possible to keep him off the ballot.

After his name was not included among those of the official candidates listed in September, Siméus took his case to the nation's Supreme Court, which ruled unanimously in his favor last month.

So now his name is on the ballot, right?

Actually, no. A quickly appointed commission, selected by the prime minister, has ruled once again that the American, who never renounced his Haitian citizenship, will not appear on the ballot.

That is the sixth time in recent weeks that Haitian officials have rejected Siméus as a candidate, but he is determined to become the country's next president whenever there is an election. The date has been postponed twice already; the latest election date is Dec. 27.

The people who gathered at the Wambsganss house last week, including missionaries who spent time in the impoverished Caribbean country, know Siméus as a tough, no-nonsense businessman, but also as a man who cares deeply about his native land and its 9 million people.

Because of the continuing electoral turmoil and his need to continue campaigning, the candidate didn't come home last week, but his wife was there to speak for him.

In a passionate appeal, Kimberly Siméus told of her spouse's poor upbringing, the sacrifices of his parents to send him to the United States for an education and of his rise to leadership in some of the country's top companies before owning his own firm, Siméus Foods International, which is headquartered in Mansfield.

Then she described a badly suffering Haiti that needs, she said, a leader with her husband's skill, commitment and passion for the country and its people.

Noting that Haiti was the first black republic in the world, emerging from a slave revolt that overthrew the French government in 1804, Kimberly Siméus ticked off these startling facts about the country:

It is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere.

Average life expectancy is 49 years.

It is the most water-deprived country in the world.

Thirty percent of children die of waterborne diseases before reaching the age of 5.

Unemployment exceeds 70 percent.

The average education is the equivalent of our third or fourth grade.

The average income is \$500 a year.

Add to all those problems corruption and crime, and it is understandable why the current leaders don't want to see a man with Siméus' intellect, wealth and commitment to change to become the next president, Kimberly Siméus said.

"The fight against Dumas running for president is another form of a coup," she said.

Thursday night's event, tagged "Texans for Dumas," raised well over \$10,000 in cash and pledges, and there is more on the way, said Doug Tabor, a friend of Siméus' who was the chief organizer of the Southlake campaign fund-raiser.

Tabor, president and chief executive officer of Team Worldwide in Grapevine, once worked for Siméus.

"There are so many things I learned from Dumas," he said. "When you work with Dumas, you learn quickly that you had better be consistent, productive and full of energy and ideas. The goals are high. Objectives will be met. People will rise to the level of expectation."

He also told the crowd, which included three other Southlake City Council members and an ex-mayor, that they were making an important statement beyond their financial contributions.

"Every person in this room is communicating a very loud and clear message to the people in Haiti: 'We care and we want to help,' " Tabor said.

Money raised in this country will help pay for campaign literature and broadcast time in Haiti.

Siméus is scheduled to give a live radio address to the nation Monday, one of several he has planned before the election.

There are more than 30 candidates on the ballot, and by election day, I certainly expect Siméus' name to be among them.

And although it seems like a very long shot, I would not be surprised if he won.

Aristide and the Endless Revolution: Overthrow of Haiti's Aristide revisited by damning documentary

By Kam Williams

Film Editor

The Philadelphia Center City Weekly Press, PA

November 23, 2005

If you have only followed the story as told in the mainstream press, then you probably have little understanding of why Haiti's duly elected President, Jean Bertrand Baptiste, was deposed in 2004 with the considerable involvement of the U.S. military and other nations supposedly dedicated to democracy. But now, thanks to Nicolas Rossier, who has taken the time to uncover the long-suppressed ugly underbelly of the story, we have a better understanding of the series of tragic events which led to the toppling of the Baptiste government.

Jean Bertrand Baptiste

It is this untangled web of deceit, betrayal, and political violence which is chronicled in *Aristide and the Endless Revolution*, a damning documentary which raises some serious questions about the Central Intelligence Agency's role in the popular president's ouster. The film asserts that, in fact, this coup d'etat marked the fourth such American intervention into the affairs of Haiti in the last ninety years.

Even Aristide himself had been deposed once before, in 1991, also allegedly at the direction of the CIA. Why would Uncle Sam seek to overthrow this much beloved former parish priest who had been swept into office by an overwhelming majority of the vote?

This illuminating production hints that the answer might relate to Aristide advocating reforms which could adversely affect American business interests monetarily, such as a campaign for reparations for this poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Sadly, Haiti has only gone downhill since Aristide, with the land being marked by political instability and a further decline in the already woeful standard of living.

Not exactly a ringing endorsement of the dubious Bush Doctrine of unilateral intervention as ostensibly implemented here, in Iraq, and who knows where next.

Aristide and the Endless Revolution

Excellent (4 stars)

Unrated

Missing bridge hinders commerce with Haiti
The Dominican Today
November 17, 2005

Pedernales.- Merchants Association president Evangelio Cruz denounced that, due to the lack of a bridge for vehicular access, hinders trade activities with Haiti.

He said that, despite the bi-national market known as Fraternity Plaza that operates from Monday through Friday at the entrance of the Haitian sector of Anse a Pitre, trade at this demarcation has not benefited from a more dynamic commercial activity, in contrast with other border zones.

According to Evangelio Cruz, this situation is diminishing commercial development in this part of the Enriquillo region, as he pointed out that there is only a walking pathway to go across the waterway, which is insufficient.

Cruz considered that with the construction of the much-needed bridge to give vehicular access to Haiti, commercial trade would go to a different dimension, and business would be incremented for the benefit of all parties.

Haiti - United States and Brazil Accused of Human Rights Violations
Noriegaville, Panama
November 22, 2005

US human rights organizations have filed a complaint against the governments of Brazil and the United States with the Inter American Commission for Human Rights for alleging violations of human rights in Haiti.

The Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, the National Lawyers Association of the USA and the Congress of Black Lawyers in Chicago are among the organizations that have signed the document that was presented at the Organization of American States. United Nations troops, led by Brazil, are accused of killing civilians and of not intervening to prevent other killings by the Haitian police.

The United States government is accused of providing arms and ammunition to the Haitian police.

One of the cases presented in the complaint accuses the UN forces of having killed at least 60 persons in a Puerto Principe neighborhood, in the early hours of July 6th of this year.

After analyzing the complaint, the Inter American Commission will request a reply from the governments and will then decide if a case against the countries will be started. (PULSAR)

Hutton presents book on Haiti
The Jamaica Gleaner
Tuesday | November 22, 2005

Clinton Hutton autographs a copy of his book 'The Logic and Historical Significance of the Haitian Revolution and The Cosmological Roots of Haitian Freedom for Lonie Mears at the launch held at the Philip Sherlock Centre, UWI. - CARLINGTON WILMOT/FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER

WHEN DR. Clinton Hutton closed the public presentation of his first book on Friday evening, he noted the significance of the date.

"Today is exactly 202 years since the enslaved of that French colony destroyed Napoleon's army at Vertieres. Very important place in the history of the African Diaspora. But we don't know about it. Very important, because it led to the independence of Haiti. It destroyed all the superstructure created by white supremacy and their relationship to not only Africans, but non-Europeans," he said.

Hutton spoke of the creation of a world order based on, among other things, "stealing other people's land", terming it "a world order upon which the present world order is based."

APPLAUSE

There was applause from the full house which turned out at the Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts, UWI, Mona, for the launch of The Logic and Historical Significance of the Haitian Revolution and The Cosmological Roots of Haitian Freedom. It was an evening when performances preceded the main address of Professor Kamau Brathwaite, who preceded Hutton.

Hutton gave some telling statistics on the Haitian Revolution, including the Polis losing 5,000 troops and the British 60,000. "The three most powerful armies in the world (British, Spanish, French) were defeated by the Haitians," he said. "What is important is to understand how the people created meaning. What was the essence of their social psychology?" he asked.

Referring to Garveyism and Rastafari, Hutton said, "We have to understand how the ordinary people, who involve themselves in stick fights, in mas, we have to understand how they create meanings, so we can better understand what they have done so we can be here today."

Paying his respects to CLR James' The Black Jacobins which Hutton says changed his life forever, he said that in all the material he had read on the Haitian Revolution the motive for their actions was said to be 'rooted in French enlightenment thought'.

"I could not accept that. Not from what I know of gerreh, the Morant Bay Rebellion."

He then gave the central aim of the book as countering that view, that French ideas spurred the Haitian Revolution, saying the ideas "existed long before the French Revolution in many things, especially in funeral rituals."

Hutton noted that the songs at wakes were "explicitly songs of freedom. And they were being sung long before the French Revolution. The ideals of the enslaved were rooted in their own psyche in the cosmology they took with them and reorganised in the Americas. That is the central argument of the book."

HOW TO KNOW

About Brathwaite, Hutton said "He teaches me how to know." And on Friday Brathwaite covered topics as diverse as Roman Catholicism being declared the national religion of Haiti, the development of UWI and the Reagan-Thatcher combination that was "the beginning of a long chain saw of conservative reaction that brings us to here."

"But when we begin to lose hope we celebrate the launch of six books," Brathwaite said, giving an overview of the texts that he was referring to and putting Hutton's new publication into the chain.

"It has given us a great printout from the negatives. This book is a printout of the negatives we have been suffering from," he said.

Bosnia, Kosovo, Haiti: Missions accomplished
TheTranscript.com
North Adams Transcript, MA
Wednesday, November 23, 2005

While there is a lull in the fierce debate over our troubled military mission in Iraq, it might be useful to take note of the 10th anniversary of our participation in the Bosnia intervention and occupation. Unlike in Iraq, that mission was undertaken in November 1995 by NATO after a U.S.-brokered agreement among the warring parties, and by most every measure, it was an unqualified success. Dire predictions from Republicans in Congress of a quagmire and untold numbers of casualties proved groundless.

Much of the credit must go to the fact that NATO, not the U.S. alone, went into that war-torn region — the site of vicious ethnic violence just prior to the intervention.

It also is useful to take note of the American-led operation in 1999 to overturn an invasion of Kosovo by Yugoslavia-led Slobodan Milosevic. In that mission — which also involved NATO — the Serbs were turned back with an aerial campaign alone, and Mr. Milosevic was deposed in 2001 and now is on trial before the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

Compared to the deadly stalemate resulting from the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq, those two operations have been stunningly successful, accomplished with a minimum number of casualties on both sides and providing an immediate high level of stability in the region.

It also should be noted that President Bill Clinton, who the hawkish Bush team has tried to paint as a weak commander in chief, oversaw both missions. His administration likewise performed well in Haiti in 1994 by removing a repressive regime and restoring the elected president, Jean Bertrand Aristide — again with a minimum number of casualties.

President George W. Bush, in the aftermath of 9/11, also effectively organized a coordinated international effort to rid Afghanistan of the Taliban and provide relative stability to that nation. Another U.S.-led international mission had met with quick success, which might well have resulted in greater stability had not the military been drawn off too quickly to invade Iraq.

And then we have the Iraq mission, in which the president seemed to forget the example of Mr. Clinton —as well as of his own father in the first Iraq war — and charged into a country of 26 million people with too few troops and almost no international help, especially when it came to restoring order after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

The answer to our Iraq crisis, in now seems clear, must be found in attracting our European allies and others to the process of rebuilding the nation as a democracy. But first Mr. Bush might have to publicly admit his mistakes and prove to the world that he has learned a costly lesson in Iraq. Judging from his recent rhetoric, the president still has a ways to go.

Flicker Records Will Host Benefit Show for Orphans in Haiti
by Steven Ertelt
Christian Music News Net, MT
November 22, 2005

Christian music label Flicker Records, home of such bands as Pillar and Everyday Sunday, will host a benefit concert Friday night December 9 in Nashville at Rocketown to support the Hands and Feet Project. That's a ministry founded by members of Audio Adrenaline to raise funds for Haitian orphan relief efforts.

Screamo bands Kids in the Way and Staple will headline the concert, titled "Flicker Rock Night: A Benefit Show for the Orphans in Haiti." Also playing: Until June, eleventyseven, Fireflight and Flatfoot 56.

"Flicker has been critical to the launch and development of Hands and Feet," says Audio Adrenaline frontman Mark Stuart. "We are proud of the label and appreciate its ongoing support of our efforts to help children in need."

The web site for the project is <http://www.handsandfeetproject.org>.

The event begins at 7:30 pm local time and tickets are \$5 at the door.

For more information about the event, visit www.rocketown.com or call (615) 843-4000.

Brazil denies human rights violations in Haiti

Juliana Andrade

Reporter Agência Brasil

Agencia Brasil

November 24, 2005

Brasília – The former commander of the UN Mission for Stabilization in Haiti (Minustah), Brazilian general, Augusto Heleno Ribeiro, denies charges that troops in the mission committed violations of human rights. The charges have been made by American NGOs who say there were cases of genocide.

Ribeiro declared that in his opinion the people behind the charges are pro-Jean Bertrand Aristide and want his return to the island.

The Brazilian general said he considered the charges baseless. "If there was anything to the charges I might be worried. But they have no basis in reality. No one in the stabilization mission is there to kill people, much less commit genocide," he said.

Haiti: Justice system support program
Planned Project Summary Information
Source: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Relief Web
22 Nov 2005

Haiti: Justice system support program
Planned Project Summary Information
Project number: HT-32574
Branch: Americas Branch
Country: Haiti
CIDA's ODA Priorities: 100% - 402 - Democratic institutions and practices
CIDA's Sectors: 100% - 15030 - Legal and judicial development
Project Approval Date: August 2005
Anticipated Project Duration: 3 years
Estimated Project Value: \$5.0M
Project Implementation: Unsolicited Proposals Mechanism - Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (AIF)

Competitive Contracts in the implementation of this project: Monitoring Agent and Evaluation
Contract for a maximum value of \$100,000 - Probable date of publication of competitive process by Consulting and Audit Canada (CAC) or on MERX - December 2005

Project Description: The project is built around three (3) components. The first involves promoting peace tribunals, the primary underpinnings of the justice system. The second consists in asserting and securing the independence of the judiciary, without which conceiving of institution-building and improvements to the workings of the system of justice would be impossible. The third project component involves helping to augment legal information in several respects, such as dissemination of laws to legal practitioners and legal information to the public through the creation of a law review, the publication of codes and statutory enactments (both annotated and non-annotated), and the production of law brochures, to help build on the capacities of those working in the justice system and to raise public awareness, in order to complement and build on the measures taken under the first two components.

Project Impact:

1. A stronger, more accessible system of justice;
2. A more favourable public image for the system of justice;
3. Institutions, jurisdictions and professionals better able to assume their powers and trusts and fulfill their functions.

Project Outcomes:

1. Improved operation of the public system of justice;

2. Enhanced effectiveness of justices of the peace;
3. Greater capacity and engagement on the part of officers of the courts in providing legal aid to disadvantaged persons under the jurisdiction of the courts, especially women and children;
4. Better legal and judicial security through greater use of alternative dispute resolution;
5. More confidence on the part of persons under the jurisdiction of the courts and better understanding of their rights;
6. Improved organizational, institutional and functional capacities on the part of the Court of Cassation;
7. Regular, broad dissemination of the Court of Cassation's decisions;
8. Increased independence of judiciary as a result of a functional and effective Supreme Council of the Magistracy (CSM);
9. Increased effectiveness of judicial inspection operations;
10. Improved performance by judges and career and independence guarantees for judges;
11. More credibility for the justice system;
12. Improved dissemination of laws.

Project Outputs:

1. Status report, analysis and strategy for each project component;
2. Development of training programs and start-up of training sessions for justices of the peace in areas of law under their jurisdiction and in alternative dispute resolution (ADR);
3. Action program for formalizing and developing the legal aid model;
4. Identification of pilot areas for the introduction and conduct of community-based justice operations (intermediaries);
5. Development of training plan and identification of needs for strengthening the Court of Cassation, Supreme Council of the Magistracy (subject to the adoption of the instruments establishing the Council) and judicial inspection;
6. Start-up of precedent data base for the Court of Cassation;

7. Publishing program for Haitian statutory enactments and codes, treatises and legal information brochures;

8. Preparatory committee that is up and running;

9. Conceptualization of model of Haitian law journal.

Development Officer: Raymonde Chantigny, 819-997-9181

Internet Publication Date: November 22, 2005

Wyclef Jean and U.N.W.F.P. help Haiti
NEW YORK,
UPI
November 14, 2005

-- The Fugees frontman Wyclef Jean is helping launch a food distribution program for Haiti's poorest residents.

Jean's group Yéle Haiti and the United Nations World Food Program will work together to feed the impoverished residents of Haiti's Cité Soleil and Bel Air slums. The two groups aim to feed 3,000 people a day.

Already among the poorest areas in the Western Hemisphere, the neighborhoods have yet to recover from tropical storm Jeanne in 2004, AllHipHop.com reported.

Residents are so desperate for nutrition they have taken to baking and eating mud pies, the groups said in making the announcement.

Haitians moved to Remand Centre
Everard Owen
The Jamaica Observer
Sunday, November 13, 2005

PORT ANTONIO, Portland: The 18 Haitians refugees who arrived in the island on Tuesday along with another Haitian who escaped from the Montpelier camp, where transferred to the Remand Centre in Kingston.

The group is made up of 16 males and three females.
Four of the Haitians are returnees.

Fleeing Haitians, who have been arriving in Jamaica more frequently since the ouster of former president Jean Bertrand Aritside, are normally accommodated at the Winnifred Rest Home. But, they were denied access this time.

The batch was checked by the health department and accommodated at the Port Antonio and Castle police stations.

Yesterday, the police also reported that two female Haitians were apprehended in Goshen, St Elizabeth, during a police operation in the area. They are being held at Lacovia pending checks on their immigration status.

Haiti Settles on 35 Presidential Candidates

Prensa Latina

November 14, 2005

Port-au-Prince, Nov 14 (Prensa Latina) The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) after invalidating three candidates, two of them due to their US nationality, approved 35 presidential candidates in Haiti.

Ex President Rene Preval (1996-2001), former Port-au-Prince Mayor Evans Paul, and ex Police Commissioner Guy Philippe are among the candidates.

In spite of differences with the Legislature, Preval was the first head of state in Haiti's history to be democratically elected, complete his term of office, and voluntarily transfer power.

Philippe, current leader of the National Reconstruction Front, led the uprising which Washington used to justify removing constitutionally elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004.

Paul, candidate for the three small parties forming the Democratic Alliance Coalition, was a former leader of the National Front for Change and Democracy, allied to Aristide.

The CEP-rejected candidates were Miami millionaire Dumarsais Mécène Simeus of the Tet Ansanm party, Arab born dealer Samir Georges Mourra, from Haiti Progress Movement, and Jacques Jose Nicolas, for reasons undeclared.

The nine members of the CEP were to discuss the new electoral schedule Monday to finalize the date for the elections for president, 27 senators and 90 congress people, which have been postponed twice.

Boniface Alexandre, president of the interim government, said the new president will take office on February 7.

Until now, only a third of the 3.1 million Haitian eligible voters have registered for the elections.

Keeping Young Son in Mind in Pursuit of a Second Job
By JOSEPH P. FRIED
The New York Times
November 14, 2005

Daniel Gousse, a 29-year-old Brooklyn resident, says he has two important desires in his life: to help support his 3-year-old son, David, who lives in Haiti, and to go to school to learn to repair electronics.

Daniel Gousse, a security guard, helps support his son in Haiti. He plans to study electronics after learning to read and write in English.

Mr. Gousse is acting on the first desire, regularly sending part of his \$6.75 an hour in earnings as a security guard to a half-sister in Haiti who is caring for the boy. In fact, Mr. Gousse, who immigrated from Haiti in 1994, says he would like to get a second job so he can contribute even more money to his son's support.

And he may soon be taking the first steps on the road toward achieving that. His counselor at a social services agency that helped him obtain the security guard job says that although he has learned to speak serviceable English since arriving from Haiti, his inability to read and write it because of a learning disability could keep him from reaching that goal. So she has registered him in an adult-education program intended to improve his English skills.

Besides affecting his job prospects, Mr. Gousse's inability to read English may have contributed to an upsetting event in his life last year, said the counselor, Abbigale Crawford of the Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service. The security company that employs Mr. Gousse told him that because his resident alien card had expired and he hadn't renewed it, he had to stop working.

The card, known as a green card, permits noncitizens to live and work legally in the United States. Mr. Gousse had not been aware that it was time for him to renew it, Ms. Crawford said. In addition, he did not have the \$250 renewal fee. His family didn't have the money either, said a spokeswoman for the Brooklyn Bureau, one of the seven charitable organizations supported by The New York Times Neediest Cases Fund.

The bureau drew on the fund to pay the fee.

"I know he didn't have the financial means of paying for it, and he needed it for his job," Ms. Crawford said. "It was a necessity, an urgency, so he could work."

But he was still out of work for three weeks while awaiting a replacement card, Ms. Crawford said.

It was a distressing time, Mr. Gousse said recently. "I just sat in my house," he said. "I was not happy because I didn't have a job and didn't have the money."

Mr. Gousse was interviewed at a Lower Manhattan diner near a U.P.S. center where the company that employs him, Adelis International Security, had assigned him as a guard. "I like it," he said of the

work, but he has another path in mind. "I want to study electronics so I can fix radios, televisions and computers."

Mr. Gousse and two of his sisters arrived in New York 11 years ago, following his mother, Chrismene Francois, who came in 1985. Ms. Francois, with whom he lives, and who works as a home attendant, said four other sons were also living in New York. Mr. Gousse's father has remained in Haiti.

Mr. Gousse said he had returned to Haiti a half-dozen times to visit his father and, more recently, his son. (He is not married to the child's mother.) Mr. Gousse said he did not complete school in Haiti, leaving it at 16. He added that he immigrated to New York two years later "to finish school and go to work." After he was found to have a learning disability, he completed a special education program in 1997 at Prospect Heights High School in Brooklyn and later entered a work training program run by the Brooklyn Bureau, which placed him with the security company nearly three years ago.

Ms. Crawford, his counselor at the agency, said the program in which she had recently enrolled him, to help him become literate in English and familiar with electronics, is to begin in January at the Brooklyn Adult Learning Center of the city's Department of Education.

The courses are free, which is important to Mr. Gousse. "Right now I have no money to pay for it," he said.

DR, Haiti to flourish with DR-CAFTA
Dominican Today
November 14, 2005

Santo Domingo.- The Free Trade Agreement with Central America and the US (DR-CAFTA) opens a new bright stage for the Dominican Republic and Haiti, as the two nations benefit from the insertion into the DR-CAFTA treaty BY Dominicans, which will entail a major boost in productivity for both countries.

Dominican Association of Duty-Free Zones (ADOZONA) Arturo Peguero, added that the agreement gives way to massive hand laboring in Haiti, outsourcing to the neighboring country goods produced by the Dominican Republic, thus lowering manufacturing costs while situating the country in a better competitive position in international markets.

Within the framework of DR-CAFTA, the Dominican Republic can co-produce with Haiti, assembling and exporting goods from the neighboring country to the United States.

This benefit within DR-CAFTA was sought by ADOZONA, and will encompass not only duty-free zone products, but will include all products.

Haiti Candidate List Omits 2 With U.S. Ties

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

November 13, 2005

November 12, 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Nov. 12 (AP) - Haitian electoral authorities issued a revised presidential candidate list on Friday that omitted two Haitian businessmen who have been living in the United States.

Dumarsais Siméus, owner of a food services company in Texas, and Samir Moura, a longtime resident of Florida, were not among the 35 approved presidential candidates. The coming election, for which no date has been set, will be the first since a violent rebellion and widespread unrest led to the departure of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004.

Haitian authorities have said for weeks that the Constitution bars any candidate who has dual nationality and has not lived in the country for the past five years.

Mr. Siméus won a legal appeal after being dropped from the first candidate list last month, but the list has been reviewed again.

Both men have said they would run regardless of any decision by the electoral council.

PDVSA wants Haiti in PetroCaribe
The Daily Journal, Venezuela
November 15, 2005

Haiti could be the latest Caribbean country to join the government's PetroCaribe initiative. State-owned Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) sent a delegation to Haiti early this month to evaluate the possibility of incorporating the impoverished country into the Caracas-led accord, which offers oil to Caribbean countries on preferential terms.

Energy and Petroleum Minister Rafael Ramírez had said earlier in October that Caracas was not negotiating to include Haiti in the initiative because since its foreign policy did not recognize the country's U.S.-appointed interim government. But President Hugo Chávez announced last month that Venezuela would open the door for Haiti to join.

Interim Haitian Prime Minister Gerald Latortue has said he is keen to participate. But Washington, which wields heavy influence in Haiti, is concerned that PetroCaribe would allow Chávez, a fierce critic of the U.S., to boost his influence in the country.

If Latortue does agree to the initiative, it would not become effective until after the installation of a new government in February – that is if the troubled elections, currently slated for the week of December 11-18, are not postponed again.

The election will be the first since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled into exile in 2004, faced with an armed revolt and U.S. and French pressure to quit.

Chávez says PetroCaribe strives to cut out downstream middlemen to make oil more affordable for small Caribbean countries suffering from high global oil prices.

Washington has a different opinion. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fisk has called PetroCaribe the result of Cuba and Venezuela's "failed statist ideologies" and has said it "undermines the position of private sector companies in the region."

Venezuela signed bilateral agreements with nine Caribbean countries in September under the terms of the PetroCaribe accord, after Cuba and Jamaica had already signed. Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago refused to join, while the Bahamas has not yet made a decision.

Under the terms of the accord, countries will pay 60pc of crude up front. When the price of oil goes above \$50 per barrel, they will have 25 years to pay off the other 40pc with a 1pc interest rate and a 2yr grace period. Countries can also make partial payments with goods and services.

PDVSA expects to supply PetroCaribe participants with a total of 185,700 bpd. Cuba already receives 98,000 bpd from Venezuela, while the Dominican Republic will get 50,000 bpd, Jamaica will get 14,000 bpd, and the remaining countries will share 23,700 bpd.

By Jens Erik Gould
Daily Journal Staff

A wind is blowing the night Marie Joséé Germain hears that...

By JOE MOZINGO

The Miami Herald

Monday November 14, 2005

CAP-HAITIEN, Haiti - A wind is blowing the night Marie Joséé Germain hears that the boat will make a run for Miami. She hugs her children goodbye, and sobs all the way to the port.

At the abandoned dock where the boat is tied up, she takes a seat on an old battery case and softly sings a song while she waits for the captain and other passengers.

“The wind blows, the lightning strikes, the boat is rocking on the sea. . . . But God is watching over us. Captain, don't panic, just take us there.”

Captain Ricardeau Felix pulls up in a borrowed Isuzu Trooper and assures everyone that the voyage is on. But Germain is beginning to doubt it, assuming he wouldn't want to embark on the 700-mile trip in rough seas and leave his friend's SUV on the docks.

Then some U.N. peacekeeping troops from Nepal step out of their post nearby, curious at the activity along the water. They walk around for a few minutes, and go back inside.

“We can't leave now,” Felix announces. “They'll stop us. We're going to have to move the boat and go later.”

Germain sighs, wondering what his real motives are. Even before Haitian migrants ever sail into the Windward Passage, they must navigate a murky underworld of boat owners, sailors, middlemen, hustlers and bandits. They rarely know who is calling the shots. Most don't even know whether a boat is leaving until they board it, or its destination until they get there.

At sea, they risk drowning or dying of thirst. On land, they risk losing the money they pay to smugglers and falling deeper into the abyss of poverty they are trying to escape.

“I tried many times on these boats, and I just lost all my money,” said Alexandre Renet, 34. “We'd pay them [\$800 U.S.] and they'd get halfway there and turn back and keep our money.”

Renet is nonetheless trying again -- waiting with Germain in the dark parking lot. He said goodbye to his wife and children in the capital, Port-au-Prince, and took the spine-jarring, six-hour bus trip to this city on the north coast of Haiti.

“I couldn't do anything for them there, and I don't like begging,” he says.

His uncle in New Jersey is paying his fare. Renet is not wasting the money on the leaky sailboats that might or might not get him to the Turks and Caicos Islands 150 miles away -- the shortest and first leg of a long, costly journey that winds through the Bahamas to South Florida.

Renet and Germain hope to go on a straight run to Florida on a homemade plywood and fiberglass speedboat named Air Florida 2.

In his pocket, Renet keeps a piece of paper with the critical phone numbers on it. He can't wait to make the call -- I am here, come pick me up. His uncle says he'll wire some money and drive down from New Jersey to get him.

NO FAMILY HELP

Jude Bernardin, 21, is not so blessed, with no family to help him get out. For three years, he has been trying to leave Haiti the cheapest way possible, on one of the sloops that sail to Providenciales in the Turks and Caicos.

He sold his inheritance for his last attempt in July: a pig, two goats and 10 chickens.

Two days out at sea, he began to hear muttering that they were turning back. He could only guess what was happening from his confined space -- wedged into the sloop's dark belly with more than 200 people, disoriented by the heat, the stench of vomit and the groans of ragged planks holding back the sea.

When the hatch opened the next day, he was exactly where he had started. The sailors claimed that the compass had broken and that it was too risky to proceed.

Bernardin suspects that they never planned to go to Providenciales. They already had everyone's money. Had they gone farther into international waters, they would have risked the U.S. Coast Guard catching them and destroying the boat.

But Bernardin is undeterred.

"Even if it's a fake trip, I'll be on it," he says.

'DO OR DIE'

By August, Bernardin hears of another trip to Providenciales with the same captain. He hopes he will get free passage this time. But he is small and boyish and doesn't carry much clout in the slum.

The boat is tied to a wall at the opening of the inlet. It's a 60-foot sloop, made of rough-hewn timber and painted blue and white. There is no motor. A sail is fashioned from a vinyl billboard banner for the 2005 Nissan Altima. Vodou flags hang from the bow, in the belief that they will make the boat invisible from the Coast Guard.

One of the sailors, Alain Silves, says they are ready to go even though they don't have much food or water.

"We're going anyway," he says. ``Do or die."

On Aug. 26, passengers begin to gather along the muddy bank of the inlet, swollen from rains the day before. Uprooted lilies and weeds drift by.

Bernardin hears that the boat might leave that night. He has nothing to pack -- his possessions could fit in a grocery bag. He visits someone who might know more about the captain's plans.

READY TO GO

In a 10-foot-by-6-foot shack, Fritz Nel lives with four other adults and five children. He is thin and sinewy as a bundle of wires, with the watery eyes of malnutrition.

He doesn't know anything more than Bernardin, but he is ready. He bought new pants and a shirt to look respectable when he arrives. He plans to take his two young sons with him.

“I worry about them dying. But when you get to Provo with children, they give you more attention. Maybe they'll let us stay.”

Their friend Theodore Fritz is grim with fear at the thought of the passage.

He never thought he would have to leave his country like this.

A little more than one year before, he was a part-time university student and radio journalist in Port-au-Prince. Then, on the air, he denounced the gangs that claim allegiance to ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide as rapists and murderers. Three days later, when he was at school, several men beat his wife with an iron bar, breaking her back and both legs, and torched his house.

His family went into hiding. "They're still looking for me, going to neighbors' houses, asking for me," he says.

And now the 31-year-old father has come here to catch a boat. He has never been on a boat before, never swam in the ocean.

“Now all I can think about is dying on the water.”

HURRICANE RUMORS

That afternoon, clouds bloom off the mountains and drench the city at dusk. Sailors have heard rumors of a hurricane out there somewhere; Katrina churned over Miami the day before and into the Gulf of Mexico. But they don't know the details. Many captains don't even use maps, describing their routes into the Bahamas as a succession of currents, winds and landmarks.

The smugglers call off their boat's departure.

For three more days, clear mornings give way to tropical squalls in the evenings. The journey is stalled. The out-of-town passengers have to beg for food and spots to sleep.

Finally, on Aug. 30, 169 people row into the black bay on canoes and dories and board the 60-foot sloop. Fritz the journalist, his friend Nel and Nel's two boys find their places inside.

The captain won't let Bernardin on unless he pays.

The boat sails without him.

THE SPEEDBOAT

A week later, Air Florida 2 motors off into the night on a trip that its passengers later recount: Two days out, they hit a violent head wind off the north coast of Cuba. As the boat crashes through a rising sea and driving spray, most of the 25 people aboard get wretchedly sick. Ricardeau Felix, the captain, doles out a small supply of Dramamine. He wants to go on -- as does his wife, hunkered down on the floorboards with their four children.

But Felix's half-brother doesn't think the boat can hold up, the passengers recount. He tells Felix that they will die if they go farther.

He is a huge, scowling man who commands respect.

The engines are groaning. One of them keeps stalling. The starter fails, and each time it does, the mechanic has to pull the rope-starter furiously to get it going, rubbing his hands to blisters.

They turn back. Many of the passengers are furious. When they get back to Cap-Haitien the next day, Felix's wife says she will not even talk to him. They sold everything for the trip -- their radio, dishes, the furniture.

Renet will have to call his uncle in New Jersey later. He takes the bus back to his family home in Port-au-Prince, dejected, wondering if he was taken again.

Germain goes home to the shame of returning to her three children with nothing. ``Their money for school I used for the boat."

PRAYING TO SPIRIT

Felix promises everyone that they will leave again as soon as he can refill the gasoline and fix the engine and starter.

But by mid-September, Air Florida 2 is still docked. Felix is trying to placate his increasingly frustrated passengers. He announces several times that the boat is ready to go. But his stated plans are always foiled, one day by a faulty battery, another by the winds.

One night, he and a dozen friends and would-be passengers meet in an abandoned port building to appease Aga-Ou, the Vodou spirit they believe rules the sea.

Candles light a sweltering back room as the men gather in a circle and pass a bottle of Barbancourt rum among them. One man lights a torch. Another with a honey-smooth voice slowly chants to bring Aga-Ou out. They spray a perfume called Florida in the air.

The chanting turns to singing. They beat drums and sticks in a gathering fury.

Suddenly, Felix, wearing jeans and no shirt, barges into the circle and demands, ``Who called me? Who called me?"

Aga-Ou has taken over his body.

Felix quivers with angry energy. Everyone else backs up. He grabs the torch and scrubs his chest and armpit with the fire. He tries to shove it down his jeans, but other men jump forward and keep him from doing so.

The room reels with the heat and drums. The rum bottle shatters against the wall. A man crashes to the ground, possessed by a spirit. He writhes and kicks in violent spasms. The broken glass crunches beneath his bare back. The men try to restrain him, but his feet strike them away.

A chicken is sacrificed. The drums slow. Aga-Ou leaves.

The men slowly clear the room. They hope he is appeased.

THE OTHER BOAT

The voyage of the 60-foot sloop is cursed by more human factors.

Three days out, the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Sapelo spots the boat just 27 miles north of Haiti. A Coast Guard video shows it teeming with people. The American sailors tell the migrants that they are boarding. They launch inflatables and throw them life vests.

The Haitians are severely dehydrated and sick. They are out of fresh water and disoriented, thinking they are nearing Florida. They are taken aboard the cutter. Officers shoot the sloop with high-caliber rifles to sink it.

Theodore Fritz, the journalist, presents his press identification and says he is being persecuted in Haiti.

He is taken to see an asylum officer at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay. The Sapelo drops the 168 other migrants at the Haitian Coast Guard station in Port-au-Prince.

Fritz Nel's 18-month-old son has been drinking saltwater, which can lead to a fatal kidney failure. His face and limbs are swollen.

When he gets back to Cap-Haitien, Nel has to beg for money for days so the child can see a doctor.

THE HAITIAN EXODUS

Sailing north only way to escape for some Haitians

BY JOE MOZINGO

Miami Herald

Sun, Nov. 13, 2005

CAP-HAITIEN, Haiti - He wanders the slums and shipyards, listening for murmurs of the next boat getting ready to leave.

When Jude Bernardin's father died three years ago and an uncle commandeered his family's land, he went to the city to find work. But with the economy in ruins, he found only mud and decay and people like himself.

So he wagered what little money he had on a chance to climb aboard any rickety vessel that could get him out of Haiti.

He lost.

A boat captain tricked him and about 200 other passengers out of their cash in July. It was Bernardin's third attempt to get to the Turks and Caicos Islands -- the entry point in a 700-mile archipelago of human migration that leads to Miami.

Now, in mid-August, the 21-year-old is ready to go again. And across the north coast of Haiti, so are thousands of others.

In this old French colonial port, one sailor plans to smuggle his own family out. A journalist is fleeing political gangs. An unemployed mechanic hopes to be a better father from afar. A single mother prays that she can find a future for her children in Miami, even as she leaves them behind.

They are people whose wrenching personal stories are often lost under the category of "economic refugees." They drown, they get robbed, they climb into the most wretched of boat holds, packed body to body in steaming heat, hoping to go anywhere but here.

Haiti's relentless poverty has bred a paralyzing sense of helplessness, with thousands of people concluding that the only way to take control of their lives is to leave -- no matter what the risk.

They make news now and then, as in the televised landing of 220 Haitians on Miami's Rickenbacker Causeway in 2002 and the drownings of three women whose bodies washed up in Pompano Beach on Nov. 5. But mostly, they are invisible.

A DIMMING DREAM

Bernardin dreams of finding work and returning to Haiti someday with the money to take care of his little sister and show his uncle that he is a man. But that scene, which burns so brightly in his imagination, dims every day he waits here.

He comes to a shack propped over an open sewer, down an alley barely wider than his shoulders. When men don't use it to meet prostitutes, he sleeps here, and on a shelf above the fetid mattress, he keeps one of his only points of pride.

It is a secondhand trophy he won in a soccer game -- with a gold figurine rubbed to gray plastic and a placard celebrating ``the 22nd Annual City of North Miami Gold Coast Cheerleading Squad."

As the slum slowly grinds away at his sense of self, it reminds him that he has to leave, no matter how.

"I have no life here," he said. ``Even if I die at sea, I have no choice. There is no life for me in Haiti."

SLOWING THE FLOW

U.S. and Bahamian officials stopped about 3,200 migrants in the last fiscal year, fewer than in some years, more than in others. The Coast Guard has clamped down since the 2002 incident, dramatically reducing the number of migrant ships sailing straight into Miami. Smugglers have reacted accordingly. They carry fewer people at a time, charge more and take a circuitous route.

Like Bernardin, migrants often make several attempts just to complete the first leg of the journey, to Providenciales in the British colony of Turks and Caicos, 150 miles north of Haiti. From there, they hope to move into the Bahamas and then try to slip into Florida on speedboats.

In the north coast port of Cap-Haitien, Haiti's second-largest city, handmade boats with anywhere from 10 to 200 passengers sail into the pipeline every week. Many more leave from the northern town of Port-de-Paix and the offshore island of La Tortue.

Some make it to their destination. Others don't.

Storms sink them or drive them far off course. Winds die and stall them for weeks as passengers run out of food and water. Coast Guard cutters intercept them, destroy their boats and send them home. Smugglers deceptively loop around and drop them back off in Haiti, or leave them to perish on uninhabited islands. Armed bandits attack them.

Ima Pyrrhon, 23, lost her husband on a trip that left here with 15 people in August. She was told that he and six others drowned when the boat capsized.

She says she can barely speak since it happened.

``We had three children and another baby on the way. . . . We made this decision. We had no choice.

``He was all I ever had."

RAMPANT POVERTY

Haiti is one of the poorest nations in the world and getting poorer. Only parts of sub-Saharan Africa are worse off. The armed rebellion that ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide early last year

and the continuing insecurity ever since have steepened the decline. Prices rose 15 percent this year, while most incomes stand still at less than a dollar a day. And many Haitians fear that elections later this year will erupt in violence.

"We will never let the election find us in Haiti," said Jippy Hamilton, a 29-year-old mechanic.

For the past eight months, Hamilton and his childhood friend Ricardeau Felix have been scouring the city for scrap, building a 16-foot speedboat for a rare direct shot at Miami.

Cap-Haitien is an open-air market for what they need. Junk of every sort is freighted here from the Miami River.

Street hawkers sell bicycle sprockets and engine parts, tables, baby cribs, trophies, pots, pans and salad bowls. Vinyl billboard banners originally sold at flea markets in Florida are resold here as boat sails; the bay is full of creaky old sloops with billowing ads for Nissan, Tanqueray gin and Sunkist.

Hamilton found two broken-down Evinrude outboard motors, which he soon got working. He and Felix began to construct a hull with odd bits of plywood and coated the outside in fiberglass. On the motors, they mounted pieces of an old truck chassis they had welded together. They turned three salad bowls into air-intake vents on the bow.

Finally, they painted their boat white -- with pink, green and blue stripes -- so they could blend in with the pleasure craft of South Florida, they say. They stenciled the name in formal Gothic lettering:

Air Florida 2.

All they have to do is fix a starter and find a reliable battery so they don't end up stalled at sea, trying to rope-start two outboards.

A PLAN FOR DEPARTURE

In mid-September, they would go. About 25 passengers, including Felix's wife and five children, would take their places on the crowded floorboards.

They would have no marine radio, no charts, no life vests, no weather reports, no emergency flares. They would throw their fate to God and the Vodou spirits who stir the sea, motoring into the night for a destination 700 miles away.

"If I didn't think I was going to make it, I'd never take my kids," Felix said.

Felix is Air Florida's captain, a paunchy, baby-faced man who grew up sailing in the Windward Passage. His stepfather captained commercial freighters to the Bahamas. Felix could find work only carrying charcoal and migrants to Nassau. He made enough money that he once bought a car, a used Daihatsu.

But those days are long gone. His last boat, Air Florida I, was confiscated by a Bahamian patrol boat.

NO SECOND THOUGHTS

Now, he plans to smuggle himself and his family out. He is cocksure that he can slip by the Coast Guard and survive any storm. He has no second thoughts, no desire to see whether Haiti improves after elections.

"By the time Haiti changes, me and my wife and kids will be dead," he said.

His friend Hamilton sees Haiti's future just as bleakly. His family life is too strained to take his children along. But he hopes that he can be a better father from Miami.

He has found no regular work since 1999. The sense of impotence he feels for not being able to support his 3-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter is a constant source of shame.

He lives a three-hour trip from them, but doesn't visit because he has nothing to bring them.

"My son loves crackers. He always asks me for crackers. If I had something to buy him some, it wouldn't be so bad. But I feel terrible every time I see him."

FRUSTRATING LIFE

Every plan that Hamilton has come up with to make a living as a car mechanic has been thwarted at the start. He is as thin as a reed and falls into bouts of depression, sulking off by himself. He sleeps on Air Florida, occasionally dousing his sorrows with Barbancourt rum, waiting to go to the place where he hopes he can be a better man.

"God, my people are humiliating me," he said one day on the dock, gazing off. "Even if I get to the other world and they mistreat me, I will have a better life. There would have to be no mechanics, no cars in America for me not to survive there."

He won't even think about not making it to Miami. He is at the end of his line in Haiti. There is nothing left for him here but time and shame.

By the end of August, their boat is almost ready. Hamilton still needs to fix the starter on one of the outboards and find a battery. Felix is haggling with the passengers for money that he says he needs to buy 200 gallons of gasoline.

Bernardin tries to get a spot, but there is no room for those who can't pay. This direct trip to Miami is a rare endeavor and carries a high fee. Felix is charging \$800 to all but family members and close friends.

Air Florida is afloat and tied to the remains of a fallen dock. Men waiting for work in the port sit in the meager shade of some scraggly trees. Dozens of fishing and coastal trading sloops with splintered planks and crooked masts bob and creak in the harbor.

Marie José Germain, one of Felix's passengers, comes down every day to check on Air Florida's progress.

She stares with a set jaw at the little boat that will take her away from her children.

Germain, 31, is a serious, churchgoing woman who carries her portly figure with an unshakable calm and dignity. Her locked jaw betrays her anxiety -- and her displeasure when Felix and Hamilton play-fight in the parking lot or waste money on rum.

She gave her last bit of savings to Felix for gas. She trusts that he will not disappear with it but is wary enough to check up on him regularly.

She returns to her apartment, torrid in the afternoon heat. Her 14-year-old son cradles her baby on the bed. Sheets divide a space no bigger than a prison cell. Bible readings are posted on the walls.

`A THREE-TIME LOSER'

For years, Germain's only means of survival were the men she lived with. Because there are fewer jobs for women in urban Haiti, they are often forced to rely on men to avoid destitution. Now, she has three children with three long-gone fathers.

"I'm a three-time loser," she says flatly. When her last boyfriend walked out on her, Germain had enough. She decided that her family of four was going to make it on its own.

"I just want to be independent," she says, ``not depend on men to survive."

She has been braiding hair to get by. Yet with the cost of living going up, the only women she knows with money are a few neighborhood prostitutes. By summer, she has to do something.

She makes the wrenching decision. She pays the money that was meant to send her son to school that year for a spot on the boat.

"If I don't go looking for a life for us all, we're all going to die," she says.

She hasn't slept much since, worrying about dying on the ocean, orphaning her children.

Her brothers urge her not to leave, saying the trip is too dangerous. She doesn't know how to swim. The deepest she has ever been in water is up to her waist. But now she is determined to get to Miami by early September -- so she can send money back and get her boy into school.

``If I make it, I will be living strictly for them."

Body of 3rd migrant smuggled into Pompano Beach ID'd
South Florida Sun Sentinel
November 14 2005

POMPANO BEACH – Detectives on Monday identified the third female migrant whose body washed ashore recently as a 25-year-old Haitian woman.

In all, three women lost their lives when they attempted to illegally enter the United States with as many as 12 other people, the Broward Sheriff's Office said in a prepared release.

Here's what happened, according to BSO spokeswoman Liz Calzadilla-Fiallo:

Around 5:50 a.m. on Nov. 5, a Saturday, a patrolling deputy spotted 10 to 12 people in the surf coming ashore on the 1400 block of S. Ocean Drive. The deputy called for backup and three females and two males were quickly taken into custody.

One of the males was transported to Broward General Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, where he was treated and released for injuries possibly caused by a boat's propeller. The other four migrants were turned over to U.S. Border Patrol agents.

Shortly after 6 that morning, a fisherman dialed 911 and said he had spotted the body of a woman near the Pompano Beach Pier, 222 N. Pompano Beach Blvd. The body was later identified as Diane Thompson, 26, of Kingston, Jamaica, an illegal migrant

At 7:45 that same morning, dispatchers received another call that a beachgoer had found another body on the beach, this time at 520 N. Ocean Drive. Detectives later confirmed the body was that of 25-year-old Irma Polycarpe, of Haiti, another illegal migrant. Polycarpe was the last of the three identified by BSO.

Finally, at 8 a.m., the body of a third woman was discovered at 615 N. Ocean Drive. She was identified as Angeline Thelusma, 29, of Jean Rabel, Haiti.

The Broward Medical Examiner's Office has performed autopsies on each of the women, but conclusions on the cause of death for each is pending, Calzadilla-Fiallo said.

The investigation continues.

Major gun smugglers murdered
RJR.com, Jamaican Radio
Nov. 13, 2005

Two of the three men who were on Saturday morning shot and killed near Sandy Bay District in Clarendon have been linked to a gun running ring operating out of Haiti.

The three, 50 year old Roy Thompson, his 19 year old son Randy and his nephew 21 year old Kevin Howard of Sandy Bay were found in bushes in Inverness near Sandy Bay with gunshot wounds to their heads.

Speaking in Clarendon Saturday, Police Commissioner Lucius Thomas did not mince words in describing the link Roy Thompson and his son Randy had with organised crime.

The Commissioner said both men were intimately involved in the gun trade.

Meanwhile, Acting Commanding officer for Clarendon Deputy Superintendent Radcliffe Lewis, said for over a year Mr. Thompson and his son Randy were under surveillance, as the police had intelligence that he was the largest gun smuggler in the island.

DSP Lewis added that the police carried out over eight raids at Mr. Thompson's house on various occasions but failed to turn up any weapons.

The police say they received intelligence about three months ago that he was in the process of bringing in a shipment of guns from Haiti and was due to collect the arms at different points in the parish.

The guns were slated to be collected at Faulkner Beach in Rocky Point, Jackson Bay and Welcome Beach in the Salt River area.

The police then mounted a stakeout of his premises recently in the hopes of apprehending him while bringing in the weapons.

The RJR news centre understands that Mr. Thompson was previously convicted of murder in 1973 and spent ten years in prison.

At the time of his death, the police say he was in the process of supplying criminal gangs with weapons.

The police are also trying to determine how closely Mr. Thompson's nephew, Kevin Howard, was linked to the gun trade.

Haiti - Elections : Crystal balls don't lie
Saturday 12 November 2005
Debate
By Daniel Simidor
AlterPresse
November 11, 2005

As I peer into my crystal ball to spy what mad new games the mad, mad, men are playing with our future, a Preval-Simeus-Bazin tandem jumps suddenly into focus, with Aristide and his nemesis in Washington both discretely approving or shouting praise.

How is that possible? What will the Constitution say? I distinctly see a silent Preval (with nothing to say) resuming his drunken presidency, while Simeus swaps passports with Latortue, singing sweetly "I'll never renounce thee" to an eagle hovering above, and Bazin wearing his pakapala hat ushering a long line of candidates and acolytes into the permanent government.

Then from the ranks of sympathizers and fellow travelers - the people of whom the poet Dorn wrote, "if they had a thought / couldn't get it out / with a corkscrew" - comes a chorus of confused "yes and no, and but." But Aristide, too busy with his next book that will explain why, leaves it to a gentleman lobbyist and his lawyers to explain how two years is not a long time to wait, and, seeing how the wind is changing in Wash, that the Democrats will be back in the White House by 2008. And isn't it a remarkable thing to see how much loyalty is on the rise, when people are truly without a thought among themselves to share?

For those who fought to get Aristide where he is today, it is a bitter pill to swallow for sure. Civil Society, the GNB Intellectuals and the Fusion Particles are furious that once again they are being bypassed. Whether in the end they will agree to join in the fray will depend on how much of the spoils they will be allowed. The trend, however, is to cast aside "the status quo forces" (Simeus dixit) who have been too long on top of the heap, in favor of new managers and entrepreneurs from the fabled Diaspora.

Accepting the elections as a foregone conclusion, and Haiti as the pawn of "a paranoid and kleptocratic Bush administration keen on imperialist adventures" (the words of a fellow named Steinhoff), is not easy. Simeus would only be the third prime minister in a row with a US passport. But his rise to power, make no mistake about it, is a sure sign that the Bush White House wants more hands-on control over unruly Haiti.

The Haitian left is singularly unprepared and at a loss in this juncture. It isn't so much that "Socialism died in 1989" as some people have declared prematurely, or that a weakened left divided against itself was brought to its knees by a decade of occupations and populist politics. The problem is that the Haitian left in its many variants, after two decades of exile in Europe and North-America, is hopelessly reformist, consumed with issues of rights, and without a program or even an agenda for power.

Will the elections really take place and what do they matter anyway, ask my debonair leftie friends in their semi-retirement? Grassroots solidarity, not bourgeois elections, is what we should focus on, some of them add wishfully, apparently unaware that the grassroots sector, too, is on its knees.

The problem is that crystal balls don't lie. The Lavalas cells are whipping up their troops into action as we speak, with their usual mix of roots music, bugaboo politics and dope - and a little looting on the side to let the other side know what time it is. Come Feb. 7, Simeus, Preval and Co. will rule. . .By default.

Daniel Simidor, danielsimidor@yahoo.com
Brooklyn, Nov. 10, 2005

Dinner, games to support parishes in rural Haiti
Green Bay Press-Gazette, WI
November 12, 2005

PULASKI — The Assumption BVM Holy Name Society is staging a dinner and games of chance from 5 to 8 p.m. Nov. 19 in the church basement to benefit agricultural and community development in sister parishes of rural Haiti, as well as local Holy Name parish programs.

"We call it a poultry shoot because you'd have to be chicken to not take a whirl at some of our games," said Holy Name President John Malcheski.

Raffle tickets are sold in "heats" at six tickets for \$5, and winners are drawn every 10 to 15 minutes throughout the evening.

"We have many winners go home with top-quality frozen meat and poultry delicacies.

"But the biggest winners are those Haitian families that we help to feed themselves and their communities through development," he said.

The event features a chicken dinner catered by Super Ron's of Pulaski and served by the Assumption BVM Council of Catholic Women.

Tickets may be purchased in advance at \$10 for adults and \$3.50 for children 12 and younger by calling the Assumption BVM parish office at (920) 822-3279.

Tickets also will be available at the door at \$11 for adults.

A silent auction will take place concurrently with the dinner and poultry shoot.

Malcheski and John Gracyalny of Oneida returned recently from accompanying a medical mission to Haiti. The Catholic Diocese of Green Bay and Friends of Haiti send medical supplies and volunteers twice a year.

"We saw so much poverty, so much suffering, but so much hope for a leg up on a better future," Gracyalny said.

Friends of Haiti and the Assumption BVM Holy Name Society aim to purchase farm tools, seeds, irrigation equipment, farm trucks, and drinking-water systems for the districts of Thomazeau and Gran Boulage.

Most crop production there is subsistence, with farm families scratching out a meager existence for the immediate family only.

Friends of Haiti also is looking for corporate sponsors willing to team up with it to provide needed business, technical and financial assistance to Haitian communities. For more information on Friends of Haiti, contact Mary Vandenhevel at (920) 336-5636.

Tree debris could help Haiti recover
Rob Graf
pompano beach
South Florida Sun Sentinel
November 12 2005

I am writing to propose an idea that has been on my mind since watching all the trees and branches uprooted and torn apart after Hurricane Andrew, hauled off to Miami International Airport and either mulched or burned up for disposal.

Here we are after Hurricane Wilma, facing the same issue. Why not solve a few problems here? This is going to cost the taxpayers a tidy sum again. Instead, let's use this overabundant supply of fresh wood, load it all into containers from all the counties affected in Florida (even Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama), ship it to all cargo container ships available in all ports strategically located, and ship it all down to Haiti, which has been defoliated by the people in that country, who use it for charcoal to cook with.

Besides that, why not have the United Nations finance this operation as humanitarian aid to a stricken country like Haiti, where they might have a chance to reforest that country without it being chopped up in its infancy, and help eliminate the horrific and deadly mudslides created during heavy rain periods?

It seems simplistic, and might require more detailed thought, but I see no reason why this cannot be done.

The United Nations would have an immediate supply for a product helpful to a needy people in a desperate situation. I think this is a win-win-win situation, and possibly for years to come. Readers' opinions are welcome.

New York New York – Brain drain a headache

BY TONY BEST

The Nation Newspaper, Barbados

November 11, 2005

AS EDWIN CARRINGTON, Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) Secretary-General explained to West Indians in Brooklyn, the immigration story has two sides, the good and the troublesome.

The bright spot is the billions of dollars which Jamaicans, Haitians, Guyanese, Trinidadians, Barbadians and others, in that order, send back to their families every year, at least US\$4 billion by some estimates.

The downside is the departure of some of the brightest and the best, skilled persons who can help individual nations accelerate the pace of their social and economic development.

It's the latter which is taking centre stage as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and now CARICOM take a sharp look at what in the Caribbean is called the "brain drain", but in other areas, including the United States and Canada, it's the "brain gain".

Reasons abound why CARICOM is paying so much attention to the fortunes of the region's people living in North America.

For one thing, there are more Jamaicans, Guyanese, Haitians, Barbadians, Trinidadians, Antiguan, Grenadians, you name them, in Canada and the US than there are people in the entire Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) or Guyana.

For another, three Caribbean nations – Guyana, Jamaica and Haiti lead the developing world in the exodus of college or university-educated people.

So, while Jamaica is receiving about US\$2 billion annually in remittances from nationals abroad, Haitians send back US\$1 billion; Guyana US\$190 million; Trinidad and Tobago US\$90 million; and Barbados between US\$50-100 million, the departure of many of their highly trained for other shores isn't being ignored any longer.

Although Carrington said the Diaspora was making an immense contribution to the economic and social development of the region, and stands to do even more when the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME) is launched in January – a point made at different times by P.J. Patterson, a Jamaica's leader, Owen Arthur, Barbados' Prime Minister, and their counterpart in St Kitts-Nevis, Dr Denzil Douglas – the Secretary-General described the absence of so many skilled persons as "the significant brain drain which the region experiences".

In its study, the World Bank stated that eight of ten Haitians and Jamaicans who have college degrees live outside their country. In the case of Guyana it was even worse, 89 per cent of its highly skilled no longer reside or worked in the country.

"The report reveals the brain drain is massive in small and poor developing countries," said Maurice Schiff, World Bank economist and co-editor of the report. "While over 50 per cent of college graduates leave the countries in some of them the figure is as high as 80 per cent."

The study came after a less rigorous OECD analysis, which complained recently that Guyana topped the worldwide list of nations with the greatest proportion of their highly skilled people working abroad.

But Trinidad and Tobago, CARICOM's most prosperous country, is also being hurt by a massive exodus of its skilled persons. Some 75 per cent of its brightest and best has gone abroad.

In the case of Barbados, the OECD study showed that the country with the best human development record among the world's developing nations had lost 47 per cent of its "highly skilled".

Glyne Murray, Barbados' top diplomat in Canada, said his country's loss didn't come close to matching the pictures of other Caribbean nations because of the standard of living at home.

"Barbados certainly has not suffered because of this, otherwise we could not have been ranked so highly consistently over the years by various measurements internationally," was the way Murray put it. "Therefore, I do not think Barbados as a country has anything to fear."

What's interesting about this chapter in immigration is that developing countries are providing rich nations with the best of the best in terms of human resources, skills that they didn't pay for. As if to make matters worse, many of the doctors, engineers, journalists and other highly educated people find that their credentials are not accepted in Canada, forcing them to work as taxi-drivers or waiters.

In essence, they earn far less than their Canadian counterparts, despite higher levels of education.

U.S. & Brazilian Governments Sued Over Killings in Haiti

Democracy Now!

November 15, 2005

Human rights attorneys have announced plans to sue the U.S. and Brazilian governments for their alleged role in massacres in Haiti. The lawsuits are being filed today before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. The attorneys allege that the U.S. has financially supported the Haitian security forces that have committed atrocities and that Brazilian UN peacekeeping troops have been involved in politically-motivated killings.