

HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: AUGUST 17 – 22, 2005

Perennial Haitian exodus widens

By Kathie Klarreich

Christian Science Monitor

August 23, 2005

MIAMI – Writing about Haiti as a failed state has become commonplace. Every few months a coup, an assassination, a political massacre shocks the sensibilities of news desks and editors and - for a nanosecond - Haiti makes the front page with rote descriptions of violence, poverty, and death. Then it drifts to the back page and out of consciousness.

Since the fall of the Duvalier family dictatorship in 1986, the pendulum has swung from bright moments of genuine hope to the dark despair of insecurity and instability. But today it appears to have stopped swinging. In spite of the 7,600 UN peacekeepers stationed there, more than 800 people (including 40 policemen) have died in street violence in the past year - 200 in June alone. And kidnappings for ransom - of men, women, and children, rich and poor alike - have become an almost daily event.

Because of the insecurity, once again an exodus is under way. This time it's not just the sad stream of boat people that spikes at moments of peak political or economic stress, nor is it the class of bourgeoisie that has always had the financial means to live abroad. It's the heart and soul of Haiti, the solid citizens who represent the last surviving foundations of civil stability who, despite past national traumas, vowed to stick it out in their homeland but are now packing their bags for the first time. It's the lower middle class (laborers) and the solid middle class (shopkeepers and entrepreneurs) - the people who had a genuine economic stake in Haiti's future. After years of being knocked down by the fall of one government and rising up to the promises of the next, these patriotic and loyal Haitians can no longer find a reason to be optimistic about that stake. These are the people jamming outgoing flights of airlines that fly in nearly empty to Port-au-Prince.

The most personal example I can offer is my Haitian husband, leader of one of Haiti's most popular street bands. For seven years he's shuttled back and forth from our home in Port-au-Prince to our home in Miami; but for the past two months, since narrowly escaping death after being sought by armed gunmen of a rival band who claimed he should have been more politically vocal, he's been shuttling back and forth across our living room, wondering if he can ever return to his old life, or play music with his band again.

Then there's my Haitian mechanic friend who recently went into debt to send his wife and three children to the US. He lives just south of the National Palace, an area known for bustling street activity and blaring music from buses. For the last four months he's not had a single client come to his garage, and the street remains eerily silent because of the rash of recent kidnappings.

A local street vendor of fried food I used to buy from was abducted this summer and then released for a ransom of \$100 - the equivalent of several month's of income for her. But an elementary-school-age child of friends of mine was kidnapped and only returned home after his middle-class family scraped

together every last dime they had and could borrow to pay the \$30,000 ransom. They also had to hand over their new SUV.

Those are just the happy endings: Not everyone returns unscathed, or alive.

A UNICEF dispatch denouncing the insecurity cited a case of an 11-year-old girl who, because her family was unable to pay a ransom, was blinded. And last month, the respected Haitian journalist and poet, Jacques Roche, was kidnapped and murdered - and his tongue was cut out. His assassination barely brushed the pages of the international newspapers.

Times are so critical that my two closest Haitian friends - middle-class people who I always thought of as part of Haiti's *poto mitan* (the center pole of the voodoo temples) are also seriously contemplating leaving Haiti for the first time in the turbulence of the past 20 years. One, who runs a small handicrafts business, has already been to the Dominican Republic scouting future employment possibilities. The other, a construction entrepreneur, is spending the summer in the safety of the US to figure out what his next step should be.

Many journalists have already left, as have aid workers. The Peace Corps has been sent home and the US, as well as Canada and France, has asked all non-essential personnel to leave.

The US policy mantra has always been that democratic elections will cure Haiti's ills - there have been nearly a dozen changes of government with only three democratic presidential elections since 1986. This fall, Haitians are to vote in local, legislative, and presidential elections. It's too soon to know if the electorate will participate or if they are registering only because the voter ID cards they receive will soon be mandatory for routine transactions. A change of governments will produce new figureheads and new headlines, but Haitians have less reason than ever to believe it will alleviate their poverty - some of the worst in the Western Hemisphere - or contribute to security and stability.

Haiti's only democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was forced to leave the country during both of his terms as president. His party, Family Lavalas, is probably the only party that has enough votes to win - but its partisans are accused of committing much of the violence strangling the nation. With chaos the norm, it's hard to say who in Haiti is ultimately responsible for the country's anarchy - or who could handle the responsibility of stabilizing the country.

But if and when Haitians go to the polls, they must do so with faith in the system and not in the supreme reign of an individual. Although they've never had reason to believe in the system, it's not too late to try to instill such a belief. It will take supreme faith, a cast of altruistic candidates, and an international community that promises to be there for the long haul. Unless that happens, the Haitian exodus is bound to swell and rob the country of the very people the nation needs for stability.

- Kathie Klarreich's new book - a memoir of her years covering Haiti for the Monitor and other news organizations - is 'Madame Dread: A Tale of Love, Vodou, and Civil Strife in Haiti.'

Bahamas Rejects Florida's Deportation Request For Jailed Haitian
The Bahama Journal
August 22, 2005

Florida press reports over the weekend said that an immigration judge has ordered that a West Palm Beach man born in The Bahamas to Haitian parents be deported to Haiti, a land he has reportedly never seen.

According to the Palm Beach Post, Steven Altidor, 24, moved to Palm Beach County with his family when he was four or five years old.

The young man reportedly beat another man and stole his wallet and also violated his probation.

The report says that the United States originally planned to deport him to The Bahamas, but that request was rejected given that Altidor does not have Bahamian citizenship because both his parents are Haitian.

Under Bahamian law, Altidor had the option of applying for citizenship when he turned 18, but Florida was said to be his only home.

The Palm Beach Post also reports that his parents worry that his deportation to Haiti would be a death sentence.

"I feel so bad," the man's father, Wilner Altidor, was quoted in the paper on Saturday as saying. "They say that they are going to send him to Haiti. But he does not know Haiti."

He also said that he would like to see his son deported to The Bahamas as opposed to Haiti.

The jailed man's father, according to the report, was ordained a Minister in The Bahamas and works at a West Palm Beach discount store.

His son was being held in a Florida detention centre until his appeal is decided, the Palm Beach Post said.

HAITI PROGRES
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*** THIS WEEK IN HAITI ***

August 10 - 16, 2005
Vol. 23, No. 22

LAVALAS FAMILY REGISTERS TO PARTICIPATE IN SHAM ELECTIONS

The Lavalas Family party (FL) of exiled President Jean Bertrand Aristide has registered to participate in Haiti's occupation-run nationwide elections scheduled for later this fall, much to the dismay of the party's popular base.

Former FL parliamentarians Rudy Hériveaux, Louis Gérard Gilles and Yvon Feuillé registered the party at the Port-au-Prince electoral headquarters on the afternoon of Aug. 8, the final day for parties to file. No deadline has yet been set for parties to name their candidates.

To date, Aristide has not personally repudiated the outspoken threesome for their entrance into the occupation elections on the party's behalf. For weeks preceding their registration, the three former parliamentarians repeatedly announced that they would run and claimed to be in touch with Aristide.

"We registered to participate in the election, which we will win, in order to end the political persecutions, arbitrary arrests and detentions and the summary executions our members and sympathizers have been subject to," Hériveaux told Reuters.

But most of the FL's "members and sympathizers" targeted by the de facto regime unequivocally reject any participation in the "selections," as they are called on the street, saying the Washington-promoted polling is just an attempt to consummate and legitimize the Feb. 29, 2004 coup in which U.S. Special Forces soldiers kidnapped and exiled Aristide. In past months, several high-level FL councils have also rejected participation in the occupation elections.

"There are many positions taken by the Lavalas Family, and that of Gilles, Hériveaux and Feuillé is one of the positions," said Ben Dupuy, secretary general of the National Popular Party (PPN), which along with several FL-affiliated popular organizations has called on the Haitian people to shun the elections and fingerprint-and-photo-bearing electoral cards. "We don't see how their participation in a farce will lead to the freedom of the political prisoners they claim to champion. The

leadership has not set the record clear. Nobody knows who is the real Lavalas. But it is clear that the grassroots, the base, has borne the brunt of the repression, and they stick to the position of demanding a return to constitutional rule and the physical return of President Aristide before any elections. The PPN stands with the victims of repression and not with politicians who are trying make a deal with the occupation forces."

Lavarice Gaudin, a leader of the Miami-based popular organization Veye Yo, also pointed to the FL's confusing conduct. "The problem is not really with Gilles, Feuillé and Hériveaux, who everyone knows are renegades," Gaudin said at the weekly Veye Yo meeting in Miami on Aug. 5. "The problem is the rest of the Lavalas leadership which tolerates them. Why are they still in the party? Why can they speak in its name? Is there no discipline? Even look at [former FL senator] Dany Toussaint, who openly called for Aristide's overthrow. He has never been expelled."

Since the coup, Haiti has been repressively and disastrously ruled by Washington-selected puppet technocrats and militarily occupied, first by the U.S., France and Canada (the coup's sponsors) and presently by the Brazilian-led United Nations Mission to Stabilize Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Even according to official figures, the vast majority of Haitians reject the coming elections. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP), whose figures many suspect are inflated, claim that, in the past three months, 1.5 million, scarcely 33%, of Haiti's 4.5 million eligible voters have registered to vote, despite a vigorous propaganda campaign to convince them. The population has instead heeded the rejectionist call of the PPN and Lavalas base.

"We will not fall into the trap of getting electoral cards, and we will not participate in the election/selections which the occupation forces and the de facto government of [President Boniface] Alexandre and [Prime Ministers Gérard] Latortue want to shove down the people's throat," declared the PPN's Georges Honorat in an Aug. 8 press conference in Port-au-Prince. He denounced the MINUSTAH's recent distribution of flyers around Haiti vilifying PPN for its stand against the sham elections. "The PPN has always clearly said that it will participate in elections when the conditions are right," Honorat said. "But today, we will not go to elections under an occupation." He called the upcoming polling a "mascarade" to put in place a "puppet president and parliament."

Meanwhile, the CEP said nationwide municipal elections scheduled for Oct. 9 would be postponed until late December. It also moved legislative and presidential elections forward from Nov. 13 to Nov. 6, and run-offs

from Dec. 18 to Dec. 11. Most election observers, and even CEP officials, doubt that this timetable can be kept. Voter registration was also extended one month until September 15.

The U.S. and European establishment's International Crisis Group (ICG) issued an Aug. 3 report which sounded an alarm that the planned elections were in deep trouble. "Massive technical, political and security obstacles must be overcome very quickly or Haiti's elections -- municipal and local in October, parliamentary and presidential in November -- will have to be postponed," the report opens. Calling Haiti a "failed state," the ICG acknowledged that occupation authorities might not be able to overcome the obstacles, in which case, "turnout is likely to be unsatisfactory, credibility of the outcome will suffer, and the government's legitimacy will be in question." The ICG even questioned whether the date targeted by the Bush administration for the new government's inauguration might not have to be pushed back.

"The constitutionally designated date of 7 February 2006, when the new president and parliament are to be sworn-in, could also be postponed if necessary," the ICG concluded. "In a country that is slipping every day towards permanent failed state status and whose constitution has been largely ignored for years, keeping a symbolic date must not be the first priority."

Among the other political parties which have registered for the elections are the National Reconstruction Front (FRN) of former "rebel" leader Guy Philippe, the ADEBAH of former justice minister Camille Leblanc, the MOCHRENA of right-wing Pastor Luc Mésadieu, the Haitian Christian Democratic Party (PDCH) de Marie Denise Claude, the MNP28 of Dejean Bélizaire, the social-democratic Fusion of Serge Gilles, the Great Center Right Front of former Duvalierist minister Hubert Deronceray, the Movement for National Reconstruction (MRN) of Dr. Jean Henold Buteau, the OLAH of former Duvalierist strongman Franck Romain. Even the de facto Prime Minister's nephew and security chief, Youri Latortue, has registered a contender: the Artibonite in Action party (LAA).

Assembly industry capitalist Charles Henri Baker, the number two of the former Washington-concocted "civil" opposition front "Group of 184," also announced he will run for president as an independent. He has placed ads on several of the capital's bourgeois stations soliciting the signatures of 100,000 supporters, which he must present to the CEP by Sep. 10. One wonders why, as the leader of "184 organizations," he has to resort to radio advertizing to collect the signatures.

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Aristide party threatens to boycott Haiti poll

22 Aug 2005

Reuters

By Joseph Guyler Delva

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Aug 22 (Reuters) - The party of ousted Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide said on Monday it would boycott elections later this year if a parish priest it views as its likely presidential candidate is not released from jail.

Gerald Gilles, a leader of a moderate faction of Haiti's leading opposition party, the Lavalas Family, said Father Gerard Jean-Juste was the most popular figure in the party. Jean-Juste was jailed a month ago by the interim Haitian government in connection with the murder of a journalist.

"After several consultations, the masses that we represent and the base of the party claim Father Jean-Juste as their presidential candidate. So he will be our candidate," Gilles told Reuters.

"We say loud and clear (that) we'll boycott the elections if Jean-Juste, and many other political prisoners that are potential candidates for our party, are not released."

Jean-Juste, a fiery orator who has also lived in the United States and is well known in Miami for defending Haitian immigrants' rights, has not indicated if he would run in the elections scheduled for later this year to restore democracy to the poor Caribbean country.

The priest has instead insisted that Aristide be allowed to return before Lavalas take part in the elections. Aristide, himself a former priest, was ousted in February 2004 after an armed revolt and amid accusations of corruption and despotism.

Haiti has been torn by continuing political and criminal violence since Aristide's ouster, despite the presence of more than 7,000 Brazilian-led U.N. troops and international police.

Jean-Juste was arrested on July 21 on allegations he had played a role in the kidnapping and the killing on July 14 of journalist Jacques Roche.

The priest has rejected the accusations and said he was in Miami when the crime was committed. Like other senior Lavalas figures who have been put in prison by the interim government of Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, Jean-Juste says the accusations are politically motivated.

Gilles and other leaders of a moderate wing of Lavalas angered many party supporters when they registered Lavalas for the elections, scheduled for November.

But party officials said they had made an effort to unify Lavalas and the decision by moderates to designate Jean-Juste as their likely presidential candidate was welcomed by more radical members. The United Nations has also urged Lavalas to participate in the election

Justice in Haiti

OUR OPINION: KEEPING POLITICAL FOES IN JAIL DISCREDITS INTERIM GOVERNMENT

Miami Herald

August 22, 2005

Haiti's interim government can't seem to get it right when it comes to keeping the bad guys in jail and dealing fairly with political opponents.

Earlier this month, in a news conference marking the end of his tour, U.S. Ambassador James Foley complained about the sudden release from jail of Louis-Jodel Chamblain, a notorious gunman and leader of the armed uprising that ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, even as former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune remains in jail without trial more than one year after his arrest.

"Imagine the tarnished image of Haiti today, with a Chamblain released and a former prime minister who continues to languish in jail," the departing ambassador declared.

Not content with this black eye, the government has made matters worse by arresting another vocal critic, Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, on charges that he was responsible for the death of journalist Jacques Roche in Haiti on July 15 even though Rev. Jean-Juste was reported to be in Miami on that day. He was arrested, said a local police official, because he aroused "public clamor" when he showed up at the funeral for Mr. Roche amid a sea of political foes who blamed him for the murder.

This was an unwise and provocative move by Rev. Jean-Juste, but that does not justify jailing him on trumped-up charges. Given the predicament of Mr. Neptune, it creates the appearance that the government of interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue is using false imprisonment as a way to silence political foes during the period leading up to elections this fall.

This does more than tarnish Haiti's image. It makes a mockery of the legal system and discredits the government. To keep these prominent opposition figures in jail during this vital period under dubious charges will call into question the validity of the government that emerges from elections. Better to allow the two men to regain their political freedom. The best way for the government to silence its critics is not to throw them in jail, but to admit that mistakes have been made, correct them and remove an issue that threatens to cast a permanent cloud on the upcoming elections.

**Violence escalates in Haiti as key election approaches
Pro-Aristide forces accused in the abduction and slaying of editor**

By GARY MARX

Chicago Tribune

OPPOSITION FIGURES IN JAIL

Houston Chronicle

August 20, 2005

Since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled Haiti amid a bloody uprising in February 2004, three of his major supporters — key leaders in the opposition — have been jailed.

- **The Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste:** Police say the Roman Catholic priest is tied to pro-Aristide gangs suspected in the murder of journalist Jacques Roche. Jean-Juste denies that he had had anything to do with Roche's death.
- **Former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune:** He has been jailed for more than a year. The government has accused him of orchestrating the killings of Aristide opponents during the rebellion in February 2004, allegations that he denies.
- **Former Interior Minister Jocelerme Privert:** He was arrested in April 2004, and also is accused of helping orchestrate the killings of Aristide opponents. Like Neptune, he says he is being singled out because he is a leader in Aristide's Lavalas Family party.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI - Renowned poet and journalist Jacques Roche was visiting his younger brother last month when gangs kidnapped him at gunpoint.

Roche's friends and colleagues quickly scraped together \$10,000 ransom. It was not enough to save his life.

Four days after he disappeared, Roche's body was found face up in the street, his arms handcuffed and chained behind his back.

Roche's slaying sent a shock wave through a country reeling from an epidemic of kidnappings that police, diplomats and others say is being carried out by armed supporters of exiled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to sow chaos as Haiti's U.S.-backed interim government prepares for elections in the fall.

A cultural editor

Roche, who was the cultural editor for the newspaper *Le Matin*, anchored a television program financed by a coalition of business leaders and others who fought to unseat Aristide. The television show apparently set him up as a very public enemy in the eyes of pro-Aristide militants.

"He was afraid, and he told me he was going to stop doing the television program," said Roche's 24-year-old fiance, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisal. "He felt his life was in danger."

The Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, a Roman Catholic priest and prominent Aristide supporter who has been jailed in connection with the crime, said government officials are trying to pin Roche's slaying on him to destroy the political opposition and sweep the elections.

"I had nothing to do with (Roche's death)," said Jean-Juste, 59, in an interview at Haiti's National Penitentiary. "They don't have any proof. I know that I am going to be exonerated."

Michael Lucius, inspector general of the Haitian National Police, said a gang leader known as Tou Tou, who remains at large, ordered Roche's execution.

Gang link cited

And while the police have turned up no evidence linking Jean-Juste to the abduction and killing, Lucius accused the priest of sharing responsibility for the crime, because he maintains ties to pro-Aristide gangs.

Jean-Juste rejected the accusation, saying pro-government politicians are exploiting Roche's death for "political mileage."

"I have always denounced violence," he said.

Jean-Juste rejected the accusation, saying pro-government politicians are exploiting Roche's death for "political mileage."

A longtime Miami resident and advocate for Haitian immigrants in the United States, Jean-Juste is the third major opposition figure to be jailed since Aristide fled Haiti in 2004 in the face of an armed rebellion and U.S. diplomatic pressure.

Former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and former Interior Minister Jocelerme Privert have been in custody for months while a judge investigates whether there is evidence to charge them in connection with killings in the city of St. Marc.

The two former Aristide government officials deny involvement and, like Jean-Juste, say they are being singled out because they are leaders in Aristide's Lavalas Family party.

The outcome of the Roche investigation and the case involving Neptune and Privert are likely to have profound implications for Haiti's future as a 7,600-strong U.N. peacekeeping force struggles to regain control of a nation racked by poverty and violence.

Lavalas leaders remain divided over whether to participate in the elections, with Jean-Juste and other hard-liners favoring a boycott unless Aristide is returned to power and political prisoners are released.

PRIEST CALLED `A PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE'

Human rights advocates and U.S. officials are demanding the release of former Miamian Gérard Jean-Juste from a Haitian jail.

BY JACQUELINE CHARLES

Miami Herald

August 20, 2005

Former Miami activist Gérard Jean-Juste has become the focus of a strong letter-writing campaign urging his release from a Haitian jail and calling him a political prisoner.

A Catholic priest who led the most powerful Haitian rights group in the country, Jean-Juste was arrested last month for investigation in the murder of a journalist, but no formal charges have been filed.

He has been one of the staunchest critics of Haiti's U.S.-backed interim government, accusing authorities of human rights abuses against supporters of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and Washington of racist policies.

Aristide's supporters allege that more than 700 of their brethren have been jailed for political reasons. They include former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and Annette Auguste, a 70-year-old Haitian grandmother and popular singer known as S6 Ann.

Twenty-nine members of the U.S. Congress plus thousands of supporters from 42 countries and 10 U.S. states have sent letters to the U.S. and Haitian governments demanding his release from a Port-au-Prince jail.

'TRUMPED UP' CHARGES

Amnesty International has said the charges against Jean-Juste are "trumped up" and it has called him a "prisoner of conscience," a classification usually reserved for the victims of the worst abuses.

"Father Jean-Juste is an advocate for human rights in Haiti, and his arrest is part of a long-standing attempt to silence him for his criticism of the Haitian government," said Archi Pyati of Human Rights First, a lawyers advocacy group based in New York. The group's campaign triggered 1,351 letters to the Haitian government, Pyati said.

In Miami, where Jean-Juste's supporters have held a candlelit prayer vigil in Little Haiti and protests outside the Haitian consulate, many Haitians remember him as head of the now defunct Haitian Refugee Center, which helped thousands of Haitians obtain legal residency status. Jean-Juste served as director of the center from the early 1980s until 1991, when he resigned to move back to Haiti to work for the Aristide government.

He remains one of the few Haitian leaders who can draw a crowd in Little Haiti, and hundreds of Haitians clamored to touch his face at a rally he appeared at in December, just days after he was released from his first stay in a Haitian jail.

"I know that Father Jean-Juste is being persecuted for what I don't know," said Farah Juste, a Miami community activist. ``He's fighting for the cause of the masses"

In a letter dictated from jail to his U.S. lawyer, a defiant Jean-Juste said he had collapsed from unknown causes on Sunday but pressed his demands:

`JOINING MY VOICE'

"Regardless of all the hardship, I am still joining my voice to the voices of all democracy lovers to demand the return of constitutional order in Haiti, the physical return of our elected president Aristide, release of all political prisoners, respect of all human rights," he wrote.

But while Jean-Juste's demands for the return of Aristide may have ruffled the Haitian government's feathers, supporters say he has become even more of a problem amid increasing talk that he might run for the presidency in elections scheduled for Nov. 6.

"They do not want him out [of jail] because he could potentially register as a candidate for president and easily win if he has the support of Aristide," said Ira Kurzban, a Miami lawyer who has known Jean-Juste for 27 years and worked for the Aristide government.

Jean-Juste has denied any interest in being a candidate, saying he wants to maintain his devotion to his church and to Haiti's poor. Aristide also was a Catholic priest, but left his order to pursue politics.

Jean-Juste was arrested July 21 after a mob attacked him during the funeral of Jacques Roche, a journalist who was kidnapped and murdered.

The priest said he went to the funeral to show his respect and that he and Roche were related.

But the mob, which accused Aristide supporters of killing Roche, chased and threatened Jean-Juste.

"They don't have anything as evidence or a charge," said his Port-au-Prince attorney, Mario Joseph. He filed a motion seeking Jean-Juste's release while the investigation is completed, but the judge has not yet replied.

Jean-Juste was first arrested by the post-Aristide government in October for suspicion of inciting violence and hiding pro-Aristide gunmen. He spent 48 days in jail but was not charged.

QUESTIONED BY POLICE

The week before his latest arrest, police stopped and questioned him for several hours after he arrived at the Port-au-Prince airport on a flight from Miami. Days earlier, Aristide critics had accused Jean-Juste of handling some of the former president's money.

Supporters credit his aggressive activism with halting U.S. government attempts to deport Haitians who had illegally migrated to South Florida.

"He's responsible for [Miami] having a Haitian community," Kurzban said. ``It was through his leadership and his creation of the Haitian Refugee Center and working with us on the legal work and organizing people politically that [he] stopped the deportations. It was the initiation and the creation of the Haitian community here."

Peacekeeping mission in Haiti says armed groups have gone underground
UN News Centre
August 22, 2005

22 August 2005 – Although the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Haiti no longer needs to patrol in armoured vehicles, it says the armed groups it has been battling in the shantytowns of the capital have gone underground and the police must work most closely with intelligence services, a senior military official said.

In a radio interview, Lieutenant Colonel André Luis Novaes Miranda of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) said operations in the Caribbean country have moved to a new phase.

“The armed groups now function in a clandestine fashion. We wish therefore to open the way to the National Police and the CivPol (mission civilian police) which must penetrate these areas to continue the work that we have already started with regard to the return to order and security,” he said.

The people living in the troubled districts have begun to give the mission a positive response, and no shots have been heard in these areas, even though the bandits of Delmas and Bel-Air are still armed. “Nonetheless, the group led by ‘General Toutou’ continues to resist,” he said.

Meanwhile, addressing a two-day Santiago seminar for MINUSTAH troop-contributing countries in Chile entitled “Chile, regional security and the future of Haiti,” mission chief Juan Gabriel Valdés, a former Chilean ambassador, stressed “the importance and the historical value of the joint presence of Latin American armies in a peacekeeping mission to aid a country in the same region.”

Organization of American States (OAS) Secretary-General José Miguel Insulzae and MINUSTAH Force Commander General Augusto Heleno Ribeiro Pereira joined the Foreign Affairs and Defence deputy ministers from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru and Uruguay at the meeting. The deputy ministers re-affirmed their commitment to the mission said the efforts now being made should be maintained.

But Chilean Foreign Minister Ignacio Walker, said the efforts to stabilize Haiti after civil strife have been positive yet inadequate. “To arrive at a more significant success in Haiti needs additional efforts, as well as greater financial and human resources,” he said.

After an insurgency that forced elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to go into exile in February 2004, MINUSTAH has spent more than a year trying to re-establish order in the Caribbean country. In early regional cooperation, Haiti responded to an 1815 appeal from South American "Liberator" Simon Bolivar by donating supplies and men for the independence struggle that freed Bolivia, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela

Chile urges more int'l efforts to solve Haitian crisis
China View
August 20, 2005

SANTIAGO, Aug. 19 (Xinhuanet) -- Chilean Foreign Minister Ignacio Walker Friday called for more international efforts to solve the crisis in the war-torn Haiti.

The Haitian crisis spreads all over political, economic and social fields, therefore the task of the United Nations "cannot belimited simply to the military aspect," Walker told a minister-level meeting of Latin American countries which participated in UN stabilization mission (Minustah).

The international society should make more efforts and increase financial aid to help maintain Haiti's situation despite "undeniable" achievements by the UN mission, said Walker.

He also warned there are more difficulties ahead for the UN stabilization mission, to which Chile contributes some 600 troops and police.

Jose Miguel Insulza, secretary-general of the Organization of American States (OAS), and representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, Ecuador and Guatemala and international organizations, participated in the meeting.

Explosions, kidnappings, assassinations and robberies have worsened the situation in Haiti despite the upcoming general elections. The most severe unrest comes from the bastions of supporters of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has planned to increase the UN troops in Haiti from 7,600 to over 9,000.

CEO seeks new job: the president of Haiti

BY JACQUELINE CHARLES

Knight Ridder Newspapers

San Luis Obispo Tribune

August 22, 2005

MIAMI - (KRT) - The walls of Haitian-American entrepreneur Dumarsais "Dumas" Simeus' office bear witness to his success - proud photos, awards and magazine covers recognizing his \$100 million food empire in this rapidly growing city in the Lone Star State.

His humble roots are here, too: a framed photograph of a two-room shack with an aluminum roof in the village of Pont-Sonde, Haiti, where he was born 65 years ago.

Those roots have inspired Simeus, one of the nation's top black businessmen and a member of Florida Gov. Jeb Bush's Haiti Task Force, to take on the greatest challenge of his life: seeking the presidency of Haiti.

Simeus, whose first introduction to the United States was as a student at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, declared his candidacy Wednesday, standing in front of that childhood home in Haiti. He says he brings more than just love of his country, where his parents still live. He brings the business savvy of a maverick CEO.

Haiti is "a country of 8 million customers that's into bankruptcy. And you need a professional leader, a professional executive to come and get the country out of bankruptcy," Simeus said in a recent interview in his second-floor office at Simeus Foods International, a food manufacturing company whose customers include Denny's, T.G.I. Friday's and Burger King.

Critics say the world in which Simeus has succeeded is very different from the one he wants to take over.

"It's impossible for someone from the diaspora to maneuver through the political land mines in Haiti," said Marie Florence Bell, chairwoman of Bush's task force, who is among a small group of South Florida Haitian Americans who have been hosting informal "get to know you" sessions with Haiti's presidential candidates in recent months.

"The rules of engagement (in Haiti) are completely different; it's a mind-boggling, complex, multilayered society," she said.

Bell and others say that while they respect Simeus' accomplishments, he should take note of the last Haitian who tried but failed to stabilize an impoverished and volatile Haiti: longtime South Florida resident and current interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue.

"After seeing what Gerard Latortue has done to the country, I would rather have someone be president of Haiti who has lived in Haiti for the past five years and knows what is going on," said Charles-Henri Baker, a leading opponent of former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide who intends to run for president as an independent.

Simeus said the Haitian people have misunderstood why Latortue has failed.

"It's not the fact that he's been in the diaspora," said Simeus, a father of three. "It's the fact that Latortue is not a proven leader, a proven executive. He's never had to manage and run complex organizations. That is the only reason why he has not delivered."

Simeus faces enormous challenges before Haiti's Nov. 6 presidential election. He must get 100,000 signatures by Sept. 10 as an independent to qualify for the ballot. And he must energize a disenchanted electorate while staving off attempts by Haiti's political class to derail his presidential bid.

Many Haitian politicians have been waiting in the wings since the fall of former Haitian dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier in 1986 and Aristide's departure last year.

They argue Simeus can't be president because he has lived abroad for the past 44 years.

Article 135 of the Haitian Constitution states a presidential candidate must "be a native-born Haitian and never have renounced Haitian nationality," and have resided in the country for five consecutive years before the election.

Simeus said he has never renounced his Haitian citizenship despite being a U.S. citizen. And he argues that constitutional requirements don't apply in any case, claiming Haiti has been operating outside of the constitution since Aristide's ouster in 2004.

His attorneys have been working the phones, trying to overcome the perceived legal obstacles.

The story of how the son of an uneducated farmer and a merchant woman became a successful American businessman is about never losing sight of the dream.

Like many Haitian youngsters, Dumarsais Simeus stood on the docks of St. Marc, near his hometown, and dreamed about going where the boats were coming from.

His parents sold a plot of land to help him buy a plane ticket to attend college in the United States. He first enrolled at Florida A&M University before eventually graduating from Howard University in Washington with a degree in electrical engineering. Later he earned an MBA from the University of Chicago.

He eventually landed a job with TLC Beatrice Foods International, where he developed a reputation for being a taskmaster and "fixing what's broken."

He honed his business savvy as president and chief operating officer at Beatrice, the largest black-owned company in the nation.

His firm, which he bought in 1996 with a \$55 million loan, is today Texas' largest black-owned company and the largest black-owned food processing plant in the country, according to Black Enterprise magazine. Through it all, Simeus kept in close touch with his homeland.

Though he brought 40 relatives to the United States, including 16 siblings, a foundation bearing his name provides healthcare, food, clothing and education to residents of Haiti's breadbasket, the Artibonite Valley.

"The bottom line is he is a native son of Haiti, clearly born and raised in Haiti, went out in the world to make a success and he has kept constant connection with Haiti," said Rob Allyn, the Dallas-based GOP political strategist hired by Simeus.

The firm has helped engineer victories for candidates in the Bahamas, Indonesia and Mexico, as well as for the George W. Bush gubernatorial campaign in Texas.

"Anyone would agree that Dumas Simeus has never forgotten where he came from," Allyn added.

Simeus' political platform includes making it easier for companies to invest in Haiti, promoting jobs, and rooting out corruption by making government accountable.

Whether Simeus succeeds, his critics and supporters agree: He is an inspiration.

"I want to create a Haiti where people are proud to stay because there are opportunities," he said. "I want a Haiti where there is access to capital for the average guy, for the poor guy who was born in a hut like I was born in."

Texan seeks change for his native Haiti

Friday, August 19, 2005

By BRAD HAWKINS / WFAA-TV (Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas News)

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — The streets are jammed with far more people than cars.

7,000 United Nations peacekeepers now circulate through the capital of this Caribbean nation, where just two months ago kidnappings and murders went hardly noticed.

Alan McKenzie / WFAA-TV

Dumas Siméus speaks to an enthusiastic crowd in Haiti during his quest to become president of his native land. Four hours northwest of Port-au-Prince, 65-year-old Texan Dumas Siméus has come home to the village of Pont Sonde. He came to tell them that he, a father of three, wants to be their next president - and transform his native land.

Siméus, who founded a multi-million-dollar food industry giant in North Texas, said the hunger for responsible leadership in Haiti called him from his mansion outside Mansfield back to the village where he began an inspirational life.

"My dream is create a Haiti where our brothers and sisters are proud to say they are Haitians," said Siméus. "(A place) where they can work, where they can feel they are part of society."

Haitians are indeed gearing up for a new government. It's been 18 months since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide left the country in a violent coup - and the gang violence, kidnappings and crime haven't stopped since.

The unrest is threatening a planned Presidential election in early November. And you don't have to speak Creole to hear Siméus' hope - or know the citizens' desperation.

Most Caribbean countries make the news during hurricanes, but in Haiti the most destructive storms have been manmade - a turbulent two centuries with winds fueled by unbelievable hunger. The lack of food is only worse in Somalia and Afghanistan, other countries where the governments have vanished into lawlessness.

So how does one go about fixing such a situation?

"It's very, very difficult ... it's broken, Siméus said. "We have to start somewhere."

Siméus started a life of great success in a concrete closet of a house.

"This is my home," he said, looking around the tiny abode with history in his eyes. "This is where my mom was in labor, and that's where I was born; they cut my umbilical cord, dug a hole and put it right there."

His drive took him to the United States, to Howard University and then the University of Chicago. He quickly developed a global resume, leading companies across the continents before starting his own.

Siméus Foods International in Mansfield is the largest black-owned food processing business in the U.S. The multi-million-dollar company produces everything from the breakfast sausage served at Denny's to the supertime soups of Quizno's Subs.

The Siméus Foundation has pumped millions back to Haiti for medical care and water treatment. They know and love him in his homeland, and he said he has no worries when stuck in one of the massive crowds that often crowd streets in Haiti's capital.

"I feel that the people really love someone who they believe loves them," Simeus said. "We really have a peaceful Haiti; Haiti is a very peaceful country. Unfortunately, we have a few gangs."

He faces great obstacles in his quest. This friend to Washington has been a U.S. citizen for 45 years, has no party and faces a constitutional ban on non-Haitians running for president.

Still, he perseveres.

"No one could kill that dream, my friend, because it had roots right here in Pont Sonde," he said. "My parents kept watering (those roots) so that the tree of the dream could bloom in the United States, could come back and help enrich other lives here in Haiti."

For Dumas Siméus, hope hangs on the next wave of change.

E-mail bhawkins@wfaa.com

Shock wave from Haiti

Ste. Adele comes to grips with news of resident slain in apparent kidnapping

JOEL KOM

The Montreal Gazette

August 21, 2005

Residents of this small Laurentian community were still learning yesterday about the killing of one of their own, more than 3,000 kilometres away.

Most hadn't heard about the Friday shooting of Denis Therrien, who was killed in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince when he tried to escape would-be kidnappers.

Even if the news had reached them here, about 60 kilometres northwest of Montreal, some were still surprised yesterday to learn Therrien had made his home among them.

"I knew there was someone killed, but I didn't know he was from here," said Andre Vachon as he munched on french fries at a grill a few blocks from Therrien's apartment. "It's a sad thing to be at the wrong place at the wrong time."

A Haitian newspaper quoted witnesses as saying Therrien had been killed after being kidnapped or having been caught up in a hostage-taking.

Reports said Therrien, who was working at a metal recycling factory in Port-au-Prince, was confronted while taking a shortcut to work through an area that hadn't been secured by the United Nations.

His body was recovered a few hours after his escape attempt, reports said.

Therrien's home, one of about 20 apartments in a modest, brown-brick, four-storey building overlooking the town's main street, was quiet yesterday.

Jacques Campeau, the building's landlord, said Therrien and his wife - who refused interview requests - had shared the apartment for two years. Their car, a black two-door Chevrolet Cavalier, sat in their allotted parking spot, while neighbours said they didn't really know the couple at all.

Campeau said he talked with Therrien the day before his Wednesday flight back to Haiti. Therrien had just finished his three-week vacation here after being in Haiti for almost a year.

Therrien and his wife didn't mingle much with neighbours, Campeau said, adding that he believes she's a waitress.

"They were quiet, kept to themselves," he said. "Mostly it was just (my wife and I) who they talked with a bit."

The building's janitor, who didn't want his name used, said Therrien didn't show any reservations about returning when they talked last week.

However, reports said Therrien was questioning whether to return because of security concerns. "We talked a bit," said the janitor, who described Therrien as a "bon vivant" in his 50s and standing about 5 feet, 5 inches and sporting short blond hair. "I asked him if he'd be going back, and he just said 'Yes.' "

Neither Campeau nor the janitor knew of any family in the area. Dan McTeague, who deals with Canadians in trouble abroad as the parliamentary secretary for Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew, said the family had requested no information be made public other than the confirmation that it was Therrien who was killed.

McTeague repeated warnings that Canadians should not travel to Haiti unless it is absolutely essential.

As many as 1,500 Canadians are estimated to be in Haiti and registered with the federal government for everything from jobs to aid work to tourism, although McTeague said the number is slightly outdated.

Therrien is the second Quebecer to be a kidnapping target in Haiti in a little more than two months.

Huguette Goulet, 65 and a Montreal native, was kidnapped in Port-au-Prince in mid-June while there to run an Internet and long-distance phone service. A \$300,000 ransom was reported to have been demanded, and Goulet was released about four days later in good health.

Haiti has been in turmoil since February 2004 when president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was driven out in a coup. UN peacekeepers have been trying to maintain order, but violence and kidnappings are commonplace. Last week, UN officials decried the lynching of at least 15 people in Port-au-Prince's slums by gangs wielding machetes.

Canadian killed in Haiti fleeing from kidnappers
19 Aug 2005
CBC News

Le Journal de Montreal newspaper reported Saturday that the body of Denis Therrien was found a couple of hours after he was shot to death while trying to flee several men in Haiti.

Therrien -- in his 50s -- was from Ste-Adele, Que.

He had worked in metal recycling in Port-au-Prince since September 2004, when hurricanes ravaged the Caribbean island.

Therrien had just returned to Haiti on Wednesday following a three-week vacation in Quebec.

The killing took place after he left his home Friday morning on his way to work.

Therrien apparently took a shortcut through an area of the city called Aristide Park, instead of using a safer route used by United Nations forces.

Several men ambushed him in a kidnapping attempt. He was shot as he ran from the scene.

Two weeks ago, Therrien met with representatives of the Montreal newspaper to discuss his concerns about the safety of daily life in the Haitian capital. He was questioning whether to renew his contract with his employer. He claimed to have been involved in three incidents since the spring.

MP Dan McTeague, parliamentary secretary for Canadians abroad, said Ottawa's embassy in Port-au-Prince is working closely with the employer and family members to provide consular services.

Canada has advised citizens against travel to the impoverished and violence-torn Caribbean country.

The government has urged those already there to leave unless their presence is considered essential.

Canada's governor general the pride of Haitian community
AP , MONTREAL
Monday, Aug 22, 2005
Taipei Times, Taiwan

More than a month before she officially takes the title of governor general of Canada, a descendant of slaves and child of political exiles from one of the world's poorest countries is already the pride of Canada's Haitian community.

Michaëlle Jean, a Quebec-based journalist and documentary filmmaker whose family fled dictatorship in Haiti when she was a child, is set to become Canada's first black vice-regal, and at age 48, one of its youngest when she is sworn in on Sept. 27.

Though mostly ceremonial, the post carries great prestige. It's one of the oldest institutions in Canada, representing its official head of state, the Queen of England, while promoting Canadian sovereignty and national identity at home and abroad.

Rising up

"We're always at the bottom, whether it's the violence and corruption back home or the gangs in Montreal," said Haitian Marie-Michele Comeau. "When someone's made it to the top, everybody gets very excited."

But while Haitians are rejoicing in Quebec -- the French-speaking province that is now home to 100,000 immigrants or descendants of the Caribbean island -- others are painting Jean as a former supporter of Quebec independence who doesn't deserve to represent Canada.

Still others have claimed the stunning black woman is a token and a pawn, picked by Prime Minister Paul Martin to boost the slipping support of federalism and his Liberal Party in Quebec.

The allegations have tempered the joy among the Haitian community.

"In the 30 years I have been in Quebec, I have never felt such a swell of pride as a Quebecer, followed by such disappointment among the Haitian population -- a disappointment that could well turn to anger," wrote Haitian-born author Dany Laferriere in the op-ed pages of La Presse newspaper.

The heated charges against Jean -- who holds dual Canadian and French citizenship and speaks five languages -- were launched by a nationalist publication that claimed she and her husband were once known in Quebec cultural circles as sovereignists.

Quebec issue

Others pointed to a 1991 documentary produced by her husband, Jean-Daniel Lafond, in which Jean joined a group of well-known separatists in a toast to independence. It wasn't clear whether she meant the independence of Quebec or of the French Caribbean island of Martinique. The film was an

exploration of the life of Aime Cesaire, a Martinique poet and legislator, and his influence on the Quebec independence movement.

The Quebec separatist movement, an extremely sensitive issue in Canadian politics, can make or break politicians and contribute to the downfall of a government.

Though Quebecois narrowly defeated the last independence referendum in 1995, recent polls have indicated that if another poll were held today, Quebecers might vote in favor of some sort of autonomy within Canada.

Jean remained quiet about the ordeal until Wednesday, when she released a short statement that confirmed her commitment to Canadian federalism and denied belonging to any political party or the separatist movement.

"I am deeply touched and wish to thank all those who have so warmly greeted the news of my recent nomination to the office of Governor General of Canada," she said. "Others have questioned my attachment to Canada and that of my husband, Jean-Daniel Lafond.

"I want to tell you unequivocally that both he and I are proud to be Canadians and that we have the greatest respect for the institutions of our country. We are fully committed to Canada. I would not have accepted this position otherwise."

Jean noted her roots when she was introduced as the country's 27th governor general.

"I have come a long way," she said. "My ancestors were slaves, they fought for freedom. I was born in Haiti, the poorest country in our hemisphere. I am a daughter of exiles driven from their home by a dictatorial regime."

Soon Haitian children will have a hospital of their own
WDC Media Public Relations Firm
August 21, 2005

(PRLEAP.COM) (Los Angeles)—“Soon Haitian children will have a hospital of their own thanks to Jan Crouch and Smile of a Child,” declared Haiti’s Prime Minister, Gerard Latortue, during a recent interview.

Haiti, which is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, loses three out of its twenty children every year—many before their fifth birthday. This has been widely attributed to Haiti’s extreme poverty and the overwhelming need for medical care particularly in remote villages.

Enter Smile of a Child (SOC) the not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable origination founded by Jan Crouch in 1994.

The new Smile of Child hospital will feature a fully integrated 100 bed medical facility with an around-the-clock emergency room and totally functional surgical unit. The hospital also plans to provide out-patient medical services for Haitians of all ages, reports a SOC medical official.

“Smile of a Child is here to serve Haiti. We love Haiti. We love its people!” announced Jan Crouch at a press conference in Haiti.

Almost completed, the hospital will spell the difference between life and death for many Haitians. With a population of over 8 million people, Haiti experiences a severe lack of physicians.

Assisting Smile of a Child Hospital is Franklin Graham, President of Samaritan’s Purse and President and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Samaritan’s Purse, a nondenominational evangelical Christian charitable organization, has already agreed to donate all furnishings for the hospital.

“I guess I had never seen such poverty in my whole life,” reflected Jan Crouch upon her first visit to Haiti in the mid-80s. “When I saw utterly poor children — diseased, crippled, naked, and most of all pathetically hungry boys and girls — playing in gutters in the filthiest water I had ever seen, it was beyond comprehension.”

“There they were jumping up and down and slugging through gutters. My heart broke into a million pieces. I just knew immediately that something had to be done.”

What initially began as a humanitarian feeding mission and toy drive for Haitian children has now exploded into a global outreach mission. Today, Smile of a Child improves the lives of tens of thousands of needy youngsters worldwide.

“Many of the children had never owned a new toy,” says Crouch. “To see their faces light up when they receive a doll or new truck cannot be expressed in mere words — it’s priceless.”

It was on "Praise the Lord," TBN's flagship production, that Haiti's Prime Minister expressed his appreciation on behalf of his country. He publicly thanked Jan Crouch and SOC for their sacrificial work in investing in the future of Haiti's children. Joining the Prime Minister on the program were his cabinet members. They too shared their gratitude for Smile of a Child's compassionate outreach.

Then the Prime Minister, in a powerful appeal, called upon the international Christian community to come to the aid of Haiti. A global audience was challenged to help Haiti acquire ambulances and fire engines!

"Call your Mayor. Ask your local Fire Chief. Haiti can utilize your unused emergency vehicles to save lives. What may be outdated and below your nation's standard, Haiti can use!" said the Prime Minister.

Jan Crouch smiled and then replied to Latortue: "By this time tomorrow, Mr. Prime Minister, Grandmas around the world will be on the phones and hard at work getting Haiti what it needs. It is a joy to help the Haitian people. God loves Haiti and so do we."

This too has come to pass. Haiti now has several used but perfectly useful ambulances and fire engines thanks to the efforts of SOC and TBN viewers who responded to the need.

In addition to the hospital, SOC has teamed up with Friend Ships (www.friendships.org), a relief organization that provides large scale humanitarian aid and establishes development programs for people lacking essential human needs.

Friend Ships was involved with the actual delivery of the needed supplies. According to Friend Ships, SOC and TBN sent thousands of tons of emergency vehicles, hospital beds, hospital furniture, medical equipment, food, drinking water, clothes, teacher desks, clothing, bedding, and sanitation supplies.

Bay Area teacher describes Haiti visit

San Leandro resident goes to impoverished nation to see conditions afflicting the poor

By Tasha Bartholomew

The Argus, CA

August 21, 2005

SAN LEANDRO — On his first day in Port-au-Prince nearly three weeks ago, humanitarian Doug Spalding was greeted by the sounds of gunfire and chaos.

Spalding, a San Leandro resident and San Lorenzo high school science teacher, spent 10 days of his summer vacation traveling Haiti with a small delegation from St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in El Cerrito.

But this was no ordinary vacation.

Spalding and the group, who have sister parish ties in Haiti, went there to bear witness to the people who face the guns of their own police force and those of United Nations troops, who were sent to the country — in principle — to insure their safety.

"The police and U.N. go to the neighborhoods with some objective, and it basically becomes a shooting gallery," Spalding said.

Imagine homes and churches sprayed with machine-gun bullets, and living conditions so bad in some areas that not even the worst of U.S. ghettos could compare.

"It's just really distressing, but it fits a pattern to eliminate the Lavalas (lower class)," he said.

Spalding, who has visited the country three times, said Haiti has had a long history of political and social unrest, dating back to the 18th century. He said the nation's people are fighting a one-sided war, and the one thing that's fueling it is intense hatred between the upper and lower (Lavalas) class. In time, Spalding said, there is potential for a genocide in Haiti, much like the one in Rwanda in 1994.

Another battle is over whether Haiti can hold elections later this fall.

Violence broke out in Haiti early last year when gunmen began taking over the island, calling for the resignation of then-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who fled the country in February 2004.

If technical, political and security obstacles aren't overcome soon, Haiti's elections — municipal and local in October, and parliamentary and presidential in November — could be put on hold.

While in Haiti, Spalding witnessed a voter-registration

drive; he said currently there are about 700,000 registered voters out of a possible 5 million.

When asked if he ever felt unsafe or threatened in Haiti, Spalding said no because "blancs," or whites, seem to have more privileges than darker people who live there.

He said what did "creep" him out was the head prison guard at National Penitentiary, who looked like Mike Tyson and sounded like Robert De Niro. Spalding said the guard tried to intimidate his delegation when the group visited the prison.

Spalding said the prison itself is packed with more than 1,300 prisoners living in awful conditions.

An 8-by-10-foot cell, which should hold one or two persons, houses about 24 men. The prisoners tend to sleep in shifts on a cardboard mat or the floor, since there are no beds, and are subjected to grimy conditions, such as dirt, blood, urine and feces because there are no toilets in the cells.

Spalding said, unfortunately, most of the prisoners aren't told why they're there, with little to no hope of a trial.

While Spalding knows most people in the United States don't necessarily have Haiti on their radar, he believes that if enough American citizens call or write to their state and national officials, some change could happen.

"For me, it's important to bring back information and give a voice to the Haitian people by telling their stories and showing their pictures," said the Royal Sunset Continuation High School teacher. "I'm already thinking that I may go back during the Christmas break."

Tasha Bartholomew covers the city of San Leandro and Ashland. Call her at (510) 293-2471.

Doctor to send medical supplies to Haiti

DANIEL DREW

The Connecticut Post Online

August 21, 2005

MONROE — Medical relief is on the way to Haiti, thanks to the tireless efforts of a former town resident who is a native of the impoverished Caribbean island.

Maxime Coles, an orthopedic surgeon, for months collected medical supplies and solicited donations from doctors in the region. Last year, he bought a truck to help transport the supplies to Haiti. Coles said helping his countrymen has affected him deeply.

"It makes you want to cry," he said of the poverty and suffering in his native land.

Haiti is often unsettled by political strife, and many of its residents are malnourished and have almost no access to medical care.

"Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere," Coles said. "We have the poorest conditions and it's getting worse and worse with all of the political problems we're having now."

Insufficient funds kept the truck of medical supplies stranded in the United States as Coles, who recently moved to Coffeyville, Kan., tried to raise enough money to ship it.

The doctor tired of having the truck's \$1.5 million worth of supplies sit unused in Connecticut, so he has paid \$4,800 himself to ship the trailer to Port-au-Prince.

But his out-of-pocket costs have not ended there.

Someone broke into the truck in a Bridgeport lot three weeks ago. The burglar failed to gain access to the supplies, but caused \$800 worth of damage by smashing the windshield. And the truck's battery and alternator needed replacement because it sat idle for so long. Parts and labor totaled \$670, according to Louis-Marc Lazarre, a Coles family friend and Stratford resident who is arranging shipping.

To get the truck to its departure

port in Staten Island, N.Y. Coles has had to register it with dealer's license plates, which could cost up to \$500, and hire someone licensed to drive it to Staten Island.

The truck, which will depart for New York this weekend, could sit at the port for up to a month. Port officials must wait for a ship of appropriate size to depart for St. Marc, a town on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince.

Then, Coles must pay \$3,500 to process the truck through Haitian customs.

Once the truck is in Haiti, it will be driven to Port-au-Prince's General Hospital. A doctor will be waiting there for it.

The truck could not be shipped to the capital city because many freighters don't go there.

Coles "has done all that out of his pocket because he feels the country is in need of such things," Lazarre said. "He started his medical career there, and would like to see things get better."

Shipping is difficult because Haiti does not have a good port system, according to Lazarre.

"If he didn't know me, he could not get this done," Lazarre said, explaining a detailed knowledge of the nation's shipping is needed to arrange transport.

Coles and Lazarre will travel to Haiti to ensure that all the supplies reach their intended owners.

"We're going to continue doing it and hopefully we'll make a difference," Lazarre said.

Daniel Drew, who covers Monroe and Easton, can be reached at 330-6470

U.N. condemns 'lynching' in Haiti

By Joseph Guyler Delva

Source: Reuters Foundation

Date: 18 Aug 2005

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (Reuters) - A spokesman for the U.N. mission in Haiti condemned on Thursday what he called the lynching of several alleged bandits by machete-wielding residents, whom witnesses said were accompanied by Haitian police.

Spokesman Damian Onses Cardona said the U.N. mission to stabilize Haiti, known as MINUSTAH, was very concerned and that the attacks were "absolutely unacceptable."

"We can never tolerate a popular justice like that. We cannot tolerate people lynching people like that," Cardona told journalists during a news conference on Thursday at the U.N. compound in Port-au-Prince.

According to witnesses and radio reports, at least 15 people were hacked to death with machetes in the slums of Bel-Air and Solino within the past two weeks.

Police acknowledged last week that seven people had died in such attacks. They declined to comment on witness reports that several of the killings had occurred in the presence of police officers.

A Reuters cameraman filmed youngsters with machetes as they chopped the face and body of an unarmed man who had just been shot by police. Police did not deter the attack and described the victim as a bandit.

Last week, several slum residents congratulated themselves on local radio after killing a presumed bandit called Chabba, and thanked the police for their support.

A spokeswoman for the Haitian police, Jessie Coicou, declined to comment. The director for the Haitian administrative police, Renan Etienne, said he was absent and had not yet received any report on the matter.

Residents of the slums of Bel-Air, Cite Soleil and Solino have reported killings, kidnappings and other crimes carried out by armed bandits, and some viewed the attacks on alleged bandits as acts of frustration or vengeance.

"Those presumed bandits should be handed over to the legal forces that will transfer them to the judicial authorities who solely have the authority to decide their fate," Cardona said.

With the police and U.N. troops cracking down on criminal gangs over the last few weeks, several gang leaders have expressed interest in negotiating with the U.N. mission within the framework of a Demobilization, Disarmament and Reinsertion program.

U.N. officials said on Thursday they were ready to talk with illegal armed groups that want to disarm.

"We are going to seize all real opportunities to peacefully disarm groups," Cardona said. "The very concept of DDR programs, not only in Haiti but around the world, is based on the will to cooperate to give a chance to pacification."

U.N. peacekeepers were sent to Haiti after its elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was driven out during an armed rebellion in February 2004. Ongoing political and gang violence has hindered efforts to register voters for legislative and presidential elections set for November.

Banking on Mongolia
Sunday, August 21, 2005
RICHARD READ
The Oregonian

MANDALGOVI, Mongolia -- Small-time cashmere trader Davaasuren suffered through Gobi Desert droughts and freezes while dreaming of starting a business. He wanted to supply his town with eggs, but he lacked money for chickens.

Portland-based Mercy Corps aimed to help Mongolians out of poverty, but the humanitarian organization avoids handouts that foster dependency.

So Mercy Corps introduced Davaasuren -- who like many Mongolians, goes by one name -- to XacBank, a commercial bank that the nonprofit launched four years ago.

Now a loan from XacBank, pronounced "hassbank," enables the 29-year-old entrepreneur to sell fresh eggs, replacing those trucked in from the capital under the former socialist system. More XacBank loans allow scores of Gobi Desert herders to survive by launching small shops, factories and gas stations.

The idea of a humanitarian organization establishing a for-profit bank might seem as far-fetched as the presence of a tree in the harshest region of Mongolia. But nonprofit development organizations have funded commercial enterprises in places ranging from Romania and Haiti to Aceh, the tsunami-battered area of Indonesia.

Humanitarians may be new to the profit ethic, but they like the idea of creating incentives and of founding banks and businesses that last far longer than one-time grants. They acknowledge the commercial approach bypasses the poorest of the poor, but they say other conventional programs already address those needs. "The reason you own the for-profit companies is because you want to make something sustainable and last forever," says Ed Epp, Mennonite Economic Development Associates vice president for resource development.

Instead of awarding grants in Nicaragua, for example, MEDA bought a bank and redirected it to make small loans. In Haiti, the group founded a credit union that's become the nation's largest.

Mercy Corps goes a step further. It trains Mongolian herders and others, helping them prepare business plans and apply for loans. Then Mercy Corps guarantees some of the collateral so that XacBank, or a competing bank, can assume less risk and charge lower interest.

In an added twist, Mercy Corps links some of its global beneficiaries -- including Davaasuren, the egg man -- to donors with business experience. Western entrepreneurs who donate \$10,000 shares to Mercy Corps' Phoenix Fund can advise on business plans and visit projects financed by the fund.

Mongolia, a newly capitalist country sandwiched between China and Russia, could use the help. The emerging democracy, with fewer people than Oregon but six times the area, has been clobbered in

recent years by "zuds" -- dramatic freezes and droughts that deprive yaks, camels and other livestock of what little greenery survives on southern steppes.

Mercy Corps' objective is not to move nomads off the range. It aims to diversify incomes, stemming migration to Ulan Bator, the nation's swelling capital. "Herders realize they can't afford to be a single-product kind of business," says Steve Zimmerman, Mercy Corps Mongolia country director. "They can produce dairy goods, make furniture, run gas stations."

Out of the past

Step into Vladimir's yurt -- or ger, as the round felt tents are known in Mongolian -- and enter a world predating the 13th century, when Genghis Khan controlled an empire extending from Beijing to the Caspian Sea.

After hollering the traditional greeting (which translates literally to "Hold the dog!"), visitors duck through the south-facing door and walk clockwise to sit on low stools. Vladimir presides behind a table laden with dried curd as his wife, Duuhenduu, cooks on a dung-fueled central stove.

A 3-day-old goat frolics on thick wool carpets. A baby white camel -- straight out of "The Story of the Weeping Camel," the 2003 movie about nomadic herders -- is staked outside.

Duuhenduu and Vladimir, a weathered 50-year-old man in tall black boots, pooled resources with about 20 families that produce and sell mutton, milk and cashmere. Mercy Corps provided training and helped secure a \$4,000 XacBank loan to buy a milking camel and a small store to sell their products.

"We'd never borrowed before," Vladimir says, "but we have a good business plan and no competitors." During the first two months, the families sold 3 tons of camel's milk.

Vladimir's Gobi Desert cooperative near the Chinese border is able to keep up payments at 18 percent annual interest. XacBank's rate would be considered usurious in the West, but it's actually well below market in Mongolia. Mercy Corps, which sometimes deals with competing banks, makes no profit.

Duuhenduu ladles some fermented camel's milk. Vladimir hands around bowls of the muscular beverage, which visitors must not refuse.

"It's a good year for camels," says Vladimir, who has 67.

Cashmere market hard-hit

Herdsman Chuluunbaatar headed a work unit of farmers during Mongolia's socialist era, when the government owned domestic animals. He had to make sure that every family had its animals out grazing by 10 a.m. "If I found any family that didn't, I had to yell at them," Chuluunbaatar says. "If I didn't, I would get yelled at by the party secretary."

Vestiges of Soviet influence remain, and Chuluunbaatar serves up vodka in his ger on the vast, roadless Mongolian steppe. The nation's animals have been privatized, but he says ever less rain and

more dust storms complicate animal husbandry as the free market heightens herders' risk. And the bottom has fallen out of the world cashmere market.

Chuluunbaatar, 60, helps manage a cooperative that has expanded from producing cashmere to opening general stores with a Mercy Corps-backed loan. His grandson watches "Batman" on a solar-powered DVD player bought on the proceeds.

In all, Mercy Corps has helped Mongolians secure more than \$400,000 in loans. Ventures range from producing horse milk to making felt to growing fodder. So far there have been no defaults or delinquencies.

Zimmerman moved beyond the initial approach of helping herders improve cashmere and wool production after roaming the nation with an official of the U.S. Agency for International Development, which funds Mercy Corps programs here. Zimmerman had to wean Mongolian staff members off distributing fodder and generators, encouraging them to provide training and technical help.

Now the World Wildlife Fund and the United Nations are asking Mercy Corps to help provide business training and loan guarantees. Zimmerman has traveled to Aceh, helping design a similar program encouraging loans by commercial banks to businesses rebuilding from the tsunami.

"Aceh is awash in nongovernment organizations who are very happy to give people money to rebuild an ice plant," says Zimmerman, who thinks that approach encourages dependency. "In the long run, that's not going to work."

Zimmerman is exploring the idea of expanding the Mongolian model. "It's possible that in some of our other areas," he says, "we could create more XacBanks."

But entering the banking industry exposes nonprofits to market risks. MEDA, the Mennonite organization, warns benefactors that some of its ventures have lost money. When an institution does become profitable, MEDA typically sells out to investors and moves on, hoping the bank will remain true to its development mission.

Mercy Corps managers, too, say they have no abiding interest in banking.

"Eventually, we will look to divest and leave XacBank or become a minor shareholder," Zimmerman says. "Ultimately people like Chuluunbaatar will be able to say, 'Goodbye, we don't need you anymore.'"

Richard Read: 503-294-5135; richread@aol.com

Gas prices fuel 1-day strike in Haiti

By G. Dunkel

Workers World

August 19, 2005

On Aug. 8, the Association of Owners and Drivers of Haiti (APCH) held a countrywide, one-day strike over a sharp, unannounced increase in fuel prices. Jean Winston Bazile, spokesperson for APCH, said, "This is a warning strike, asking for the collaboration of the people. Our next step will be to park all our minivans in front of the offices of the Ministry of Commerce and the National Palace. Because we cannot continue to function this way."

Changeux Méhu, president of APCH, added, "We are determined and we cannot continue to enrich rulers who take no consideration of the precarious life of the poorest sectors of Haitian society. It is necessary that this change; we can't tolerate such acts."

The people who use the APCH minivans, which supply the only mass transit available throughout Haiti, supported the strike, even though it forced them to walk to work. "We have had enough. We can't accept such a situation, which increases our misery," was a typical response of those interviewed. (Haïti-Progrès, Aug. 10)

On July 28, the National Popular Party (PPN) and Fanmi Lavalas held a major demonstration in Cap-Haitien, the second-largest city in Haiti. It demanded an end to the military occupation by UN troops, which are in Haiti under orders of the imperialist-controlled Security Council, and the return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the popularly elected president who was kidnapped and forced into exile in February 2004 by U.S. troops. The date was chosen to mark the 90th anniversary of the first U.S. occupation of Haiti.

The march gathered in Rond-Point Samori, a poor neighborhood, and proceeded to Notre-Dame Square without incident.

Another, similar demonstration was held in Valières, a small city in northeast Haiti.

While the people's struggle continues, however, some politicians who claim to speak for Fanmi Lavalas, the party created by Aristide, have registered it in the fall elections and intricate political maneuvering fills the fancy hotels of Port-au-Prince.

The PPN released a statement on July 28 on the situation inside Haiti: "Today, despite massacres and genocides perpetrated by George Bush, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Haiti, he believes he can call progressives 'terrorists.' But the world has never known a terrorist of such a horrible character as George Bush. They call militants who peacefully resist against the coup-napping of Feb. 29 [2004] bandits, while the biggest gangster in the country, Andy Apaid [Haiti's richest businessman], has given arms and money to the Labanière gang to kill people living in Cité Soleil. Why don't they arrest him?"

...

“Has Venezuela sent arms and soldiers to kill us? No. Has Cuba sent arms and soldiers to kill us? No. We say, Long live Venezuela! Long live Cuba! Long live the International Tribunal on Haiti.

“The PPN declares that ... it is not ready to sell its conscience, that it has just one destiny, to fight for the total liberation of our country.”

Priest jailed in Haiti needs medical care, lawyer says

A former Miami priest was weak and in need of medical care after briefly losing consciousness in his prison cell in Haiti, a visiting lawyer said.

BY JACQUELINE CHARLES

Miami Herald

August 18, 2005

A former Miami priest jailed in Haiti is weak and needs medical help but was in good spirits two days after collapsing in his prison cell, said a U.S. lawyer who visited him Tuesday.

The Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, who led Haitian community groups in Miami before he moved to his native country, lost consciousness on Sunday for about 20 minutes in his tiny cell, said Loyola University professor Bill Quigley.

"He told me he thought he almost died on Sunday," said Quigley, who is working with Jean-Juste's Haitian lawyers to secure his release.

"He's sick, there is no doubt about it," Quigley said. "There is something [wrong] with him, and I think it's very serious when a man near 60 is kept in an incredibly hot area, loses consciousness and does not get adequate medical attention."

The Catholic priest collapsed in his cell, about eight feet by two feet, at the National Penitentiary. Prisoners carried him on their backs to the infirmary, Quigley said by phone from Port-au-Prince.

Jean-Juste was detained July 21 amid allegations of involvement in the murder of a Haitian journalist. It is the second time Jean-Juste has been arrested since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled into exile early last year. Jean-Juste is a prominent Aristide supporter and still calls for his return to Haiti.

Quigley said that during his 30-minute visit Tuesday in the warden's office, he noticed Jean-Juste had lost 15 to 20 pounds even though his parishioners bring him food every day. The priest complained about skin rashes, and pain in his neck, arms and legs.

He said Jean-Juste sleeps on a one-inch thick rubber mat in the "extremely hot" and "smelly" cell he shares with another prisoner.

Quigley, accompanying the priest when he was arrested, said no official charges have been filed against him.

Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, in Miami on Wednesday for knee surgery, directed Herald inquiries to the justice ministry. It could not be reached for comment.

A letter-writing campaign by several groups, including 29 in the U.S. Congress, has failed to win Jean-Juste's release. In a reply dictated to Quigley, Jean-Juste thanked his supporters saying, "I read the letter and you are so strong and clear. Well said! I wish our church leaders were so strong and clear."

Church leaders in Haiti have said little of his arrest.

Lavarice Gaudin, a member of Miami's pro-Aristide watchdog group Veye Yo, said Jean-Juste was arrested because he is viewed as a possible candidate in Haiti's Nov. 6 presidential elections: ``That's the big thing behind it."

In Haiti, rhetoric trumps human rights

By Todd Howland

The Boston Globe

August 16, 2005

THE US-INSPIRED peacekeeping approach being utilized by the United Nations in Haiti is a failure. Members of Boston's growing Haitian community should not get their hopes up for a shift in US policy, following the recent resignation of US Ambassador to Haiti James B. Foley. Major donors, like the United States, have confirmed time and again their unwillingness to experiment with new methods that put human rights of the Haitians first.

While the United States has pledged more than \$1 billion, this money has not measurably improved the level of respect for human rights of the Haitian people, whether access to health care or justice is considered. It is high time we face a prime stumbling-block squarely: the way money flows to countries in crisis.

At present, the international community intervenes in a crisis using two tools: The first is sending in the UN's blue helmets. These missions are approved by the Security Council and paid for by member states according to a pre-agreed payment schedule. It is only natural that the states paying the most, like the United States and Japan, seek to limit the number and breadth of these missions.

To that end, the United States limits UN peacekeeping missions to putting blue helmets on the ground. Thus, peacekeepers normally spend over 99 percent on themselves. The result is situations like Haiti, where the peacekeeping mission's annual budget for its personnel's health care is greater than the annual budget of the Haitian Ministry of Health.

While security does not grow out of the barrel of a gun, many cling to the idea that the international community needs to establish security first and then undertake development. This might work for the conflicts of the past, where a ceasefire between competing armies could achieve a modicum of security. Today, chaos is common, so simultaneous work on security and development is needed.

Realizing this, US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan are working in cooperation with USAID and others in an attempt to do "nation-building." In Haiti, UN peacekeepers have provided no real support to community development or implemented projects to build the capacity of institutions needed to bolster the respect for human rights. But have no fear. The international community's second tool is "voluntary contributions."

How generous we are when we know that the money pledged will never actually be disbursed. Traditionally, the central government is required to develop a useful and sensible plan, to demonstrate the capacity to receive money and execute projects in a timely fashion. Under ideal circumstances, this process takes at least two years from conception to disbursement. This may work well for functional government, but for dysfunctional governments in chaotic countries it is not viable. Thus, no money arrives, fueling suspicion and undermining the efficacy of the blue helmets.

While many in the UN have spoken about the need for a new integrated peacebuilding approach highlighting human security, the bureaucracies of donor countries are stuck in their dated methods, and the people of Haiti, Liberia, et al. continue to suffer.

The new UN reforms propose a Peacebuilding Commission that would force peacekeepers and UN agencies to work together -- but unless we change how money flows to countries in crisis, the crises will continue to recur.

Peacekeeping missions should measurably improve the full spectrum of human rights and be given the budget to do so. The UN already has a Peacebuilding Trust Fund that can be used to fill the funding gap in countries like Haiti. Some of the voluntary contributions should be diverted to this fund to support projects using a human rights-based approach. Peacekeepers and agencies should work with communities to prioritize, define, and implement projects.

Communities have already defined small projects like fixing an access road to a regional hospital and tree planting to avoid further erosion and contamination of drinking water. While modest, they would create a completely different relationship between the UN and the Haitian people based first and foremost on human rights.

The US-inspired UN failure in Haiti has numerous causes, but the US unwillingness to change its outdated money-flow modus operandi to peacekeeping operations in order to maximize their transformative potential highlights shows that it is not just the UN that needs reform.

Todd Howland is director of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights in Washington.

**Orphanage in Haiti touching hearts in Knoxville
WBIR.com, Knoxville, TN
August 19, 2005**

Almost 30-years ago, Nicolas Louis Juste made a promise to God. He was fighting a deadly illness and vowed that if God would save him, he would dedicate his life to helping the poor and abandoned children of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

"My vision is for one day all of the children to be happy," says Juste.

While goal seems almost unreachable, Juste has made incredible progress. His organization, Poor Children's Assistance Project, is educating over 5,000 people and caring for over 300 orphans.

He's currently in Knoxville getting some rest and raising money for his mission from local churches like Whitestone.

"There is little economy and little education, and the children and elderly suffer the most," says Mark Zimmerman, worship pastor at Whitestone.

For more information, you can go to www.poorchildren.

Strong Efforts Needed for Guyana And Haiti To Reach U.N. Goals
PAHO Press Release
August 18, 2005

Washington, D.C., August 18, 2005 (PAHO)—A stronger effort will be needed for Guyana and Haiti to reach the public health objectives of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, a set of principles for international health cooperation, according to two officials of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

Dr. Teófilo Monteiro and Paulo Teixeira made this statement this week as they joined the efforts of PAHO's representatives in Guyana and Haiti.

In their respective statements, the two PAHO officials referred to the achievements and the deficiencies in those two nations when it comes to public health. At the same time, they outlined PAHO's plans for those two nations – which receive priority treatment – for the 2006-2007 period.

Monteiro, an advisor on environmental health, pointed out the percentages in the increase in the access to safe water and health services reached in Guyana between 1990 and 2004. However, despite the improvement in Guyana's public health services, Monteiro stressed the need to continue working and seek to increase multi-sectoral assistance with government officials, aid agencies and civil society. Monteiro stressed particularly the efforts being made in the issue of solid waste and those seeking to improve the nationwide access to water for general consumption.

Among the key elements of the cooperation of PAHO's office in Guyana Monteiro pointed out the strategy of strengthening the organization's role as a liaison with the various partners that work toward a common agenda. Together with other elements, Monteiro also stressed the importance that PAHO help Guyana's Health Ministry in the implementation and monitoring of the methodology recommended for development.

Presentations

Guyana Sustainable Development and Environmental Health Project
(PowerPoint, 1.84MB)

La Cooperación de la OPS/OMS en Salud Ambiental y DS en Haití 2004-2007: cambios y perspectivas (Spanish only)
(PowerPoint, 52KB)

The basis of PAHO's task in Guyana on issues such as sustainable development and environmental health, according to Monteiro, "is to make sure that we effectively incorporate environmental health and sustainable development into national policies and actions, including political, scientific and legal guidelines for the human environment."

Teixeira, speaking on behalf of the Environmental Health and Health Promotion program of PAHO's office in Haiti, emphasized the organization's change in perspective and approach in the impoverished Caribbean nation where – as Teixeira explained – only peace and development will make it possible to have a healthy environment in Haiti, one that will be able to turn around the Haitians' endemic crisis.

"In Haiti, the issue of peace is more important than any other need," Teixeira said. "To speak of peace in Haiti is not a rhetorical matter. It's a necessity."

The new strategy of cooperation moves away from what Teixeira described as a "unique model" and moves towards a "different" model of diversified cooperation within the area of the capital city, Port-au-Prince, and the interior of the country (Aquin and Port Salut). There, the activity will raise to a maximum the impact of cooperation through sectoral approaches that, in turn, will efficiently utilize the technical, human and financial resources to move toward the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

Teixeira said that during the 2006-2007 period the challenges faced by PAHO in Haiti include, among others, the eradication of urban malaria, environmental improvements to reduce in a 20% the diseases caused by water and the lack of hygiene, and the promotion of health as part of human development with the enabling of health factors as a foundation for community initiatives.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) was established in 1902 and is the world's oldest public health organization. PAHO works with all the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its people. PAHO serves as the Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO).

PAHO Member States today include all 35 countries in the Americas. France, the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are Participating States. Portugal and Spain are Observer States. The U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is an Associate Member.

Letter from Haiti National Penitentiary
We Hear Hope Coming
by Fr. Gerard Jean-Juste
Haiti Action Committee
August 16, 2005

Port au Prince Haiti - Haiti National Penitentiary - Brothers and sisters around the world, allow me to thank you for what you have done for me personally, and what you have done for the poor ones I serve and stand with, for all prisoners, especially the political prisoners of Haiti.

I know that thousands of you are advocating on my behalf. People from Haiti, from the US, from Brazil, Canada, Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Nicaragua and the Netherlands have sent letters and faxes to the US Embassy and the Haitian government trying to free me and to bring democracy and human rights back to Haiti.

Hundreds of churches and organizations who are helping out - I thank you. I especially thank the 29 members of US Congress who signed a letter for me. I read the letter and you are so strong and clear. Well said! I wish our church leaders were so strong and clear.

I must tell you I am not doing well physically. I was almost dead Sunday morning. I fell unconscious for some time but was rescued when some of the other prisoners took me on their backs to the dispensary. God sends me back to you! I do not know what happened. My neck hurts, my skin is very bad and I ache a lot. I need medical attention. But I am glad to be alive and join all of you in the struggle for freedom and real democracy.

My cell is 8 by 2 and is very hot and smelly. We have a bathroom in the hall that works when there is water. There are no beds. I sleep on a one inch thick mat on the floor. Yet I am very thankful to God who allows me to wake up to another life.

I now have discovered so much support for the Haitian people and me from people all over the world. I am in awe. I add my strength to those who stand all over the world for the rights of everyone whatever color, whatever creed, whatever nationality. To Cite Soleil, to Bel-Air, Veye Yo, the 10th department, the Lavalas family, to all of you around the world, to the churches especially my own St. Clare's, I say to you "Chapo Ba!" (I tip my hat!)

There is a great fraternity in jail and with the poor. In jail we pray loudly - day and night.

Our spirits are uplifted when we hear about your work for Haiti, because we hear hope coming. We hear hope coming and we know our victory for human rights and respect and democracy will be total one day.

Personally, regardless of all the hardship, I am still joining my voice to the voices of all democracy lovers to demand the return of constitutional order in Haiti, the physical return of our elected president Aristide, release of all political prisoners, respect of all human rights, and if that is done then real elections can happen.

Keep up the advocacy. Keep up the peaceful demonstrations. Keep up the prayers.

Ill and in jail, I humbly add my suffering to those of Jesus to hasten peace and justice and love for everyone.

Merci.

Fr. Gerard Jean-Juste, an outspoken advocate for democracy and human rights, especially for the poor, has been in prison in Haiti without written charges since July 21, 2005. This message comes by way of Bill Quigley a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans in the US who is volunteering to assist Mario Joseph, his lead Haitian lawyer. Mr. Joseph is a lawyer with BAI in Port au Prince. Bill is volunteering with the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti.

U.S. sends 234 back home
By ALFONSO CHARDY
Miami Herald
August 17, 2005

Coast Guard officials said Tuesday that 234 migrants from Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti have been repatriated since Saturday after they were stopped at sea on boats headed toward the United States.

CONTINUING FLOW

The repatriations reflect a continuing flow of illegal migrants attempting to reach U.S. shores.

The total number of Cubans stopped at sea this year is increasing -- 1,856 as of Tuesday, the largest number intercepted in a single year since 1994, when 37,191 Cubans were stopped during the rafter exodus.

According to a Coast Guard statement, its vessels returned 100 Haitians, 121 Dominicans and 13 Cubans since Saturday.

The Cubans were intercepted last week at an unspecified location.

SAILBOAT STOPPED

The Haitians were intercepted Sunday while traveling on a sailboat 19 miles west of Great Inagua in the Bahamas. About 947 Haitians have been stopped by the Coast Guard this year, compared to 3,078 last year.

The Dominicans were stopped Monday about two miles west of Rincón, Puerto Rico. About 2,404 Dominicans have been interdicted so far in 2005, compared to 4,568 in all of 2004.

Coast Guard officials say that so far the figures do not portend a mass migration from Cuba.

The number of Cubans stopped this year is only 357 more than the total for all of 2004, or 1,499.

Teacher faces hearing on letter

The Orange County educator is accused of writing disparaging remarks about Hispanics.

By Víctor Manuel Ramos and Mary Shanklin

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

August 22 2005

An Orange County teacher accused of writing a letter critical of Hispanics faces a hearing this week that could lead to her dismissal.

On Friday, school district officials sent a letter to Jan P. Hall, a fifth-grade teacher at Sadler Elementary, asking her to attend the session and explain the letter published last week in a Spanish-language newspaper.

The letter, supposedly written to a congressman, complained that Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Haitians, Middle Easterners and others should not be allowed to stay in the country. The letter denigrated the education of Puerto Rican teachers and stated that "Puerto Rican children are holding back American children academically."

School officials suspended Hall last week, and the School Board is expected to stop her paychecks Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Orlando-area Hispanic leaders, worried about a flurry of angry commentary on Spanish radio, have scheduled a press conference today to call for community reconciliation.

Hall has not spoken publicly since the controversy erupted. Parents and others who have known her give widely different impressions, however, of the longtime teacher originally from Mobile, Ala.

Sadler parent Adline Acceus, a Haitian immigrant, said her daughter Sharma started having problems in Hall's class last year, even though the girl had done well the first few years of school.

Acceus said she took offense when Hall suggested her daughter be evaluated for a learning disability. A final blow was that Hall directed her daughter to special-education classes and then to repeat the fifth grade.

"They said she was learning-disabled in Ms. Hall's class," said Acceus, adding that although Hall generally was nice, the teacher ordered her around on what she should do with her daughter at home.

"She doesn't talk like a person who can really work with kids," Acceus said. "She didn't have enough patience with kids."

However, another parent of a Sadler student said she had no complaints about the woman who taught her 11-year-old granddaughter.

"Her math class was hard, but I had no problems," said Helen Brown, a New Yorker of Puerto Rican ancestry.

The woman she met in the classroom did not seem like the one being portrayed as a racist on the six o'clock news, Brown said. The letter was published Wednesday in the Puerto Rican newspaper El Nuevo Día.

"It's like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," Brown said. "I had met her. She wasn't arrogant or nothing. All the teachers were nice in that school. I have no complaints."

Before her 2004 divorce, Hall lived with her husband of 34 years in the Conway area. Neighbor Betty Cordoba, who is from the Philippines, described Hall as a "lovely Southern lady," always gracious.

"She was always friendly, and we were foreigners," Cordoba said. "I don't think she's racist, maybe misunderstood."

Court records showed that Hall spent \$400 of her annual salary on class supplies "for needy children" and another \$2,500 for religious organizations.

Sadler Principal Anne Lynaugh seemed ambivalent Friday as she spoke about the case that disrupted her school's operations.

Lynaugh reported Hall to the school district for investigation and was the administrator to whom Hall confirmed that she had written such a letter. Although Lynaugh has condemned the contents of the letter, she described Hall as an "excellent teacher."

The principal said she had received no complaints about Hall, and that she was "a caring professional" committed to children.

Hall's personnel records are closed during the investigation, but officials said she had been with the district for five years -- three at Englewood Elementary School and about two at Sadler. She also has worked for Polk County schools.

The 24-year classroom veteran was investigated in 2002 when the district had complaints from her and her previous boss, Englewood Principal Oscar Aguirre. School Board attorney Frank Kruppenbacher said Friday that the complaints were based on "personality conflicts" and were dismissed.

The key to Hall's future may rest with whether she was speaking in the letter as a teacher or as a private citizen.

"She doesn't distinguish between her personal and professional opinions," Kruppenbacher said.

After this week's predissmissal meeting, which had not been scheduled as of Friday, Superintendent Ron Blocker is expected to decide whether to continue investigating Hall, fire her or take other action.

The district has pulled her grade books as part of the probe.

Teachers union president David DeMond said the union would represent her if she does not have another attorney. Union leaders directed her to not comment.

"She's being tried and convicted in the papers," DeMond said. "My honest opinion is that she wrote a letter in confidence to her congressman. I don't condone what she wrote, but she doesn't have a right to speak an opinion that she has? Initially, it will cost her her job."

Victor Ramos can be reached at vramos@orlandosentinel.com or 407-420-6186. Mary Shanklin can be reached at mshanklin@orlandosentinel.com or 407-420-5538.

Teacher wrong: Schools must address bias
Darryl E. Owens
Orlando Sentinel
August 20, 2005

Outrage gripped the Hispanic community this week after Orange County teacher Jan P. Hall pulled a John Rucker, throwing Hispanics, Haitians, Middle Easterners and other immigrants under the school bus.

In a letter to an unspecified congressman, which the Puerto Rican newspaper El Nuevo Dia translated into Spanish and published, Hall, a fifth-grade teacher at Sadler Elementary School in Orlando, allegedly ripped "foreigners" for leeching off taxpayers' money and blamed immigrants for the diminishing quality of schools.

Hateful stuff, to which Orange County Superintendent Ron Blocker swiftly reacted by suspending Hall without pay pending an investigation.

"There is no room for racism and discrimination," Blocker insisted.

Right on, Ron.

If Hall indeed wrote and believes this vile bile, give her a dunce cap and the boot. If Blocker or anyone else believes censuring the 59-year-old teacher will boot out such attitudes from the classroom, give me a break.

All her letter did was air dirty linen usually stuffed in some pedagogical hope chest: Prejudice drags on minority students like an overstuffed backpack.

The issue often comes to light through suspension statistics.

One study, "The Color of Discipline: Source of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment," found blacks were not only suspended more, but also often for more arbitrary offenses. Researchers cite this as "evidence of a pervasive and systemic bias."

Prejudice too creeps into the classroom in subtler ways. University of Florida economist David Figlio found teachers give less attention and tuition to black kids with nontraditional names such as Da'Quan or LaQuisha than students with common names.

The reason? Teachers graft on biases about the parents' educational level and commitment to their child's education, and approach the student with lower expectations.

I -- as do many minority parents -- wrestled with these realities when my now-teenage daughter began school. Now that my son is in kindergarten, I worry even more since the disciplinary hammer falls hardest on black boys.

I'm not painting white teachers with a broad bias brush. Heaven knows that without a cadre of dedicated white instructors who pushed, embraced and encouraged me, I might be sweating out some real toil today.

Problem is, studies such as "How White Teachers Perceive the Problem of Racism in Their Schools," suggest most white teachers have an "impaired consciousness" regarding racism. They often blame the victim or stay mum when they witness racist behavior by white colleagues.

That's a major rub, given only 16 percent of public elementary and secondary school teachers are minorities.

I side with C.R. Lawrence, who posits in his essay, "The id, the ego and equal protection: Reckoning with unconscious racism," that "we cannot be blamed for unconsciously harboring attitudes that are inescapable in a culture permeated by racism . . ."

Dismissing blame doesn't negate, he says, "our collective responsibility for racism's eradication."

What does that mean for schools?

Commitment to programs that reinforce teachers' duty to honor all students and challenge preconceptions about minority students in order to effectively educate our kids.

In an ever-diverse community, parents can demand no less.

Haitians find bias slogans near home

BY JENNIFER SMITH

STAFF WRITER

Newsday.com

August 22, 2005

A Haitian family awoke yesterday morning to find mystifying slogans scrawled in chalk on the street outside their Brentwood home.

"Get off the Boat! U HAITIAN," read one. "ROW THE BOAT."

"ARISTIDE POWER," went another, referencing ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Suffolk police called the matter a bias incident - not a bias crime - noting that no threats were involved and no property was damaged.

"From the victims' point of view, they didn't know what it meant," said Det. James Mosby of the Hate Crimes Bureau. "They didn't fear for their safety."

Homeowner Nicole Chery said she and her family had not experienced any previous problems in the neighborhood since moving to Bruce Lane from Queens eight years ago.

"I feel bad," said Chery, 49, who emigrated from Haiti in 1981. "I was so shocked."

Chery and her son Jackson, 17, both said they had no idea who might have written the slogans, nor what message the writer intended to send.

Neighbors expressed surprise at the incident, calling it out of character for this racially mixed block of tidy homes inhabited by black, white and Latino families. "Everybody's fixed up their homes," said Rob Scaturico, 45, who moved here shortly before Chery. "It's a nice block."

Chery said the incident must have happened early yesterday morning because the street was clean when a visiting relative left around midnight.

"The person took their time," Chery said yesterday afternoon, pointing to a Polaroid she took of the neatly lettered writing to document it before washing down the street.

Mosby said police would monitor the incident and step up patrols in the neighborhood.

Obituary: Businessman M. Pierre brought work ethic from Haiti

By Tania Valdemoro

Palm Beach Post

Monday, August 22, 2005

DELRAY BEACH — Maxo Pierre died the way he lived — by working hard.

The 49-year-old businessman died Saturday morning in Boca Raton when the lawn mower he was driving tumbled into a pond and pinned him underneath the water, according to the Boca Raton Police Department.

Mr. Pierre had been working with his son, Maxime, but he was alone when the accident occurred, daughter Natacha Pierre said.

Landscaping had been Mr. Pierre's hobby. He loved figuring out where to arrange plants and flowers, Natacha said. Mr. Pierre started Maxo Professional Discount Landscaping a few months ago, she said.

The new business was another way to keep busy, Natacha said. Mr. Pierre became restless on the weekends while at his family's grocery store called Maxo Supermarket.

Mr. Pierre opened the grocery store in the 1980s, a few years after his arrival from Haiti in 1981, she said. Before the store opened, Mr. Pierre went to homes in Delray Beach and sold Haitian foods from the back of a van. The grocery store stocks Haitian food from Miami and clothing from Haiti and Panama.

"You could come in, buy what you need and pay whenever," Natacha said.

Adjacent to the grocery store is another Pierre business — a restaurant where Haitians can get their fill of rice, beans, fried plantains and fried pork.

Others remembered Mr. Pierre for his leadership in the Haitian community.

Mr. Pierre gave people jobs, said Daniella Henry, executive director of the Haitian American Community Council. "He was a very good man."

Mr. Pierre is survived by his wife, Venice, and children Claudel, Natacha, Widlene, Maxime and Mackendy.

Funeral arrangements have not yet been made, said Dieudonne Charry, Mr. Pierre's sister-in-law. The family is waiting to receive the body from the medical examiner's office, she said.

Mr. Pierre's death is still under investigation, said Sgt. Bob DeNeve of the Boca Raton Police Department.

**Letter to the Editor - Who invited us into Iraq?
08/21/2005
Beaver County Times Allegheny Times**

Can you folks tell me what U.S.-based corporations are in Iraq? What is the agenda of these companies? What percentage of the hundreds of billions of our tax dollars are going into their pockets?

When did the Iraqi people ask us to save them from the tyrannical dictator, Saddam Hussein? Did the Iraqis go to the United Nations and ask for help, rescue or deliverance from their plight?

The Haitians and Cubans, whose pleas for asylum fall on deaf ears, are sent back to be tortured or slaughtered. The Mexicans and eastern Europeans are slipped in the backdoor to be exploited by contractors, upper-class elite, farmers and ranchers.

When the Jews asked for help, the whole planet turned its back. When they fought their battles, they fought them alone. Israel is not even 60 years old yet, but what I see of it is beautiful, modern, developed and in no way backward.

The West developed the oil fields of the Arabian Peninsula, turned control over to the Arabs and walked away. A few sheiks got control of the oil wealth and did nothing but run amuck, like kids in a candy store with cars, women, travel, gambling and estates all over the world.

The poor and uneducated stayed that way and the rich got richer, They won't fight for rights or freedoms. They just go where the wind blows them because that it is the will of Allah.

Bring our sons and daughters back here to protect and defend their own families. Let those people do what they have done for 5,000 years.

Lorraine Mahany

Center Township

15 vie for Haiti presidency on new dates
Friday, August 19, 2005
Caribbean Net News

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): At least 15 candidates have launched campaigns for Haiti's presidency, and a source said Thursday the election commission would announce new voting dates.

The first round of legislative and presidential elections will take place November 6, with a second round on December 18, according to a source at the Provisional Electoral Commission.

"New constraints oblige us to change the dates," the source said on condition of anonymity.

"We will submit an amended calendar to the political parties," the source said.

The previous dates were October 9 and November 11.

The first elected president to follow deposed president Jean Bertrand Aristide will be installed on February 7. Aristide was forced from office on February 29, 2004.

The commission also said that Dumarsais Simeus, a rich industrialist who has lived in the United States for 40 years, had declared his candidacy.

Another businessman, Charles Henri Baker, member of the group of "184," which took the lead in ousting Aristide, joined those running for the top job.

Leslie Manigat, Haiti's president from February to June 1988, has also thrown his hat in the ring, along with former legislator Paul Denis.

Meanwhile, unknown persons in the neighboring Dominican Republic wounded and burned four Haitians living there, firefighters said Thursday. Three of the Haitians remain in serious condition in a hospital burn unit.

The attacks are only the most recent against Haitians in Haina, west of Santo Domingo, fire chief Rolando Cuello Segura said.

The assailants beat the Haitians, aged 19-22 and doused them with a flammable liquid before setting them ablaze late Tuesday, he said. The fourth man escaped.

The Dominican Republic shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with Haiti.

Tracing Back Family Lines: Workshop helps Louisiana families uncover Haitian roots

By Mary LaCoste, Contributing Writer

Louisiana Weekly

August 22, 2005

In the tumultuous years from 1791 to 1809, so many people left Haiti for New Orleans that the city's population increased by one-third. Some came by way of Cuba, Europe and New England to find permanent refuge in Louisiana. Among their numbers were three large groups, almost equal in number, of free persons of color, whites and enslaved Africans brought by masters wanting to circumvent emancipation laws enacted by the French.

The French Revolution had inspired those living in the French colony of Saint Domingue, now called Haiti, to aspire for liberty, equality and fraternity. Free persons of color, many of whom were successful planters, wanted equality. The white residents struggled among themselves for more freedom from French rule. The slaves, working under unspeakable conditions, and who were five times as numerous as the non-enslaved population, desperately wanted liberty.

There were a number of revolts, many brutal, and attempts by France, England and Spain to restore order. The most well-known and successful revolution was led by Toussaint L'Overture who achieved a period of peace and rebuilding that ended when Napoleon betrayed him and France began unsuccessful attempts to recapture the colony. (These events set the stage for the Louisiana Purchase.) Haiti became the first nation in the new world to be governed by descendants of Africans.

Today, many people living in Louisiana have family traditions about ancestors who lived in Haiti long ago. They had been told that documentation of the migrations were not possible as all records had been burned in the revolutions. Not so, says Augusta Elmwood, who conducted a recent well-attended Saturday conference sponsored by the Historic New Orleans Collection - its seventh annual genealogy workshop. A New Orleanian and a descendant of Haitian refugees, she shared the results of her years of research on how to obtain information.

One of her most important discoveries was that copies of birth, marriage and death certificates had routinely been sent to France. Access to this and other information, such as ships' passenger lists, can now be found on the Internet or on microfilms kept in several libraries in the United States. Patience, thoroughness and luck are often needed, she said, but much can be learned.

Assisted by a grant and with the cooperation of the Historic New Orleans Collection who hosted the conference at their Chartres Street research facility in the French Quarter, Elmwood was able to provide handouts and starter kits for compiling a Haitian genealogy. Over 100 pre-registered guests attended, some the descendants of free persons of color and of slaves.

Elmwood pointed out that the records of enslaved persons are harder to retrieve. Duplicates of records of free persons were the ones found preserved in France, though these are not the only informational sources, she said. On surprising local resource was the Family History Center of Genealogy located in Metairie. It is operated by the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter Day Saints.

After going over the facts of Haitian geography and climate - rugged mountains, fertile valleys, ample ports and long growing seasons - Elmwood described the harsh living conditions in the early colony. Occupying the western portions of the island called Hispaniola, it was named Saint-Domingue by the French. The eastern part of the island, once ruled by Spain, is now known as the Dominican Republic. It lies south of Cuba and is not far from Jamaica, Trinidad and Puerto Rico. These islands were frequent stopping points for Haitian refugees.

The early colonial days had been times of great wealth, great suffering and massive disregard for the lives of the slaves. If slaves were, literally, worked to death on sugar plantations, there was always a fresh supply arriving from Africa. It has been estimated that over one million had been brought to the colony before the practice was halted by the revolutions.

Owners of wealth producing plantations were sometimes absentee landlords living in Paris. Those living in the colony adapted luxurious lifestyles but often died of the many diseases found there. Many whites and free persons of color were not plantation owners but were craftsmen, merchants and professionals, some successful enough to send their children to France to be educated. Most of them were included in the waves of out-migrations.

Often overlooked among those on the island were the maroons who lived in the mountains, out of the reach of the authorities. They were the descendants of escaped slaves and the remnants of Indian tribes that had been there at the time of Columbus. At the conference midmorning break, some attendees noted their similarities to the maroons who lived in the swamps of Louisiana and preferred to live apart from settled areas for their safety and survival.

Among the conference participants were some who attended parts of a three-day event held the same weekend, the First Annual Conference of the Louisiana Creole Research Association, at the nearby Chateau Sonesta Hotel. The focus there was on the history and culture of the Creole people of Louisiana through ancestral research and education.

Attending both conferences was Barbara Trevigne, a local historian noted for her research into the life of Marie Laveau. She found the gatherings to be good opportunities to obtain information and to network with persons of similar interests. She noted that Augusta Elmwood's presentation helped her fill in the gaps of her knowledge about the history and customs of the people of Haiti. She found the Creole conference sessions valuable for highlighting musical traditions, art and the cultural contribution of Creoles.

The HNOC's genealogy workshop also provided a preview of its upcoming exhibit, "Common Routes: St. Domingue-Louisiana," which will run for much of 2006.