

High noon in Haïti

John Matshikiza: WITH THE LID OFF

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The race side of the equation refers to a small Caribbean country called Haïti, scene of some of the worst excesses of the European and American slave trade and its commercial off-shoots, the global and globalising trade in sugar, tobacco, spices and other things, and the marvellous site of the greatest sustained rebellion against imperialism, which resulted in the defeat of the French and British armies in 1804.

When size and race collide, a cataclysm happens that cannot be simply explained by either one of these issues. And this is what is happening now in what remains of what was once the rich, green, fertile island of Haïti -- now stripped almost bare of all its natural resources, and literally on its knees after years of internal and external war.

Haïti stands for something very special in human history: it is the first place where the subjugated black race was seen to stand up and defy the seeming inevitability of white, European power.

Its battle for liberation went even further than this. White power and its contradictory impulses had bred a new middle class, if you like, called mulattoism -- the uneasy but inevitable merger between black and white blood, the slave and the enslaver, generally denied by the ruling establishment, but vivid before the eyes of everyone who was prepared to see.

These became the new mid-aristocracy who Toussaint L'Ouverture, black leader of the slave rebellion, and his associates, had to deal with as they fought their way to freedom. In South African terminology: the blacks, the coloureds and the whites.

One hates to make too strong a comparison in all of this. But what is happening now in Haïti raises too many questions about how things stand in world affairs, and also the awkward question of where our South African government, led by a political party born out of revolutionary seeds, stands in relation to this, and to the pressing questions of size, power, influence and race.

Haïti is not an isolated example. The world is moving rapidly into other phases, and its alliances are becoming more fascinating (or challenging, or demanding, or confusing) by the day. Venezuela, for example, under President Hugo Chávez, is raising its head as a new example of what people's power can be all about -- all the things the African National Congress prided itself on in the bitter struggle against white nationalism here on the southern tip of the African continent.

Other parts of the world, like Iraq, for one ringing example, are being torn apart at the seams by the re-emergence of the same kind of imperialism that Toussaint L'Ouverture and the enslaved, dislocated, disempowered ex-Africans of Haïti fought against. British, French and American neo-liberalism

scarcely contains the aggression that speaks of the need for world domination, in the name of power, wealth and, in nowadays-speak, security.

But back to Haïti (for we must always go back to Haïti). Not many people are saying anything about the fact that beleaguered Haïti, unforgiven for its proud stand against imperialism, unashamed of its nakedness and its African past, unrepentant for its seemingly pagan Voodooism and its celebration of its own interpretation of African gods secretly brought across in the bitter holds of the slave ships; that Haïti is now suffering an unprecedented war against the remnants of its revolutionary dignity, its search for tranquillity, its justified quest for respite from the imported tribulations of the outer world.

The war is being conducted by the UN and its auxiliary armies. That is what I have been told, and that is the evidence I have seen.

The citizens of Cité Soleil (in South African speak, Sunnyside Park or Sun City, whatever you will), which is the darkest, poorest part of Haïti's capital city, Port-au-Prince, densely populated and intensely political by default, have been subjected to a fierce assault by the UN forces who have been occupying the country now for a number of years.

As in Iraq, the purpose of this occupation is unclear. Civil strife some years ago led to a series of military coups, and to the intervention of foreign, notably US, forces over a period of time. The last of these led to the ouster of the popularly elected leader, a cleric called Aristide, and his replacement by a murky military junta.

Guess what. Aristide is now in somewhat luxurious exile in South Africa, hosted on an open-ended holiday visa by our government. Little is said about him, about what he is doing here, and about what his plans are for returning in triumph to his home country. And all this while the fires that burn in the streets of Cité Soleil light up the faces of those demanding his return to lead them as they face the extraordinary guns of the forces of the UN, supposedly there to protect them, but manipulated, somehow, to bring death and destruction to their already perilous environment.

People are being killed by UN gunships in Cité Soleil, make no mistake. The world is preoccupied elsewhere -- wherever the US tells them to be preoccupied.

The Haïtian revolution, as planned, has become a sideshow to the main events of unfolding world history.

CDB mission returns from Haiti
Caribbean Net News
Monday, January 29, 2007

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados: A high-level delegation from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has just returned from an official visit to Haiti.

The mission, led by CDB President, Dr Compton Bourne, met with representatives of key government ministries, the central bank, the private sector and non-governmental organisations. The itinerary also included courtesy calls on Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis and President René Preval.

Dr Bourne described the mission as “a fact-finding visit” to discover more about the Haitian economy, and one which underscored CDB’s commitment to working more closely with Haiti. He said that “the Bank has been working assiduously over the past two years to bring Haiti into the CDB family. We have been making plans, but without real first-hand knowledge of the situation. From this visit, we will get a sense of where to aim our interventions.”

The CDB delegation was in Port-au-Prince from January 10 to 12, 2007. This mission is expected to be followed by a series of exchanges between Haitian technocrats and the staff of the Bank to determine the precise nature of the assistance which CDB will make available to Haiti.

UNICEF Launches Multi-Million Dollar Appeal for Forgotten Emergencies

By Lisa Schlein

Geneva

VOA News

29 January 2007

The U.N. Children's Fund is appealing for \$635 million to assist children and women in 33 countries this year. UNICEF says it is launching this appeal on behalf of millions of victims of conflict and natural disaster in, what it calls, the world's forgotten emergencies. Lisa Schlein reports for VOA from Geneva.

The U.N. Children's Fund says it hopes the response to its appeal is better than it was in 2006. It says last year's forgotten emergencies received only 37 percent of the funds requested. And, three of the countries, Georgia, Colombia and Haiti were completely forgotten. It says those countries received no money whatsoever.

UNICEF Deputy Director of Emergency Programs, Pierrette Vu Thi, describes what it is like to live in a country where the needs are great, but where the cries for help are not heard. She says violence and natural disaster gave Haiti the worst child mortality rate in the Americas. She says children in Eritrea are beset by a border war and cyclical drought.

"Rampant insecurity has combined with regional wars to produce the continent's most forgotten children in the Central African Republic," she said. "Colombian children are forced to leave their homes by violence or are recruited in armed groups to fight. High HIV/AIDS rates, chronic poverty and food insecurity means that Zambian children are among the world's poorest nation."

Twenty of the 33 so-called forgotten emergencies are in Africa. Nearly one-fifth of the total appeal, or \$121 million, is for Sudan, including programs in the conflict-ridden province of Darfur.

Hungry children in Niger

UNICEF says continued conflict and insecurity there have disrupted the lives of an estimated four million people, nearly half of them children. It says children account for half of those forced from their homes.

Despite this grim scenario, Vu Thi says the misery of these people can be lessened if aid agencies are given the money they need to help them.

"I just recently came back from a visit to Darfur. The funding for Darfur has contributed to key achievements, such as bringing mortality rates below emergency levels, reducing global malnutrition, protecting children from disease,...providing water supply to two-thirds of the population. But, these results must be sustained, " she said.

Vu Thi notes 61 percent of funds for Sudan last year were not met. As a result, she says many essential activities could not be carried out.

While Africa remains the most affected continent, UNICEF says children in other regions of the world also are in great need.

For example, it notes South Asia has the highest number of children living in absolute poverty. It says the Middle East and North Africa are dominated by the situation in Iraq and the aftermath of the war in Lebanon. It says violence in the Palestinian Territory continues to have a terrible impact on young people.

Getting ecotourists to Haiti is travel agency's goal

By Jennifer Nelson

January 28, 2007

Boston Globe

Dumas Lafontant knows that for most people, Haiti doesn't conjure up images of white sand, lush forests, and sparkling waterfalls. But his Caribbean homeland has a side many never get the opportunity to see, he said.

"We think that there is a hidden side of Haiti," Lafontant said. "You've seen the overcrowdedness, pollution . . . what you haven't seen are the suburbs, the beautiful waterfalls. This is the side that is not seen on CNN."

Lafontant is one of six shareholders in TourIsLokal, a Boston-based company dedicated to making Haiti a popular tourist destination. Founded in 2005, TourIsLokal will kick off a marketing campaign next month to launch its travel planning services. It has plans for television and radio ad campaigns as well as fliers aimed at members of Boston's Haitian community.

The company promotes ecotourism, which Lafontant describes as "responsible travel." When participating in an ecotour, a tourist will use energy-conserving vehicles, participate in reforestation, and learn about the culture and geography of the area.

"Basically, it's giving something back -- leaving the place better than when you arrived," he said.

Despite its beauty, Haiti, the western part of the island of Hispaniola, is the most impoverished nation in the Western Hemisphere. Out of Haiti's population of 8 million people, 80 percent live in poverty. The French and Haitian Creole-speaking country ranks 153d out of 177 countries worldwide on the "human development index," a measure of life expectancy, literacy, and standard of living calculated by the United Nations.

Lafontant became interested in ecotourism in 1991, seeing it as a way to improve Haiti's struggling economy and pull its people out of poverty. Today, with growing interest in conservation, global warming, and other environmental issues, Lafontant said, the concept of ecotourism is becoming more popular.

"I think there's beginning to be an increase of awareness that we're all in this together," he said. "We all have to contribute to making this a better world."

Numerous historical sites are scattered across Haiti, said Pierre Duchemin, another shareholder in TourIsLokal who divides his time between Boston and Haiti. For example, the Citadelle Laferrière, a fortress in northern Haiti, is the largest of its kind in the Western Hemisphere.

But if historic sights don't draw interest, the beaches of Labadie are "the most beautiful in the Caribbean," Duchemin said. Royal Caribbean cruise ships dock along the beaches.

"It's dubbed as paradise on earth," Lafontant said. "You go there and you wouldn't think you were in Haiti."

They expect that an investment company will provide the funding needed to promote the company's offerings and begin planning trips. Lafontant and Duchemin said their goal is to send 1,200 tourists to Haiti by the end of this year.

The company is looking to send tour groups, but it will work with individuals or families wanting to travel by themselves. With a larger tour, all-inclusive packages -- covering airfare, lodging, food, travel around the country, and activities for one price -- will be possible, Lafontant said. Although prices are not finalized, a six-day, seven-night all-inclusive stay would probably cost around \$1,200 , Lafontant said.

Lafontant said he is working with Northeastern University to plan an alternative spring break trip to Haiti.

Sara DeRitter , assistant director and program director of the Center of Community Service at Northeastern, said the university is looking into TourIsLokal and the opportunity to send 50 students to the area.

Yves Perpignan , who traveled with TourIsLokal on one of its planning trips last year, said the company is working with hotels and other businesses in Haiti to help them compete for tourists.

"We're bringing a few of us together to see how we can do something for Haiti in the future," Perpignan said. "We're trying to give them a new way to manage certain things and also to have them bring something new, to make them competitive for tourism."

For more information about the travel company, visit its website, tourislokal.travel .

Jean-Juste impatient to return to Haiti

The Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste -- powerful Haitian activist and former political prisoner -- longs to minister again in Haiti, but he is thwarted by political backlash and his own fragile health.

BY TANIA VALDEMORO

Miami Herald

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<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/16563509.htm>

Watching the Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste relax on a folding chair at the storefront office of Veye Yo, a political group he founded in Little Haiti, it is hard to tell the priest was wracked by leukemia.

Two months after finishing chemotherapy, his sallow complexion has cleared. He has gained weight. And he no longer uses a cane to walk.

"I'm very patient. I think my health will get better with time," said Jean-Juste, who led a decades-long fight in South Florida to legalize Haitians in the United States.

Leukemia was Jean-Juste's ticket out of Haiti's National Penitentiary last January. His illness and imprisonment for various alleged criminal offenses turned Jean-Juste, a potential presidential candidate and a staunch supporter of deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, into a cause celebre for human rights activists. Amid intense international pressure, former Haitian Prime Minister Gerard Latortue offered Jean-Juste a humanitarian release so he could receive medical care in Miami. Once his health improved, the government said, he would have to return to face charges.

But even as he remains in medical exile here, the priest, known for courting controversy, is fighting several battles. His targets: the Haitian government and the Catholic Church.

His biggest fight is over his suspension from his priestly duties at his parish of St. Claire Catholic Church in Port-au-Prince.

Joseph Serge Miot, the archbishop of Port-au-Prince, suspended Jean-Juste in September 2005 when it appeared he might run for president -- a political activity that the Vatican prohibits for priests. Jean-Juste immediately appealed the suspension to the Vatican.

The priest insists that his suspension is baseless. "When I was in jail, I could not register to run for president, so I didn't run," he said.

In December, Vatican officials responded personally to Jean-Juste. The letter, Miot said, supports his decision to suspend Jean-Juste.

The sanction, Miot told The Miami Herald in a telephone interview Wednesday from Haiti, will stand until Jean-Juste personally writes him promising, "he will not engage in politics, and only tend to his pastoral duties."

"He has not done anything," Miot said. ``He only wrote Rome saying that the suspension was unjust. He has to write me and say what he's going to do."

``He says he is waiting for me. He has to send me a letter saying he's only going to work for the church and not engage himself in political affairs. He has not done anything."

Jean-Juste also complains that Miami Archbishop John Clement Favalora has neither interceded on his behalf in the dispute nor provided him a stipend to get by during his months of treatment.

"It wouldn't be appropriate for another bishop to interfere," said Mary Ross Agosta, spokeswoman for the Archdiocese of Miami, explaining that Jean-Juste has never even served as a priest in the Miami diocese. ``But, the Archbishop is concerned about the Rev. Jean-Juste's spiritual well-being."

Even if he were to win that battle with his church, Jean-Juste also must settle the criminal charges against him. He is charged with conspiring to kill Haitian police officers and harboring illegal weapons in his parish. The priest has denied all wrongdoing.

His lawyers, Mario Joseph and Brian Concannon, are trying to dismiss the criminal charges against him in Haiti.

In July 2004, Haitian officials accused Jean-Juste of murdering Jacques Roche, a prominent journalist, after he showed up at Roche's funeral. A judge dismissed the charge last year, but Haiti's new government has yet to determine what to do with the conspiracy and illegal weapons case.

Jean-Juste's return, while welcomed by members of Aristide's Lavalas Family Party, would be unsettling for President René Preval, who has built a fragile coalition government absent any high-profile members of Aristide's once all-powerful Lavalas Family Party.

"He doesn't say so publicly, but I don't think Preval wants major figures of Lavalas back in Haiti. He certainly doesn't want them engaged in political activities," said Robert Fatton, a Haiti expert at the University of Virginia.

``Jean-Juste's return would rekindle and intensify the political divisions in the country. At the time of the election, most analysts had assumed if he could have presented himself as a candidate, he would have won the presidency."

Exalted by Haiti's poor as a natural successor to Aristide, cancer has reminded Jean-Juste that he is vulnerable. He has not escaped the unpleasant side effects of chemotherapy and spends his days resting in Fort Lauderdale or commiserating with Aristide supporters at Veye Yo on Friday nights during the group's weekly meetings.

His throat scarred from a biopsy, Jean-Juste says he has trouble swallowing and may have to resume chemotherapy treatments.

His diagnosis is the stuff of spy thrillers. Paul Farmer, a longtime friend and infectious diseases specialist at Harvard University, visited the priest in jail in 2005 and took blood samples when prison guards were not looking. He later spirited them to a University of Miami hematologist for analysis.

Instead of fearing prison guards, Jean-Juste now fears infections and mosquito bites. Both are plentiful in Haiti. Despite the risks, the priest insists he is well enough to go home. His parish needs tending. His food program, which serves 1,000 people a week, needs money.

"My doctor said I can go back for three days at a time," Jean-Juste said.

While he complains of being treated like a pauper by church officials, Jean-Juste points to the generosity of his supporters at Veye Yo, who have given him new clothes, a cell phone and money.

Activists like Jack Lieberman, who worked to free the priest from jail, are incensed that criminal charges against Jean-Juste still remain. "If Haiti is to be a democracy, the prosecutions of people who were victimized by the illegitimate regime [of Latortue] need to be rescinded," he said.

Jean-Juste spoke bitterly of Latortue, whose return to the United States last year could not be more different than the priest's. After a tumultuous two years of heading a caretaker government, Latortue has quietly resumed his retirement in Boca Raton.

"Speak of the devil," the priest said, as he watched the former prime minister's image appear in old television footage of Haiti at Veye Yo. Now out of power, Latortue declined to respond to Jean-Juste's attacks of his administration.

Without a country to visit or a church to lead, Jean-Juste remains ever defiant.

"This is ridiculous! I am a priest convalescing and I am not able to serve. That's what makes me sicker!" Jean-Juste said from his lawn chair.

Miami Herald Staff Writer Jacqueline Charles contributed to this story.

**SAIS Students Take Flight
Groups head to Haiti, Guatemala, Mexico, China, Saudi Arabia
By Greg Rienzi
The Johns Hopkins Gazette
January 29, 2007**

The Caribbean nation of Haiti has been plagued by political violence for most of its history and remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Yet, last May the country's 8.3 million inhabitants saw a glimpse of hope with the inauguration of a democratically elected president, who promised to bring a measure of peace and stability to the region. That effort has begun.

It was at this pivotal juncture in Haiti's history that 16 students from Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies undertook a field trip of the highest order — an up-close and transparent look inside the newly formed government. This month, the SAIS students conducted five days' worth of interviews with government officials and civil society representatives at all levels, ranging from an audience with President Rene Preval himself to meetings with neighborhood leaders in a newly securitized slum.

The Haiti trip, a for-credit experience sponsored by the school's Conflict Management program, was just one of several "academic vacations" taken this winter break by SAIS students, who also headed off to Guatemala, Mexico, China and Saudi Arabia.

I. William Zartman, director of the Conflict Management program and the Jacob Blaustein Professor of International Organizations and Conflict Resolution, said that he's organized winter-break trips for years and that recently several other SAIS departments and programs have followed his lead.

Zartman said a trip like the one to Haiti allows students to develop a better understanding of the principles, concepts and specifics they learn in the classroom.

"It just makes a world of difference to hear things on the spot from people who are directly involved with the situation," Zartman said. "There are many sides of the story, and with this one-week experience, [the students] were able to see the conflict in three dimensions and hear many different points of view."

The Conflict Management program also sponsored a trip to Haiti last year, when students studied the platforms of the various presidential candidates. The students' mission each time is to study the underlying causes of the endemic conflict. Currently, the small nation is rife with gang violence, poverty and corruption, Zartman says, and suffers from an overall lack of structure.

"Nothing works in Haiti, and yet everything works there," Zartman said. "Everyone just makes do and tries to find his or her way around a very dysfunctional situation."

Specifically, the SAIS student group toured the overcrowded capital, Port-au-Prince, including its slums at Bel Air; and a provincial town, Jacmel. In addition to the president and prime minister, the students spoke with various other ministers, security and development officials, the special representative of the secretary general of the United Nations, the World Bank representative, UNICEF

workers, human rights and disarmament group leaders, anti-corruption figures, a mayor, the U.S. embassy, reporters and health officials. They also spoke with the leaders of the country's two official religions, the archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Haiti and the Hougun, the chief priest of voodoo.

In November and December, before leaving, the students attended talks in Washington by experts on Haiti, including the country's ambassador, and did research in preparation for the trip.

Each student focused on a particular angle or issue, such as education, economy and the environment. Upon their return, the students were asked to write a 10-page report that described the problem and proposed solutions. Once all the reports are completed, Zartman will write an introduction, bind them in one volume and send copies to officials in Haiti and circulate the document in academic circles.

Ruben Harutunian, student coordinator for the Haiti trip, said that it was an unforgettable experience.

"This was such an incredible opportunity. We got to see what life is like there, to witness some of the misery and poverty firsthand and then also talk with people who are actively trying to make things better," Harutunian said.

The school's grant-sponsored Guatemala trip was organized by the International Development Program and involved 10 students who went to the Central American country for a two-week stay to expand their knowledge of its current economic and social development. During the trip, the students conducted a series of meetings with organizations and individuals working in Guatemala, including USAID, the U.S. ambassador to Guatemala and the Inter-American Development Bank.

In addition, five of the students worked with Friendship Bridge, a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization, to complete a market study on microfinance in the department of El Quiche, and the other five conducted a survey on education in rural Chisec.

Farther north, seven SAIS students from the Western Hemisphere program spent two weeks in Mexico thanks to a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The students connected with representatives of various NGOs based in the southern state of Chiapas, who took the group to various areas to better understand issues related to poverty and development, such as indigenous rights, migration, health and education.

Among their activities, students visited bilingual schools, indigenous communities, youth groups, human rights activists, migrant shelters, and a group called Jovenes Constructores, a program in Tapachula through which unemployed youth are brought together to rebuild their communities after Hurricane Stan.

Trine Lunde, a doctoral candidate in Latin American Studies and student coordinator for the Mexico trip, said that the students saw and did much. She considered it "a very successful test run."

"This was our first trip there, and we tried to lay some groundwork for future trips," Lunde said. "But overall, it was very interesting and rewarding, definitely for me."

Zartman said that experiential field trips have become part of the academic fabric at SAIS, and he is happy to have played a role.

"The Strategic Studies program takes a trip every year to a battlefield, which is fine. But I thought, Why just go to dead battlefields when you can see live conflicts?" Zartman said. "Our people here at SAIS go on to take some pretty hair-raising jobs, so it's important to show them what it's like mucking around in the Third World and how to behave in the middle of a conflict and avoid getting carried away. If [all these trips] become part of the culture here, so much for the better, as [they're] an essential part of the wonderful training that we give."

**Lame Ti Manchèt Accused of Role in Murder of Photographer
Haiti Struggles to Defend Justice
By JEB SPRAGUE
Counterpunch
January 26, 2007**

Residents of Martissant, a sprawling poor section along the southern part of Port-au-Prince, have accused Lame Ti Manchèt (the Little Machete Army), a civilian vigilante group, of having a role in the killing of freelance photojournalist Jean-Rémy Badio on January 19 2006. According to SOS Journalistes, of which Badio was a member, he was assassinated after taking photos of the killers. They state that his family received multiple death threats. Agence Haitienne de Presse (AHP) reports that according to Badio's close friends the victim had been the object of death threats from members of the vigilante group "the Little Machete Army" and that "residents of Martissant accuse the Little Machete Army of committing most of the killings in the area".

An early press release put out by the Paris based Reporters Without Borders (RSF) attempted to place the blame for the murder on not only Lame Ti Manchèt but also another group known as Baz Gran Ravine which has no reported involvement in the killing. RSF's Directrice générale in Canada Emily Jacquard wrote, "Two armed gangs - Lame Ti Manchèt (Little Machete Army) and Baz Gran Ravin (Big Ravine Base) - have been fighting for the control of Martissant for the past two years".

The report, without mentioning the resident's charges against Lame Ti Manchèt for having a role in the murder of Badio, also failed to mention that the overwhelming amount of documented political killings in Martissant over the last two years have been conducted by Lame Ti Manchèt, this includes a massacre of 21 people, the burning down of 300 homes 7/9/06, and a massacre carried out jointly with the Haitian police at a USAID sponsored soccer tournament 8/20/05. In contrast to massive evidence showing violent rampages by Lame Ti Manchèt, people on the ground in Martissant consistently explain that since 2004 the Baz Gran Ravin (Big Ravine Base) has served as a self-defense grouping.

Soon after the 2004 coup it is believed that Lame Ti Manchèt came into existence under the tutelage of the illegal Latortue regime whose mission was to "eliminate people hostile to the interim regime". (AHP 1/23/07) A young journalist Abdias Jean was executed, with a bullet in his head, by police of the interim government in January of 2005. RSF and other groups seen as partial to Haiti's interim authorities failed to report on the killing.

According to reports from AUMOHD, a human rights group active in Martissant, the 2006 massacre conducted by Lame Ti Manchèt "was meant as a smoke screen to provoke Baz Gran Ravine into a retaliation and thereby distract from the push to get police and civilians involved with Lame Ti Manchèt into jail. AUMOHD'S community human rights council (CHRC) coordinator, Esterne Bruner, was assassinated by Lame Ti Manchèt 9/21/06. But there has not been any retaliation reported. Instead the CHRC, non-violent and non-partisan, continues to prosecute all the killings".

The Institute for Justice and Democracy (IJDH) in Haiti observes, "The Little Machete Army will keep going until someone stops them. They carried out the August 2005 soccer game massacre with the help of police, and right near a MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti) observation

post. Then they struck again the next day, burning house after house. They did a series of attacks in the summer of 2006. But neither MINUSTAH nor the PNH will go in and arrest the leaders."

Footage from the August 2005 soccer game massacre appeared in New York Times author Walt Bogdanich's documentary "Haiti: Democracy Undone". It shows well equipped police officers, with Lame Ti Manchèt serving as police attaches, running into a screaming crowd.

Under international pressure from human rights groups, the PNH with the assistance of Sri Lankan MINUSTAH troop successfully arrested and jailed fifteen members of the Haitian police department cited in the official police investigation as working with Lame Ti Manchèt. But the arrested individuals were released on personal recognizance in February of 2006. On October 19 2006 Judge Peres Paul issued his final judgment releasing all the police officers from any responsibility but named civilians in the case who he referred to criminal court.

Human rights organizations have decried Judge Peres Paul, who as a supporter of the interim government, released police officers that were known to be working with Lame Ti Manchèt. PNH chief Mario Andersol later criticized corruption among the judiciary, a group of whom went on strike in response. The civilian members of Lame Ti Manchèt referred to criminal court by Judge Peres Paul were Marck alias Ti Ink, Tél Kale, Kiki Ainsi Connu, Roland Toussaint, Frantz alias Gerald Gwo Lombrit, Roudy Kernisan alias commandante Roudy (head of Lame Ti Manchèt), Carlo alias Choupit, and Jean Yves alias Brown.

Guyler Delva of the Haitian Association of Journalists (AJH) has denounced the killing of Badio on numerous Haitian media outlets. Amnesty International has also issued a press release denouncing the killing of Badio. The Associate Press reports that Fred Blaise, a U.N. police spokesman, explained that gang members were suspected in the shooting but no arrests have been made. Following the recent murder of Badio, Haiti's Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis authorized MINUSTAH soldiers to increase patrols in Martissant.

Thousands have been killed in Haiti since the unconstitutional overthrow of its elected government in February 2004. A scientific study done through random spatial sampling and published in the British medical journal, The Lancet, found that between early 2004 to mid 2006, 4,000 people were killed by the interim government's forces and its armed supporters in the greater Port-au-Prince area. The second half of the study which its authors presented this month shows that the vast majority of those targeted were supporters of Lavalas and Lespwa.

Visit HaitiAnalysis.com for more information.

Jeb Sprague is a graduate student and freelance journalist.

Jamaica pledges support towards Haiti's development

By JIS

Jan 25, 2007

The FinalCall.com

KINGSTON, Jamaica (JIS) - Prime Minister of Jamaica, Portia Simpson Miller, recently reaffirmed Jamaica and CARICOM's commitment to assist Haiti to achieve its development goals.

"As Jamaica participates in the regional assistance program for Haiti, we seek to make our contribution to the reconstruction process currently underway for the economic and social development of our sister nation," Prime Minister Simpson Miller stated.

She further implored the wider international community to "stay the course with Haiti and provide the financial and technical support as this is crucial if the government is to succeed in its development plans."

The Prime Minister was addressing a press conference following bilateral talks with the President of Haiti, René Préval, who arrived in the island for a four-day working visit.

She noted that President Préval's visit to the island was to be viewed as a critical step in strengthening bilateral relations between Jamaica and Haiti.

Outlining the outcome of the deliberations between herself and President Préval, Prime Minister Simpson Miller said that high on the agenda was Haiti's technical preparation to accede to the revised treaty of Chaguaramas, a move that would allow the country to participate in the Caribbean Single Market.

"It is my hope that this process can be completed as soon as possible," she said, while commending the Haitian President for adopting an inclusive approach to governance, with a view to ensuring that democracy took root in the country.

She noted further that the leaders discussed a number of initiatives covering tourism, agriculture, engagement with the Haitian Diaspora, education and training, institutional strengthening and improving the social infrastructure.

"We both recognized that cooperation in agriculture and reforestation would be beneficial to the Haitian economy and social infrastructure. The planting of trees and the sharing of best practices would not only provide greater agricultural yields, but would also serve to stem the risks of landslides and flooding," she stated.

For his part, President Préval thanked Prime Minister Simpson Miller for sustaining Jamaica's ties to Haiti, underlining that he believed the process was beneficial to his country. He also updated the Prime Minister on the political and economic situation in Haiti, including the status of support from the international community.

A joint communiqué signed by both parties emphasized the importance of a sustainable democracy in Haiti, supported by the rule of law, a secure and stable environment and economic and social progress. The leaders also stated their resolve to continue their efforts within the regional framework to ensure that these objectives are met, while noting the importance of stability and security to both countries.

The President and the Prime Minister shared the view that the visit served to concretize many of the ideas put forward for enhanced cooperation between the two countries. Accordingly, the leaders anticipate a period of strengthened exchange, not only in terms of economic and social benefits, but also for the people-to-people contact, which will contribute further to deepening the integration process.

Meanwhile, they stressed that security forces in both countries were taking strident moves to curtail the illegal gun and narcotics trade between Haiti and Jamaica. “We have a plan of action, but we will not disclose it because I believe that those persons involved in such activities should be caught by surprise and be made to pay for their actions,” said Ms. Simpson Miller.

The leaders are expected to hold further talks at the convening of the first Jamaica/Haiti Joint Commission in Jamaica, during the second quarter of 2007.

Haiti: Two years since the killing of journalist Abdias Jean
Thursday, January 25, 2007
by Joe Emersberger and Jeb Sprague
Caribbean Net News

He was murdered on January 14, 2005, shortly after finishing his lunch near his home in the Village de Dieu slum.

The killing of Abdias Jean, a young Haitian journalist who reported from Haiti for WKAT radio in Florida, was quickly condemned by Amnesty International, the Director General of UNESCO and the Inter American Press Association. It was reported by Reuters and Associated press wire services.

The Secretary General of the Association of Haitian Journalists (AHJ), Guyler Delva, also condemned the murder and expressed dismay at the indifference of the Haitian commercial media to the death of a journalist.

Delva did not share Jean's political views but the brazen nature of the crime against a fellow journalist impacted him. Delva was part of the opposition that helped to overthrow Haiti's democratically elected government on February 29, 2004 and bring to power de facto Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, but Delva's protests provoked Latortue's displeasure. According to US based researcher Tom Reeves, who spoke with Reuters employees, Latortue complained to Reuters about an article Delva had written about the murder.

Delva was also a close associate of Reporters San Frontiers' (RSF) Secretary General Robert Menard, whose organization failed to mention the killing of Jean and many other assaults on grassroots journalists during the interim period. In August of 2006 the Paris based group RSF was questioned on its failure to report on the murder of Abdias Jean.

RSF's Haiti expert responded "We asked the police about the killings of Abdias Jean and we were told by the police that it was an attack made by the police but that they didn't know he was a journalist. He was taking pictures."

The RSF representative admitted that it had not met with a single witness to the murder but that all the information they had on the case was based on the testimony of the police, known for their widespread killings and abuses. The damning police testimony was never published. In a response, Jean-François Julliard, RSF's News Editor, again failed to mention the murder of Jean.

Haitian police spokeswoman Gessy Coicou, speaking for the RCMP-trained perpetrators, said of Abdias Jean: "I haven't heard of him and I haven't seen his name in any of the files I have. Many journalists have reported that there are many witnesses. I would advise them to file a complaint." The victim's mother filed numerous complaints but nothing has come of them.

In the moments prior to his death, Abdias Jean was investigating murders carried out by the Haitian police, specifically the killing of two young boys. After taking photos of the victims, he hid in a friend's house when he saw police approaching. But the police spotted him; ordered him out of the house, and shot him in front of several witnesses.

Reed Lindsay, a US journalist based in Haiti, reported: "They tied his wrists with his own belt, dragged him a block away and put a bullet through his head" Yet the police claim not to have heard of him. Perhaps they didn't.

The police and other armed groups that backed Latortue's de facto government were responsible for 4,000 political killings in the greater Port-au-Prince area, according to a scientific study published in the Lancet Medical Journal in August 2006.

However, Brian Concannon of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti asserts "The police know very well who Abdias Jean was. His family filed complaints with the police, the Haitian justice system and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights."

Violence against poor journalists, often those with cameras continued during the interim period. A young Haitian photojournalist, Jean Ristil, who had photographed MINUSTAH and Haitian police violence in Cite Soleil, said that, in November of 2005, he was arrested for the second time. He has been interrogated, tortured and had much of his equipment destroyed by police.

On April 7, 2005, journalist Robenson Laraque died from injuries suffered while observing a clash between UN troops and members of the disbanded Haitian military in the city of Petit-Goâve.

Later that year unknown assailants murdered another Haitian journalist, Jacques Roche. His killing was exploited by the interim government to justify the vilification and imprisonment of a prominent liberation theologian and critic.

The failure to achieve justice for the victims of violence by the interim government's forces and their armed supporters has been widely ignored by the corporate press, many academics and some press freedom groups like RSF which claim impartiality.

The killers of Abdias Jean, much like the killers of thousands of Haitians after the coup of February 2004 remain at large.

Concannon, a lead lawyer on the historic Raboteau massacre trial, observes, "Abdias Jean's killing is yet one more example of the double standard, where the lives of poor black men in Haiti matter least. Had he been a journalist with a prominent Haitian or foreign outlet visiting Cite de Dieu, he would have been eulogized for his courage in going into that neighborhood. But he was a poor journalist covering his neighbors, so he has been forgotten."

Mario Andersol, chief of the Haitian national police, was unavailable for comment.

UN soldiers move into Haiti slum

BBC News

January 25, 2007

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6297213.stm>

UN peacekeepers in Haiti say they have set up a stronghold in one of the largest and most violent slums of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

The stronghold is to be a centre for operations against armed gangs, a UN spokesperson told the BBC.

The UN troops came under fire as they moved into the Cite Soleil shantytown, but the UN contradicted reports that several people had been wounded.

UN peacekeepers, in Haiti since 2004, have stepped up patrols in Cite Soleil.

They were sent to the country to maintain order after a revolt ousted the former President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

On Wednesday, Brazilian soldiers of the UN mission took over an abandoned building used by gangs.

Hundreds of people have died in Port-au-Prince in clashes between rogue police officers, ex-rebels and gangs.

The Brazilian-led UN force includes more than 8,000 soldiers and police supported by some 1,000 civilian personnel.

UN forces raid gang's house in Haiti leaving six wounded

Thursday, January 25, 2007

by Clarens Renois

Caribbean Net News

<http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/cgi-script/csArticles/articles/000053/005387.htm>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): UN forces raided the Haitian capital's largest shantytown Wednesday to seize a gang's house in an operation that left six people with gunshot wounds, witnesses and UN officials said.

The United Nations peacekeepers' operation was launched in Port-au-Prince's Cite Soleil slum, an area controlled by armed groups.

"We were woken up at 3:00 am (0800 GMT) by intense shooting and we noticed UN tanks in the neighborhood," a Cite Soleil resident told AFP.

With the rising sun, peacekeeper helicopters were still buzzing over the shantytown, while automatic gunfire was heard, jolting the slum's 300,000 residents.

"Six people with gunshot wounds were admitted to hospital, but their injuries are not life-threatening," said a doctor at a local hospital who asked to remain anonymous.

A police source said Haitian police did not take part in the operation, the second in Cite Soleil in four weeks by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), whose mandate is up for renewal by the UN Security Council in February.

Over two decades, Haiti has suffered from political violence and instability, notably since the resignation of then-president Jean Bertrand Aristide in February 2004 amid a popular uprising.

More than half of the Caribbean island's 8.4 million people live below the extreme poverty line of one dollar a day, according to UN officials.

Security remains a major obstacle to a turnaround.

After Aristide's departure into exile, a force of over 7,200 soldiers and 2,000 police belonging to MINUSTAH went to the impoverished Caribbean country to maintain order while an interim regime sought to restore stability.

The UN force's objective Wednesday "was to secure a house controlled by gangs who regularly exact ransoms from motorists and truckers on a busy route nearby," MINUSTAH spokeswoman Sophie Boutaud de la Combe told AFP.

The gangs also used the house to launch attacks on UN patrols, she said.

"We intend to expand our presence here to better safeguard Cite Soleil," she said, offering no details of the plan.

The UN blue helmets and Haitian police in a joint-operation had already swept the shantytown on December 22, resulting in at least 10 deaths and dozens of injuries, according to several sources.

Their objective then was to wrest control of a road from Cite Soleil outlaws.

Mid-January, MINUSTAH's new Brazilian commander, General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, announced the force's most important task was to "prevent violence" wreaked on the population by armed groups.

In an interview with Agencia Brasil, the general said Cite Soleil was a hotspot for violence.

"It is the poorest neighborhood in Port-au-Prince and a garrison for three or four heavily armed gangs who have unleashed unspeakable violence against the population," he told the Brazilian news agency.

"MINUSTAH troops patrolling City Soleil are dusted by thousands of shots each day. This proves that there is a large influx of arms and munitions," he said.

In Washington on Wednesday, a conference of experts said that insecurity and impunity in Haiti amid failed police and judicial systems hindered the impoverished country's economic development.

"People are not going to invest with this kind of insecurity," said Mark Schneider, vice president of think tank International Crisis Group.

Despite the UN force's crime-busting efforts since 2004, the experts said it was difficult to counter 20 years of political instability and insecurity in the country.

Haiti's failed judicial system, they agreed, is of special concern, with many judges and lawyers lacking not only a professional background, but often basic office equipment such as paper and pencils.

Haiti celebrates Caribbean soccer title
The Associated Press
January 24, 2007
International Herald Tribune

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Hundreds of fans thronged the international airport to welcome home Haiti's soccer team on Wednesday, a day after it won the Caribbean Cup for the first time in Trinidad.

Haiti defeated Trinidad and Tobago 2-1 in the final, its best result in the tournament's 18-year history.

About 100 supporters crowded around the squad's chartered plane and cheered wildly as players emerged and held up the silver trophy. Hundreds more fans packed the airport's entrance, hoping for a glimpse of the team.

"Now we want to go to the World Cup in 2010. We have the means, we just proved it," Yves Jean Bart, president of the Haitian Football Federation, said as players toasted themselves with champagne.

Soccer-mad Haitians celebrated the win well into the night with fireworks and loud parties. A victory parade led by the team was planned for Wednesday.

Trinidad's team was weakened by the absence of many star players who had club commitments overseas. Cuba came third by downing Guadeloupe 2-1.

All four teams qualified for the CONCACAF Gold Cup in the U.S. in June.

In Haiti, photographer gunned down after receiving gang threats
CPJ News Alert
Committee to Protect Journalists
January 25, 2007

New York, —The Committee to Protect Journalists called on Haitian authorities today to fully investigate the murder of photographer Jean-Rémy Badio, who was gunned down outside his home in Port-au-Prince on Friday after receiving several death threats from local gang members. CPJ is investigating whether Badio's murder is linked to his professional work.

Badio, a freelancer, was shot to death at 4 p.m. in Port-au-Prince's southern Martissant slum, Haitian press freedom advocate Guyler Delva told CPJ. Fred Blaise, a U.N. spokesman, said gang members were suspected of the shooting, The Associated Press reported. Badio had been threatened with death by local gang members since October 2006, according to colleagues interviewed by CPJ.

Badio—a member of Delva's press group, SOS Journalistes, and the Haitian Association of Photojournalists (APH)—had photographed gang confrontations in Martissant, where he lived with his family. APH sold his pictures to local dailies, including the Port-au-Prince newspaper Le Matin, a source told CPJ.

Rival gangs have been battling in Martissant for months, AP reported. According to the Port-au-Prince-based Radio Métropole, the escalating gang violence has made Martissant one of the most dangerous neighborhoods of the Haitian capital. CPJ research shows that gangs in Port-au-Prince allow only those journalists who they deem friendly to report in neighborhoods they control. Delva said gang members seldom allow journalists to take their pictures for fear of being identified by local authorities.

Badio's colleagues, who asked not to be identified out of fear of retaliation, said that the photographer had problems with local gang members who believed that he was a police informant.

“We urge local authorities to conduct a speedy and thorough investigation into the murder of Jean-Rémy Badio,” CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon said.

Blaise told reporters that no arrests have been made, AP said. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis said he had authorized U.N. peacekeepers to increase patrols in Martissant. Still, Badio's wife and children were forced to flee their home after receiving further threats from Martissant's gangs, Delva told CPJ.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Haiti: Amnesty International condemns murder of journalist

Amnesty International condemned today the murder of journalist and photographer Jean-Rémy Badio. The organization believes that he was targeted because of his work as a journalist reporting on gang violence in Martissant, a suburb south of Port-au-Prince.

Jean-Rémy Badio was a freelance journalist and photographer. On 19 January, he was reportedly shot at his home in Martissant where gang warfare has been spiralling for more than two years.

Jean-Rémy Badio was a member of SOS Journalistes, a Haitian organization dedicated to the protection and defence of journalists' rights and freedom of the press. According to this organization, he was killed because he had photographed members of an armed gang in Martissant. His family reported that prior to his death he had received death threats from gang members.

Haitian authorities must ensure that the murder of Jean-Rémy Badio does not remain unpunished. An investigation into his murder must be carried out promptly and thoroughly, and the results made public. Members of armed gangs who are terrorizing men, women and children must be shown that there can be no impunity for such crimes and must be brought to trial.

Amnesty International exhorts the Haitian authorities to end impunity for the murder of journalists and to bring the alleged perpetrators of these crimes to justice.

In cases where investigations have been initiated, impunity still prevails. Among these are:

Jean Léopold Dominique along with Jean Claude Louissaint, murdered in Port-au-Prince on 3 April 2000;

Brignol Lindor, found dead in Acul (near Petite Goâve) on 3 December 2003;

Abdias Jean, allegedly extrajudicially executed by police officers on 7 January 2005;

Jacques Roche, found dead on 15 July 2005.

Amnesty International urges the government of Haiti, with the assistance of MINUSTAH, to take urgent steps to ensure that all journalists and human rights defenders in Haiti are able to carry out their activities in safety and without fear of harassment or intimidation.

Haitians nabbed in marijuana busts
Monday | January 29, 2007
The Jamaica Gleaner

KINGSTON (CMC):

Jamaica police have arrested three Haitians in connection with two large marijuana busts in the western parish of Westmoreland and the central parish of Clarendon.

Members of the anti-crime task force, Operation Kingfish, said the arrests on Thursday have sparked fresh concerns about the growing guns-for-drugs trade between Jamaica and Haiti.

In the first operation which took place in the community of Orange Hill, Westmoreland, two Haitians were detained after law enforcement authorities discovered a one-acre marijuana field.

Spokesman for Operation Kingfish, Inspector Steve Brown, said a police team also went to Clarendon where a large quantity of ganja was seized and another Haitian arrested.

"The fact that these Haitians are getting involved in criminal activities, we will be asking the authorities to take a serious look at the status of these Haitians who are in Jamaica.

"A lot of them came here under the disguise that they are seeking refuge, but soon they get involved in the illegal gun and drug trade, and against this background we are asking the authorities to take a serious look at these Haitians," Brown said.

'Four dead' in Haiti UN operation
BBC News
January 26, 2007

UN peacekeepers have an important presence in Haiti's capital

The UN mission in Haiti says four people were killed when its peacekeepers expanded their presence in the Cite Soleil slum of Port-au-Prince.

A spokesman said six other people were injured in what he described as exchanges of fire with criminals.

On Wednesday, when the operation took place, another UN spokesman had said there had been no reports of casualties or much of a reaction to the operation.

The peacekeepers are now holding a strategic location in Cite Soleil.

The stronghold is to be a centre for operations against armed gangs, a UN spokesperson told the BBC.

A local aid worker for the charity Medecins Sans Frontieres, Fabio Pompetti, told AFP news agency that three women had been wounded in Wednesday's clash and that one of them later died from her wounds.

UN peacekeepers, in Haiti since 2004, were sent to the country to maintain order after a revolt ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Hundreds of people have died in Port-au-Prince in clashes between rogue police officers, ex-rebels and gangs.

The Brazilian-led UN force includes more than 8,000 soldiers and police supported by some 1,000 civilian personnel

U.N. Peacekeepers, Haitian Gang Clash

U.N. peacekeepers trade gunfire with gang members and seize hideout in Haitian slum

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Jan. 25, 2007

By TRENT JACOBS

Associated Press Writer

(AP)

CBS News

(AP) U.N. troops traded gunfire with armed gangs Wednesday after seizing an abandoned primary school that had been used to stage attacks on the peacekeepers, a U.N. official said. Witnesses said one person died and five were injured.

Blue-helmeted soldiers secured the empty schoolhouse during an early morning raid in Cite Soleil, a gang-controlled slum on the edge of the capital of Port-au-Prince, said Sophie de la Combe, a spokeswoman for the U.N.

"The gangs were using this house for criminal activities and to shoot on U.N. troops, putting the population in danger," de La Combe said.

Troops later came under attack by gang members, setting off a gunbattle in the squalid, densely populated area.

Residents of Cite Soleil told The Associated Press that one man died and five others were wounded, including a young woman shot in the leg and chest.

De la Combe could not provide information on casualties.

Djilale Abdezigafon, a physician with a Belgian-run Doctors Without Borders clinic in Cite Soleil said several people were treated for gunshot wounds but said the injuries were not life-threatening.

In recent weeks, the 8,800-strong U.N. force has stepped up offensives in Cite Soleil to root out armed gangs that flourished after a February 2004 revolt toppled former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Last month, U.N. troops raided the slum in a crackdown against gangs wanted in a wave of kidnappings and killings. Witnesses said 10 civilians were shot to death, but the United Nations said only gang members died.

Also Wednesday, U.N. officials said a Haitian photojournalist was shot to death at his home in a violent slum days after he photographed gang members.

Jean-Remy Badio, a freelancer, was slain Friday in the southern Port-au-Prince slum of Martissant, said Fred Blaise, a U.N. police spokesman. Blaise said gang members were suspected in the shooting but no arrests have been made.

International press freedom group Reporters Without Borders said Badio apparently was killed by gang members he had photographed days earlier. It said Badio's family had reported receiving threats before his killing.

**Lame Ti Manchèt Accused of Role in Murder of Photographer
Haiti's War on Journalists
By JEB SPRAGUE
Counterpunch
January 26, 2007**

Residents of Martissant, a sprawling poor section along the southern part of Port-au-Prince, have accused Lame Ti Manchèt (the Little Machete Army), a civilian vigilante group, of having a role in the killing of freelance photojournalist Jean-Rémy Badio on January 19 2006. According to SOS Journalistes, of which Badio was a member, he was assassinated after taking photos of the killers. They state that his family received multiple death threats. Agence Haitienne de Presse (AHP) reports that according to Badio's close friends the victim had been the object of death threats from members of the vigilante group "the Little Machete Army" and that "residents of Martissant accuse the Little Machete Army of committing most of the killings in the area".

An early press release put out by the Paris based Reporters Without Borders (RSF) attempted to place the blame for the murder on not only Lame Ti Manchèt but also another group known as Baz Gran Ravine which has no reported involvement in the killing. RSF's Directrice générale in Canada Emily Jacquard wrote, "Two armed gangs - Lame Ti Manchèt (Little Machete Army) and Baz Gran Ravin (Big Ravine Base) - have been fighting for the control of Martissant for the past two years".

The report, without mentioning the resident's charges against Lame Ti Manchèt for having a role in the murder of Badio, also failed to mention that the overwhelming amount of documented political killings in Martissant over the last two years have been conducted by Lame Ti Manchèt, this includes a massacre of 21 people, the burning down of 300 homes 7/9/06, and a massacre carried out jointly with the Haitian police at a USAID sponsored soccer tournament 8/20/05. In contrast to massive evidence showing violent rampages by Lame Ti Manchèt, people on the ground in Martissant consistently explain that since 2004 the Baz Gran Ravin (Big Ravine Base) has served as a self-defense grouping.

Soon after the 2004 coup it is believed that Lame Ti Manchèt came into existence under the tutelage of the illegal Latortue regime whose mission was to "eliminate people hostile to the interim regime". (AHP 1/23/07) A young journalist Abdias Jean was executed, with a bullet in his head, by police of the interim government in January of 2005. RSF and other groups seen as partial to Haiti's interim authorities failed to report on the killing.

According to reports from AUMOHD, a human rights group active in Martissant, the 2006 massacre conducted by Lame Ti Manchèt "was meant as a smoke screen to provoke Baz Gran Ravine into a retaliation and thereby distract from the push to get police and civilians involved with Lame Ti Manchèt into jail. AUMOHD'S community human rights council (CHRC) coordinator, Esterne Bruner, was assassinated by Lame Ti Manchèt 9/21/06. But there has not been any retaliation reported. Instead the CHRC, non-violent and non-partisan, continues to prosecute all the killings".

The Institute for Justice and Democracy (IJDH) in Haiti observes, "The Little Machete Army will keep going until someone stops them. They carried out the August 2005 soccer game massacre with the help of police, and right near a MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti) observation

post. Then they struck again the next day, burning house after house. They did a series of attacks in the summer of 2006. But neither MINUSTAH nor the PNH will go in and arrest the leaders."

Footage from the August 2005 soccer game massacre appeared in New York Times author Walt Bogdanich's documentary "Haiti: Democracy Undone". It shows well equipped police officers, with Lame Ti Manchèt serving as police attaches, running into a screaming crowd.

Under international pressure from human rights groups, the PNH with the assistance of Sri Lankan MINUSTAH troop successfully arrested and jailed fifteen members of the Haitian police department cited in the official police investigation as working with Lame Ti Manchèt. But the arrested individuals were released on personal recognizance in February of 2006. On October 19 2006 Judge Peres Paul issued his final judgment releasing all the police officers from any responsibility but named civilians in the case who he referred to criminal court.

Human rights organizations have decried Judge Peres Paul, who as a supporter of the interim government, released police officers that were known to be working with Lame Ti Manchèt. PNH chief Mario Andersol later criticized corruption among the judiciary, a group of whom went on strike in response. The civilian members of Lame Ti Manchèt referred to criminal court by Judge Peres Paul were Marck alias Ti Ink, Tél Kale, Kiki Ainsi Connu, Roland Toussaint, Frantz alias Gerald Gwo Lombrit, Roudy Kernisan alias commandante Roudy (head of Lame Ti Manchèt), Carlo alias Choupit, and Jean Yves alias Brown.

Guyler Delva of the Haitian Association of Journalists (AJH) has denounced the killing of Badio on numerous Haitian media outlets. Amnesty International has also issued a press release denouncing the killing of Badio. The Associate Press reports that Fred Blaise, a U.N. police spokesman, explained that gang members were suspected in the shooting but no arrests have been made. Following the recent murder of Badio, Haiti's Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis authorized MINUSTAH soldiers to increase patrols in Martissant.

Thousands have been killed in Haiti since the unconstitutional overthrow of its elected government in February 2004. A scientific study done through random spatial sampling and published in the British medical journal, The Lancet, found that between early 2004 to mid 2006, 4,000 people were killed by the interim government's forces and its armed supporters in the greater Port-au-Prince area. The second half of the study which its authors presented this month shows that the vast majority of those targeted were supporters of Lavalas and Lespwa.

Visit HaitiAnalysis.com for more information.

Jeb Sprague is a graduate student and freelance journalist.

Mysterious prison ailment in Haiti traced to US rice

Friday, January 26, 2007

by Jeb Sprague and Eunida Alexandra

Caribbean Net News

NEW YORK, USA: A newly released investigation into the deadly scourge of beri-beri in Haiti's National Penitentiary has uncovered evidence that the clash between the manufacturing process used in US processed rice and the traditional Haitian rice cooking method has been killing poor young men behind bars and leaving others morbidly ill.

By early 2006, firefights brought on by Haitian National Police and United Nations incursions into the capital's poorest neighborhoods had become commonplace. The raids, deemed "operations" by authorities, and reportedly designed to flush out criminal gangs, often resulted in high civilian casualties.

In a recent scientific study in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, done through random spatial sampling, it was estimated that 8,000 people were killed in the greater Port-au-Prince area from March 2004 through early 2006 after Haiti's elected government was ousted.

Already overcrowded and antiquated, Haitian prisons quickly became packed with poor young men, drastically worsening the health conditions inside. The national penitentiary in Port-au-Prince, built for a capacity of 800, today holds over 2,000 prisoners.

Last April, the Lamp for Haiti Foundation, a Philadelphia-based non-profit organisation created to address both the health care and the human rights needs of Haiti's poor, commissioned an investigation into the mysterious beri-beri deaths of otherwise young, healthy prisoners in the Haitian National Penitentiary.

Staff attorney Thomas Griffin and staff physician James Morgan were given access by the national director of prisons, Wilkens Jean, to the sickest prisoners to search for clues to the source of the outbreak.

Griffin, a Philadelphia-based immigration lawyer and human rights investigator, had repeatedly visited the Haitian National Penitentiary since February 2002. In November of 2004, taking part in a Miami University human rights delegation, he found that poor supporters of the elected Aristide government had come under severe repression, showing up in "mass graves, cramped prisons, no-medicine hospitals, corpse-strewn streets and maggot-infested morgues".

In an October 2005 investigation, Griffin met with over 80 US deportees. While conducting a follow-up investigation in March 2006, he found that a deportee from the United States he had met in October, Jackson Thermidor, had just died of congestive heart failure brought on by beri-beri. Further, based upon reports from prison officials as well as prisoners, beri-beri appeared to be devastating the overcrowded prison population.

If left untreated, beri-beri slowly attacks its victims' nervous systems, eventually causing congestive heart failure. Treatment, which is almost always successful, consists simply of the correct administration of a multivitamin supplement.

Morgan and Griffin observed that many of those arrested during the administration of the post-coup, foreign-appointed government started to suffer from weight loss, emotional disturbances, impaired sensory perception, weakness, pain in the limbs, and periods of rapid and irregular heartbeat - all direct symptoms of beri-beri.

Packed together in squalid conditions and provided meager, irregular meals, Haitian prisoners were fed a diet of rice that Griffin and Morgan discovered had lost its natural B1 vitamin/thiamin content, leading to the ultimately harmful effects. Griffin explained, "We found out that the little food they do give to prisoners is US-processed rice."

All the Haitian rice production, which Haitians traditionally grew and consumed as a staple, was a healthy, whole-grain, vitamin B-packed, and native crop. But, due to US policies since the early 1980's preferring US rice producers over Haitians' own sustainable agriculture, tariffs were forced to drop, and US rice flooded the Haitian market.

It not only destroyed much of traditional Haitian farm life that was the soul and lifeblood of the nation, but it pushed farmers off their land and into the city slums in Port-au-Prince. The prisoners, Griffin observed, who must eat the US rice come from those slums, and are now dying of beri-beri.

Griffin and Morgan gained access to all 21 of the prisoners then housed in the prison infirmary. Dr Morgan made physical examinations as Griffin questioned the prisoners on the conditions of their confinement and their backgrounds.

Among other findings, only two of the prisoners had been convicted and were serving sentences. The others were legally innocent, pending trial or release. Only eight had ever been brought before a magistrate for a hearing, despite the Haitian Constitution's requirement of hearing within 48 hours of any arrest.

The average length of time prisoners had been detained as of the April investigation was 13 months, and one prisoner had already been locked up for two full years without ever being taken before a court. Nine of the 21 prisoners were suffering in the deep stages of beri-beri, hardly able to talk due to chest congestion and fatigue from overworked hearts.

"None had lawyers," Morgan observed, "they all had sunken empty unfocused eyes, the trailing step and the air of used old men awaiting death, yet they were hardly in their twenties."

Most telling to the investigators, however, was that all the sick had depended on the prison's "twice a day meals from a large communal bowl, rather than, like most of the more healthy prisoners, on food prepared and delivered daily from outside by family members."

At the request of investigators, Wilkins Jean took them to the prison warehouse, where 50-lb sacks of imported US rice made up almost the entirety of the food stores. Griffin explains, "On each one of

these bags was written, in English: 'Extra Fancy Long Grain Enriched USA,' and 'Do Not Rinse Before or After Cooking.'"

Like most mass-produced rice in the US, it had been polished and bleached to make it more appealing to the consumer's eye. The process, however, removes key nutrients, including vitamin B1/thiamine, from the grain.

To restore some of the nutrients, many US rice mills routinely "enrich" the processed rice by adding back nutrients. The problem for Haitians, however, is that the nutrients are returned by merely coating the exterior of the rice grain with the mixture. Haitians, Griffin and Morgan would learn, have always scrubbed their rice before cooking it - which, according to Griffin, at the prison resulted in a meal "that had about as much nutritional value as cardboard."

The Lamp Foundation is now embarked on an ambitious education campaign at the prison and with the national prison directorate, and plans to open an office in Cite Soleil, the poorest community in Port-au-Prince, later this month.

"The only reason the general population of Haiti that eats US processed rice is not also suffering from beri-beri to the same degree is that they must get vitamin B/thiamin from other sources. The prisoners, on the other hand, get no other food," Morgan said. "We told Mr Wilkens Jean this: if you are going to serve American rice, cook it like an American - don't rinse it before you cook it."

According to Prison Director Jean, prison authorities had tried to distribute vitamin B supplements because they already knew that the lack of it was underlying the beri-beri epidemic. But, said Jean, the prison administration never had enough for all prisoners on any kind of regular basis.

**US Embassy in Haiti acknowledges excessive force by UN
by Haiti Information Project
Bay Area Indymedia
Thursday Jan 25th, 2007**

According to documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) by the Haiti Information Project (HIP), the U.S. Embassy and various intelligence agencies attached to the Pentagon's Southern Command, were aware of the excessive use of force by UN forces in Haiti on July 6, 2005. Despite being heavily censored by U.S. officials under Executive Order 12598 in the "interest of national defense or foreign relations," what emerges is clear evidence of the disproportionate use of force by UN troops in Cite Soleil.

An "After Action Report" submitted to the US Embassy by the UN states that the UN attack on the crumbling civilian neighborhood was intense, prolonged, and carried out with heavy artillery and weaponry that UN officials knew could cause extensive collateral damage and the death of innocent victims.

These disturbing revelations are made all the more important in light of accusations that the UN committed a second massacre in Cite Soleil on December 22, 2006. In that raid, video and photographic documentation as well as eyewitness testimony obtained by HIP, paints a picture all too similar to the events of July 6, 2005.

According to the After action report, "...the firefight lasted over seven hours during which time [UN] forces expended over 22,000 rounds of ammunition... [An official] with MINUSTAH acknowledged that, given the flimsy construction of homes in Cite Soleil and the large quantity of ammunition expended, it is likely that rounds penetrated many buildings, striking unintended targets."

According to the documents obtained by HIP, UN and US officials knew of, and ignored victim's claims of the MINUSTAH massacre. A U.S. Embassy cable to the Secretary of State and US Southern Command on July 19, 2005 and titled "Human Rights Groups Dispute Civilian Casualties", states, "Human rights organizations continue to dispute the number of civilian casualties from the MINUSTAH operation in Cite Soleil on July 6. Some local human rights groups estimate the number of deaths attributed to MINUSTAH soldiers [to be] between... 50 to 70 people... Pro-Aristide affiliated human rights organizations are calling it a massacre by the UN. MINUSTAH have allowed charges of a massacre to fester, but they released a statement on July 25 stating that their forces did not intentionally target civilians."

While the cable may reflect the official version put forward by the UN of unintended targets, testimony from the survivors and photographic evidence from July 6, 2005, of what are clearly headshots targeting civilians, contradicts this. Although many were likely killed behind thin walls, the video evidence of the disproportionate number of victims felled by single shots to the head from high-powered rifles lends credence to the testimony of survivors following the deadly raid.

In the same document, a personal commentary apparently added by former US Ambassador James B. Foley states, "It remains unclear how aggressive MINUSTAH was, though 22,000 rounds is a large amount of ammunition to have killed only six people."

These FOIA documents are the first clear acknowledgement of the excessive use of force by UN troops in the military operation of July 6, 2005. Unfortunately, it will probably take as long to learn the truth about the UN military operation of December 22, 2006 where residents claim the UN has committed a second massacre in Cite Soleil.

NEXT: The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) documents reveal a concerted propaganda campaign conducted between the US Embassy and the UN to spin events concerning July 6, 2005. It also points to an unusual level of domestic surveillance against Haiti solidarity activists in the United States.

<http://www.haitiaction.net>

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Haiti: Amnesty International condemns murder of journalist

Public Statement

AI Index: AMR 36/001/2007 (Public)

25 January 2007

Amnesty International condemned today the murder of journalist and photographer Jean-Rémy Badio. The organization believes that he was targeted because of his work as a journalist reporting on gang violence in Martissant, a suburb south of Port-au-Prince.

Jean-Rémy Badio was a freelance journalist and photographer. On 19 January, he was reportedly shot at his home in Martissant where gang warfare has been spiralling for more than two years.

Jean-Rémy Badio was a member of SOS Journalistes, a Haitian organization dedicated to the protection and defence of journalists' rights and freedom of the press. According to this organization, he was killed because he had photographed members of an armed gang in Martissant. His family reported that prior to his death he had received death threats from gang members.

Haitian authorities must ensure that the murder of Jean-Rémy Badio does not remain unpunished. An investigation into his murder must be carried out promptly and thoroughly, and the results made public. Members of armed gangs who are terrorizing men, women and children must be shown that there can be no impunity for such crimes and must be brought to trial.

Amnesty International exhorts the Haitian authorities to end impunity for the murder of journalists and to bring the alleged perpetrators of these crimes to justice.

In cases where investigations have been initiated, impunity still prevails. Among these are:

Jean Léopold Dominique along with Jean Claude Louissaint, murdered in Port-au-Prince on 3 April 2000;

Brignol Lindor, found dead in Acul (near Petite Goâve) on 3 December 2003;

Abdias Jean, allegedly extrajudicially executed by police officers on 7 January 2005;

Jacques Roche, found dead on 15 July 2005.

Amnesty International urges the government of Haiti, with the assistance of MINUSTAH, to take urgent steps to ensure that all journalists and human rights defenders in Haiti are able to carry out their activities in safety and without fear of harassment or intimidation.

Haiti: Two years since the killing of journalist Abdias Jean
Thursday, January 25, 2007
by Joe Emersberger and Jeb Sprague
Caribbean Net News

He was murdered on January 14, 2005, shortly after finishing his lunch near his home in the Village de Dieu slum.

The killing of Abdias Jean, a young Haitian journalist who reported from Haiti for WKAT radio in Florida, was quickly condemned by Amnesty International, the Director General of UNESCO and the Inter American Press Association. It was reported by Reuters and Associated press wire services.

The Secretary General of the Association of Haitian Journalists (AHJ), Guyler Delva, also condemned the murder and expressed dismay at the indifference of the Haitian commercial media to the death of a journalist.

Delva did not share Jean's political views but the brazen nature of the crime against a fellow journalist impacted him. Delva was part of the opposition that helped to overthrow Haiti's democratically elected government on February 29, 2004 and bring to power de facto Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, but Delva's protests provoked Latortue's displeasure. According to US based researcher Tom Reeves, who spoke with Reuters employees, Latortue complained to Reuters about an article Delva had written about the murder.

Delva was also a close associate of Reporters San Frontiers' (RSF) Secretary General Robert Menard, whose organization failed to mention the killing of Jean and many other assaults on grassroots journalists during the interim period. In August of 2006 the Paris based group RSF was questioned on its failure to report on the murder of Abdias Jean.

RSF's Haiti expert responded "We asked the police about the killings of Abdias Jean and we were told by the police that it was an attack made by the police but that they didn't know he was a journalist. He was taking pictures."

The RSF representative admitted that it had not met with a single witness to the murder but that all the information they had on the case was based on the testimony of the police, known for their widespread killings and abuses. The damning police testimony was never published. In a response, Jean-François Julliard, RSF's News Editor, again failed to mention the murder of Jean.

Haitian police spokeswoman Gessy Coicou, speaking for the RCMP-trained perpetrators, said of Abdias Jean: "I haven't heard of him and I haven't seen his name in any of the files I have. Many journalists have reported that there are many witnesses. I would advise them to file a complaint." The victim's mother filed numerous complaints but nothing has come of them.

In the moments prior to his death, Abdias Jean was investigating murders carried out by the Haitian police, specifically the killing of two young boys. After taking photos of the victims, he hid in a friend's house when he saw police approaching. But the police spotted him; ordered him out of the house, and shot him in front of several witnesses.

Reed Lindsay, a US journalist based in Haiti, reported: "They tied his wrists with his own belt, dragged him a block away and put a bullet through his head" Yet the police claim not to have heard of him. Perhaps they didn't.

The police and other armed groups that backed Latortue's de facto government were responsible for 4,000 political killings in the greater Port-au-Prince area, according to a scientific study published in the Lancet Medical Journal in August 2006.

However, Brian Concannon of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti asserts "The police know very well who Abdias Jean was. His family filed complaints with the police, the Haitian justice system and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights."

Violence against poor journalists, often those with cameras continued during the interim period. A young Haitian photojournalist, Jean Ristil, who had photographed MINUSTAH and Haitian police violence in Cite Soleil, said that, in November of 2005, he was arrested for the second time. He has been interrogated, tortured and had much of his equipment destroyed by police.

On April 7, 2005, journalist Robenson Laraque died from injuries suffered while observing a clash between UN troops and members of the disbanded Haitian military in the city of Petit-Goâve.

Later that year unknown assailants murdered another Haitian journalist, Jacques Roche. His killing was exploited by the interim government to justify the vilification and imprisonment of a prominent liberation theologian and critic.

The failure to achieve justice for the victims of violence by the interim government's forces and their armed supporters has been widely ignored by the corporate press, many academics and some press freedom groups like RSF which claim impartiality.

The killers of Abdias Jean, much like the killers of thousands of Haitians after the coup of February 2004 remain at large.

Concannon, a lead lawyer on the historic Raboteau massacre trial, observes, "Abdias Jean's killing is yet one more example of the double standard, where the lives of poor black men in Haiti matter least. Had he been a journalist with a prominent Haitian or foreign outlet visiting Cite de Dieu, he would have been eulogized for his courage in going into that neighborhood. But he was a poor journalist covering his neighbors, so he has been forgotten."

Mario Andersol, chief of the Haitian national police, was unavailable for comment.

Founding of a Grassroots Human Rights Coalition in Haiti

by Wadner Pierre

January 24, 2007

Center for Research on Globalization, CA

(from haitianalysis.com)

Port-au-Prince- On November 18, 2006 Haitian grassroots human rights organizations came together to found a coalition. CONODDH (National Coordination of Organizations Defending Human Rights) explains that it is a grouping of organizations all with deep experience working in the field of human rights.

CONODDH has declared its independence of any religious or political affiliation. The registered office of CONODDH is temporarily installed in Port-Au-Prince, but its seat can be transferred at any moment to any place in Haiti. At the November press conference CONODDH proposed activities both within the departments of Haiti and also outside Haiti to improve the domestic situation.

Its founding statute explains "the initiative to establish CONODDH was launched by the following organizations: GDP (Groupe de Defense des Droits des Prisonniers Politiques, or Political Prisoners Rights Defense Group); the BAI (Bureau des Avocats Internationaux, or Bureau of International Lawyers); FTS (Fondation Trente Septembre, or September 30 Foundation); the Collectif des Parents des Prisonniers Politiques (the Political Prisoners' Families Collective); CREDHU/CTH, (Comite pour le Respect des Droits Humains de la Confederation es Travailleurs Haitiens, or Committee for the Respect of Human Rights of the Confederation of Haitian Works), GARDH (Groupe d'Action et de Recherche pour les Droits Humains, or Human Rights Action and Research Group).. " The various organizations will be providing inter-financing. Outside donorship will be accepted but only from organizations or individuals whose philosophy is compatible and in no case attempts to dictate the coalition's conduct.

The inclusion of the CTH's human rights committee within the organization provides significant strength to CONODDH, as CTH is one of the largest and most progressive unions in Haiti. The trade union came under severe repression following February 2004 when the interim government fired and persecuted thousands of civil sector workers. The aid embargo on Haiti, 2000-2004, meant to destabilize Haitian democracy harmed trade unionists across the country.

"What will bring CONODDH into the field of human rights in Haiti?" asked one reporter at the recent conference. CONODDH officials responded that Haiti is a country which has a population of between eight and nine million inhabitants and that in its history the majority of the population live in a situation where the most basic of human rights are deprived.

In spite of the goodwill of some governments which have succeeded in certain capacities and failed in others, there has been little widescale understanding of how to implement basic rights for the great majority of the population. Years of dictatorships in Haiti violated the rights of the greatest majority of the population, particularly that which lives in the underprivileged districts. This population which has lived in misery for years, now has few services like drinking water, electricity, roads and suffers under poor environmental conditions.

Human rights organizations generally denounce the cases of violations but often are lacking in proposing solutions. A few elite oriented human rights groups, often cited by the corporate media and financed by Canada, France, and the United States have failed to investigate the 2004-2006 campaign of repression against poor communities. Some other human rights groups such as AUMODH and BAI have pushed for solutions. CONODDH forms a large scale coalition and aims to bring new blood into this field of human rights but particularly towards aiding the poorest, those without a voice. The overall objective of the CONODDH is to work for the promotion and the defense of human rights for all and throughout the extent of the entire Haitian territory.

Global Research Articles by Wadner Pierre

UN Troops Storm Haiti Village
Prensa Latina
January 24, 2007

Port-au-Prince, Soldiers from the UN Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH) charged against Cite Soleil village.

Although reports do not mention fatalities there may be some wounded since the 300,000 residents awoke early on Wednesday to bursts of gunfire while some copters still patrol the area.

The punitive action is viewed as a display of force against the neighborhood, labeled as conflict zone.

The residents compared the action to the Jul 6, 2005 carnage of 40 civilians killed at their homes at Bois Neuf and Drouillard neighborhoods.

Since the MINUSTAH, made up of 7,200 military and near 2,000 policemen, were deployed in Haiti in 2004 their actions have been questioned by several local and international sectors.

The charges involve sexual abuse, pedophilia, prostitution and trafficking with humans to nourish the lucrative sex industry.

Congress is asked to let Haitians stay

Rep. Alcee Hastings is seeking an 18-month reprieve for Haitians living in this country illegally, so they can stay and work legally.

BY JACQUELINE CHARLES

Miami Herald

January 19, 2007

Citing an ongoing wave of violence and kidnappings in Haiti, U.S. Rep. Alcee Hastings has filed a bill to temporarily protect thousands of undocumented Haitians from deportation.

The South Florida Democrat said his proposed Haitian Protection Act of 2007 is designed to give "temporary protected status" or TPS to an estimated 20,000 Haitians living illegally in the United States. That would give them residence and work papers for up to 18 months.

SURGE IN VIOLENCE

"The Haitian government and the Haitian people need to catch a break," Hastings said. "There is no question violence is on the rise there, and tragically, kidnappings and more specifically child kidnappings are occurring in great numbers."

Hastings' bill was welcomed by South Florida Haitian and immigration activists, who in recent months have stepped up their call for TPS despite successful elections in Haiti in the past year. The country continues to suffer from instability, they argue.

In December, The Miami Herald reported that schools in and around Port-au-Prince were forced to close days early following a spike in for-ransom kidnappings of Haitian kids. At least 48 such kidnappings were reported Nov. 10-Dec. 15.

Though kidnappings appear to have decreased following joint operations by the National Police and the 9,000-strong U.N. stabilization force, insecurity remains as President René Préval and Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis struggle to return the country to stability. A recent update of a State Department travel warning on Haiti tells U.S. citizens that "there is a chronic and growing danger of kidnappings."

SUGGESTED REQUEST

Hastings, whose bill faces an uphill battle even in a Congress controlled by Democrats, said he has written to Préval asking him to make a formal request for TPS to help bolster the effort.

While Congress can pass legislation designating TPS, it is usually the Department of Homeland Security that decides if a country qualifies, based on criteria that include political strife and natural disasters.

Chris Bentley, a spokesman for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, said that to the best of his knowledge, "it only happened once before when [TPS] was created -- extending it to El Salvador. We know of no time since then Congress has actually designated TPS to another country."

**Author's talk launches Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Reads
Story of doctor's humanitarian work inspires guilt, he says
Friday, January 26, 2007
BY MARIANNE RZEPKA
Ann Arbor News, MI**

Dr. Paul Farmer has battled tuberculosis, AIDS and malaria in countries that would stun you with their poverty.

He sleeps little, flies a lot and enjoys treating people with the worst cases of disease anyone has ever seen.

It's enough to make you wonder why you're not doing the same thing.

Author Tracy Kidder talks about that guilt in his book "Mountains Beyond Mountains," the book chosen for this year's Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Reads program. He also addressed it in a talk he gave Thursday to a standing-room-only crowd of readers at Washtenaw Community College.

Farmer's work makes people - including Kidder - think they should be doing more in the world to help those less fortunate. "I knew if I were to hang around, he was going to disturb my peace of mind, and he did," Kidder said.

Pat Stafford-Sturk, of Clinton, knows the feeling.

She finished "Mountains Beyond Mountains" in a week. It both "challenged me and made me feel guilty," she said.

Still, she was looking forward to Kidder's talk, and wrote the date of it on her calendar as soon as it was set. "He writes nonfiction in a way that just hooks you," Stafford-Sturk said.

Kidder's talk was the official kick-off for the community reads project, and the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti district libraries are scheduling a number of events that fall under the theme for this year's program, "We the People ...," including several discussions of the book led by library staff.

That program overlaps with the theme semester at the University of Michigan, "The Theory and Practice of Citizenship: From the Local to the Global."

In his book, Kidder describes Farmer's work in countries where there is no money, no clean water and no suitable housing. To make a difference, the doctor has raised millions of dollars, built new houses and found sources of clean water for those people, as well as set up a nonprofit organization, Partners In Health, to help organize and fund the programs.

Now Farmer is spending a lot of his time getting a similar facility up and running in Rwanda with financial help from the Clinton Foundation, Kidder told the audience Thursday. The doctor expects

soon to be working in Malawi and in an area of the Republic of South Africa that has reported the highest incidence of AIDS in the world, Kidder said.

You might be feeling guilty just about now, but in his book Kidder describes what happened when a wealthy and important donor mused that he should just drop everything and go work with Farmer in Haiti.

Kidder wrote: "Farmer thought for a while, then said, 'In your particular case, that would be a sin.'"

Marianne Rzepka can be reached at 734-994-6820 or mrzepka@annarbornews.com.

Haiti joins CDB
Caribbean 360.com
January 24, 2007

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados - The Republic of Haiti has become the latest member of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). Arrangements for accession to full membership in the Bank were completed recently.

CDB President, Dr. Compton Bourne, welcomed the development saying, "We have been working assiduously over the past two years to bring Haiti into the CDB family. Over the next few months we anticipate a series of discussions between CDB's technical staff and Haitian officials to determine how best the Bank can target its interventions in Haiti."

Haiti is classified as a Borrowing Member Country of the Bank, and as such, is eligible to receive loan and grant financing, as well as technical assistance from CDB. It became the world's first independent black nation in 1804, but has experienced political and economic instability. With a population estimated at 8 million, it also regarded as the poorest nation in the western hemisphere.

CDB is the region's premier development financing institution. It was established in 1969 to contribute to the harmonious economic growth and development of the member countries in the Caribbean and to promote economic cooperation and integration among them. With the admission of Haiti, CDB now has 26 member countries in the Caribbean, Latin America, North America, Europe and Asia. (CDB)

Haiti Joins the Caribbean Development Bank
Haiti eligible to receive loans and grants
Caribbean Press Release
January 24, 2007

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The charges involve sexual abuse, pedophilia, prostitution and trafficking with humans to nourish the lucrative sex industry.

Freelance photographer killed in Haiti
Wednesday | January 24, 2007
The Jamaica Gleaner

Haitian freelance photographer Jean-Rémy Badio was murdered in the southern Port-au-Prince district of Martissant on Friday. He was shot dead in his home by members of a gang he had photographed a few days before.

Reporters Without Borders issued a release yesterday stating that it was "horrified" to learn of the event.

"Badio's tragic death is a harsh blow for the Haitian media, for whom conditions seemed to have improved during the past year," the press freedom organisation said. "This murder has unfortunately served as a reminder that gang law continues to prevail in Haiti, especially in Port-au-Prince. Those responsible must be quickly found and brought to justice, otherwise such murders will recur and will continue to go unpunished. The government must continue to combat the armed gangs."

According to the organisation SOS Journalistes, of which Badio was a member, he was killed because he had photographed members of local gangs. His family said he had received threats from gang members prior to his death.

Haiti: Two years since the killing of Abdias Jean
Joe Emersberger & Jeb Sprague
19 January 2007
Green Left Weekly, Australia

Abdias Jean was murdered on January 14, 2005, shortly after finishing his lunch near his home in the Village de Dieu slum.

The killing of this young Haitian journalist, who reported from Haiti for WKAT radio in Florida, was quickly condemned by Amnesty International, the director-general of UNESCO and the Inter American Press Association. It was reported by Reuters and Associated Press wire services. The secretary-general of the Association of Haitian Journalists (AHJ), Guyler Delva, also condemned the murder and expressed dismay at the indifference of the Haitian commercial media to the death of a journalist.

Delva did not share Jean's political views, but the brazen nature of the crime against a fellow journalist impacted on him. Delva was part of the opposition that helped to overthrow Haiti's democratically elected government on February 29, 2004, and bring to power de-facto Prime Minister Gerard Latortue. But according to US-based researcher Tom Reeves, who spoke with Reuters employees, Latortue complained to Reuters about an article Delva had written about the murder.

Delva was also a close associate of Reporters San Frontiers (RSF) secretary-general Robert Menard, whose organisation failed to mention the killing of Jean and many other assaults on grassroots journalists during the interim period. In August 2006 the Paris-based RSF was questioned on its failure to report on the murder of Abdias Jean.

RSF's Haiti expert responded: "We asked the police about the killings of Abdias Jean and we were told by the police that it was an attack made by the police but that they didn't know he was a journalist. He was taking pictures." The RSF representative admitted that it had not met with a single witness to the murder, but that all the information they had on the case was based on the testimony of the police, who are known for their widespread killings and abuses. The damning police testimony was never published. In a response, Jean-Francois Julliard, RSF's news editor, again failed to mention the murder of Jean.

Haitian police spokeswoman Gessy Coicou, speaking for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police-trained perpetrators at a February 2005 press conference, said of Jean: "I haven't heard of him and I haven't seen his name in any of the files I have. Many journalists have reported that there are many witnesses. I would advise them to file a complaint." The victim's mother filed numerous complaints but nothing has come of them.

In the moments prior to his death, Jean was investigating murders carried out by the Haitian police, specifically the killing of two young boys. After taking photos of the victims, he hid in a friend's house when he saw police approaching. But the police spotted him; ordered him out of the house, and shot him in front of several witnesses.

Reed Lindsay, a US journalist based in Haiti, reported: “They tied his wrists with his own belt, dragged him a block away and put a bullet through his head.” Yet the police claim not to have heard of him. Perhaps they didn’t. The police and other armed groups that backed Latortue’s de facto government were responsible for 4000 political killings in the greater Port-au-Prince area, according to a scientific study published in the Lancet medical journal last August. However, Brian Concannon of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti asserts, “The police know very well who Abdias Jean was. His family filed complaints with the police, the Haitian justice system and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.”

Violence against poor journalists, often those with cameras, continued during the interim period. A young Haitian photojournalist, Jean Ristil, who had photographed MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti) and Haitian police violence in Cite Soleil, said that in November 2005 he was arrested for the second time. He was interrogated, tortured and had much of his equipment destroyed by police. On April 7, 2005, journalist Robenson Laraque died from injuries suffered while observing a clash between UN troops and members of the disbanded Haitian military in the city of Petit-Goave. Later that year unknown assailants murdered another Haitian journalist, Jacques Roche. His killing was exploited by the interim government to justify the vilification and imprisonment of a prominent liberation theologian and critic.

The failure to achieve justice for the victims of violence by the interim government’s forces and their armed supporters has been widely ignored by the corporate press, many academics and some “press freedom” groups like RSF that claim impartiality. The killers of Abdias Jean, much like the killers of thousands of Haitians after the coup of February 2004, remain at large. Concannon, a lead lawyer on the historic trial over the 1994 Raboteau massacre, observed, “Abdias Jean’s killing is yet one more example of the double standard, where the lives of poor black men in Haiti matter least. Had he been a journalist with a prominent Haitian or foreign outlet visiting Cite de Dieu, he would have been eulogized for his courage in going into that neighborhood. But he was a poor journalist covering his neighbors, so he has been forgotten.”

Mario Andersol, chief of the Haitian national police, was unavailable for comment.

[Reprinted from <<http://www.haitianalysis.com>>.]

Amnesty International's Track Record in Haiti since 2004

By: Joe Emersberger –

www.haitianalysis.com

January 19th, 2007

The coup that ousted Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide on February 29, 2004 led very predictably to the worst human rights disaster in the Western Hemisphere over the following two years.[1] It is worth reviewing how the world's most famous human rights group, Amnesty International, responded.

Aristide was twice elected President (in 1990 and in 2000). His first government was overthrown in a coup in 1991. The outcome of the 1991 coup was horrific and well documented. Thousands were murdered; tens of thousands were raped and tortured; hundreds of thousands were driven into hiding. The victims were overwhelmingly supporters of Aristide and his Lavalas movement. The 1991 and 2004 coups were both the work of the US government, Haiti's elite and their armed servants. Canada and France collaborated extensively with the planning and execution of the second coup.[2]

By mid April of 2004, three organizations had sent delegations to Haiti to investigate the aftermath of the coup: the Quixote Center based in Maryland, the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) and the Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean (EPICA). All drew very similar conclusions.[3]

They uncovered a massive terror campaign waged by the de facto government in collaboration with the UN forces in Haiti (later to be known as MINUSTAH) against Lavalas partisans. They reported that some Haitian human rights groups in particular the National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR) were unreliable due to their hostility towards Lavalas. The NLG and Quixote Center delegations observed "wanted" posters in NCHR offices which identified Aristide and other Lavalas officials as criminals. Both delegations reported that NCHR refused to carry out investigations in Lavalas strongholds such as Cite Soleil. Even at this early stage the NLG uncovered evidence in the state morgue of the huge death toll that was being exacted on Lavalas supporters. The state morgue reported that 1000 bodies had been disposed of a month after the coup - most obvious victims of violence. The morgue typically disposed of only 100 bodies a month.

The EPICA delegation suggested that people contact Amnesty to alert them of the unreliability of NCHR. It was a good suggestion because Pierre Esperance, NCHR's director, had boasted in 2002 that

"I am a primary source of information for international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Most recently, I was invited to address the US State Department in a roundtable forum to discuss the human rights situation in Haiti." [4]

His statement does not seem to have been much of an exaggeration. During the first four months after the coup Amnesty failed to call attention to the evidence that a massive assault on Lavalas was well underway. Amnesty's statements suggested equivalence between armed Lavalas partisans and their opponents. For example, on April 8, 2004 Amnesty would state that

"...a large number of armed groups continue to be active throughout the country. These include both rebel forces and militias loyal to former President Aristide." [5]

Amnesty criticized the de facto government for arresting "only Lavalas leaders" but it did not condemn the arrests, many of them made illegally. It expressed no doubts about the legal authority of the de facto government to make any arrests at all. Moreover, by April 8, 2004, many Lavalas officials such as Jocelerme Privert and Amanus Maette had been imprisoned without charge for longer than the 48 hours allowed by the Haitian Constitution. Amnesty had frequently protested violations of this nature in the past even in the case of Roger Lafontant, head of Duvalier's infamous Tonton Macouts, who was arrested by Aristide's first government in 1990 but in 2004 Amnesty was silent as the constitutional rights of elected officials were violated. [6]

It was not until a report issued in June of 2004 that Amnesty mentioned some of the facts other investigators had uncovered months earlier. It finally acknowledged that a " large proportion of the victims of violence were Aristide supporters, including members of grassroots organizations and their relatives" It finally stated that "some human rights organizations who have been active in denouncing abuses committed under the Aristide period do not seem inclined to investigate abuses committed against pro-Aristide groups". However, Amnesty failed to name any of those groups. The omission was harmful to the victims because NCHR, the most prominent Haitian human rights groups, was not only willfully blind to the campaign against Lavalas. It eagerly assisted with the campaign. On March 6, the de facto government made an agreement with NCHR to file criminal charges against anyone NCHR denounced. NCHR eventually changed its name to RNDDH at the request of its parent organization in New York, who wished to distance itself from its Haitian associates. Nevertheless, NCHR/RNDDH continues to be frequently and uncritically cited by the international press. [7]

Amnesty's report of June, 2004 denounced the brutality of US marines who arrested Annette Auguste ("So Ann"), a popular folk singer and Lavalas activist. Her family members, including her 5 year old grandson, were handcuffed by the marines. However, Amnesty suggested that arresting her was justified by hastening to add "those suspected of responsibility for human rights abuses must be brought before a court of law." Kevin Pina, a US filmmaker who worked with Haitian journalists to capture images of the post coup terror, pressed Amnesty to recognize So Ann as a political prisoner. Amnesty's responded that it had "reliable information" that So Ann was guilty of crimes. Amnesty would not tell Pina who their sources were, but NCHR had publicly "saluted" So Ann's arrest. She would remain imprisoned for 20 months without being charged before Amnesty would finally concede that she was arrested "solely for her political views." She finally had her day in court in August, 2006 and was acquitted because no evidence was presented against her. [8]

Amnesty also continued to use the word "Chimere" as if it were a term accepted by all Haitians to refer to armed Lavalas partisans. In fact, it was a term used by elites and the de facto government to stigmatize Lavalas supporters as criminals. Kevin Pina explained

"This word was a highly partisan term used by those who supported Aristide's ouster, especially NCHR, to create a climate of terror and fear after Feb. 2004. Anyone accused of being a 'chimere' was marked for death or imprisonment without trial. Yet here was AI, a purportedly independent human rights organization, using the same politically charged language. I found it disgraceful." [9]

The partisan language Amnesty used was indicative of other failings that would mar this report and their future work.

The background Amnesty provided to the situation in Haiti did not put the human rights record of the Aristide government in proportion to those of his opponents. This had been done by Peter Hallward, a UK based researcher who had used Amnesty's reports, but coming from Amnesty the analysis would have been more difficult to ignore. It would have helped refute articles in the international press which consistently equated Aristide's government to the murderous regimes of the past. These distortions greatly diminished international support for Aristide's government while it was in power and for the victims of the 2004 coup. [10]

Hallward's analysis showed that the record of the Aristide's government was vastly superior to any run by his adversaries. After a month the abuses of the de facto government had already dwarfed anything that took place under Aristide. Hallward's analysis was indirectly supported by opinion polls and elections results since 1990. In 2002 a USAID commissioned poll found that Aristide remained - by a wide margin- the most popular politician in Haiti. The results of presidential elections of 2006, where the presidential candidate endorsed by the Lavalas movement won by a landslide for the fourth consecutive time, also confirmed that Haiti's poor majority, if not the international press and various NGOs, did not equate Lavalas governments to the despised regimes of the past. [11]

On August 16, 2004 Amnesty condemned the sham trials that acquitted Jodel Chamblain and Jackson Joanis - two death squad leaders who played a key role in the coup. The outcome was hardly surprising. Gerard Latortue, head of the de facto government, had publicly praised the armed leaders of the coup as "freedom fighters".[12]

On October 8, 2004 Amnesty expressed concern about "the disregard for the lives and safety of the people" shown by the Haitian police in poor neighborhoods that were Lavalas strongholds. [13]

On October 19, 2004 Amnesty expressed concern about the arrest of Reverend Gérard Jean-Juste, a prominent Lavalas supporter, whom they said "may" be a prisoner of conscience. The statement was issued days after the arrest, which was encouraging given Amnesty's failure to defend other political prisoners, but the tentativeness of its criticism was inexplicable given the record of the de facto government.[14]

Amnesty's press release of November 11, 2004 condemned more police repression in Lavalas strongholds but the following outlandish statement was also made.

"Amnesty International recognizes the difficulties currently facing the transitional government, many of which are the legacy of the actions of the previous government of Jean Bertrand Aristide."

The main "difficulty" the de facto government faced was eliminating Haiti's most popular political movement. That was clear even from a careful read of Amnesty's reports. The "difficulty" was, in one sense, a legacy of Aristide's government, and of the 200 year struggle by Haitians for democracy, but that is not what Amnesty meant. It was commiserating with the elite over their "difficulties".[15]

I had donated to Amnesty for many years, but as 2004 came to a close I began writing to them often to complain about their work on Haiti.

I received gracious replies to my letters from Linn Kingston, Amnesty International Canada's Caribbean Coordinator at the time. It quickly became clear that it was Amnesty's UK office that was responsible for reports about Haiti. Kingston told me that a detailed report was to be published about Haiti "early in 2005" and that my concerns would be "passed on". Repeated delays to the report's publication eventually exasperated Kingston. She wrote to me in May of 2005 saying she was "mystified" by the delays given the dire situation in Haiti. She told me she had "protested and have asked the Canadian Secretary General, Alex Neve and the Directeur General, Michel Frenette of the Francophone Canadian Section to protest as well."

The report would not be published until the end of July, 2005. [16]

Several months before Amnesty's report was finally available, the University of Miami School of Law's Center for the Study of Human Rights, published a detailed report about the human rights situation Haiti. Harvard Law School had also put out an extensive report shortly after. [17]

The University of Miami report summarized conditions in Haiti as follows:

"...the police, backed by UN forces, routinely carry out indiscriminate and unprofessional killing operations. The undisciplined army is back, protecting the rich and attacking the poor. The justice system is twisted against poor young men, dissidents and anyone calling for the return of the constitutional government."

The report conservatively estimated that 700 political prisoners were jailed by the de facto government. It shed considerable light on the close working relationship between NCHR, the Haitian government, and officials linked to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and USAID.

The Harvard School of Law report was more focussed on the role of the UN forces (MINUSTAH) in Haiti but would reach similar conclusions:

"MINUSTAH has effectively provided cover for the police to wage a campaign of terror in Port-au-Prince's slums. Even more distressing than MINUSTAH's complicity in HNP abuses are credible allegations of human rights abuses perpetrated by MINUSTAH itself..."

Amnesty's report of July 28, 2005 again failed, unlike other investigators, to clearly put the violence of Lavalas partisans and the government in proportion. It did, belatedly, defend Yvon Neptune, the former Prime Minister under Aristide, whose illegal detention NCHR had caused with its groundless allegations of a "massacre" in Saint Marc. Amnesty finally stated that Yvon Neptune was a "political prisoner" after he had already spent a year in jail. Amnesty said that a "local human rights organization" had accused him. Again, it failed to name NCHR. [18] Neptune was finally released provisionally in August, 2006, but he must still fight NCHR's allegations in court.

On July 6, 2005 MINUSTAH forces and the Haitian police carried out a massacre in Cite Soleil a slum where support for Lavalas runs especially deep. At least 23 people were killed. The consequences of the raid were extremely well documented. It was captured on film by Haitian journalists working with Kevin Pina. The evidence of MINUSTAH's criminality was so compelling that MINUSTAH stated shortly afterwards that it "deeply regrets any injuries or loss of life during its operation." [19]

Weeks after the massacre Lucile Robinson, Amnesty's UK based researcher for Haiti at the time, explained Amnesty's silence to me as follows.

""We are aware of the situation and are currently gathering information from a variety of sources in order to gain a balanced and informed view on the subject before we react to these events. As I am sure that you are aware, in order to maintain the good reputation that AI depends on to produce effective actions, we do need to make very certain of our facts before acting upon them."

Amnesty's reluctance to comment even to call for an investigation despite overwhelming evidence contrasted starkly with its swift response to unsubstantiated reports of police beheadings by Lavalas supporters. Amnesty finally made brief reference to the July 6 massacre in a statement it published six months after it took place. [20]

Lucile Robinson also defended Amnesty's work by saying that "there are actions which we take which will not always be visible to the general public". However, it was obvious that public exposure was desperately needed. I cited various, far too typical, press reports that obscured the campaign against Lavalas, and thereby minimized the political price paid by the governments of US, Canada, and France (among others) for siding with the oppressors. [21]

Amnesty redeemed itself somewhat by responding quickly, and this time decisively, to the second arrest of the Reverend Gerard Jean-Juste. In a statement of July 25, 2005 it designated him as a "prisoner of conscience." Despite Amnesty's public action, Jean-Juste remained imprisoned for six months after Amnesty took his side. He was provisionally released to have chemotherapy and has still not been cleared. [22]

In January of 2006, Amnesty co-authored a report with OXFAM and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) about the progress of disarmament in Haiti since the coup. The report was entitled "The call for tough arms controls:Voices from Haiti", but some voices were conspicuously absent. After reading the report, I posed questions to Amnesty to which they never responded. Among those questions were

*Why are none of the victims of MINUSTAH's raids into poor neighborhoods quoted in this report?

*Why, in the section entitled "What needs to be done", was discussion dominated by foreign officials and representatives of the de facto government? There was one brief quote from a Bel Air resident but nothing from the well known and highly respected political prisoners: Gerard Jean Juste, So Ann, Yvon Neptune who had been interviewed by journalists and activists. [23].

Despite the elections of February 2006, the Haitian government remains penetrated by appointees of the de facto government. Judge Peres Paul responsible for the incarceration of Gerard Jean-Juste and Kevin Pina remains on the bench. In December of 2005 the regime stacked the judiciary in a brazen

abuse of executive power. It fired five supreme court justices and replaced them with their allies. As a result, at least 100 political prisoners jailed by the de facto government remain in prison. Police hired by the de facto government, and vetted by NCHR/RNDDH, are still on the job. [24]

MINUSTAH continues to patrol slums like Cite Soleil on behalf of Haiti's elite and their foreign allies. On December 22, 2006 MINUSTAH and the Haitian police perpetrated yet another massacre in this neighborhood. Nearly a month later, Amnesty has yet to publicly comment. [25]

On December 13, 2006 Jean Candio, a former Lavalas parliamentarian, became a political prisoner of the Canadian government. He was imprisoned for two weeks in a Windsor Ontario jail due to his association with Aristide's government and spurious allegations by NCHR/RNDDH that in 2001 he had used violence to disrupt a church meeting. Both Amnesty and the UN had published NCHR's allegations against Mr. Candio, but never mentioned later investigations that exonerated him.

The Canada Haiti action Network (CHAN) has expressed its dismay at Amnesty's response to the case of Jean Candio. CHAN summed up Amnesty's track record in Haiti: "Amnesty has been outperformed in Haiti by investigators with far fewer resources and much less stature." [26]

FOOTNOTES

[1] As measured by political killings (4000 over two years) relative to the population the Haitian de facto regime and its allies surpassed Colombia's military and paramilitary groups. This according to the findings of the Kolbe/Hutson study published in the Lancet Medical journal in August, 2006. <http://www.ijdh.org/pdf/Lancet%20Article%208-06.pdf> However, it should be noted that a scientific survey of political killings in Colombia has never been carried out. The "passive surveillance" figures for Colombia are likely to be low. For discussion of passive surveillance versus random sampling see http://web.mit.edu/CIS/pdf/Human_Cost_of_War.pdf

[2] For consequences of 1991 coup see <http://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/h/haiti/haiti948.pdf> For Canada's role in 2004 coup see "Canada in Haiti: Waging war on the poor majority" by Yves Engler and Anthony Fenton for discussion of Canada's role.

[3] Tom Reeves, a Quixote delegation member, discusses findings here: <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=5335> NLG sent two separate delegations see http://www.nlg.org/programs/international/Haiti_delegation_report1.pdf And <http://www.nlg.org/news/delegations.htm> The Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean. A People's Fact Finding Investigation to Haiti: April 18-24, 2004. (EPICA: Washington, D.C., 2004)

[4] See <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/platform/1323> for the Esperance quote

[5] <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360302004?open&of=ENG-HTI>

[6] Amnesty International: The 1992 Report on Human Rights Around the World (covers events in 1991)

[7] Amnesty; June, 2004; <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360382004?open&of=ENG-HTI> On agreement between NCHR and de facto regime see http://www.ijdh.org/pdf/YvonNeptuneIACHRPetition_ENU.pdf For uncritical citation of NCHR/RNDDH see the lengthy Toronto Star article "Crime & Chaos in Haiti" by Tim Harper (Nov 11, 2006) which describes the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) as the "the leading Haitian human rights organization." NCHR-New York, publicly distanced itself from NCHR-Haiti in March, 2005, and asked it to change its name. Soon after, NCHR changed its name to RNDDH. See http://www.nchr.org/hrp/neptune%202005311.htm#The_Haitian_judicial_system_delivers_little_other_than_injustice

[8] For Amnesty's defense of So Ann. See <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360032006?open&of=ENG-HTI> For NCHR's "salute" of So Ann's arrest see http://www.rnddh.org/breve.php?id_breve=13&var_recherche=annette+auguste Pina interview <http://www.pej.org/html/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=5965&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>

[9] For Pina interview see link provided note 8

[10] The left leaning UK Independent stated in an editorial of March 1, 2004 - one day after the coup - that Aristide's ouster would be "mourned by few Haitians" and that Aristide was "just another dictator in a region where he'd once been the great democratic hope."

[11] Below from "Option Zero in Haiti" by Peter Hallward: "Amnesty International's reports covering the years 2000-03 attribute a total of around 20 to 30 killings to the police and supporters of the FL a far cry from the 5,000 committed by the junta and its supporters in 1991-94, let alone the 50,000 usually attributed to the Duvalier dictatorships..... Amnesty International reports indicate that at least 20 police officers or FL supporters were killed by army veterans in 2001, and another 25 in further paramilitary attacks in 2003, mostly in the lower Central Plateau near the US-monitored Dominican border." See <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=55&ItemID=5806> for the full article Hallward's numbers are confirmed by Justin Podur - who took a very detailed look at a book published by a rabidly anti-Aristide author See <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=55&ItemID=9706> For information on USAID commissioned polls in Haiti see <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=55&ItemID=8940> For probing analysis of Haiti's 2006 presidential elections by Brian Concannon see http://haitiaction.net/News/BC/2_14_6/2_14_6.html

[12] <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360532004?open&of=ENG-HTI> Amnesty's June, 2004 report mentioned Latortue's "Freedom fighter" remark. See note 7

[13] <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360542004?open&of=ENG-HTI>

[14] <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360562004?open&of=ENG-HTI>

[15] <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360602004?open&of=ENG-HTI>

[16] Human Rights Watch, in contrast, never replied to a single email or phone call of mine about Haiti. Their response to the 2004 coup was even worse than Amnesty's. See <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=55&ItemID=10011>

[17] Miami report at http://www.law.miami.edu/cshr/CSHR_Report_02082005_v2.pdf Harvard report at http://www.margueritelaurent.com/campaigns/campaignone/human_rights_reports/harvard.html

[18] For details about the "massacre" in Saint Marc see <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=8142>

[19] Independent: Andrew Buncombe: "Peacekeepers accused after killings in Haiti" : <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/americas/article302259.ece>

[20] Amnesty's brief mention of July 6, 2005 massacre is here <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360042006?open&of=ENG-HTI> Amnesty's response to the "beheadings" story is here <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360542004?open&of=ENG-HTI> Amnesty said it "condemns in the strongest terms the beheading of National Police officers, supposedly by Lavalas supporters." Brain Concannon discusses the unsubstantiated "beheading" reports here http://www.ijdh.org/articles/article_violence-in-haiti-kboo-portland-radio.html Investigations in the Port-au-Prince morgue by the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) turned up no evidence that the beheadings took place.

[21] See FAIR; Jeb Sprague "Invisible Violence" for detailed look at the corporate media's Haiti coverage after the coup; <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/article.php?id=218&PHPSESSID=22c1451fade7191bea9212da47c8ef98>

[22] <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360082005?open&of=ENG-HTI>

[23] The Control Arms report is here <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR360012006?open&of=ENG-HTI> Some of my letters to Amnesty (and Human Rights Watch) are archived here <http://www.medialens.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=842> An interview Justin Podur did with So Ann while she was in prison is here <http://www.killingtrain.com/archives/000464.html#more>

[24] See <http://www.ijdh.org/pdf/humanrightsreport6-19-06.pdf> for discussion of judiciary The de facto government's hiring of police , and the NCHR/RNDDH role, is discussed in The University of Miami report. See note 17. For an updated list of political prisoners see <http://www.ijdh.org/pdf/headline1-10-07.pdf>

[25] For graphic images from the 12/22 massacre see the following Democracy Now segment. <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=07/01/04/159201> which is an interview with So Ann

[26] First open letter from CHAN to Amnesty is here
<http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/article.php?id=222> Second open letter is here
<http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/article.php?id=228>

**BIOGRAPHY | TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE
MYTHICAL MANTHE NOVELIST HUMANIZES THE PERSON BEHIND THE LEGEND
OF HAITI'S INDEPENDENCE
BY MICHAEL DEIBERT**

Toussaint Louverture: A Biography. Madison Smartt Bell. Pantheon. 352 pages. \$27.

Miami Herald

January 21, 2007

Novelist Madison Smartt Bell's new biography of Haiti's independence hero Toussaint Louverture attempts to lift the veils of romance and symbolism from one of history's most compelling figures to examine the man beneath. It largely succeeds in its long overdue re-examination of one of the central individuals of that tumultuous nation's earliest days.

Perhaps no figure in Haitian history has been as much wrapped in myth and legend as Louverture, and Bell, author of a trilogy of historical novels chronicling some of the major personalities of the Haitian revolution, goes a long way toward humanizing the character of the freed slave whose challenge to the armies of the European powers would eventually result in the only successful slave rebellion in history and the establishment of an independent nation in 1804, a victory Louverture never lived to see.

Though Bell's initial descriptions of Haiti's pre-Columbian civilization are somewhat pedestrian, he soon hits his stride in detailing the complicated and often absurd color scale of the slave-holding society into which Louverture, claimed by some to be the descendant of an Arada king, was born as "Toussaint Bréda," after the Bréda plantation where he was enslaved. He chose the moniker Louverture -- "the opening" -- many years later.

Freed from slavery 17 years before the outset of the Haitian revolt, Louverture was, Bell reminds us, "a member of a very small group: free blacks who owned slaves as well as property." Why and how he sought to make common cause with other like-minded rebel leaders such as Jean-Francois Papillion and Georges Biassou -- masterfully resurrected from historical obscurity by Bell -- forms one of the book's most intriguing questions.

At times leaning heavily on the work of the anthropologist Gérard Barthelemy and historian Gerard Laurent, Bell illuminates many of the long-forgotten minutiae of the Haitian revolution. If he may occasionally be faulted for belaboring some of his points -- the description of a minor 1796 skirmish outside of the city of Port-de-Paix drags on for many pages -- he nevertheless must be saluted for his elucidation of the effect that Louverture's blending of European and African styles of command and authority had on Haiti's independence struggle.

Seeking to counter the misconception that the leaders of Haiti's revolt were "a gang of supposedly ignorant, illiterate and generally uncivilized blacks," Bell brilliantly evokes the bitter eloquence of the writing of Haiti's revolutionary leadership, as is evidenced in a passage from a July 1792 letter signed by the rebel generals Jean-Francois and Biassou (as well as, curiously, Louverture's 14-year-old nephew Belair) to the representatives of the French government: "Under the blows of your barbarous whip we have accumulated for you the treasures you enjoy in this colony; the human race has suffered to see what barbarity you have treated men like yourself -- yes, men -- over whom you have no right except that you are stronger and more barbaric than we are. For too long we have borne your chains

without thinking of shaking them off, but any authority which is not founded on virtue and humanity, and which only tends to subject one's fellowman to slavery, must come to an end, and that end is yours."

The Louverture we see in these pages comes across as resilient, brave and politically savvy, switching allegiance between French and the Spanish colonial forces with dizzying speed and eventually uniting the entire island under his rule before being shipped off to ignoble exile and imprisonment in France by Napoleon's brother-in-law, General Charles Leclerc. With Louverture spirited out of Haiti and imprisoned in a jail amidst the Jura Mountains, Bell writes movingly of the petty humiliations the courageous Louverture was forced to endure at the behest of the pint-sized French tyrant: Stripped of his military uniform and given peasant rags to wear, fed meager rations and given inadequate heating during a brutal French winter, Louverture died in prison in April 1803.

When Bell attempts to bring Louverture's legacy up to the present day, his footing is less sure, and he unquestioningly repeats popular myths regarding Haiti's recent history that, coming after such detailed and comprehensive analysis of its distant past, strike the reader as disappointingly facile. One is left wishing that Bell had displayed as much interest in the nuances of the democratic struggle in Haiti's second century as he did in its outset, but the overall effect doesn't diminish the value of what has come before.

Despite its imperfections, though, the biography serves as a well-researched and timely reminder that Haiti's political travails are no recent phenomenon, and that human beings, however symbolic they may become, are creatures of complex motivation, not easily summed up by the empty sloganeering that has characterized much of the recent debate on Louverture's tormented homeland. Before there was the legend, there was the man, and Bell's book does all students of Haiti a favor by bringing a bit of him back to public consciousness.

Michael Deibert is the author of *Notes from the Last Testament: The Struggle for Haiti*.

Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the United States: Protect rights, reduce statelessness

Caribbean Net News

Reuters

Friday, January 19, 2007

<http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/cgi-script/csArticles/articles/000052/005242.htm>

WASHINGTON, USA: Exploitative migrant labour agreements and years of unregulated migration have created a permanent underclass of people of Haitian descent in the Caribbean, including in the Dominican Republic.

One Dominican-Haitian named Sonia Pierre who has overcome this poverty to lead a human rights movement on behalf of stateless children, and who received the 2006 R.F. Kennedy Human Rights award, compellingly describes the situation.

There is a country in the Caribbean where children cannot go to school. These children do not have a right to healthcare. These children are in danger of being taken to Haiti [even though they and their parents were born in the Dominican Republic].

They are victims of discrimination because of the condition of being of Haitian descent. Many times these children then have a hate for their origins. One's identity, roots, and values are what make you a human being. This is not the internal problem of one state. We live in a global world. So we are talking about world citizens.

In the Dominican Republic there exists thousands and thousands of stateless people - most of them being children. An estimated two to three million individuals, 20-25 percent of people residing in the Dominican Republic, are not documented. Among them are up to one million individuals of Haitian origin.

Within that group, and of most concern, is the large number of Dominican-Haitian children born in the country who cannot access their human right to a nationality addressed in the country's constitution. In addition, asylum seekers who have fled politically motivated persecution in Haiti live in a state of limbo because their claims are not adjudicated in the Dominican Republic.

Their Dominican-born children also live without effective nationality. As a signatory to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, there is much the Dominican government can do.

"People see the Dominican Republic as a happy go lucky place with a few flaws. In reality, it is a country with deep rooted difficulty with human rights and an attitude that no one can tell us what to do," says Bridget Wooding, a development consultant.

The complex history and economic disparity of the two countries that share one island have resulted in decades of migration, which has at various times, including the present, been largely unregulated.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Haitians migrated to the Dominican Republic to work on the plantations and in the factories of the sugar industry. From the 1950s through the early 1980s the migration was legal, but there was also exploitation.

While the migration agreements were worked out bilaterally, the US also benefited. Migration agreements were hugely profitable for companies and governments.

Workers who had migrated under bilateral migrant worker agreements had children in the Dominican Republic over several generations, and these individuals have established themselves.

However, the Dominican government has failed to establish a legal framework compatible with international norms to address the nationality of the descendants. According to one US representative, " children are neither Haitian nor Dominican. They are stateless."

Descendants of Haitian migrants cannot access education beyond the fourth grade, have a bank account, own a car, get a driver's license or get a good job. "It is as if you don't exist," one Dominican-Haitian explained to Refugees International (RI) and Lutheran Immigration and Refugees Service (LIRS) during a recent visit to the region.

The problem has not diminished in the two decades since the sugar industry has required less human effort. Other industries and services have taken advantage of this inexpensive and unregulated labor force. Women find work in the homes of Dominicans as domestics.

Men work and live, sometimes with their wives and children, on construction sites. Others have remained on the bateys or formerly functioning sugar plantations frustrated with lack of employment, education, and freedom of movement.

"We depend on Haitian labor," a Dominican Republic government official confirmed. "We don't hide the reality. The problem is not new, and we are looking for a solution."

Meanwhile, the Dominican government continues to enjoy the short-term benefits of low-wage, undocumented workers and has not meaningfully pursued the long-term benefits of regulating migration.

The impact of governmental failure to establish a fair, humane immigration system was described by one elderly man who has been living and formerly working on a Dominican Republic batey for 35 years, yet cannot have an identity document or claim a pension. He has five children and numerous grand-children, none of whom are documented.

"I cannot approach the municipal government or the consulate to solve my problem. Living without documents is like living as a pig in the mud," the man lamented.

In theory, the Dominican constitution grants citizenship to everyone born on its territory, but the Dominican Supreme Court has ruled that Dominican-born Haitians are ineligible for citizenship because they are "in transit," despite the fact that many of them, their parents and grandparents have lived and worked in the country for decades.

According to one Haitian government official, these children could theoretically be registered at the Haitian embassy in the Dominican Republic, but according to individuals who have tried this, they get turned away for various reasons, including not having proper documents or witnesses. When they try to get required documents from local hospitals where their children were born, they are also unsuccessful.

In October 2005, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights based in Costa Rica, issued a landmark judgment, *Yean and Bosico*, which found that the Dominican Republic had denied citizenship on the basis of race, thereby rendering children of Haitian descent effectively stateless.

The court gave the government until mid October 2006 to apologize, pay damages to the two children involved, publish the ruling, and implement measures to ensure equal access to birth certificates and school enrollment. The government has done nothing to comply and stated it is bound by the Supreme Court judgment that Haitians are in transit.

Currently, there is a debate about changing the Dominican constitution so that nationality would be conferred based on the determination of having Dominican blood and not by virtue of being born on Dominican soil. If this change goes forward, thousands of individuals will be made stateless.

The Central Electoral Board issues birth certificates and identity documents to Dominicans, but it widely reported to deny the right to Dominican birth certificates to children born of parents believed to be Haitian. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are particularly concerned about a developing trend.

"Young people try to get identity documents, especially as they prepare to enter the university, but are surprised to find they have no birth record. Sometimes they take the birth certificate and keep it," one agency reported. "We are aware of 25 cases of annulments of birth certificates."

There also continues to be serious concern about large-scale deportations of Haitian migrants. Tens of thousands of individuals are deported from the Dominican Republic to Haiti each year. Expulsions are not carried out according to agreed methods.

In the process, families are separated and individuals, including children, remain without a nationality years after the deportation. LIRS and RI visited a community of deportees who had been living near the border for 15 years. Their biggest concerns include malnutrition and inability to integrate back into their former communities.

While recognizing the World Bank's good intentions, some NGOs are concerned about a project under consideration to help the Dominican government issues birth certificates and identity documents to children and adults.

NGO workers told RI and LIRS that they expressed their concern to the World Bank that this program would discriminate against Dominicans of Haitian descent.

The situation in Haiti continues to cause people to leave the country for a better life elsewhere, but many of them continue to face violations of their human rights in the places where they seek protection or where their children are born and have a right to a nationality.

Common needs of countries in the region to document citizens, combat human trafficking, and meet labor needs would be best addressed in the context of meeting their international human rights obligations, a method known to prevent refugee flows. With the support of the international community, the Dominican Republic and Haiti need to develop policies which ensure that the rights of stateless persons and their children are upheld.

Refugees International recommends that:

The Dominican Republic and Haiti develop and carry out non-discriminatory policies, including ones on documentation and migration that prevent and reduce statelessness, with a focus on combating corruption.

The Dominican Republic immediately and fully complies with the 2005 Inter-American court decision.

The Dominican Republic signed the 1954 Convention relating to the status of stateless persons. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the agency with a mandate on behalf of stateless persons, establishes an active presence in the Dominican Republic.

The United States invest and participate in a rights-based regional response to migration in the Caribbean that inclusively responds to the plight of stateless persons.

Senior Advocate for Stateless Initiatives Maureen Lynch conducted an assessment of the situation for Haitians in the Dominican Republic in November.

Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the U.S.: A Shared Responsibility to Protect Refugees

18 Jan 2007

Source: Refugees International - USA

Maureen Lynch and Bernadette Passade Ciss ♦

The following bulletin was written jointly by the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and Refugees International.

Over the past decades, waves of asylum seekers have fled persecution in Haiti, seeking safe haven in neighboring countries in the region. For those fleeing by land, the Dominican Republic has issued only a handful of asylum decisions, and for those fleeing by sea, the U.S. Coast Guard has rarely provided interdicted Haitians meaningful access to refugee or asylum processing. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has advised the U.S. that its interdiction practice violates its obligations under the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. Security is a nearly unachievable goal for Haitian asylum seekers.

During a recent visit by Refugees International (RI) and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), one man explained the situation. "The Dominican Republic does not respect the Geneva Conventions [meaning the Refugee Convention]. We refugees have lots of problems. There is no security. There is discrimination. I can't get healthcare. Our children have no papers and cannot go to school. We struggle to pay the rent and sometimes are chased out of our homes." Another declared, "I haven't returned to Haiti because the atmosphere is not set. One has to hide and move from one place to another because it is a gang-run society."

The Haitian government lacks the ability to control its internal affairs and is in a permanent state of instability, experts say. According to local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations, armed groups in Haiti continue to commit violence against civilians with impunity. While the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Haiti, MINUSTAH, reports fewer attacks against its operations and less kidnapping in some neighborhoods, representatives say, "When gang violence is reduced in one area, it crops up in another," and pointed out that these gangs have in effect replaced the government in certain neighborhoods.

"There is no rule of law," a leading human rights activist told RI and LIRS. "The biggest problem is impunity. The judicial system is corrupt and doesn't respond to the needs of the population. Crime goes unpunished. I see that the international community and the government of Haiti don't have the will to improve justice. We have to fight impunity and corruption." This individual also pointed to the disturbing trend of forcible recruitment of boys to participate in the gangs and the gangs' disproportionate targeting of women. In a country where NGOs emphasized to RI and LIRS that over 50 percent of the households are female-headed, this trend is particularly alarming.

The Dominican Republic faces its own challenges. An estimated 20-25 percent of persons residing in the Dominican Republic (2-3 million persons) are not documented. At least 200,000 and as many as one million of these individuals are of Haitian origin, a situation largely produced by the complex history, economic disparity, and decades of unregulated migration between the two countries. While the Dominican Republic government recognizes its dependence on Haitian labor, it fails to distinguish

in any meaningful way between individuals who enter the country for economic reasons and those who have fled persecution.

Asylum seekers in the Dominican Republic say they are treated as economic migrants instead of as people in need of protection. One of them explained, "I am directly excluded from society because I don't have documentation." When asked how the births of the children of asylum seekers get registered, one Dominican government official said that children of asylum seekers get their parents' status and such individuals, despite their claim of fearing persecution in Haiti, should go to the Haitian embassy to register a birth. "Sons and daughters of refugees are in a state of limbo," an affected individual concluded.

"For 15 years there has been no mechanism for refugee status determination [in the Dominican Republic]," a rights worker noted. Five refugee cases were recognized in the last two years. According to the Dominican government, ninety-nine percent of asylum applications are filed by Haitian nationals, but the most recent individuals granted refugee status were one Haitian, one Guatemalan, and one Russian. According to NGO and government representatives, hundreds of asylum cases are pending, with figures ranging from 300 to almost 500 families.

Since the inter-ministerial body that meets to decide on asylum cases rarely meets, asylum applicants face insecurity in the Dominican Republic and are in constant fear of deportation to Haiti. Lack of status affects everyday life. Renewing an asylum application costs thousands of Dominican Pesos, ranging from 8,000 to 24,000 (USD \$239-718). One asylum seeker explained, "I came here because my life was threatened. For six years I only have papers that show I requested refugee status. It is only good for two months. Each day I go to the immigration office to try to get a legal document. It's a big problem. We are refugees. We are intelligent and have the capacity to do anything, but instead we get abuse. There are many laws that the government doesn't respect. And the same problem exists here as over there [Haiti], which is violence."

Another asylum seeker explained how her eldest minor daughter was assaulted and forcibly deported to a town in Haiti where she knew no one. After three months and much support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), they were reunited only to face the consequences of another pre-adolescent daughter being raped and needing to go into hiding following their attempts to bring charges against the perpetrators. This asylum seeker explained that she isn't safe in the Dominican Republic, but she would rather be in hiding there with her family than return to Haiti where her son was killed. Human rights workers in Haiti confirmed the reality of this asylum seeker's fears.

Tens of thousands of individuals are deported from the Dominican Republic to Haiti each year. Expulsions are not carried out according to agreed methods, according to advocates. In addition, families often become separated and individuals, including children, remain without a nationality years after the deportation. LIRS and RI visited a community of deportees who have been living in Haiti near the border for 15 years. Their biggest concerns include malnutrition and inability to integrate back into their former communities. As for deportees from the United States, MINUSTAH cited their return as a challenge for the Haitian government and stated that the Haitian government would not be able to handle more than a few deportees from the U.S. each month, a number far lower than the 100 people per month that the U.S. reportedly intends to start returning to Haiti.

In addition, conditions in Haiti have forced unknown numbers of people to leave their homes in search of safety in other parts of the country. In some communities, anywhere from one third to one half of the population is internally displaced. Some families leave their homes at night and return during the day; others seek sanctuary in clinics or churches. Haitian deportees from the Dominican Republic and the United States exacerbate the problem of internal displacement.

UNHCR does not have an office in the Dominican Republic or Haiti to advise the governments on the status of refugees and internally displaced persons. "There are not many institutes willing to help the refugees with health problems, financial assistance, and legal aid," one humanitarian worker reported, "But nevertheless, the organizations that help the refugees need finance and space. That does not exist right now." At the government level, one key problem identified by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is that there is no bilateral migration accord. And the often articulated hope that the governments of Haiti and the Dominican Republic will soon resume the work of a bilateral migration commission is simply that, a hope.

With the support of the global community, the Dominican Republic and Haiti must develop policies to ensure that the rights of refugees, stateless persons, and their children are upheld. As one refugee put it, "There are thousands of people waiting for a solution; [waiting] to live a normal life."

Refugees International and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service recommend that: The Dominican Republic and Haiti develop and carry out viable migration policies, including an effective asylum adjudication system and reinstatement of a fully-functioning migration commission. The donor community and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) work with and help fund the Dominican Republic and Haiti to build these systems. UNHCR establish offices in the Dominican Republic and Haiti to work on behalf of refugees and stateless persons and determine the extent of internal displacement in Haiti. The Dominican Republic and the United States refrain from forcible return of Haitian asylum seekers and expedite full access to a full and fair refugee status determination process, including eliminating asylum application fees in the Dominican Republic. The United States invest and participate in an effective regional refugee protection system and urge others in the region to do the same. The United States respond to the plight of Haitian refugees by removing barriers to durable solutions, including barriers to the U.S. asylum system and to the strategic use of resettlement.

----- Maureen Lynch of Refugees
International and Bernadette Passade Cissé of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service conducted a joint assessment mission focused on Haitian asylum seekers in November.

Haiti Police, Parliament Tension Increasing
Prensa Latina
January 19, 2007

Port-au-Prince, The conflict between a high-ranking police officer and a member of Parliament is focusing the attention of the three powers of the Haitian State with the expiration of a notification by the Deputies Chamber.

In a unanimous resolution Wednesday, the Legislature demanded dismissal of General Inspector and Central Director of the Administrative Police Jean Saint Fleur, accused of attacking Deputy Michelet Casimir on January 2.

The declaration from 87 members of Parliament resulted from Saint Fleur's refusal to attend the Finance Ministry to discuss the charges.

The case file contains photos of Casimir's wounds caused by police following his arrest when his driver broke a traffic regulation.

The deputies warned they would resort to the Justice Ministry if the director of the Administrative Police and those accompanying him during the violent incidents are not fired in 24 hours.

We must judge the guilty people, declared the president of the Lower Chamber, Pierre Eric Jean Jacques, and asserted they would see the case to the end.

Discount carrier Spirit Airlines to begin flying to Haiti in March
The Associated Press
January 18, 2007
International Herald Tribune

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Discount carrier Spirit Airlines will offer service between Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Haiti's capital beginning in March, the airline said Thursday.

Fort Lauderdale-based Spirit will fly to Port-au-Prince three times a week starting March 22 and will offer daily flights starting in May, the airline said in a statement.

One-way fares between Fort Lauderdale and Port-au-Prince will start at US\$93 (€71) according to Spirit's Web site, compared with US\$255 (€197) for American Airlines flights listed on that company's Web site.

Barry Biffle, Spirit's chief marketing officer, said the new service would give the 250,000 people of Haitian descent living in South Florida "a new low-fare option for travel."

Spirit currently flies to 29 destinations, including 12 in the Caribbean. Earlier this week, the airline announced a new service between Fort Lauderdale and Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

HAITI: Mysterious Prison Ailment Traced to U.S. Rice
by Jeb Sprague and Eunida Alexandra
Global Research, January 18, 2007
IPS news - 2007-01-17

NEW YORK, Jan 17 (IPS) - A newly released investigation into the deadly scourge of Beri-beri in Haiti's National Penitentiary uncovered evidence that the clash between the manufacturing process used in U.S. processed rice and the traditional Haitian rice cooking method has been killing poor young men behind bars and leaving others morbidly ill.

By early 2006, firefights brought on by Haitian National Police and United Nations incursions into the capital's poorest neighborhoods had become commonplace. The raids, deemed "operations" by authorities, and reportedly designed to flush out criminal gangs, often resulted in high civilian casualties.

In a recent scientific study in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, done through random spatial sampling, it was estimated that 8,000 people were killed in the greater Port-au-Prince area from March 2004 through early 2006 after Haiti's elected government was ousted.

Already overcrowded and antiquated Haitian prisons quickly became packed with poor young men, drastically worsening the health conditions inside. The national penitentiary in Port-au-Prince built for a capacity of 800 today holds over 2,000 prisoners.

Last April, the Lamp for Haiti Foundation, a Philadelphia-based non-profit organisation created to address both the health care and the human rights needs of Haiti's poor, commissioned an investigation into the mysterious Beri-beri deaths of otherwise young, healthy prisoners in the Haitian National Penitentiary.

Staff attorney Thomas Griffin and staff physician James Morgan were given access by the national director of prisons, Wilkens Jean, to the sickest prisoners to search for clues to the source of the outbreak.

Griffin, a Philadelphia-based immigration lawyer and human rights investigator, had repeatedly visited the Haitian National Penitentiary since February 2002. In November of 2004, taking part in a Miami University human rights delegation, he found that poor supporters of the elected Aristide government had come under severe repression, showing up in "mass graves, cramped prisons, no-medicine hospitals, corpse-strewn streets and maggot-infested morgues".

In an October 2005 investigation, Griffin met with over 80 U.S. deportees. While conducting a follow-up investigation in March 2006, he found that a deportee from the United States he had met in October, Jackson Thermidor, had just died of congestive heart failure brought on by Beri-beri. Further, based upon reports from prison officials as well as prisoners, Beri-beri appeared to be devastating the overcrowded prison population.

If left untreated, Beri-beri slowly attacks its victims' nervous systems, eventually causing congestive heart failure. Treatment, which is almost always successful, consists simply of the correct administration of a multivitamin supplement.

Morgan and Griffin observed that many of those arrested during the administration of the post-coup, foreign-appointed government started to suffer from weight loss, emotional disturbances, impaired sensory perception, weakness, pain in the limbs, and periods of rapid and irregular heartbeat -- all direct symptoms of Beri-beri.

Packed together in squalid conditions and provided meager, irregular meals, Haitian prisoners were fed a diet of rice that Griffin and Morgan discovered had lost its natural B1 vitamin/thiamin content, leading to the ultimately harmful effects. Griffin explained, "We found out that the little food they do give to prisoners is U.S.- processed rice."

All the Haitian rice production, which Haitians traditionally grew and consumed as a staple, was a healthy, whole-grain, vitamin B- packed, and native crop. But, due to U.S. policies since the early 1980's preferring U.S. rice producers over Haitians' own sustainable agriculture, tariffs were forced to drop, and U.S. rice flooded the Haitian market.

It not only destroyed much of traditional Haitian farm life that was the soul and lifeblood of the nation, but it pushed farmers off their land and into the city slums in Port-au-Prince. The prisoners, Griffin observed, who must eat the U.S. rice come from those slums, and are now dying of Beri-beri.

Griffin and Morgan gained access to all 21 of the prisoners then housed in the prison infirmary. Dr. Morgan made physical examinations as Griffin questioned the prisoners on the conditions of their confinement and their backgrounds.

Among other findings, only two of the prisoners had been convicted and were serving sentences. The others were legally innocent, pending trial or release. Only eight had ever been brought before a magistrate for a hearing, despite the Haitian Constitution's requirement of hearing within 48 hours of any arrest.

The average length of time prisoners had been detained as of the April investigation was 13 months, and one prisoner had already been locked up for two full years without ever being taken before a court. Nine of the 21 prisoners were suffering in the deep stages of Beri- beri, hardly able to talk due to chest congestion and fatigue from overworked hearts.

"None had lawyers," Morgan observed, "they all had sunken empty unfocused eyes, the trailing step and the air of used old men awaiting death, yet they were hardly in their twenties."

Most telling to the investigators, however, was that all the sick had depended on the prison's "twice a day meals from a large communal bowl, rather than, like most of the more healthy prisoners, on food prepared and delivered daily from outside by family members."

At the request of investigators, Wilkins Jean took them to the prison warehouse, where 50-lb sacks of imported U.S. rice made up almost the entirety of the food stores. Griffin explains, "On each one of

these bags was written, in English: 'Extra Fancy Long Grain Enriched USA,' and 'Do Not Rinse Before or After Cooking.'"

Like most mass-produced rice in the U.S., it had been polished and bleached to make it more appealing to the consumer's eye. The process, however, removes key nutrients, including vitamin B1/ thiamine, from the grain.

To restore some of the nutrients, many U.S. rice mills routinely "enrich" the processed rice by adding back nutrients. The problem for Haitians, however, is that the nutrients are returned by merely coating the exterior of the rice grain with the mixture. Haitians, Griffin and Morgan would learn, have always scrubbed their rice before cooking it -- which, according to Griffin, at the prison resulted in a meal "that had about as much nutritional value as cardboard."

The Lamp Foundation is now embarked on an ambitious education campaign at the prison and with the national prison directorate, and plans to open an office in Cite Soleil, the poorest community in Port-au-Prince, later this month.

"The only reason the general population of Haiti that eats U.S. processed rice is not also suffering from Beri-beri to the same degree is that they must get vitamin B/thiamin from other sources. The prisoners, on the other hand, get no other food," Morgan said. "We told Mr. Wilkens Jean this: if you are going to serve American rice, cook it like an American -- don't rinse it before you cook it."

According to Prison Director Jean, prison authorities had tried to distribute vitamin B supplements because they already knew that the lack of it was underlying the Beri-beri epidemic. But, said Jean, the prison administration never had enough for all prisoners on any kind of regular basis.

Eunida Alexandra is a Haitian immigrant living and working in Brooklyn who hosts the television cultural awareness show "Voices of Haiti" in New York. Jeb Sprague is the editor of www.Haitianalysis.com

Feds nixed deportation order
By VINCENT LAROUCHE
The Ottawa Sun
January 22, 2007

Daudi Niyonsaba was outraged after reading in the Journal de Montreal that Immigration Canada helped his accused attacker avoid a deportation order in 2003.

The newspaper reported that Jean-Yves "Blaze" Brutus, who is accused of attempted murder in the shooting of Niyonsaba, was ordered deported in 2002 for "serious crime."

Immigration Canada intervened a few months later to halt the deportation order because Brutus feared for his safety if he was sent back to his native Haiti.

Niyonsaba said he can't understand why his accused shooter was allowed to stay in Canada even though he was deemed dangerous by the authorities.

"He was known for a long time," said Niyonsaba, himself an immigrant from the central African nation of Burundi. "He was regarded as a danger to the public, but nothing was done to protect the public. That worries me."

He is calling for tough new measures to ensure repeat offenders are kept off the streets.

"If not, there will be more innocent victims like me," he warned.

Eastern Caribbean states defend visa restrictions on Haiti
Radio Jamaica
January 16, 2007

Eastern Caribbean states have defended a decision by ten CARICOM countries to impose visa restrictions on fellow member Haiti during the Cricket World Cup.

The nine world cup host countries and Dominica, which form a single CARICOM domestic space for ease of movement, imposed a common visa on Haiti along with a number of countries because of concerns about human trafficking and terrorism.

St. Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Dr. Denzil Douglas told journalists at the end of the issue came up at the 44th meeting of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) authority in Antigua late last week.

Mr. Douglas said that Jamaica and Dominica had specifically called on the imposition of a CARICOM visa on the grouping's 15th member.

Swept aside and forgotten
By Larry Bailly
Wednesday, January 17, 2007
Editorial Opinion
Seattle Times
Snohomish County opinion

Larry Bailly

I have just left for the Caribbean. I'll be a little more than 700 miles from Miami, but 100 years back from life as we know it.

I'll be in a place where people are still living in homes with grass roofs, stick walls and mud floors, and where electricity is still an oddity and clean water is often the difference between life and death. Donkeys are still the beast of burden and walking is often the only means of travel. Children still die in great numbers before they reach school age, most from malaria, tuberculosis and malnutrition, many others from accidents involving fire. Burning charcoal is the prevailing odor in the air.

After 200 years of colonial slavery, and another 200 years of being a free republic, with periods of revolt, revolution, dictatorship and foreign control, Haiti just survives.

The country's "far west" is still a primitive, forsaken area of the Western Hemisphere. One of nine sections in the poorest country in the Americas, it is at the lowest rung of even that ladder. It survives from day to day on the backs of people who just go on fighting to live.

This is Haiti's desert region. There are no real jobs; there is very little educational opportunity. I go there because I am always impressed. People there aren't bitter, because they have never known anything different. They don't expect to be saved from anything, they are just curious about why we are there. I myself am always kind of an oddity, a "blanc" with a beard.

I'll be there with a couple of friends to investigate the construction of a small but important medical facility. I will meet, for the first time, a missionary couple from the Netherlands — a doctor and her husband dedicating their lives to the future of Haiti's destitute inhabitants.

In this dark corner of Haiti, a hospital will be a beacon of hope. Our group of men, from a church in Snohomish, will work to see that this facility becomes a reality.

We won't make a significant contribution to the project on this trip. We will just see what needs to be done, and then work to get teams there to help. Due to the remote location, just the logistics of getting the needed materials there can be a challenge. Most of what we hope to deliver on this trip is support: to let the missionaries know that they don't have to do this on their own.

Once we have an idea of the scope of the project, we can decide where we can be of most assistance. In the future, we will attempt to put medical teams together to staff the facility on a part-time basis, to help in any way possible.

A few years ago, when I first ventured out on a trip like this, I was asked a question. Why would you go out of your way to help people who won't help themselves?

The answer has become very clear. These are people who have been swept aside and forgotten. They will never have the opportunities I have had. Given a chance to work, they will; given a chance to learn, they flourish. I don't go there to give a handout. I go there to reach out and give a hand up. It's the least I can do.

Larry Bailly, a lifelong Snohomish County resident and a mechanic by trade, spends time in the mission field in Haiti, Mexico and other places. Contact him at baillybusbarn@juno.com

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Tragic Hero

Madison Smartt Bell dons his historian's hat for yet another book on Haiti's liberation

by Maria Browning

The Nashville Scene

January 17, 2007

TROUSSAINT LOUVERTURE: A BIOGRAPHY

By Madison Smartt Bell (Pantheon Books, 333 pp., \$27)

Bell will read and sign *Toussaint Louverture: A Biography* at Davis-Kidd Booksellers on Jan. 20 at 2 p.m. Toussaint Louverture, the freed slave who led the revolutionary uprising in Haiti at the end of the 18th century, usually gets no more than a brief mention in American history texts. Although he has been revered as a hero in the African American community—there's an African American cemetery named for him in Williamson County—many Americans have at most a vague image of a uniformed figure on horseback, leading a revolt invariably described as “bloody.” Nashville native Madison Smartt Bell has done his bit to clarify and flesh out that image, making Toussaint a central character in three sprawling and widely praised novels about the revolution—*All Souls' Rising* (1995), *Master of the Crossroads* (2000) and *The Stone That the Builder Refused* (2004). In his latest book, *Toussaint Louverture: A Biography*, Bell has set out to write a straightforward history of the man that reconciles the conflicting accounts of him as humane liberator and ruthless rebel.

The French colony of Saint Domingue, which became the independent nation of Haiti, was home to a complex society of white plantation owners, landless whites and black slaves—most of them African born—who vastly outnumbered both white groups. There were a few free blacks, and also a substantial number of gens de couleur, the offspring of master-slave liaisons, who were regarded as a third race. As Bell describes it, the aim of the white landowners, or grands blancs, was gaining wealth through sugar cultivation; they had no interest in settlement or society-building. This single-minded ethos fostered a particularly merciless attitude toward slaves—even more brutal than chattel slavery in the American South. Caribbean slaves were routinely worked to death at a young age, and Bell describes a host of horrific punishments inflicted on them: “A slave who ate fruit or sugarcane in the field would be forced to work with his or her head locked in a tin cage. Some slaves were thrown alive into ovens, others buried neck-deep in the ground and left to be tormented by mosquitoes and biting ants. Still others had their anuses packed with gunpowder and exploded—a sport called ‘making a nigger jump.’”

This was the world into which the slave Toussaint Bréda—i.e., Toussaint of Bréda plantation—was born between 1739 and 1746. There are no reliable records of his early life, but he seems to have been generally well treated. At the age of 18, he reportedly hit one of the plantation's white managers during an argument—normally a capital offense—and came away unscathed. Bell speculates that Toussaint may have spent some time with the Jesuits, who probably taught him to read and write. He was freed in his early 30s, and showed up as the leaseholder of a plantation just a few years later, in 1779. We know that he owned slaves, because there is a record of his freeing one. Otherwise, he seems to have kept a very low profile until he appeared as a leader among the rebels in 1791.

Gaps in the record of a life are a gift to the novelist but a curse to the biographer. They loosen the narrative reins so the fiction writer can go where he pleases—an indulgence historians aren't allowed. Bell, however, makes the lack of material work for him by suggesting that his subject's early invisibility was deliberate: Toussaint was ambitious and intelligent, risky things for a black man to be. He protected himself from white hostility by refusing to sign documents (claiming illiteracy) and continuing to work in the service of his former masters at Bréda, even after he had substantial landholdings of his own. It wasn't until 1793, two years into the rebellion, that he issued a public statement committing himself to the abolition of slavery. Until that time he had been careful to continue good relations at Bréda and kept his name off rebel documents.

It was also at this time that he took the name "Louverture." Bell doesn't accept the usual explanation of the name—that it was a play on the French word for "opening," bestowed on him in grudging admiration of his military prowess ("That man makes an opening everywhere"). Instead, he chose the name himself for its spiritual significance. The slaves of Saint Domingue were nominally Catholic, but the practice of Vodou was almost universal. "Louverture" is a reference to the Vodou prayer to the spirit of gates and crossroads: "Attibon Legba, open the way for me." As Bell explains, the association with Legba lent Toussaint a spiritual power: "Toussaint Louverture alone was master of the crossroads of liberty for the former slaves of Saint Domingue."

Toussaint himself practiced Vodou in private but publicly espoused a Catholic faith "at least as sincere as any of the Borgia popes," according to Bell—a comparison that gets to the heart of Bell's take on Toussaint's character: a true believer in human rights and racial equality, but also ambitious and ruthless, with a keen eye on his public image. He feigned illiteracy to placate whites when he was young, and later to ingratiate himself with rebel slaves who might have resented his wealth and privilege. He was a great fighter, but he was also a small, homely man who made sure he was seen to his best advantage astride his famous white horse. He was careful to distance himself from the many massacres of white civilians during the war, though he clearly condoned some of them.

It was once widely accepted that the initial uprising of slaves in 1791 was actually plotted by the grands blancs as a way of frightening poor whites away from any ideas of reform that may have been fostered by the French Revolution. But the slave insurrection, so the theory goes, took on a life of its own and destroyed its instigators. This idea has been largely discredited by modern historians, but it continues to intrigue Bell: "[I]f the grands blancs actually did light the fuse to the bomb that blew up their whole society, that is simply one of history's most magnificent ironies—it takes nothing at all away from the achievement of the black revolutionaries and their leaders, who almost immediately wrested control of the scheme away from the original plotters and took it over for themselves. Toussaint, especially, was always adept at redirecting the energy of others to serve his own ends."

In fact, Haiti's struggle for independence is filled with intrigue and betrayal, and within that context the landowners' scheme seems plausible. It must have taxed Bell's tremendous storytelling skills to guide the reader through endless power shifts among a large cast of characters while simultaneously explaining the global events that triggered them. It's a staggering amount of material to cram into 300 pages, and Bell does a remarkable job of weaving it all together. Still, there's a disorienting "Alice through the looking glass" sensation as the facts and anecdotes pile up on the page. Understanding the events that surround a man is not the same as understanding him.

Only near the end of the book, when we see the defeated Toussaint and read his own words, does a fully human portrait emerge. Napoleon, determined to retain French control of Haiti, betrayed Toussaint and shipped him off to a desolate French prison where he died, starving and entirely alone. Toussaint pleaded his case in a poignant appeal that went ignored: “No doubt I owe this treatment to my color; but my color...has my color ever hindered me from serving my country with fidelity and zeal? Does the color of my body tarnish my honor and my courage?”

Bell begins each novel of his Haitian trilogy with a moving account of this Toussaint—the brilliant man thwarted by the greed and race hatred of the white world. With unerring narrative instinct, Bell recognized Toussaint’s inevitable destruction as the heart of the story, the essential truth to be gleaned from the tragedy of the man and his still-troubled country. In *Toussaint Louverture*, Bell the historian can provide only a backdrop to the insights of Bell the novelist.

