

## HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: AUGUST 1 – 14, 2007

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### Haiti rebuilding itself with UN assistance

By BAN KI-MOON

Bangkok news

August 15, 2007

There may be worse slums in Haiti, but none so infamous for its violence and grinding poverty as Cite{aac} Soleil in the heart of the nation's capital, Port-au-Prince.

Drinking water is scarce, public sanitation non-existent. Most of its 300,000 residents have no electricity; fewer have jobs. The neighbourhood's mayor was blunt when I met him during my visit to Haiti last week. "Here," he said, "we need everything."

And yet, I also saw hope in Cite{aac} Soleil. At the mayor's offices, a new local government is putting down roots in a community it long ago abandoned.

Across the street, I toured a newly refurbished school. Youngsters greeted me, excited by the prospect of resuming their education. Nearby, young men played soccer.

People struggle merely to survive in Cite{aac} Soleil. The irony of its name, Sun City, is cruel. Yet I was glad to see this lively bustle, these signs of normal life.

Six months ago, there would have been none of this. Gangs ruled, terrorising ordinary people, extorting money and destroying lives. Kidnappings were routine \_ nearly 100 a month. Even poor families feared to leave home, especially with children.

Last December, newly elected President Rene{aac} Pre{aac}val asked the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti to do something. It did, with a decisiveness and efficiency that serves as a model of robust international peace-keeping. In an operation lasting six weeks, amid fierce firefights, UN forces took control of the slum. Roughly 800 gang members were arrested; their leaders have been jailed. The practical results are plain to see. In June, only six kidnappings were reported. Security has returned not only to the streets of Cite{aac} Soleil, but to the rest of the capital and other Haitian cities as well.

I saw other signs of progress. For the first time in a long while, Haiti today has a stable, democratically-elected government, widely accepted across all strata of society and by all political parties. The economy is no longer in free-fall. Inflation has dropped to 8%, from 40% three years ago. The IMF projects growth of 3.5% this year \_ as opposed to negative growth for much of the previous decade. Thanks to new laws, tax revenues rose by a third last year. Just as President Pre{aac}val took on Haiti's gangs, so has he declared war on corruption, endemic to every sphere of life. This shows real political courage.

I am convinced that Haiti is at a turning point. Long the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, seemingly forever mired in political turmoil, it at long last has a golden chance to begin to rebuild itself. With the help of the international community \_ and the UN in particular \_ it can. Haiti has seen five multinational interventions over the past decade. In each case, we left too soon, before real change

could take hold. Or we let our efforts to help be too circumscribed \_ restricted, say, to merely trying to maintain security or supervise an election.

This time will be different. That is why, in October, I will ask the Security Council to renew the UN's mandate in Haiti for a term beyond the customary interval of six months. In clear language, I assured the Haitian government \_ and the people \_ that we intend to stay until our mission is accomplished, consistent with their wishes, for however long it takes.

Haiti is nearing the end of the first phase of its nascent recovery \_ that of ensuring peace and security. The second phase must focus on social and economic development. More than ever, Haiti needs our energetic help in building functioning civil institutions \_ beginning with the creation of an effective and honest national police force, backed by a reformed justice system.

I was, therefore, immensely encouraged that, in response to my visit, the Haitian Senate last week approved ambitious new legislation aimed at reconstituting an effective and independent judiciary and creating a legal climate more conducive to economic development and foreign investment.

Without such changes, the trends of global commerce, finance and tourism will continue to pass Haiti by.

I called on all sectors of Haitian society \_ the government, business and ordinary people \_ to commit themselves to work together for social change. Without their mutual cooperation, Haiti cannot advance.

Above all, the ordinary people of Haiti must see tangible evidence that they can look forward to a better future \_ starting now, not tomorrow.

We must, therefore, assist the government in delivering what many call a "peace dividend". It is nothing grand, as our Brazilian force commander Carlos Alberto Dos Santos Cruz explained to me. Yes, the people of Cite{aac} Soleil, like all Haitians, welcome the new peace on their streets. But more, he said, they need "the basics". Water. Food. Jobs.

Of course, this is ultimately Haiti's responsibility. But it is ours to help achieve it.

Ban Ki-moon is Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**OAS Anti Drug Commission to visit Haiti Next Week**  
**Press Zoom, Press Release**  
**Aug. 13, 2007**

The head of the Organization of American States' ( OAS ) anti-drug commission , James F. Mack, will visit Haiti next week to meet with top government officials to discuss ongoing endeavors to combat illegal drugs in that country.

The Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Commission ( Known by its Spanish acronym, CICAD ), will arrive in Port-au-Prince on Sunday and lead a team of OAS experts on the mission which will include talks with Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis and Foreign Minister Jean Raynald Clerisme, among others.

The main objectives of the three-day trip will be to review the progress of Haiti's National Antidrug Plan and promote its swift approval by that country's authorities, as well as to discuss and present a training workshop on the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism ( MEM ), a hemisphere-wide assessment process carried out by CICAD.

Once approved, the National Antidrug Plan will establish the needed policies to confront the principal aspects of the drug problem, from supply and demand to related problems such as money laundering.

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism was created to increase coordination and cooperation among the OAS member states, which recognize a shared responsibility for the drug problem and have a common commitment to confront and overcome this scourge. This evaluation mechanism provides countries with a thorough assessment of how they are doing on all aspects of the drug problem. The MEM helps governments identify their strengths, weaknesses, progress, setbacks and gaps across a wide variety of indicators, and assists them to adjust their policies and actions to respond more effectively to the challenges posed by the international drug problem.

This workshop will be geared towards the institutions that provide data to Haiti's Antidrug Commission, which will in turn submit this information to CICAD for the evaluation that is carried out by the Governmental Expert Group, the body responsible for drafting the MEM's reports.

During a regional summit on drugs, security and cooperation held in the Dominican Republic in March, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza reiterated the organization's commitment in providing Haiti with the necessary cooperation and technical support to combat the drug problem. Next week's trip marks the first working visit by James F. Mack to the Caribbean nation since that summit. He will also meet with the Minister of Public Health and Population, Robert Auguste, the Minister of Justice and Public Security, René Magloire, and the Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, Edmond Mulet.

## **Haiti forms commission to help solve journalist slayings**

**The Associated Press**

**IHT**

**August 10, 2007**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Haiti has created an independent commission to speed up stalled investigations into the slayings of journalists in the impoverished nation.

Eight journalists have been killed in the Caribbean country since 2000, and the notoriously weak and corrupt justice system has yet to convict anyone in the deaths.

The nine-member body, made up of Haitian journalists, will review each case and issue public reports on ways to move the investigations forward, commission president Guy Delva said Friday.

"We want to push the justice system to act. If there are obstacles to these cases, we want to know what they are, who is responsible and how to fix them," said Delva, a correspondent for the Reuters news agency and the head of a Haitian press freedom group.

President Rene Preval pledged full support to the commission, the first of its kind in Haiti.

"The state must make providing justice a priority," Preval said at a ceremony to introduce the commission. "I think the journalists, working together with justice officials, can help reinforce justice in the country."

Delva said the body's first task will be to revisit the murder of Haiti's most famous journalist, Jean Dominique, who was gunned down along with a bodyguard outside his radio station on April 3, 2000. Dominique's life was chronicled in the 2003 documentary "The Agronomist," directed by American filmmaker Jonathan Demme.

The probe into his killing has been plagued by delays, missing case files and the resignation of two investigating judges who received death threats. Three early suspects have been killed, including one under mysterious circumstances in police custody.

Dominique's widow, Michele Montas said revisiting his case offers hope after years of frustration.

"He was a symbol that gave a voice to the voiceless, and that voice was silenced," said Montas, who once fled the country because of death threats and now serves as spokeswoman for U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "So we're asking for justice for him and everyone else."

## **Illegal Migrants Land On Yamacraw Beach**

**By Vanessa C. Rolle**

**The Bahama Journal**

**13th August 2007**

Teams of officers from the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, the Royal Bahamas Police Force and the Department of Immigration apprehended 84 illegal Haitian immigrants on Yamacraw Beach Sunday morning.

A group of 84 Haitian migrants was apprehended at Yamacraw Beach on Sunday. The Haitians arrived on what authorities called an unsanitary vessel. (Photos by Candia Dames)

The group included nine women and 75 men. Just last Wednesday, Defence Force marines apprehended a group of nine Haitian women and 75 Haitian men in the Exumas.

When The Bahama Journal's news team arrived on the scene Sunday, it met a big yellow bus near the entrance of the beach waiting to transport the migrants to the Detention Centre on Carmichael Road.

Farther down the trail, there were smaller police and Defence Force vehicles as well as a smaller bus that transported immigrants from a dead-end area where they had been huddled on the sand to the area where the big yellow bus was parked.

The Haitian immigrants were seated on the sand in neat rows surrounded by the law enforcement officers and were taken to the buses in groups of 10.

Some of them were bareback, and shoeless, while others were fully clothed. Only one immigrant was seen carrying a stick of deodorant and a toothbrush in his hand. Some of the females wore their hair braided or locked; others wore caps.

According to Defence Force Chief Petty Officer, Ralph McKinney, this number brings the total apprehensions for the year to more than 900.

He said a concerned citizen alerted law enforcement agencies to Yamacraw Beach after spotting the immigrants' vessel while having an early morning swim.

Police and Defence Force units were dispatched to the scene where they found and detained four people on shore, Mr. McKinney said.

"The police detained the four persons until a much larger number from the Defence Force came. Collectively, we were able to account for 84 persons on the vessel. This was shortly after 9 o'clock," he said.

He said authorities did not believe anyone got away from the scene.

"What we have also done since we've been here is sent teams of persons into the nearby bushes searching and we're going to monitor this area for the rest of the day – or at least until tomorrow (Monday)," he said.

None of the nine women appear to be pregnant, Mr. McKinney said.

"You would notice that some persons have a bag. [They] might have a small amount of money or a passport or something of that nature. But the majority of these people here don't have passports," he said.

Mr. McKinney said the migrants did not identify the captain of the blue and white vessel.

"Unfortunately, in all of these circumstances, we find that no one ever owns up to being the captain. I would suspect that as soon as the tide comes up, this vessel would be more than likely destroyed because it is very, very unsanitary," Mr. McKinney said.

He said officers could not find a registration record for the vessel used for the voyage, adding that in most instances where the record is found, the vessels are usually registered in Bahamian names with Bahamian addresses.

"There were small amounts of dried food, no meat, and coal used for cooking found on the boat," he said.

"There were no compartments on the boat; it was just one open area. But what you would find is that normally in the daytime, they would take all their clothes off and they sit in between each other's legs, and in the nighttime when no one could see them, they would come out for air."

Authorities believe this latest group of illegal immigrants had been at sea for approximately six days.

Mr. McKinney said they did not look malnourished.

"They are in good condition," he said. "What we find is that with this sort of migration, the persons are relatively calm. Notwithstanding that, we do not take any chances, but they are very well behaved in such instances."

Senior Immigration Officer Peter Joseph was also on the scene at the time of apprehension.

He told The Bahama Journal the illegal immigrants will be taken from Yamacraw Beach to the Detention Centre for processing.

"Everybody seems to be in fair condition. We have some with some scrapes and bruises, but they will be tended to once we get to the Detention Centre," he said.

Mr. Joseph said there are approximately 300 immigrants detained at the Detention Centre.

"We have been getting quite a number of persons in, but that number has been maintained although we have been having repatriation flights. This crew will be processed and repatriated in the very near future," he said.

"The flights are very expensive, but right now, that is the only route we have. We just have to do what we have to do."

Mr. Joseph said some flights carry up to 114 people at a time.

Holland Musgrove, a 51-yearold civilian, said he was jogging when he saw the sloop coming in the distance.

"When I hit as far as Stokes' house, I looked out to the water to see if it was high or not and I saw this vessel in the middle of the sea...coming. So I said I would beat the vessel through and I ran down to the back to see what they were doing. So I ran straight in the back here and watched the vessel come on shore," Mr. Musgrove said.

"As I looked, I [saw] three people come onboard and they were standing up [probably] looking to see where to throw the anchor out. So I ran down and turned back facing the boat to see who was coming off the boat. When I looked...and they almost reached...I saw like over 100 men or more. That's how big the number was [that] I saw," he said.

Mr. Musgrove said he ran toward the bushes so they could not see him, and didn't come out until he saw the police officers whom he knew come on the scene with guns.

"I [said] at least I get support because somebody else came on the scene. But [one of the officers] pulled his gun and made them come on sure and made everybody lay down. Nobody hid in the bush or anywhere like that. Right out the sea, they had to lay right there on the sand, and that's where you'll meet them," Mr. Musgrove said.

He said he had always heard about illegal immigrants coming into the country, but never witnessed it before.

"Our country in trouble man," Mr. Musgrove said. "We're in trouble and I see why things are like this. These people are outnumbering us by far. I witnessed 84 this morning and you don't know how [many have] gone through. Just seeing that this morning caused me to think back about the problems we have."

**430 Nepalese soldiers awarded in Haiti**  
**People's Daily Online**  
**August 14, 2007**

At least 430 Nepalese soldiers based in Mirebalais, in Haiti's Central Region, were awarded United Nations peacekeeping medals for their outstanding performance there, The Kathmandu Post reported on Tuesday.

According to a statement issued by the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti and made available by UN office in Kathmandu, Secretary- General's Special Representative for Haiti Edmond Mulet presented the medals to them at a function on Aug. 6.

Mulet also congratulated the Nepalese blue helmets for their effort in stabilizing Haiti and their good conduct toward the Haitian population.

According to the daily, Nepal is the fourth largest troop contributor to UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti.

**Aid agency reunites Haiti kids with parents**  
**CNN.com**  
**August 10, 2007**

Agency says 47 Haiti children kept in inhumane conditions at adoption center

Official says many were stunted from malnutrition and had skin diseases

Parents had given kids away after being promised they'd receive good care

Parents won judgment ordering kids' release after learning of poor conditions

GENEVA, Switzerland (Reuters) -- Forty-seven children in Haiti have been reunited with their parents after being kept in inhumane conditions at an adoption center for up to two years, an international aid agency said Friday.

Now ages 2 to 7 years, the children were "given away" by their parents in return for promises that they would receive good care and the families would get financial assistance to set up small businesses and meet their other children's needs, the International Organization for Migration said.

The children were kept at the center in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, ostensibly awaiting international adoption, for a period ranging from six months to two years.

Many were stunted from malnutrition and had skin diseases due to poor care, International Organization for Migration spokeswoman Jemini Pandya said.

After learning of the conditions the children were kept in, and realizing they had been misled, the parents denounced the center's owner and won a judgment ordering their release this week.

"IOM and the Pan American Development Foundation have just returned 47 trafficked children back to their homes and their parents in the town of Jeremie in Haiti's Grande Anse region," Pandya told a news briefing in Geneva.

The children were considered "trafficked" as they had been put in an exploitative situation, she said.

At least another 40 children from a different town remained at the center as authorities had yet to start proceedings to have them returned home, the spokeswoman said.

A lack of resources in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, has prevented social welfare authorities from investigating all international adoption centers, she said.

The Geneva-headquartered organization is providing the released children with medical and psychological care, paying their school fees for a year, and giving the parents cash and training to help them care for their large families. E-mail to a friend

## **Movie Review**

### **"Ghosts of Cité Soleil" a harrowing look at Haiti's hellish slums**

**By Ted Fry**

**The Seattle Times**

**August 10, 2007**

"Ghosts of Cité Soleil" follows two gangster brothers through the slums of Port au Prince, Haiti.

"Ghosts of Cité Soleil," a documentary directed by Asger Leth and Milos Loncarevic. 88 minutes. Not rated; suitable for mature audiences.

In English, Creole and French with English subtitles.

Forget the elegant horror and "torture porn" movies that have been invading lately. The dreadful reality in the slums of Port au Prince, Haiti — as depicted in the riveting documentary "Ghosts of Cité Soleil" — is more horrific than any tale from the crypt Hollywood could conceive.

So visceral are the events that you'll feel the filmmakers were taking their lives into their own hands just capturing the story. At one point, one of the nearly 500,000 residents of the Cité Soleil ghetto says, "I'd kill you just to take your camera." It's no idle threat. This huge landscape of dirty mazes that hide blank-faced young men who threaten and maim with nary a thought of basic morality has been called "the most dangerous place on Earth" by the United Nations.

In recounting a fateful period in 2004, when President Jean-Bertrand Aristide turned his country against itself and was eventually deposed, the filmmakers had remarkable access to primary characters in the battle. The sinister warlords of Cité Soleil followed most closely are 2Pac and Bily, antagonistic yet loving brothers and members of the gangs that covertly supported Aristide's Lavalas political party for money, or because there was nothing better to do.

The gangs are called chimeres (ghosts). The movie's title is most apt at the end when a terse credit epigram offhandedly reveals the fate of the lives we have just been such clandestine witness to.

Musician and Haitian expatriate Wyclef Jean makes a spiritual appearance and provides some terrific music on the soundtrack. Also on the fringes is an enigmatic French "relief worker" named Lele, who acts as a kind of conduit for us and as an erotic foil for the violence boiling in both 2Pac and Bily.

"Ghosts of Cité Soleil" is oftentimes confusing or disjointed, and always jarring in its interpretation of the facts during this turbulent time. It is, nonetheless, a spellbinding experience for being so unflinching in its harsh gaze.

Ted Fry: [tedfry@hotmail.com](mailto:tedfry@hotmail.com)

## **Haitians begin to stand together**

**A difficult history and persistent poverty have led many in the Southland to hide their nationality. But now expatriates are showing pride, forging links.**

**By Anna Gorman,  
Los Angeles Times  
August 13, 2007**

When Daniel Castin told people he was from Haiti, the response was always the same.

"Isn't that the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere?" they would ask.

So at some point, Castin -- who emigrated to escape poverty at home -- stopped telling people his nationality.

"It's like I was drowning and you were describing the water to me," said Castin, who lives in Pasadena. "Give me a break already."

Roughly 5,750 Haitian immigrants live in California, according to the 2000 U.S. census. But because they are scattered throughout the state and some are reluctant to identify as Haitians, they lack the cohesion of other expatriate communities.

George Laguerre, owner of the popular Haitian restaurant Tigeorges' Chicken, is trying to change that. Each month at his Echo Park restaurant, Laguerre hosts a gathering for immigrants. By unifying Haitians throughout the Southland, Laguerre believes he and others can help reduce poverty in their homeland by forming organizations to donate food or clothing or to start development projects back home.

At the most recent celebration, several dozen Haitians spent hours dancing to traditional music, eating goat meat and fried plantains and reminiscing.

"What Tigeorges' is doing is unbelievable," said Marc Calix, 36, who came from Santa Monica. "He is bringing Haitians together."

Calix, a neurophysiologist whose grandparents were killed under the dictatorship of Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, said he used to hide his accent. As he matured, Calix said, he realized the need to recognize the problems that exist in Haiti.

"Yes, we have bad roads and we don't have the best politicians," he said. "In order for Haitians to rise to the top, us Haitians are going to have to do it."

After a recent move from the East Coast, Calix looked up "Haitian food" on the Internet and discovered Tigeorges'.

"I don't care how much you deny it, you are only lying to yourself," he said. "You are always going to crave the food. You are always going to crave the culture. It's something that's in you."

Some say that Haitians' reluctance to embrace their identity stems from the persecution by Duvalier's brutal dictatorship. Others attribute it to an embarrassment about the nation's poverty, crime and corruption. Still others cite the myth that HIV came from Haiti.

The rise of Haitians such as actor Jimmy Jean-Louis and musician Wyclef Jean has helped some Haitians become more comfortable admitting their heritage. In addition, many Haitian immigrants are encouraged by the government of Rene Preval and the progress he has made in their native country.

"People who were afraid to say they are Haitian are starting to come out," said Wilfrid Colas, 40, who lives in Orange County.

Laguerre began the monthly gatherings this summer. "Now that I have the confidence in being Haitian," Laguerre said, "I think it's my duty to bring Haitians together."

Castin, who attended the celebration, immigrated more than two decades ago and works as a procurement officer for the federal government. Castin said he now knew that being Haitian wasn't something to be ashamed of -- and that he and other immigrants shouldn't shy from talking about Haiti's problems.

"We have an opportunity," Castin, 47, said. "There are so many of us here in the United States. We have a lot of power from outside."

**Venezuela offers gas plants to Dominican Republic and Haiti**  
**The Dominican Today**  
**August 12, 2007**

Caracas.- Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez has offered to build two gas plants in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, for processing and re-exporting the fuel to countries in the region. The gas, he said, could also be used for vehicles and general domestic consumption and sale.

Chávez made the offer as Leonel Fernández was explaining the Strategic Plan for Energy Integration at the Third Petrocaribe summit in Caracas.

According to the plan outlined by Fernandez, the Dominican Republic would achieve energy independence in the medium and long term.

Fernández said that hydroelectric projects were a priority, and that in the coming year these would provide 300 new megawatts of energy to the Dominican electricity grid.

He added that the country was also looking into generating energy from non-fossil sources such as solar panels, which are environmentally friendly.

**Randall Robinson is not an easy man**  
**St. Kitts-Nevis Commentary**  
**August 13, 2007**

Born in poor circumstances in the segregated US South he became a lawyer, a distinguished political activist, and an author.

He is well known throughout the United States and beyond.

I first heard of him in the late 1970's, shortly after he founded the TransAfrica Forum which has served since 1977 as a "major research, education and organizing institution for the African American community, offering constructive analyses concerning US policy as it affects Africa and the Diaspora..."

He served as Trans Africa's president until 2001.

Over those 24 or so years, Mr. Robinson engaged in major political activism.

He has been a champion of social justice in the United States, advocating with great passion and effect the plight of African Americans, and calling for reparations for them.

He was one of the leading fighters worldwide for ending segregation in South Africa. Indeed, in 1984, he established the Free South Africa Movement which pushed successfully for the imposition of sanctions against the apartheid South African Government.

The man was a veritable thorn in the side of the Reagan Administration in Washington and in the side of any other institution or person standing in his path to social justice.

In 1994, he went on a 27-day hunger strike to press for the re-instatement of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power in Haiti after a short-lived coup d'etat by General Raoul Cedras. Aristide had been Haiti's first democratically elected President.

And again, Mr. Robinson was successful, and the United Nations sent in a multinational operation to put Aristide back in power.

Some Kittitian and Nevisian police officers participated in that operation.

He also dumped crates of bananas on the steps of a US Government office building to protest against unjust trade practices in bananas against Caribbean nations.

He has more than once expressed the view that America's domestic and foreign policies exploit the poor.

He went to jail a number of times in the name of his causes and his convictions.

In 1999, he wrote a book called "Defending the Spirit" which was a rallying call to a new era of African American leadership, and which portrayed what it means to be Black in America.

In 2001, he wrote "The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks", which strongly articulated his views on reparations for Black America.

In that same year, he decided that it was time to quit America, so he gave up his post as President of TransAfrica Forum, packed his bags, and took off for the Caribbean with his wife and young daughter.

Then in 2002, he wrote "The Reckoning: What Blacks Owe To Each Other".

In this book, Mr. Robinson states that while Blacks must push for reparations, they must also fight against the growing prison industrial system which he considers to be as ominous for Black and Brown people as the slave trade was for Black people between the 17th and 19th centuries.

He calls on Blacks to understand, expose and dismantle this frightening system.

This book was heavily influenced by Mr. Robinson's work with gang members, ex-convicts and other persons whose lives had been deeply affected by poverty.

Two years later, yet another amazing book by Mr. Robinson, entitled "Quitting America: The Departure of A Black Man From His Native Land", hit the bookstands.

In it, he told the story as to why he had left America. And he compared and contrasted life in the world's only superpower with life in his new Caribbean island home.

I am happy to say that in the comparing and contrasting, the Caribbean island home came out the winner, hands down.

I'm talking about an intelligent, sensitive, strong, visionary and decent man. And such a man would be expected to make sensible choices and to have exquisite taste.

Which is exactly what he did.

Indeed, he had already chosen a brilliant, beautiful and regal Caribbean woman named Hazel as his wife.

This is a lady who had gone up to North America and gotten her tertiary education, to build on the solid foundation which she had left the Caribbean with.

She had reached the point where she had held down a very important job with the US Congressional Arms Services Committee, and she operated a very reputable consultancy service in the US. An independently bright and dynamic woman who could acquit herself with aplomb and graciousness in the midst of immense adversity. An alpha female. Double alpha, even! And charming and nice!

So it would come as no surprise that Mr. Robinson would quit America and come to live in the Caribbean with Hazel and their daughter, Khalia.

His latest book has just come out. It is entitled: "An Unbroken Agony: Haiti From Revolution to The Kidnapping of a President".

It tells us the story of Haiti from the Revolution led by L'Ouverture and Dessalines, right up to the taking out of Aristide. It tells us about the imposed sanctions and about the reparation penalty charged by France back then just after the Revolution, equivalent to US\$21 billion of today's dollars.

It shows how Haiti was never given the chance to get off its feet and never 'forgiven' for defeating the might of the French and for taking its independence, and opening the way for the abolition of slavery.

This book is a mighty book and it is about a story that every person of conscience must know.

I have just started reading it, and already I am captivated.

The story, the writing style, the command of English, the vast knowledge of the writer of his subject, and most of all, his passion for Haiti and all that it symbolizes.

There are some people in this old world of ours who can talk, and others who can write. Then there are those who can do both at the highest and most captivating level.

Randall Robinson falls into that third group.

And, as is the case with others of his ilk, his effectiveness in getting his message so magically to us cannot be simply explained by the fact that he has a powerful intellect.

It has to come from a place far deeper than that which stores bare intellect.

And it does.

Mr Robinson's effectiveness comes from his soul. He is a man of soulful compassion, sensitivity, and sincerity of purpose. A man of decency, principle and courageous conviction. A man of love. A good man. A real man.

That is why he moves people the way he does.

I am urging you, Dear Reader, to get your hands on this "Unbroken Agony..." book.

Read it, and then go after every other book that Mr. Robinson has written. You will be the better for having read them.

Before I end, I must tell you which Caribbean island the Robinsons migrated to.

It is the island of St. Kitts.

And it is an honour for us to have a man like him in our midst, living and walking amongst us.

This is where, essentially, he has been getting his inspiration to write these wonderful and stirring books. I fervently hope that we will do all that we can do, and more, to keep inspiring him.

Sometimes, I worry that he might be disappointed in us, given our pettiness, our polarization, our short fuses, our disunity and mutual disrespect, our quickness to follow the lead of others who are blinder than we are (although possessed of greater material "wealth" than we are), our disturbing indifference to our historical and cultural foundations, and our "sell-out" mentality.

There is a stirring passage at the start of Chapter 7 at page 27 of the book which I want to leave with you.

"A dark soul emboldened by pride or virtue, who elects to retrieve a stolen birthright, resist a cruel domination, or militantly ward away the puissant swarming spores of Columbus and his like, must decide at some point to engage the silver-tongued takers to draw them into a dangerous intimacy, and by so engaging them, risk a contagion of the spirit, or fates even worse".

"The odds of success are never good. The taker controls all, but the most abstract and otherwise valueless of weapons; for it is always the taker who controls the guns, the wealth, the heralds of public information, and more often than not, the weak's very own thoughts".

That, Dear Reader, is Randall Robinson.

A national treasure to be cherished, respected, and loved.

I think it is most appropriate at this time, as we celebrate Emancipation Day to be discussing a book on Haiti's Revolution and its tribulations over the centuries, written by a man who knows the story so well; an adopted son of St. Kitts & Nevis.

Until Next Time,

Plenty Peace.

**Venezuela wants Nicaragua and Haiti to be members of Petrocaribe**  
**El Universal**  
**August 10, 2007**

The Venezuelan government will make an effort to include Nicaragua and Haiti in Petrocaribe, said Rodolfo Sanz, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs for Latin America and the Caribbean.

He explained that there is already a bilateral oil agreement with these two countries, but the new one will be much better.

The ongoing Third Petrocaribe Summit held in Caracas is an important venue to assess the progress made in oil supply and infrastructure. It is also a possibility to renew the existing agreement based on the upcoming announcements of President Hugo Chávez.

Petrocaribe is an energy partnership including 14 Latin American and Caribbean nations, on the initiative of the Venezuelan government.

## **UN Supports More Female Officers In Haiti**

**11 August 2007**

**Press Release: United Nations**

Haiti: UN Supports Nationwide Police Effort To Recruit More Female Officers

Thousands of Haitian women this week registered to join their country's police academy in a campaign led by the national police service and backed by the United Nations to encourage the recruitment of more female officers.

The massive registration effort, which took place on Monday and Tuesday, was aimed at recruiting around 150 women for the 20th graduating class at the academy, which begins next month, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) said in a press release.

"[The ongoing recruitment process is] an initiative by the leadership of the Haitian National Police (HNP) tasked with rectifying the lack of women in their institution," said HNP spokesman Frantz Lerebours.

The Haitian police currently have 411 women out of a total of 8,032 officers, or around 5 percent of the total force, according to the press release. Mr. Lerebours pointed out that of the 400 candidates retained for the coming class, there were only five women.

But the response to the recruitment drive was very good and this was helped by an information campaign led by the HNP and supported by MINUSTAH, the release added. The UN is also offering support in terms of vetting the applications and assisting with the overall supervision of the operation.

"This effort to engage more women in the Haitian National Police (HNP) is very important not only for the way in which the police will function and be seen by the population, but also because the feminization of the national police will highlight the involvement of women in non-traditional roles as actors and agents of change in H iti," said Nadine Puechguirbal, MINUSTAH's Senior Gender Advisor.

Such was the response to the recruitment drive by prospective female candidates that in the West Region of the impoverished country, almost 2,000 women applied in one centre alone.

"The Haitian National Police is scoring points. The popular perception of the force has changed in our favour. If women were hesitant to join the police force before because of its negative reputation, now much like the men they wish to be part of a winning team," said HNP Inspector General Jean Miguelite Maxime.

## **Travel plans for Florida's congressmen include China, Vietnam, Israel, Iraq**

**By William E. Gibson | Washington Bureau Chief**

**South Florida Sun Sentinel**

**August 13, 2007**

WASHINGTON - If this is August, it must be time to visit China, Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel or Vietnam.

South Florida members of Congress are traveling to these and other corners of the world this month to visit soldiers, talk about trade, foster ties to their home region and generally take a firsthand look at President Bush's policies abroad.

The South Florida globe-trotters are taking advantage of the August congressional recess to assert their region's big stake in trade and foreign affairs. Their travels to far-flung war zones also reflect increasing congressional oversight of the U.S. missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Because Florida is the "Gateway to the Americas" and a cosmopolitan region with one of the largest Jewish populations in the world, foreign affairs long has been a local concern, making travel abroad a necessity for members of Congress.

"The constituency we have is literally from all over the world," said Rep. Alcee Hastings, D-Miramar, who may visit Haiti this month and plans to go to Slovenia for an international gathering in the fall. "You have the Cuban constituency, the Jewish constituency. There's the Haitians, Jamaicans, Bahamians. Then you have the extraordinary influx of people from Latin America."

"Knowledge is power," said Hastings, a member of the House Intelligence Committee. "When I visit Israel and discuss the role played by Iraq, Iran and Syria, that becomes something my local constituents are directly concerned about."

Rep. Robert Wexler, D-Delray Beach, one of the most traveled members of Congress, is in China this week exhorting top officials to ensure the safety of food and other exports, help resolve the crisis in the Sudan and reduce air pollution to address climate change.

"Food safety and product safety affects every one of my constituents," Wexler said in a telephone interview from Nanjing. "Likewise, the issue of global change has a particularly onerous effect in South Florida, which is poised to incur a disproportionate amount of damage if global climate change is not reversed."

Wexler, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Europe, this year has traveled to France and Germany and accompanied Gov. Charlie Crist on a trade mission to Israel.

"The district I represent has a larger Jewish population than any other in the country," Wexler said. "Being a familiar face in Israel, which I am, is very important."

Freshman Rep. Tim Mahoney, D-Palm Beach Gardens, plans to visit top Israeli and Palestinian leaders to gain a better understanding of the peace process. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Weston, wants to tour Haiti to learn more about conditions that prompt many of its people to flee toward Florida.

Rep. Ileana Ros Lehtinen, R-Miami, will take a first-hand look at attempts to control the opium crop in Afghanistan, while Rep. Kendrick Meek, D-Miami, will lead a separate congressional trip to Iraq as well as Afghanistan.

Congressional travel is often clouded by controversy, especially when paid for by lobbyists. Most trips by Florida members this month are official congressional travel — covered by the government — to places not known as popular tourist destinations, observed Jim Morris, project manager at the Center for Public Integrity, a watchdog group that tracks congressional travel.

"There's a big difference between a trip to Iraq and one to Maui," Morris said. "No doubt there are legitimate, educational fact-finding trips. Then there are other trips abroad to Mexican beach resorts, where there appears to be not much work, mainly socializing, going to the beach and playing golf."

Those who travel frequently say congressional work trips are revealing, informative and exhausting.

"The hours are long," Hastings said. "Sometimes I have lived in very nice hotels, and I've been in other places that should not even be called hotels."

Except for the golfing and gambling junkets, congressional trips can help Americans overcome misperceptions of other nations, said Ambler Moss, former ambassador to Panama and now professor of international studies at the University of Miami.

"They come back far better prepared to make reasonable judgments about foreign policy when they've seen conditions on the ground," Moss said. "Particularly today, in the Middle East or even in a place like Haiti, getting firsthand experience is unbeatable."

In recent decades, Floridians in Congress have played a significant role in foreign policy, often through the Foreign Affairs, Armed Services and Intelligence committees.

As chairman of the Intelligence Committee, then-Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla., shook up the Senate in 2002 and foreshadowed what eventually became the mainstream Democratic position when he called the invasion of Iraq a distraction from the war on terrorism. Floridians in Congress for many years have formed the tough U.S. policy on Cuba, influenced decisions to intervene in Haiti and encouraged trade ties with Caribbean nations and Central America. Wexler and other South Floridians have been at the forefront of debates on the Middle East.

"Congress has an essential role in foreign policy. It declares war, determines the foreign-policy budget and shapes the agenda," Wexler said. "To successfully complete our constitutional assignment, Congress must go out into the world, meet with foreign leaders and educate itself."

**Quick glimpse of misery in Haiti**  
**The Toronto Star**  
**Aug 03, 2007**  
**Carol Goar**

The emergency team at Jude Anne Hospital, which provides childbirth care to Haiti's poorest women, no longer has to perform triage in the parking lot. Médecins Sans Frontières, which opened the hospital a year ago, has now added a second building.

That is how progress is measured in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's wretchedly poor capital, said Paul McPhun grimly. He is operations manager for the aid agency's Canadian section, which is responsible for the obstetric hospital.

McPhun and his colleagues were pleased that Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited Port-au-Prince two weeks ago on his tour of Latin America. They would have liked it better if he'd come to their hospital.

"We have an obligation to show politicians the realities of life in Haiti," he said. "We want people to see the humanitarian crisis, not just the recent security gains."

It is true, McPhun admits, that the scale of violence in crime-ridden Port-au-Prince has abated in the last year or so. But basic health services remain out of reach for most Haitians. The country has the highest maternal mortality rate in the Western Hemisphere.

Women simply can't afford hospital care. It costs \$13 to deliver a baby in a state hospital, assuming no complications. That is six times the average daily wage of a Haitian who is lucky enough to have a job (60 per cent don't). A caesarean section costs \$55, not counting drugs and post-surgical care.

Jude Anne Hospital charges nothing. It is one of five free hospitals run by Médecins Sans Frontières in the Haitian capital.

When it opened in March of 2006, the staff expected to handle 300 births a month. By September, exhausted medical teams were delivering 1,300 babies a month – about one every half-hour.

That's when the parking lot became a makeshift triage centre.

It is not surprising that Harper didn't visit the facility. It does not receive – or want – funding from the Canadian government. For Médecins Sans Frontières, neutrality is essential.

"We are one of the few aid organizations that can go into the slums," McPhun explained. "That's because the people with the guns know we are not affiliated with the police or the security forces, who receive support from Canada and the United States."

Nor would the Prime Minister and his entourage have found photogenic children or grateful aid recipients at Jude Anne Hospital. A mother who gives birth there has little to look forward to.

She has a 35 per cent probability of dying before her 40th birthday. Her child has a 12 per cent chance of dying before the age of 5.

She will live in one of Port-au-Prince's gang-controlled ghettos, where the threat of sexual assault and armed conflict are ever-present. She will probably be among the 56 per cent of Haitians who live on less than \$1 a day.

Harper got a glimpse of this misery as his motorcade, guarded by armed United Nations soldiers, made its way through Cité Soleil, one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince. He visited a hospital – Sainte-Catherine-de-Labouré – that receives funding from the Canadian government. He delivered a blood analysis machine to speed up its HIV/AIDS testing. He seemed genuinely moved by the hardship around him.

"I think all of us, as fellow human beings, as people who have our own families, can only begin to understand the true difficulties and challenges that so many people in this country face on a day-to-day basis," he said.

Harper stayed in Haiti for only six hours. His primary focus was improving public security. He made no change in Canada's aid commitment of \$100 million a year.

McPhun gives the Prime Minister credit for going to Port-au-Prince. "I think a high-profile visit can only be a positive thing."

But he wishes Harper had stayed longer, seen more and recognized that healthy babies matter as much as safe streets.

**UN Chief Supports Extension of Peacekeeping in Haiti**  
**By VOA News**  
**02 August 2007**

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says he will recommend that U.N. peacekeepers stay in Haiti for another year.

Mr. Ban spoke Wednesday during his first visit to Haiti as head of the U.N. At a joint news conference with Haitian President Rene Preval, Mr. Ban said the nearly 9,000 (MINUSTAH) peacekeepers should stay on to help the government control armed gangs.

Mr. Ban noted that U.N. peacekeepers have been in Haiti five times in the past and will not leave until the country's future is secure.

The U.N. sent peacekeepers to Haiti in 2004 after a revolt toppled former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Mr. Ban also spoke of Mr. Preval's stand against corruption and the need for the international community to remain engaged with the western hemisphere's poorest country.

Some information for this report was provided by AP and

## **UN Head Visits Haiti to See Peacekeepers**

**Wednesday August 1, 2007**

**By STEVENSON JACOBS**

**The Guardian UK**

**Associated Press**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) - U.N. Secretary-General Ban-Ki-moon arrived in Haiti on Wednesday to observe an 8,800-strong peacekeeping force that has helped bring relative calm to the troubled country for the first time since a 2004 revolt ousted the president.

Ban's 24-hour trip comes as the U.N. Security Council prepares to renew the Haiti mandate in October. Ban is expected to ask for more specialized forces such as naval units to help the Caribbean country guard its coastline from weapons and drug traffickers.

The peacekeepers came to the impoverished nation in 2004 after a revolt toppled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, sparking a long turf war against well-armed, slum-based gangs blamed for a wave of killings and kidnappings.

The secretary-general was greeted upon arrival by President Rene Preval but made no public statements.

Ban's visit, his first since becoming leader of the world body, comes as the U.N. force begins a slow transition from a military to a policing role - a move officials say is essential to maintaining peace as this impoverished Caribbean country rebuilds

Today, blue-helmeted soldiers no longer get shot at or need to launch large-scale raids into slums in search of gunmen. Neighbors simply call and give soldiers the gang members' location.

Despite the improved security, the top U.N. envoy to Haiti says it's too soon to begin pulling out troops.

“An early withdrawal right now would be a big mistake, 'big' with a capital letter,” Edmond Mulet recently told The Associated Press. “This is a time to hold on, to make this work this time.”

He said gangs, drug trafficking and poverty still pose a threat to the country and that peacekeepers would be needed at least until Preval's term ends in 2011.

Mulet, a Guatemalan who on Friday was appointed assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping operations, said the U.N. mission hopes to use more civilian police than soldiers but is hampered by a world shortage of trained, French-speaking officers.

The peacekeepers provide 85 percent of Haiti's security needs, but the government is working to eventually take over. The national police academy is preparing hundreds of recruits to bolster the nation's 6,000-police force.

Haiti is still struggling after a century marked by foreign occupations and the 29-year Duvalier family dictatorship.

Efforts to build an effective police force are still haunted by the specter of the Duvalier-era's bullying Tonton-Macoute security forces and armed gangs that emerged to defend Aristide.

Aid groups say the delivery of foreign aid to the poorest areas of Port-au-Prince is just starting because of red tape and logistical problems.

“Assistance is only starting to trickle into the capital, whose communes have still not perceived the start of a new era,” the International Crisis Group stated this month in a report.

Preval, a populist champion of the poor elected in 2006, authorized peacekeepers to take a firm hand and warned gangs “to disarm or die” before a crackdown earlier this year led to the arrest or killings of dozens of alleged gang members.

## **UN Peacekeeping Role Evolving in Haiti**

**Wednesday August 1, 2007**

**By STEVENSON JACOBS**

**Associated Press Writer**

**The Guardian UK**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) - Three years after arriving in Haiti in the wake of a bloody revolt that ousted the country's president, U.N. peacekeepers have decimated violent gangs, calmed teeming slums and provided breathing room for a fledgling elected government.

When U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon makes his first visit here Wednesday, he'll find a U.N. force evolving from a military to a policing role that officials say is crucial to keeping the peace while this impoverished Caribbean country rebuilds.

The senior U.N. envoy to Haiti says it is too soon for the U.N. to consider withdrawing its 8,800-strong, Brazil-led peacekeeping force, noting past failed attempts to help the country.

“An early withdrawal right now would be a big mistake, 'Big' with a capital letter,” Edmond Mulet said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. “This is a time to hold on, to make this work this time.”

Ban will meet with President Rene Preval and other political leaders during his 36-hour trip, which comes as the U.N. Security Council prepares to renew the Haiti mandate in October. Ban is expected to ask the council for more specialized forces such as naval units to help Haiti protect its coastline from arms and drug traffickers.

The peacekeepers arrived in 2004 after a revolt toppled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, touching off a long turf war against well-armed, slum-based gangs blamed for a wave of killings and kidnappings.

Today, blue-helmeted soldiers no longer get shot at or need to conduct large-scale raids into slums in search of alleged gunmen. Neighbors simply call and tell soldiers where gang members are.

Mulet said the U.N. mission eventually hopes to use more civilian police than soldiers but is hampered by a world shortage of trained, French-speaking officers.

The peacekeepers provide more than 80 percent of Haiti's security needs, but the government is working to eventually take over that responsibility. The national police academy is pumping out hundreds of recruits, trying to bolster the nation's small police force of 6,000.

“We don't foresee a return to banditry and criminality in the country,” said Alix Fils-Aime, one of Preval's top security advisers. “The criminals know that the balance of power has changed.”

While the improved climate has raised hopes Haiti may finally escape a long cycle of misery, officials say gangs, drug traffickers and chronic poverty still pose a threat and that U.N. troops will be needed at least until Preval's term ends in 2011.

Haiti, a former French colony of 8 million people, is still struggling to stand on its own after a 20th century marked by foreign occupations and a 29-year dictatorship by the Duvalier family. Efforts to build an effective police force are haunted by the specter of the Duvalier-era's bullying Tonton-Macoute security forces and armed gangs that emerged later to defend Aristide.

“We have to be reminded all the time that this is a very fragile state. To rebuild these institutions is going to take time,” Mulet said.

Aid groups say foreign assistance is only now reaching the poorest areas of Port-au-Prince because red tape and logistical problems have slowed delivery.

“Assistance is only starting to trickle into the capital, whose communes have still not perceived the start of a new era,” the International Crisis Group warned this month in a report.

When peacekeepers took over providing security from U.S. Marines in June 2004, Haiti was awash in street violence after the three-week revolt that toppled Aristide.

Preval, a populist champion of the poor who swept to power in 2006 elections, authorized peacekeepers to take a firm hand and warned gangs “to disarm or die” before a crackdown earlier this year that resulted in the arrest or killings of dozens of alleged gang members.

Mulet said that since the crackdown, most of the arrests and security operations carried out by U.N. troops have come from tips provided by people living in the poorest slums. But some people have resorted to vigilante justice, including an attack last week in which people in a rural town beat to death an accused rapist and murderer.

“They (residents) have lost the fear of the gangs, which has created another problem of lynching,” said Mulet, who has urged church leaders to condemn the practice.

## **A true story of violence and power in Haiti**

**By Wesley Morris**

**The Boston Globe**

**August 3, 2007**

In 2004, Haiti's president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and his Lavalas political party were under siege from anti-government rebels. Citizens were protesting in the streets. To help stave off insurgency, Aristide recruited armed gangs, which became known as the Chimères, from Port-au-Prince's Cité Soleil neighborhood, a vast slum the United Nations had called "the most dangerous place on earth."

Into the danger went the Danish director Asger Leth and his documentary crew. Looking for a story, Leth appears to have gotten a pile of good ones. He had amazing access not just to the Chimères but also the top of the rebel movement after it swept into power. But he's made a confusing mess of the findings, looking for humanity in the wrong places. The resulting film, "The Ghosts of Cité Soleil," gives us a full, blasting profile not of the people living among the warlords but of the warlords themselves, two of them, a pair of brothers near the top of the Chimères.

One is Haitian 2pac. The other is Bily. Leth includes quiet moments with Haitian 2pac telling the camera "You gotta have dreams." He seems high and incoherent. When he tells us he thinks the younger Bily could be president, the movie seems headed toward an interesting dichotomy, especially after we meet him. He's more thoughtful and articulate, explaining what drives an impoverished person to lead a thug's life. He says he and the rest of the Chimères leadership represent Cité Soleil's 300,000 or so residents. But they just seem to be two different kinds of dangerous.

For good moral measure, Leth introduces us to a French relief worker, who reads from her diary and works at one of the too few hospitals, making house calls and cleaning up gang messes. She has access to the two brothers and tries to keep them from typical gangland recriminations, but she seems to be fueling a feud between them. Yes, that's her partying it up with 2pac in one scene, in his bed the next, and telling Bily that, alas, she's sleeping with 2pac. So amid the political turmoil, there is also "Jerry Springer" melodrama.

The film is shot and edited in the staccato key of hip-hop video. 2pac and others rap to the camera, they blow clouds of smoke into the camera, they point their guns at the camera. They make bragging threats into the camera ("I'll eat you alive and no one will ever know," 2pac says). On the streets, when he drives by, speakers blaring, rifle in his lap, crowds form outside the car, some straining to get a look at the camera. They're certainly performing for him. The flattery appears to go both ways. The film speaks their language.

I've been arguing for a return to real style in non-fiction filmmaking but that seems put to misguided ends here: This is a movie the two brothers and their minions would be proud of. Eventually, you're forced to wonder what Leth's presence is bringing out of these gangstas. You also wonder if the camera is part of some ironic deal: They keep him safe. He makes them feel like they're starring in their own "City of God."

Wesley Morris can be reached at [wmorris@globe.com](mailto:wmorris@globe.com). For more on movies, go to [boston.com/movie](http://boston.com/movie) nation.

## **UN Secretary-General Arrives in Haiti**

**By VOA News**

**01 August 2007**

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is in Haiti to observe efforts by international peacekeepers to stabilize the nation, which has been ravaged by poverty and violence.

The U.N. chief arrived in the capital, Port-au-Prince, earlier Wednesday for talks with President Rene Preval and other officials on the country's progress.

Mr. Ban is expected to visit the headquarters of the U.N. Stabilization Mission (MINUSTAH) in the capital as he witnesses U.N. efforts to provide security and other assistance.

His agenda will include a visit to the slum of Cite Soleil, where the mission repaired a water tower, and a meeting with the neighborhood's mayor. Haiti is the first stop on a two-nation Caribbean tour that will take the secretary-general to Barbados as well.

Close to 9,000 U.N. peacekeepers arrived in Haiti in 2004, following a revolt that toppled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. They still provide most of the country's security needs while preparing domestic police forces to take over.

Haiti is the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.

**Security in Haiti improving**  
**Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, Barbados**  
**Wednesday, 08 August 2007**

The special U.N. envoy to Haiti, Edmund Mulet, has given a positive but guarded assessment of the security situation in Haiti.

Six people have been killed by lynch mobs this month, according to the U.N. mission's human rights section.

But Mr Mulet told the BBC that things were improving.

He said the country was now entire under the control of the local authorities, rather than marauding gangs.

More than 850 gang members had been arrested three of the four main gang leaders, Mr Mulet added.

The UN deployed more than 9,000 troops and policemen to Haiti in 2004.

Mr Mulet said: "For the last three and a half months, not one single shot has been fired against us for from us to anybody.

"Of course it is still fragile because the economic conditions are very dire."

Mr Mulet said emphasis was being placed on helping the Haitian government establish a minimum level of rule of law to encourage new investment, tourism and exiled Haitians to return.

The U.N. mandate in Haiti expires in October, but the Security Council is certain to renew it.