

Jailed priest awaits charges, medical care

Haiti's treatment of Father Gerard Jean-Juste is the latest embarrassment for the country's interim government.

By DAVID ADAMS,

St. Petersburg Times

Times Latin America Correspondent

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MIAMI - An icon to some and a sinister trouble-maker to others, a priest with strong Miami ties currently sits languishing in a Haitian jail with suspected leukemia.

Love him or hate him, the case of Father Gerard Jean-Juste is the latest embarrassment for Haiti's interim government which took office almost two years ago - with U.S. backing - as part of a supposed democratic transition.

The government is already facing mounting criticism over its failure to hold new elections, due last November. The vote has been postponed four times, and is now scheduled for Feb. 7.

Jean-Juste, 59, was arrested in July in connection with the kidnapping and murder of Haitian journalist and poet Jacques Roche. Almost six months later he has yet to be formally charged in the case, prompting accusations of political persecution by the government against one of its most outspoken critics.

A radical, left-wing Roman Catholic priest, Jean-Juste was famous for mixing politics with his social work. A fierce critic of U.S. policy in Haiti, he blamed Washington for the February 2004 ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Born and raised in Haiti, "Father Gerry," as he is known to his friends, was a leading refugee advocate in Miami in the 1980s, championing the rights of Haitian boat people fleeing political violence and poverty. He is still fondly remembered in Miami where several large protests have been held calling for his release.

"He means an enormous amount to people here," said Steven Forester, a Miami immigration attorney who worked closely with Jean-Juste.

In 1990 he returned to Haiti and set up a parish in one of the capital's slums where he ran a feeding program for the poor. He soon became a close ally of Aristide, himself a former priest who was expelled by the Salesian order for allegedly advocating violence.

Prior to his arrest, Jean-Juste was one of the most prominent voices in Haiti calling for Aristide's return from exile in South Africa. It was also rumored that Jean-Juste was considering running for president on a platform to put Aristide back in power.

"He's a charismatic guy and people were trying to draft him," said Forester. "It's clear to us that he was arrested to keep him out of the way."

The campaign for his release has broad backing.

"Father Jean-Juste's situation transcends politics. He was a pioneer in our community," said Hertz Phanord, 52, a radio talk show host at WJCC (AM-1700), Miami's largest Haitian-owned radio station. "Whether you like him or not, we owe it to him."

The independent human rights group Amnesty International has designated him a prisoner of conscience. The campaign also enjoys the support of members of Congress. On Jan. 3, Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., requested Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice intervene with Haitian authorities to arrange medical treatment for Jean-Juste.

Nelson's letter was prompted, in part, by reports that Jean-Juste is suffering from a form of leukemia. This was confirmed over the holidays by former Brooksville resident Dr. Paul Farmer, a renowned Harvard Medical School professor who runs a clinic in central Haiti.

Jean-Juste is in urgent need of proper medical care, according to Farmer.

"As we know from long experience in central Haiti, it's hard enough to deliver chemotherapy anywhere in the country," he wrote in an opinion piece published by the Miami Herald. "It's simply not possible to do so in a Haitian prison."

Farmer, who has long voiced criticism of U.S. policy in Haiti, also urged the Bush administration to come to Jean-Juste's rescue.

A State Department official said Jean-Juste's circumstances are being closely monitored by the U.S. Embassy in Haiti. The official added that U.S. officials have raised Jean-Juste's case at senior levels of the Haitian government, urging that he receive proper medical attention.

Late last week, the government permitted Jean-Juste to be examined by a local doctor who confirmed Farmer's diagnosis. He was returned to prison after the exam.

This is not the first time that Jean-Juste has fallen foul of Haiti's justice system. He was arrested in October 2004 at his church, St. Claire's, on charges of "plotting against the internal security of the state." He was released after six weeks in jail when a judge dismissed the charges.

He was arrested again last July in bizarre circumstances after trying to attend the funeral of Roche, the murdered journalist. (Roche also worked for the St. Petersburg Times as a freelance driver and translator in Haiti.)

Jean-Juste was taken into custody by police for his own safety after a crowd of mourners assaulted him outside the church, accusing him of being behind the kidnapping.

He was taken to a nearby police station. But instead of being released he was put in jail. No arrest warrant was ever served on him, according to his lawyer. Nor have any formal charges been filed.

One fact stands out in the case: Jean-Juste was in Miami during the entire time of Roche's kidnapping and murder.

"How could he have carried it out if he wasn't even in the country?" asked his lawyer, Mario Joseph.

Friends and colleagues of Roche who handled the kidnapers' ransom demands say they have no direct knowledge of who was behind it. But they believe Jean-Juste may have known the gang members involved.

Jean-Juste was widely suspected of ties to Haiti's slum gangs during Aristide's government. The ties between the gangs and Aristide and his security staff have been well documented. Aristide's use of the gangs to intimidate his opponents was a major factor in his downfall, analysts say.

While Jean-Juste enjoyed official presidential palace protection, his gang ties are less clear. While his sermons and radio broadcasts defending Aristide often made him sound like an apologist for the gang violence, there is no direct evidence linking him to their activities. Furthermore, anyone conducting social work in the slums inevitably comes into regular contact with the gang leaders, analysts add.

Under Haitian law a judge has three months to decide if a case has merit, though an extension may be sought. But Jean-Juste's lawyer accuses the government of pressuring the judge to delay resolution of the case.

"The government in Haiti is a dictatorship," said Joseph. "They play with the laws however they like."

The office of Prime Minister Gerard Latortue denied any political interference. "The executive office of the prime minister is not directly involved in justice decisions," said spokesman Jean Junior Joseph. "Just like any other country we have separation of powers."

But few people in Haiti take statements like that seriously these days.

They point to the government's firing last month of five of the country's 12 Supreme Court judges. Courts are currently closed after the judges went on strike.

"The system is completely broken," said attorney Mario Joseph.

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Brothers from Haiti stitch together a business in high-fashion dress shirts
The Miami Herald
January 16,2006

Being told that someone you don't know is wearing your clothes might be disconcerting. When brothers Patrick and Fabrice Tardieu received a telephone call to that effect last spring, it made their year.

A frantic friend "urged me to turn my television to American Idol," Fabrice says. Host Ryan Seacrest, standing center stage and under the spotlight, sported a black dress shirt of Jacquard fabric, with square brown buttons and golden brown stitching -- a creation of the Tardieu brothers, who came to Miami from their native Haiti to found a fashion empire.

That evening was the first big break for the Tardieus.

"I cannot tell you in any case, how elated we were at the time," Patrick says. ``But as I said -- and I pray this does not sound arrogant -- we knew it would happen. We just didn't know when."

Both Patrick, 37, and Fabrice, 27, will tell you their upbringing in the Delmas 83 community between Petionville and Port-au-Prince was not one of poverty. They were raised comfortably, both men say, by hard-working parents who operated a successful import/export business.

Even so, the route from childhood in Haiti to adulthood as creators of Bogosse, a high-fashion line of men's dress shirts, ran thousands of miles through several countries and more than one other career. Patrick, a youth soccer prodigy in Haiti, moved to Brussels at 16 to play professionally and study at Belgium's European University College.

In 1993, three years after graduating with a business administration degree, Patrick -- the first Haitian ever drafted to the United States Major League Soccer league -- moved to South Florida for a gig with the Fort Lauderdale Strikers.

But he knew there had to be a life after soccer, so he started Tarimex, then a tiny, exclusive-to-Haiti freight shipping business. With office space in the galley of a rusty freighter ship in the Port of Miami, Patrick at first shipped one or two small boxes of household goods per week. Today, Tarimex operates from Doral and sends at least one large shipping container to Haiti each week. The company also has a large warehouse and more than 50 employees receiving the containers in Port-au-Prince. Even with that success, fashion remained on Patrick's mind.

"People will tell you of Patrick that as a child he was meticulous with his style. He was dapper. He had a love for a good look," Fabrice says.

Fabrice followed big brother's lead when he was 13, living first in Miami, where he graduated from Sunset Senior High School, and then it was off to the European University de Paris.

Then came a full-time job in Paris as the top sales rep and distribution supervisor for Emporio Armani to retailers in France and the French Caribbean. It was while visiting Fabrice that Patrick decided it was time to try his passion for fashion.

After a failed attempt at importing and distributing a line of shirts he discovered in Paris, Patrick decided in 2002 that he and his brother -- who studied art in college -- should break out and offer their own clothing line.

"I tell you with no exaggeration that I was so excited for my brother that I dropped everything. I mean everything," says Fabrice, who was then barely 25.

A short time later, Fabrice left Paris behind and joined Patrick in Miami.

With little fanfare and literally no money to pay themselves a salary, the brothers Tardieu immediately began to develop Bogosse -- derived from the French phrase for a stylishly handsome man.

By late 2003, Patrick had consulted his longtime advisor Ray Heraux, a Miami attorney, and Eli Akiba, a friend prominent in the Miami-area fashion scene for decades.

"You have to understand that Patrick is relentless, an amazing young man," Heraux says. ``When he came from Europe and was on his way to completing his soccer career, he had nothing, not a dime. And he even tried other things, some of them not successful. But when he told me about Bogosse, it was different."

After a trip to Turkey to line up a manufacturer, Patrick asked Heraux to come by his office in Doral and look at the model shirt he'd designed.

"Not only did I like it and approve," Heraux says, ``but I have it! That shirt! I told him that when Bogosse takes off I want that shirt, specifically. I told him he had struck a gold mine."

As for Akiba, owner of Lulu and Lulu Couture in the Bal Harbour Shops and the first vendor in the United States to carry Bogosse, he insists it's one of the best fashion lines he's ever seen.

"I knew immediately there was a market for them," Akiba says. ``I was so impressed with the shirts, I gave him an order for my stores. And they have sold very well."

And Bal Harbour's not the only place Bogosse shirts, at \$160 to \$200 each, are selling very well. From selling just a handful the first year, in 2005 Patrick and Fabrice have sold nearly 14,000 of the custom shirts at more than 70 retail shops worldwide, including stores in Washington, D.C., Marseille, France, and Fukuoka, Japan.

Aside from Idol's Seacrest, Bogosse shirts have graced the backs of other celebrities: Alfonso De Anda, Mexico's own version of Seacrest, donned Bogosse at a Billboard music award show; R&B powerhouse Usher rocked a Bogosse shirt on the red carpet at the 2005 Chanel Costume Institute Gala. Crunk rap guru Lil' John wore Bogosse to a formal MTV event. And Miami Heat center Shaquille

O'Neal flossed in Bogosse on the cover of Ocean Drive magazine.

What of the future? Patrick would like to see the shirts available in high-end retail outlets like Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue.

The brothers and business partners say they thrive on each other's differences.

Patrick drinks Martinis. Fabrice prefers Woo Woos, concoctions of peach schnapps.

Patrick is quiet in social settings, but outspoken and charismatic for business matters. He can't sing the praises of Bogosse enough. Fabrice is introspective where work is concerned, but is always the life of the party.

"We are yin and yang. And finding something trendy and functional that we both liked proved a big test," Patrick says.

But observe them both in the Bogosse "shirt room" -- a war room of sorts in their Doral office -- and it's immensely clear why their business is taking off.

Patrick absentmindedly but lovingly caresses the fabrics in the shirt room as he surveys the room. He nods in approval and mutters the shirts' names to himself.

Fabrice reflects quietly at a table, studying new concept sketches they drew together.

Their personal styles are different, but meld with the brothers' shirts. Patrick favors a side-vented blazer over ripped jeans, mirror-shined Chelsea boots and an open-collar Bogosse shirt. Patrice goes for high-end sandals, tailored cargo pants and, of course, an untucked Bogosse shirt.

Either could mingle easily with the likes of hip-hop fashion plate Sean "Diddy" Combs.

On one recent afternoon, those Bogosse sleeves rolled up, sweat on their brows, Patrick and Fabrice were engaged in lively sibling debate over everything from collar heights to cuff lengths to color combinations.

They disagreed. They crumpled up and tossed aside sketches. They compromised and drew their concepts again. The result: an addition to their already extensive collection of Western-themed and military-influenced dress shirts, with trademark big square buttons and multicolored French cuffs. In the end, they laughed, gave each other dap -- that hippest of handshakes -- and hugs, and head out for Martinis and Woo Woos to celebrate yet another Bogosse shirt.

Their next venture? A line of baby tees for young women called "Woo Martini," named after their favorite drinks.

Getting to elections and beyond

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BY MARK L. SCHNEIDER

Mon, Jan. 16, 2006

The Miami Herald

The tragic death of the Brazilian commander of U.N. peacekeepers in Haiti recently adds another somber chapter to a Haitian transition in deep trouble. Too many are looking for someone to blame, when solutions are needed.

Lt. Gen. Urano Teixeira da Matta Bacellar's reported suicide came the night before the fourth postponed date for Haiti's national parliamentary and presidential elections. The political, logistical, financial and security impediments that required successive postponements of the elections originally scheduled for Nov. 6 are still weeks away from resolution. Now Feb. 7 has been announced as the new date for the first round of parliamentary and presidential elections, and hopefully, it will stick.

The frequent refusal of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) and the Transitional Government of Haiti to take the technical advice of the United Nations stalled the electoral law, the electoral calendar, selection of candidates, registration and financing of parties. The CEP barely acceded to a competent director general in October. Constant delays now mean a \$60 million budget will not even cover local elections.

The international community has to ask itself why it did not jettison the once-reasonable goal of having "local Haitian ownership" of the process when the sad inability of the Haitian provisional institutions to do the job became apparent. The halfway measures dragged the process through multiple postponements and eroded the credibility of nearly everyone involved.

The Organization of American States succeeded in registering 3.5 million voters and promised them a 21st century ID card, but it was late in getting started and late in getting the cards produced and shipped to Haiti, partially because the CEP delayed its decision on the number of voting centers.

Security remains a major problem. The U.N. peacekeeping mission is blamed for a lack of security in Port-au-Prince that no one can ignore. While it clearly has not undertaken the disarmament and demobilization of ex-Haitian military rebels or urban armed gangs, the latter responsible for a wave of kidnappings and killings, the fault truly goes back to the U.S.-led multinational force that did not finish the job after the departure of former President Aristide.

Handed a half-secure Haiti, U.N. peacekeepers have been unable to shut down the criminal gangs, drug traffickers and politically linked violent forces. The vicious circle of extreme poverty, lack of jobs, governance or education has produced too many young men desperate to do virtually anything -- including kidnapping or killing -- to survive. The United Nations' limited success also is in part because its military and police forces are few (9400, less than half the number in Kosovo, with a Haitian population more than four times the size of Kosovo) and in part because the mandate was restricted to "support" a tainted Haitian National Police rather than being responsible themselves for law and order.

'Lavalas-lite' potential

A few among the Haitian political elite now even want to delay elections because they don't like the opinion polls that show former President René Preval, now heading a Lavalas off-shoot, leading all other candidates. They had formed a civic movement to oust Lavalas President Aristide after his administration was linked to corruption and violence. Now they see the possibility of a post-election

"Lavalas-lite" government, and suddenly a democratic election seems less important to them.

Instead of another postponement, the U.N. Security Council should extend the peacekeeping mandate that runs out on Feb. 15 for at least two years and give the authority to its Special Representative in Haiti to take over international conduct of the election's final stages if that is necessary. The United States, Canada or France should provide additional helicopters to ease election logistics and rapid reaction forces -- to reinforce the existing troops and police and to add a stronger security cordon for the voting centers and electoral network.

Everyone in the international community should be planning for the period after the elections by helping construct a platform of national dialogue and reconciliation for the next Haitian parliament and president to govern together. On issues like jobs, drinking water, infrastructure, schools and health, an initial national agenda should be prepared and made ready. Haiti cannot wait. Haiti cannot be abandoned. And peacekeeping cannot be done on the cheap.

Mark L. Schneider is senior vice president of the International Crisis Group and former director of the Peace Corps.

Fernandez stays in contact with Haiti
The Dominican Today
January 16, 2006

SANTO DOMINGO.- president Leonel Fernandez said yesterday that he stays in contact with Haiti's governmental authorities to control what he called "emotional reactions," which has caused tension between both countries, with regard to the incidents in the last days, after 24 Haitians to died trying to enter Dominican territory clandestinely.

When the bodies were going to be given to the Haitian authorities to be buried in Haiti, the vehicle was stoned by a multitude, which caused the death of another two Haitians and wounding four soldiers of the United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH).

"So we are confident that despite that these problems have appeared, always intelligence and reason will prevail and we seek for the way so there is a harmonic, pacific relation and of solidarity between the Dominican Republic and Haiti," said the agent chief executive in an interview in a voting center of his governing Dominicana Liberation Party (PLD) in t his city.

Fernandez said he understands the concerns of some sectors in the sense that a confrontation between Dominicans and Haitians can occur and, a fear that he considers "a little out of proportion with reality."

"They are social tensions that appear, in the case of Haiti and Dominican Republic," he affirmed and said that it is the result of two fundamental reasons, citing among them the situation of political instability and the economic and social impoverishment that affects the neighboring country in the last years, combined with a change in the profile of the migration to Dominican territory.

Two Haitians die, seven injured in border protest against migrant deaths
People's Daily Online
January 16, 2006

Two Haitians were killed and seven others injured in a protest at the border town of Dajabon after 24 Haitian migrants were suffocated to death in a truck taking them illegally into neighboring Dominican Republic, reports reaching here said Friday.

The demonstrators threw stones at the troops of the United Nations Stabilization Mission and Dominican troops on the other side of the borderline.

Dominican officials, involved in operation Vaquero II (Second Cowboy) to tackle the smuggling of migrants, drugs and guns from Haiti, were put on high alert for any abnormal events.

The 24 Haitians were found dead Wednesday morning four days after being sealed in a truck, which was suspected of smuggling them across the border, according to Dominican investigators.

But Haitian media reported signs of gunshot wounds were found in their bodies.

On Thursday, the Haitians attacked the truck delivering the victims' bodies to a planned burial place with sticks and stones. They demanded an explanation for their compatriots' deaths.

The driver was forced to return to the Dominican Republic. The immigrant bodies were then buried in a Dominican mass grave.

Dominican Republic's deputy attorney general Frank Soto said Haitian fury made it impossible to deliver the bodies to the location of the UN stabilization mission in Haiti.

The Dominican Republic authorities said they had arrested more than 20 people for their part in the smuggle, including a van driver and his two assistants.

Up to 1 million Haitians, most of them illegal immigrants, are believed to be living in the Dominican Republic.

The Dominican Republic authorities often arrest and deport Haitians who enter the country illegally. Diplomatic rows involving immigration issues have clouded the relations between the two countries, which share the Caribbean island of Hispaniola.

Source: Xinhua

Haiti Has Not Responded to UN Demands
Prensa Latina
January 16, 2006

Port-au-Prince, Jan 16 (Prensa Latina) The interim Haitian government has not yet responded to UN and CARICOM demands made over the weekend condemning a slander campaign against the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan wrote to interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue that many people accuse MINUSTAH of passivity faced with the violent situation in the country, while UN troops have worked to make the situation stable.

Annan demanded that the PM publicly condemn the campaign that could threaten the security of MINUSTAH.

In the meantime, CARICOM offered to help in the coming Feb. 7 elections, postponed four times, by sending representatives from different countries and warned the profound Haitian crisis is made worse by violence and the existing administrative and technical problems.

CARICOM demanded the release of those people arbitrarily incarcerated since March 2004 to ensure non-violent elections.

The UN and CARICOM demands were released before the meeting of seven MINUSTAH members this weekend in Buenos Aires to analyze and demand the election schedule for the Caribbean country.

This week the United Nations will choose the new MINUSTAH military commander to replace late Gen. Urano Texeira da Mata Bacelar who, according to forensic sources, killed himself more than a week ago.

MINUSTAH did not find a link between Bacelar's suicide and the Haitian crisis but acknowledged a possible nervous breakdown suffered by the general due to the responsibility of command.

DR Soldiers Galvanize Haiti Border
Prensa Latina
January 16, 2006

Santo Domingo, Jan 16 (Prensa Latina) The Dominican Republic army has stepped up surveillance of the bordering zone with Haiti, adding 300 new troops to complete a 1,500-strong military patrol, a move that coincides with the reopening of the border.

These troops will join 1,200 more servicemen chosen for "Operacion Vaquero II" (Cowboy Operation II), that started 12 days ago, to carry out supervision, military sources said Monday.

Confrontation between Haitians and Dominicans has begun to subside following clashes that sparked in the wake of the death by asphyxiation of 25 illegal Haitian immigrants inside a closed van.

Dajabon governor Sonia Mateo said that the measures of opening the border this Monday and allowing Haitian workers to cross over to Dominican territory "are parts of the government's plan to avoid conflictive situations."

Dominican President Leonel Fernandez dismissed Sunday the possibility of a confrontation between Haitians and Dominicans.

According to the head of state, Haitians used to migrate to work in the sugar harvest, while now they go to work in construction, agriculture and tourism, and the combination of these factors have caused a social problem.

Generally, Fernandez said, countries with common borders always have problems, and cited as an example France and Germany, and Peru and Ecuador, and Bolivia, Chile and Peru.

Pitt & Jolie Take Weekend Goodwill Trip
Monday Jan 16, 2006
By Stephen M. Silverman
People Magazine

Expectant parents Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt capped off the week that brought news of their impending summer arrival by landing in Haiti, where they took a firsthand look at projects run by Yele Haiti, the charity of Haitian-born hip-hop musician Wyclef Jean.

The two arrived in the beleaguered Caribbean nation from the neighboring Dominican Republic, where Jolie is shooting the movie *The Good Shepherd*, costarring Matt Damon and directed by Robert De Niro.

Greeted by a cheering crowd along their route through the capital of Port-au-Prince on Friday, Jolie, 30, and Pitt, 42, were protected by police and United Nations peacekeepers, reports the Associated Press. One of the couple's destinations was a school where Yele Haiti offers scholarships to students, and it was here that the star couple observed children in the classroom dancing and reciting poetry.

"You hear so much just about the danger and the fear and then you come here and you meet just an amazing people ... given just a little chance, and given a little help, this is going to be a great country," said Jolie, who serves as a goodwill ambassador for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Jean also singled out the couple for praise, given the timing of their visit amid the political turmoil in Haiti, which is struggling to organize its first elections since former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced from power in a violent rebellion nearly two years ago. "To have these people grace our country is a beautiful thing," said Jean.

After the classroom visit the couple met workers from Yele Haiti's Project Clean Streets, which helps clear litter from the capital. The project is funded, in part, by the U.S. Agency for International Development, CARE and the Pan American Development Foundation.

Jolie, Pitt tour poverty-stricken Haiti
Star couple Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt joined musician Wyclef Jean in Haiti during a visit that included meeting with children in jail.

BY JACQUELINE CHARLES

The Miami Herald

January 14, 2006

A visibly pregnant Angelina Jolie and beau Brad Pitt toured a children's jail and other parts of Port-au-Prince Friday as Haitians expressed surprise that Hollywood celebrities would visit their violence and poverty plagued nation.

But despite the cocoon of Haitian police and U.N. peacekeepers guarding their every move, Jolie, 30, and Pitt, 42, managed to shine a spotlight on the cause of their visit -- the country's desperately poor children.

Elaine Bole, spokeswoman for the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, said Jolie ``shines a light on a problem that doesn't always get a lot of light. The work she does for us, it makes a huge difference." Jolie has long been a goodwill ambassador for the UNHCR.

"It's about the kids," said the stars' host, Wyclef Jean, hip-hop artist and Haiti native. Jean helped found the music group The Fugees, and his Yéle Haiti foundation runs several programs to help children in the Caribbean nation.

As a U.N. ambassador, Jolie has visited U.N. refugee camps in Ecuador, Colombia, the Balkans, Sierra Leone, Namibia, Tanzania, Kenya, Cambodia, Thailand and Pakistan. She has adopted an orphan girl from Ethiopia and a son from Cambodia.

Jolie and Pitt warmly greeted the crowd of workers at the Port-au-Prince airport as they arrived Friday by helicopter from the neighboring Dominican Republic, where Jolie is filming a movie. They joined Jean to celebrate the one-year anniversary of his nonprofit foundation.

"You really can see that she wanted to come," said Maryse Kedar, president of the Haiti branch of Yéle Haiti and one of a select group of Haitians who greeted Jolie and Pitt on their first-ever visit to the country. ``Nobody comes to visit Haiti, so to have a celebrity like Angelina come here, Haitians really appreciate that."

'AMAZING PEOPLE'

"You hear so much just about the danger and the fear and then you come here and you meet just an amazing people," Jolie was quoted as saying by The Associated Press. ``Given just a little chance, and given a little help, this is going to be a great country."

Though Jolie's visit wasn't part of her U.N. duties, Kedar and Jean said they hope her presence there will raise the profile of Haiti's desperate needs above the wave of violence and kidnappings racking the country at it prepares for repeatedly delayed presidential elections, now set for Feb. 7.

VISITING THE CHILDREN

Jolie and Pitt's first stop was the Immaculate Conception School where they visited with children who are part of an after-school sports program sponsored by the Yéle Haiti Foundation.

Later they went to the children's jail, where they were greeted by four youngsters who rapped about their lives behind bars and the hope they held for the future. As they visited the cells, the couple used a translator to ask the children, some as young as 10, about their lives and how they ended up in jail. Jean handed out a few toys and gave the jail a symbolic check for \$2,000 -- a promise of what his foundation will provide to the prison, Kedar said.

The couple ended their visit with a private reception at the Montana Hotel and are scheduled to leave Haiti today.

While the tour of the jail was somber, the visit to local television station Telemax, which Jean recently bought, was lively. Groups of teenage girls screamed Pitt's name while waving his photo. In the courtyard, scores of school children wearing white Yéle Haiti T-shirts welcomed the couple with traditional Haitian dances and music. The couple and Jean later joined in the festivities, dancing with the youngsters.

"I am so happy to see them here," said Elisa Philippon, 14, who came to catch a glimpse of the celebrities. ``They are the perfect couple, we are really happy because this is such a big opportunity for us. I think it's a good thing they came here, they can see what's really going on."

Philippon acknowledged that most Haitians know nothing about Jolie and Pitt and were probably surprised by the heavily armed 10-vehicle caravan that moved them around Port-au-Prince. But they do know Jean, she added.

"We're huge fans of Wyclef, but what they're doing here is for the people up high, not for us down below," said Emmanuel Joseph, 24, an unemployed man who could not get into the Telemax station. ``He goes down to Bel Air, Solino, Cite Soleil to see the Haitian people. He's our brother. But we don't know why those people came."

Herald special correspondent Reed Lindsay in Port-au-Prince contributed to this report.

Dajabón's DR-Haiti market tensely back to business
The Dominican Today
January 16, 2006

Hundreds of Haitians crossed the border today under strict Military security measures

DAJABON. - The binational market held each Monday and Friday in Dajabón is back in business today under strict safety measures, after the violent protests of Friday in the Haitian town Ouanaminthe have kept the area under tension.

Hundreds of Haitians crossed the border today, supervised by numerous Dominican soldiers, after the market was suspended last Friday.

The suspension resulted from demonstrations in Ouanaminthe, just 600 meters from Dajabón, to demand that the Dominican Government clarify the deaths by asphyxiation of 25 undocumented Haitians last Tuesday, when they being taken in an unventilated truck from the border to the Dominican north region.

The demonstrators stoned a light tank of the UN forces in Haiti, that was forced to retreat from the place.

According to different sources, the truck clandestinely transported some 60 Haitians.

Groups in Haiti blamed the tragedy on the Dominican authorities and radio reports said into that many of bodies had bullet wounds, which Dominican police denied.

The protests began on Thursday when the Dominican authorities tried to repatriate the corpses, which that prevented by the Ouanaminthe demonstrators, who demanded a full investigation to determine the cause of the deaths.

The Dajabón industrialists and retailers spokesman Ramon Javier today described as "intelligent" the measures of the Haitian and Dominican authorities to reopen their borders, since that market is the main source of income for the inhabitants in communities located on both sides of the border.

For his part, the Haitian retailer Solimán Joseph told the newspaper El Nacional that he decided to participate in the market because in his view the Dominican Government is not the culprit of the death of his compatriots.

This week a Dominican Government commission that investigates the death of the 25 immigrants is expected to submit a report with the probe's results to president Leonel Fernandez.

New commander of UN troops in Haiti will be named this week
Erica Santana
China View
January 17, 2006

Latin American ministers meet to discuss Haiti's elections

BUENOS AIRES, -- Ministers from seven Latin American countries and representatives from the United Nations and Organization of American States (OAS) met here on Monday to discuss the planned elections in Haiti.

According to the local media, deputy ministers for defense and foreign relations from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Ecuador and Guatemala attended the meeting, along with OAS head Jose Miguel Insulza and UN representative Juan Gabriel Valdez.

Haiti is set to hold general elections due on Feb. 7, with a second round, if needed, on March 19.

Haiti needs to choose a government to replace the current interim cabinet, which took power after the overthrow of former leader Jean Bertrand Aristide in 2004. The presidential vote, in which 35 are standing as candidates, has been postponed three times to date.

Church in Haiti keeps hope alive amid violence and poverty
Eklesia, UK
January 16, 2006

Haiti is hampered by widespread escalating violence and political instability, Bishop Jean Zache Duracin of the Episcopal Church in Haiti told an Anglican gathering in Iowa, USA, last week.

The past three years have been filled with murders and kidnappings and the "population is terrorized by armed gangs," Bishop Duracin said. Much of the capital of Port au-Prince is under the control of armed gangs, he declared.

More than 1,600 people were murdered between March 2004 and November 2005 according to one source, he said. There is an average of 40 kidnappings a week and people possess more than 170,000 illegal small arms.

According to reports, the Haitian police registered at least 27 murders and 43 kidnappings in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area between 12 December 2005 and 3 January 2006 alone.

In the midst of this recurring and worsening violence, Duracin said, there has been no socio-economic progress and there is "endemic" weakness in the country's infrastructure. The unemployment rate is 80 percent. More than 55 percent of the population is illiterate.

"We don't have enough schools," he said, but the church tries to fill that gap and has some of the best schools in the country.

About 42 percent of children younger than five years are malnourished, according to Duracin. "And the health-care system is very bad

Still Haiti has "great potential," Bishop Duracin told the overseas council of the Episcopal Church USA..

"Haiti remains a country full of hope because it has eight million able bodies willing to work, eight million consumers - the largest consumer market in the Caribbean, a vibrant youth population, a hospitable location, some beautiful beaches, a rich history and culture, a warm climate," he said.

It needs political stability, forgiveness of its external debt and massive investment in its infrastructure and in job creation. It also needs a "massive redistribution of wealth and services," Duracin said. One percent of the population controls half of the nation's wealth.

Haiti's often-delayed elections are crucial to the country's future, he added. Haiti's United States-backed interim government recently announced a fourth delay in elections scheduled for November 2005 and the United Nations urged the government to begin the first round of the elections by 7 February 2006.

Much of the current violence can be traced to the coup in 2004 that forced the country's twice democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, from office.

"Peace and stability depend on the outcome of those elections," Bishop Duracin explained.

"Since 2004, our church has been victimized," he told the council. He reported that priests had been shot, had their vehicles stolen and were the victims of other crimes.

Edward Emmanuel Corneille, director of the Bishop Tharp Institute of Business and Technology in Les Cayes, Haiti, was shot and killed in Petion-Ville, just outside the capital, Port-au-Prince, on 5 January 2006.

The Episcopal Church of Haiti is the largest diocese of the Episcopal Church. It has more than 100,000 baptized members in 109 congregations.

The diocese is also working ecumenically. The new Desmond Tutu Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, due to open on 12 February 2006, will be a place where various denominations can gather "to see if the churches together can do something to make peace among the populations of Haiti," Bishop Jean Zache Duracin said.

Director of Episcopal Institute in Haiti Killed

The director of an Episcopal business and technological college in Haiti has been killed.

Christian Today

Sunday, January 15 , 2006

The director of the Bishop Tharp Institute of Business and Technology (BTI), built by the Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD), in Haiti has been shot and killed in Pétion-Ville, just outside Port au Prince.

Haitian police said they were still investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of Edward Emmanuel Corneille, who became director of the BTI in Les Cayes in February 2004.

The business institute was developed by the ERD in partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti and finally opened in October 2005.

According to reports, Corneille was involved in the campaign of Charles Henry Baker, a presidential candidate.

Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin of Haiti said in statement on the killing of the BTI director: "It is obvious that rampant violence and unrest has become a daily reality that threatens all of us living in Haiti," he said.

It is obvious that rampant violence and unrest has become a daily reality that threatens all of us living in Haiti.

Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin of Haiti

"Since BTI's opening, the institute has been seen as a symbol of hope for Les Cayes and the southern part of Haiti -- with Emmanuel there was hope."

According to reports, the police have registered at least 27 murders and 43 kidnappings in Haiti's capital Port au Prince in the short period between 12th December 2005 and 3rd January 2006.

The death of the BTI director has come as a great shock to the ERD.

"This is disheartening for the BTI community, the Diocese of Haiti, and ERD," said Abigail Nelson of the ERD. "Emmanuel was a charismatic leader who will be sorely missed."

Corneille played a central role in the final phases of building and opening the institute. He also helped recruit more than 120 students to the new Institute.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Emmanuel's family," said Nelson.

Solidarity nourishes hope in Haiti's prisons

by Sasha Kramer

San Francisco Bay Area IndyMedia

January 16, 2005

Haitian political prisoners Father Jean Juste, Sò Anne and Jacques Mathalier send their love to Bay View readers, some of their strongest supporters. Despite their imprisonment for months and years, they keep encouraging each other and organizing inside and outside the walls. Father Jean Juste, who has just been diagnosed with leukemia - note his swollen neck - and folksinger Sò Anne have both been officially designated political prisoners by Amnesty International. While they all continue to demand the return of President Aristide, they urge solidarity behind the candidacy of former President René Préval, who promises to release political prisoners. "We have no doubt that President Préval will win the election. We are sure that we will get out of here," says Jacques Mathalier.

Amid headline news reports of electoral campaigning, Haiti's political prisoners continue to languish behind bars. They spend their days wondering if the election will bring their freedom, wondering if their friends and family are safe. Without access to information, without their freedom, they can do little more than wonder and hold onto the hope that those on the outside have not forgotten their plight.

Many of these prisoners have been illegally held for over 18 months, living in crowded and unsanitary conditions, isolated from their families and communities. Who are they? They are grassroots organizers, former officials from the Lavalas government and family members of community activists who have been forced into exile or hiding.

They are people who threaten the current unelected government through their persistent calls for respect for the Haitian Constitution and the restoration of democracy. Months of imprisonment have not dampened the commitment of many of Haiti's political prisoners, an incredible testament to the courage and resilience of the Haitian people.

Most well known is Father Gérard Jean Juste, beloved priest and advocate for the poor, who has been imprisoned for close to six months. Father Jean Juste was arrested on July 21, 2005, after being assaulted by a crowd at the funeral of kidnapped journalist Jacques Roche.

He was initially brought to the police station by U.N. forces, who turned him over to the police after telling him he was being brought in for his own safety. That night Father Jean Juste was placed behind bars under allegations that he was involved in the journalist's death, despite the fact that he was at a demonstration at the Brazilian consulate in Miami when the journalist was kidnapped.

Even after nearly six months in prison, Father Jean Juste retains his spirit of optimism, fueled, he says, by his faith in God. Each day he prays with the other prisoners. He says, "It is the love and support of my friends on the outside that keeps me alive. I am trying to spread that love everywhere, to share the hope that you bring me with the other prisoners."

Though his spirit is strong, Father Jean Juste's physical health is declining. After the beating at Roche's funeral, Father Jean Juste became ill and his neck swelled. The swelling was initially thought to be

temporary and related to the beating, but it worsened, and now he says that it is difficult to hear out of his left ear.

Several weeks ago, Father Jean Juste was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) by Dr. Paul Farmer of Harvard, a friend and physician who has been working in rural Haiti for decades. Though CLL is highly treatable, it jeopardizes the immune system, leaving the body susceptible to infection.

Given how quickly Father Jean Juste's condition has progressed and the potential for infection in prison, doctors are urging the unelected Haitian government and Ministry of Justice to release Jean Juste for medical care outside of Haiti. These calls for Jean Juste's release match the demands of 42 members of Congress, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and thousands of solidarity activists, religious leaders and concerned citizens around the world.

Father Jean Juste received over 700 letters just before Christmas from people around the world concerned for his life. In a move that signifies a response to public pressure, the U.S. Embassy is urging Jean Juste to receive treatment in a hospital in Haiti, an option considered unsafe by lawyers and inadvisable by medical professionals.

Undaunted, Father Jean Juste calls on activists around the world to "keep up the pressure. The new year will bring freedom for all the courageous prisoners unjustly accused."

Jacques Mathalier, a former Lavalas delegate from southern Haiti, shares a cell with Father Jean Juste at the National Prison Annex at Pacot. This is not the first time these men have found themselves imprisoned under the same roof. Father Jean Juste also spent several months in the National Penitentiary with Mathalier following his arrest in October 2004, when he was dragged out of the church rectory while feeding children from the neighborhood.

The National Penitentiary is a densely overcrowded prison in Port au Prince. In March 2005 the prison had 902 prisoners, only one of whom had been convicted of a crime. Father Jean Juste was released in November 2004 following massive pressure from the international community. Jacques Mathalier remained in the National Penitentiary until his recent transfer to Pacot.

Mathalier was arrested in June 2005 in his hometown of Les Cayes soon after the former Justice Minister for the unelected government, Bernard Gousse, came to Les Cayes with people from the Group of 184, an organization led by the business community that directed the opposition to Aristide. Gousse and the Group of 184 made a series of unsubstantiated allegations about the Lavalas leadership in Les Cayes being involved in violence, and several days later Mathalier was arrested.

At the time of his arrest, the police produced a warrant charging him with attempted assassination and house burning, but the authorities refused to disclose who he had attempted to kill or which houses he may have planned to burn. After several months in prison in Les Cayes, he was transferred to Port au Prince, where the charges shifted to murder and arson. The Justice Department has yet to provide the name of the person who was killed or the house that was burned.

Meanwhile Jacques Mathalier has spent 18 months behind bars away from his family and community, much of that time in the National Penitentiary. On Feb. 19, 2005, there was a prison break at the National Penitentiary, and hundreds of prisoners escaped. Mathalier recalls that he was forced out of his cell at the time like many other prisoners.

Unlike many of the other prisoners, Mathalier returned the next day with his family. When offered a choice between escaping from prison and living the life of a fugitive for crimes that he didn't commit or returning to prison where he could fight for justice assured of his own innocence, Mathalier chose the latter. He said, "I came in with my head held high, and I was not going to leave with it hanging down."

Described by friends as a man of integrity and dedication, Mathalier holds onto hope that the situation will change, saying, "You see I am optimistic. There is no other choice."

In the Pétionville Penitentiary across town, Annette Auguste, known as Sò Anne, has spent 20 months in prison. On Tuesday, Amnesty International officially declared Sò Anne a "political prisoner" and launched a belated appeal case on her behalf.

Activists have been pressuring Amnesty to take on Sò Anne's case since her illegal arrest on May 10, 2004, Mother's Day, when U.S. Marines - who were briefly in Haiti following the Feb. 29, 2004, coup d'état - entered her house at 1 a.m., using a grenade to break down the door. No Haitian police were present during the arrest, and no warrant was produced at the time.

During the arrest, all members of Sò Anne's family, including several children, were cuffed and dark hoods placed over their heads. Marines raided the house, breaking many of the family's personal belongings and confiscating all family members' passports. The family's two dogs were beheaded during the violent entry.

Other family members were released, but Sò Anne remains behind bars, subject to ever shifting allegations against her, ranging from racist to patently absurd. Marine spokesman David Lapan originally alleged that Sò Anne had been collaborating with members of a local mosque to attack U.S. troops. Allegations against her now oscillate between the vague charge of inciting violence at a demonstration on Dec. 5, 2003, to her having killed a baby with a mortar and pestle then wiped the blood on President Aristide during a voodoo ceremony in 2000.

Like Jean Juste and Mathalier, Sò Anne has not lost the fierce spirit which made her such an effective community organizer before her arrest. Prior to her imprisonment, she worked with women's groups and community nutrition centers in Port au Prince. Now she works with the other prisoners, sharing her food brought by friends and teaching other women to read.

Sò Anne speaks out vehemently against the human rights abuses perpetrated by the current government and against the role of the United States, France and Canada in overthrowing Haiti's democracy. She says that they are afraid to release her because "they know I am a powerful organizer. They know I'm not afraid to speak out against the injustice that is happening in Haiti."

The Pétionville Penitentiary is now a women's prison, where hundreds of women are crammed into cells, sometimes up to 20 women per cell. In August 2004 there were only 45 prisoners, now there are over 200. Most of these women are poor women from Bel Air, Cité Soleil, Martissant and other poor neighborhoods in Port au Prince where support for Aristide remains strongest.

Many of the women now imprisoned at Pétionville were swept up in police raids of their neighborhoods. Some of them are activists; others are family members of activists. These are the forgotten political prisoners, the hundreds of women and men who find themselves behind bars for their commitment to democracy.

These prisoners have not only been denied due process, they have also been denied the right to participate in Haiti's elections, either as candidates or voters. The fact that so many important leaders remain in prison or exile is a stain which will tarnish the upcoming elections if they are not released.

Their plight challenges international demands for "free and fair" elections and should be a foremost consideration for governments claiming to support democracy in Haiti. Unfortunately, the United States, Canada and France, the three countries most heavily involved in the destabilization and overthrow of Haiti's democratically elected government in 2004, have remained silent on the issue of political prisoners. These world powers are so focused on the appearance of free and fair elections in Haiti that they are willing to overlook substance to forward their own political agendas.

The high profile cases of Father Jean Juste, Jacques Mathalier and Sò Anne illustrate a much wider pattern of injustice. All three expressed hope that their cases will draw attention to the plague of political repression that has swept Haiti since the overthrow of the democratically elected government in February 2004. SF Bay View readers help to feed that hope.

Dr. Sasha Kramer, sash@stanford.edu, is a freelance ecologist and human rights observer who visits and reports from Haiti frequently.

More Dominican troops off to the border with Haiti
Yesterday 300 new Army and Air Force soldiers arrived at Dajabón
The Dominican Today
January 16, 2006

SANTO DOMINGO.- After having been closed because of the incidents occurring during the transfer for burial of 25 Haitians, the monitoring was reinforced yesterday with 300 new soldiers sent to Dajabón one day before the border's reopening.

Armed Forces minister Sigfrido Pared Perez had announced the soldiers' arrival, which were sent from San Isidro Air Base of and the Army's First Brigade, and takes place as the Armed Forces evaluates the members that participate in the denominated Operation Cowboy.

These troops will join the 1,200 men which conform the select military contingent for the operation's next phase, which began 11 days ago in zones bordering Montecristi province and the municipality Jimaní.

Last night the 300 new soldiers were scattered throughout the different points where they will conduct vigilance.

Meanwhile the commercial activities began to normalize between Dominicans and Haitians and after the tension and conflicts resulting from the deaths of 25 Haitians who died asphyxiated last week when they traveled clandestinely to Santiago and other Dominican cities inside a truck.

Yesterday, the authorities allowed some loaded tractor trailers with diverse merchandise to cross to Haiti.

For today Monday the border was opened to allow the passage of the Haitian nationals, in groups of ten, as a way to maintain the control in the border line and supply migrant workers for farm activities, with responsibility placed on the producers who request them.

The Army redoubled the monitoring where the commercial interchanges are taking place.

On Saturday, the commission designated by president Leonel Fernandez to investigate the incidents went to Dajabon to inspect on site.

Severe power rationing in Haiti
by Vario Sérant
Caribbean Net News Haiti Correspondent
Email: vario@caribbeannetnews.com
Monday, January 16, 2006

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti: The year 2006 started in Port-au-Prince, capital of Haiti, under the sign of the blackout, as the last part of 2005 had ended.

Except for the zones known as priority, some districts of the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince get electricity only two hours every three days. The luckiest districts receive it two hours per day.

The main cause of this severe rationing is linked with the inability of the national electricity company (ED'H) to obtain fuel supplies.

The electricity company has faced difficulties since the end, in February 2005, of an emergency subsidy of twenty-seven million dollars coming from the United States Agency International Aid (USAID) a source close to ED'H told Caribbean Net News.

The government was then committed to release eight million dollars monthly on behalf of the national electricity company . But, this governmental subsidy remains random; provisional authorities being frequently solicited by other exigencies dependent, in particular, on the elections and other thorny issues inherited from the Aristide regime.

According to our sources, the management of ED'H remains suspended pending the outcome of a provisioning request, renewable every three months, made to the interim government. The matter is currently being considered by the central bank.

Currently, the reservoir level of the hydro-electric power station in Péligre (in the centre of Haiti) is 163 meters, out of a capacity of 172 meters. The company is currently utilising one of its generators 24 hours a day and another between 6 p.m. and midnight to produce what little energy is available in the metropolitan area.

Customer demand varies between 80 and 150 megawatts, whereas currently ED'H has at its disposal only 30 to 40 megawatts.

If the difficulties currently experienced by this public enterprise were to continue into next month, rationing would increase. The more so as the power station at Péligre is likely to reach by then the critical point of 152-153 meters.

For approximately two decades, ED'H has been unable to make ends meet and part of the deficit results from hacking of the electric network. The company has also taken pains for several years to satisfy customer demand, notwithstanding the increasing cost of electricity.

The current inefficiency is due to the fact that, in addition to the recurring problems of fuel supplies and maintenance of the electric network, successive governments resorted only to palliative measures.

According to a source close to ED'H, an effective resolution of the electric power problem entails a review of diesel usage - the fuel being very expensive - and a suitable choice of equipment

"It would have been better for the company to obtain larger generators of fifty megawatts instead of small ones of 1.5 megawatts," adds the same source.

These comments echo a plea made by Doctor Michel Lomini, a former Haitian minister, in an article published December 2004 and entitled: "Development aid versus humanitarian aid: Haiti must make a choice ". The author regretted the spreading of production amongst small diesel stations, not very efficient and with a very high cost of maintenance, and a relatively very short lifespan.

Haiti is among Caribbean countries with the lowest consumption of electric power. It approaches, according to certain estimates, 0.04 kilowatt/hour per capita. This deficiency is often mentioned among the obstacles to the social and economic development of Haiti.

UN whitewashes massacre amid new attacks in Haiti
by HIP - Haiti Information Project Sunday, Jan 15 2006
info@haitiaction.org address: HAC, PO Box 2218, Berkeley, CA 94702
anarkismo.net

The January 9 strike came two days after the death of the commander of U.N. military forces in Haiti Lt. Gen. Urano Bacellar. His death was initially reported as a suicide but U.N. Special Envoy to Haiti Juan Gabriel Valdes has implied in recent interviews to the Haitian press that it may have been an assassination by forces trying to disrupt the electoral process. And finally, the right-wing opposition of president Mbeki in South Africa with ties to Haiti's elite ridiculously implied that a sniper from their country, at the behest of Aristide, killed the general.

January 11, 2006

HIP - Haiti — "It was a campaign of fear. Didn't you hear the radio? They told people that if they left their homes they would be arrested by the police and the U.N.," stated Jean Joseph Joel, a representative of the National Commission of the Family Lavalas Cell of Reflection. Joel made the comment from Cite Soleil on January 9, the same day the Haitian Chamber of Commerce had called a national strike to condemn insecurity in Haiti and a recent spate of kidnappings throughout the capital. Roadblocks manned by the Haitian National Police and the U.N. went up throughout the capital on January 9 and traffic remained sparse as most residents stayed in their homes.

Joel made his comments from Cite Soleil, a bastion of support for ousted president Aristide and current presidential candidate Rene Garcia Preval. It has served as a launching site for massive demonstrations demanding the return of Aristide and most recently as a staging ground for large Preval campaign rallies. Residents of Cite Soleil accuse Haiti's business community of pressuring U.N. forces to commit a massacre there on July 6, 2005.

The January 9 strike came two days after the death of the commander of U.N. military forces in Haiti Lt. Gen. Urano Bacellar. His death was initially reported as a suicide but U.N. Special Envoy to Haiti Juan Gabriel Valdes has implied in recent interviews to the Haitian press that it may have been an assassination by forces trying to disrupt the electoral process. And finally, the right-wing opposition of president Mbeki in South Africa with ties to Haiti's elite ridiculously implied that a sniper from their country, at the behest of Aristide, killed the general.

For their part, the Brazilian police have officially stated that they consider the death a "suicide" citing their own autopsy results. The investigation into all of the evidence continues.

For Joel and most residents of Cite Soleil, the Chamber's call to shut down businesses and transportation is an ominous and frightening portent of things to come. They do not see the strike as a call for national unity to combat crime and violence; rather they view it as another attempt by Haiti's wealthy elite, and those attempting to forestall upcoming elections, to force the U.N. to launch military attacks against the neighborhood. They see it as a repeat of events that led to the massacre of July 6, 2005.

"This is Apaid, Boulos and Baker working to force the U.N. to come in here and commit another massacre like they did on July 6" declared Joel in a familiar refrain heard throughout Cite Soleil. Andy Apaid is a wealthy sweatshop owner and the leader of an organization that dropped the 0 from Haiti's year of independence, 1804, to create a civil society organization named Group 184 that was heavily funded by the United States, France and Canada. The Group 184 helped to build opposition to Aristide's government and Apaid was among the first to refer to para-military forces that invaded Haiti from the Dominican Republic as freedom fighters as they killed police officers and Lavalas officials in their bid to oust Aristide. Dr. Reginald Boulos is the president of the Haitian Chamber of Commerce who is implicated in the death of 60 children after his company, Pharval Pharmaceuticals, produced a poisonous cough syrup distributed throughout poor neighborhoods of the capital. Boulos had also pushed the U.N. to make armed incursions into pro-Aristide neighborhoods last May that many view as having led to the massacre in Cite Soleil on July 6. Charles Henry Baker, another sweatshop owner, helped to create the Group 184 and is currently a presidential candidate seen as the preferred choice of Haiti's wealthy elite and business community.

"Why do they keep postponing these elections when everyone knows that Preval is the people's choice? Why are they afraid of democracy when they claim that removing Aristide was for democracy? We still believe they kidnapped our president and forced him out. Now we stand ready to vote again for Preval and they keep delaying the vote. Is it because they want to rob us of our democratic rights once again? Is it because so many people are getting rich from the coup of Feb. 2004 that the international community is so blind they can't see the truth?" asked Joel.

"Don't go there. There are killers and bad people."

As the jeep of journalists approached the two Armored Personnel Vehicles (APVs), manned by Jordanian soldiers and two Haitian police officers, they motioned for them to stop. Everyone got out of the car to have their identification checked as the soldiers assured themselves that the lone Haitian driver was not kidnapping them. The journalists were about to enter the fabled land of poverty and misery that has been targeted recently as a repository for kidnapping victims in the Haitian press and mainstream international media. One of the Jordanian soldiers cautioned, "Be careful. Don't go there. There are killers and bad people."

After being followed by another APV, the Haitian driver finally negotiated his way to the central marketplace in Cite Soleil on a street named Bwa Neuf. Bwa Neuf is the site of a monument erected in honor of another supposed Lavalas "bandit", Emmanuel "Dread" Wilme. U.N. forces assassinated Wilme and four of his armed lieutenants on July 6 and residents accuse them of targeting unarmed civilians during the raid. Dread, as residents of Cite Soleil refer him to, was an orphan who grew up in La Famni Selavi, the organization founded by Aristide to help homeless street children. Like so many others, he saw his parents killed by the military following the coup that ousted Aristide in 1991. While the US-installed government, the Haitian elite and the U.N. demonized Dread as a criminal, the impoverished residents of Cite Soleil put their pennies together and built a monument to his memory.

"They killed my wife and have left me to take care of our nine children."

Bwa Neuf is patrolled by several APVs 24-hours a day. Residents claim that at any given hour wherever people congregate to talk about the community or share ideas with one another, they open

fire with automatic weapons. According to the testimony of residents, four women were killed by U.N. forces in the marketplace of Bwa Neuf on January 6. Dieunord Edme, 51 years-old, described how his wife Annette Moleon, 45 years-old, was gunned down by U.N. forces on that day from a passing APV: "They started shooting everywhere for no reason. They killed my wife and have left me to take care of our nine children. Why did they do that?"

The fear was palpable as residents of Haiti's poorest neighborhood continued to surround the group of journalists to respond to the news that the U.N. had announced the results of an investigation into the events of July 6. APVs passed by several times and residents said the only reason they didn't open fire was because of the presence of white foreigners. Yet so many killings by U.N. forces have gone unreported by the press and human rights organizations. For example, Zapada Price, a man described as "fou" (crazy) by the community, ventured too close to the U.N. checkpoint. His body lay on the road for four days because every time his family came to collect the corpse U.N. forces reportedly fired at them as well.

"The blue helmets are lying. They killed so many people and I praise God that I am alive to call them liars," shouted 30 year-old Edline Pierre-Louis who was 6 months pregnant when the U.N. opened fire on July 6. Showing us the scars on her stomach, she exclaimed, "I lost my unborn baby to U.N. forces on July 6. If they say there was not a massacre then tell me where is my child? Where is my brother who bled to death in the street? The U.N. is lying. They are the ones embarrassing themselves with this lie. Look at how many victims have come forth to tell you the truth."

On Jan. 8, residents of Cite Soleil also spoke against a campaign by Haiti's wealthy elite to destroy them because of their fidelity to the cause of ousted president Aristide and their support for the campaign of Rene Preval. "My brother has been shot and killed by the U.N., my cousin was shot and killed by the U.N. on July 6. The U.N. is lying. Look at my stomach and the operation they performed to save my life. The U.N. is lying!" stated Amavil Joudain. He was shot in the stomach by U.N. forces on July 6, 2005. Other victims of July 6 who gave testimony to journalists included:

Pierre Samson, 37, bullet in the stomach

Carole Janvier, 52, bullet to the chest

Mimose Gabriel, 52, home fired upon, stray bullet to the stomach

Leonise Cenard, 46, bullet to the stomach.

During the raid of July 6, not a single ambulance or medical unit accompanied U.N. forces as they opened fire in the community with what was described by residents as "a hail of bullets." The U.N. ultimately relied upon witnesses and testimony presented to them by the Haitian police and human rights "expert" Jean-Claude Bajoux to dismiss the evidence. Bajoux is a member of the Group 184 and known for his bias and visceral hatred of Lavalas. The U.N. to date has never interviewed nor spoken to a single resident of Cite Soleil. Despite direct testimony by victims of the July 6 U.N. military incursion, the official report by the MINUSTAH forces concluded: "The targeted victims were either individuals suspected of having been the informants of MINUSTAH, or of the people who imprudently expressed their joy at the announcement of the supposed disappearance of Dread Wilmé and some of his close associates." In other words, the U.N. ultimately concluded that the victims were shot and killed by members of Lavalas in retaliation for informing and expressing "joy" for their [the U.N.'s] military incursion.

The U.N.'s dismissal of the testimony of victims of July 6 and the recent pressure applied for another raid in Cite Soleil by virtue of the strike called by the Haitian Chamber of Commerce on Jan. 8 was foreshadowed by another dark event on December 30, 2005. The Canadian government, responsible for the reformation of Haiti's corrupt judiciary, stood by and watched without comment as Judge Jean Pérs Paul ordered the release of the following individuals implicated in kidnapping in Haiti but never mentioned by the Chamber of Commerce during their strike:

Stantley Handal

Wilfrid Francois, Haitian police officer Agent 1

Sony Lambert, Haitian police officer Agent 3

Rénald Cinéus, Haitian police officer Agent 4.

Handal is a member of one of Haiti's wealthiest families that supported the ouster of Aristide in 1991 and 2004. He was initially arrested along with eight members of Haiti's police force for running a kidnapping ring after he attempted to use a stolen credit card taken from one of his victims. The judge that released them, Jean Pérs Paul, is responsible for keeping Father Gerard Jean-Juste behind bars and for the arrest of journalists Kevin Pina and Jean Ristil on September 9, 2005. The police officer responsible for the initial investigation into Handal's case has reportedly been forced into hiding. The U.N. and the Canadian government have not commented on the case since Jean Pérs Paul ordered the suspects released.

Haiti is Canada's Iraq
by Andrew MacLeod
January 15, 2006
Monday Magazine
Center for Research on Globalization, Canada

Foreign Policy Questions:

Why won't our leaders talk about what we're doing there?

Last Tuesday, Liberal prime minister Paul Martin made his pre-election stop in Victoria, meeting with supporters at a rally at the Hotel Grand Pacific. There, in what must have felt like a strange replay of countless such events across the country as we head towards the January 23 election, Martin delivered a short speech with a few feel-good messages and several attacks on conservative leader Stephen Harper. Harper, he says, would integrate our country even more deeply with the United States—something many Canadians don't want to see happen.

And yet, one particular aspect of Canada's foreign affairs points to exactly that sort of integration with the States. Our recent dubious record in Haiti, and our role in Afghanistan, was something Martin didn't mention, and there was no opportunity for reporters to ask about.

In fact, there has been little mention of Haiti in the entire tightly managed campaign so far, even though Mark Bourque, a retired Canadian RCMP officer, died there in recent weeks, shot in the streets of Port au Prince. Not even the suicide this weekend of Urano Texeira da Matta Bacellar, the Brazilian leader of the UN forces in Haiti, caused a blip in Canadian political circles. Nor has the steady criticism from peace activists who question Canada's involvement in either country.

A call to the Liberal party's press office in Ottawa confirms the party is trying to keep Haiti out of the election. "It's not a political thing," says Kristen Connolly, who describes herself as the "press office answering-the-phone lady." Questions should be directed to the foreign affairs department, she says. "It's government comment as opposed to politics."

That seems odd to a number of observers, including Victoria's outgoing MP David Anderson, a one-time foreign-service officer. "No foreign affairs issues have come up in the campaign, which I find very surprising," he says. "I find it very strange."

The election should include a close analysis of Canada's foreign policy, Anderson says, and yet, the closest we've come during this campaign is politicians talking about increasing the size of the armed forces. How, Anderson asks, can we talk about that without saying what we'd be increasing the forces for?

Right now, he says, it looks like that would be for deployments like those in Afghanistan and Haiti. "It's an interesting election debate gap, but that goes back to my original point, that there's hardly been an election."

Or, as Susan Clarke from the Victoria Peace Coalition says, “The country is never really held to account on foreign policy during elections.”

It shouldn't be this way, she adds. “We never got a chance to say anything about Haiti. It was all done behind our backs.”

And yet, the question remains for many Canadians: Just what is Canada doing in Haiti, and why is it a problem?

Over the past several months, Clarke and the coalition have been trying to raise awareness of the issue. They've brought a couple of speakers to Victoria, including the journalist Kevin Pina, who is from Oakland, California, but has lived for several years in Haiti, is married to a Haitian and has a child there.

There are multiple reasons, he says, why Canadians should be concerned about what's happening in Haiti. For starters, it's largely thanks to us and our efforts to unseat Jean Bertrand Aristide's democratically elected government that the country is currently so unstable. Through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), we funded non-governmental organizations in Haiti that helped build opposition to Aristide. Then, during the so-called rebellion in 2004, Canadian armed forces were there to take the airport. Our forces held the country, along with soldiers from France and the United States, until United Nations troops could land. Since then we have contributed RCMP expertise to train Haitian police officers, and we are putting \$25 million into a much-delayed election that many observers say is a sham. In 2000, when Aristide was elected, there were 12,000 polling places, Pina says. The plan for this election was to have somewhere between 600 and 800 places to vote. “That might ensure the photo ops they want of long lines at the polls, but it won't guarantee participation.”

Pina is currently working on a documentary about the situation in Haiti: a work that includes scenes of UN troops raiding homes in the Cité Soleil neighbourhood, and gory shots of war dead. “A lot of what I'm showing is not being shown in the press,” he says. “I have been in the unenviable position of being the one reporting the side of the story nobody else will touch . . . I like documentary filmmaking for that reason, because the images at the end of the day don't lie.”

Asked what Canadians need to know about Haiti, Pina says, “That your government is investing millions of dollars in an unelected, undemocratic regime.” Also, he says, on this one Canada is in “lock step” with the United States. And, oh yes, the decision to unseat Aristide, known as the Ottawa initiative, was made in Canada.

All of that makes it something that should be an election issue, argues the peace coalition's Clarke. “I don't know when is a better time to hold our country accountable for its foreign policy than during an election,” she says. “The Canadian people should have everything to say about foreign policy, just like the Americans want to have everything to say about their foreign policy. That's a huge part of your persona as a nation.” M

Mixed Opposition

Whether or not Haitians get to participate in a free election anytime soon in their own country, the election that's currently happening here could determine whether there'll be a shift in our involvement there. So what do representatives of Canada's various political parties think, and why aren't they giving the Liberals a rougher ride on their Haiti record?

"We are very concerned obviously with developments in Haiti," says Stockwell Day, the conservative's foreign affairs critic, in a voice message. He's also the MP for Okanagan-Coquihalla and once upon a time lived in Victoria and attended UVic (though it's not clear from his website whether he actually graduated). He's concerned, but he's actually calling for more involvement, not less.

"We feel Canada should have more of a presence there, especially on the security side," Day says. "Over the last several years we have been underfunding our military and we do not have the capability to provide the types of level of security that's needed in a situation like Haiti right now because we're also committed in other places."

As for the NDP, last spring the party's foreign affairs critic, Alexa McDonough, called on the government to do more to stop the flow of arms into the country and to address the basic needs of health care, education, jobs and infrastructure there.

Then there's the Green Party, which called this past weekend for a formal review of Canada's involvement in Haiti. This follows on the party's October stance, which called on Canada to seek a delay in the elections until all political prisoners are freed and "intimidation of Lavalas Party supporters by the Haitian National Police is stopped."

"It's pretty outrageous that we're involved," says Ariel Lade, the Green candidate in Victoria and a member of the Victoria Peace Coalition. "These elections are going to be a sham unless Aristide and the Lavalas party are allowed to fully participate and not be harassed by the police that the RCMP are training."

Area doctors help build birth center
A gift of health to poor of Haiti
By ALAN BAVLEY
The Kansas City Star
Jan. 15, 2006

The first two times Wenchelle Lorci was pregnant, she gave birth at home. She couldn't afford a hospital. She couldn't even afford bus fare to the hospital.

Her babies died.

For the impoverished village in Haiti where Lorci lives, health care has been a luxury far out of reach. Now that has changed, thanks to the work of two Kansas City area doctors and a multitude of donors and volunteers. They have built a women's clinic and birthing center that serves one of the poorest areas in the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.

Since it opened in October 2004, the Maison de Naissance, or Birthing Home, has delivered about 300 babies and cared for more than 1,000 mothers and their children. The clinic's goal of healthy mothers and babies is summed up in the Haitian Creole word *dekabes*. That is the term for a double win at the popular game of dominos, and it has become the clinic's catchphrase.

Maison de Naissance, called MN for short, is in Larnage, an isolated farming village on a peninsula that stretches out from the southwest corner of the Caribbean island nation.

"It's a level of poverty you wouldn't be able to believe is that close to the United States," said Stan Shaffer, a doctor who works in the intensive care nursery at St. Luke's Hospital. "One in 10 births in Haiti ends in the death of the mother or child. These are horrible statistics, but they are so reversible." Poor nutrition and hygiene and a lack of skilled medical care are to blame. Villagers in Larnage are about five miles from the nearest hospital. That is a half-hour drive when transportation is available. And when patients arrive at medical facilities, they often have to provide their own food, bed linen and medicines.

Shaffer and Elizabeth Wickstrom, a St. Luke's obstetrician, had been going to Haiti regularly for years. The two agreed that the people they served needed much more than the occasional clinics the American volunteers could offer.

"The problem was we didn't have the consistency," Shaffer said. "There is no medical care there. Everyone in the community begged us for a hospital."

Two years ago, Shaffer and Wickstrom went to Haiti looking for a solution. In Larnage they found a building whose owner wanted it converted to a medical facility. With money from their own pockets, grants from the St. Luke's Hospital Foundation and other organizations, and donations from dozens of individuals, Shaffer and Wickstrom rehabilitated the building, stocked it with medical equipment and supplies, and hired its staff.

They also equipped MN with a satellite dish and computers that its nurses use to consult with doctors in Kansas City and across the United States. Video cameras allow doctors to see the patients. And doctors and clinic staff talk back and forth using instant messaging.

“I think they feel it’s a lifeline. The interaction on a daily basis is important for the team effort,” said Denise Fryzelka, a nurse midwife on the faculty of the University of Kansas School of Nursing who makes regular trips to MN.

The technology proved lifesaving a few weeks ago when a baby was born with an abdominal-wall defect, Shaffer said. MN staff assumed the defect was lethal and were going to send the baby home to die. But they consulted with a pediatric surgeon in Kansas City who told them of a medication they could paint on the baby’s skin to prevent infection and allow surgery later.

The satellite link also has made it possible for MN staff to consult with AIDS experts in Kansas City, New York and Miami. Since it began a testing program last summer, the clinic has been treating four mothers who are HIV-positive.

Clinic staff visit the women at their homes twice a day to give them their medications. Again, new technology plays an important role.

There are about 2,000 tin- and thatched-roof huts in the six-square-mile area that MN serves. But there are few roads and fewer signs to guide health workers to their destinations. So nurses use Global Positioning System devices to locate patients. They paint GPS coordinates on each hut.

When Lorci became pregnant a third time, she faced the same financial hurdles as before. But this time, MN was available. She asked its staff whether they could save her baby.

“She was so terrified,” Fryzelka recalled. “But now there were no barriers to her care. She didn’t have to decide whether to come or to feed her family.”

Lorci visited MN for several prenatal checkups and on Sept. 1 delivered Djeunie, a healthy baby girl. “Just having my baby is a miracle,” Lorci said in an instant message that Fryzelka translated. “If MN hadn’t been there, I would certainly have lost my baby as I lost the other two.”

How to help

■ To donate to the Healthy Mothers-Healthy Babies Foundation, a nonprofit agency formed in Missouri to support Maison de Naissance, write to Maison de Naissance, 4401 Wornall Road, Suite 2718, Kansas City, MO 64111, or go to www.maison denaissance. com.

Caricom offers Haiti assistance with poll preparations
Sunday, January 15th 2006
Stabroek News, Guyana

Caricom stands ready to assist the efforts of the Haitian authorities and their international partners in arranging for elections, the first round of which is due on February 7.

A statement issued by the Caricom Community Council at its 17th Meeting in George-town on Friday, said this would be done through its Election Support Group comprising the Chief Elections Officers of several member states. Caricom is also prepared to participate in international observation of the elections as a further contribution to the success of the electoral process.

The Community Council (CC) noted there was widespread agreement that several critical technical, administrative and logistical problems must be urgently addressed if the groundwork for well-run elections is to be completed in keeping with the newly established dates.

Noting the latest decision by Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council to hold the first round of Presidential and Parliamentary elections on February 7, Caricom congratulated the millions of Haitians who have registered and declared their intentions to take part in the elections.

The CC also noted that a secure environment, an orderly voting process, the widest participation by citizens and the right of all candidates to campaign freely without harassment nor the threat of violence were essential conditions that make for free, fair and successful elections.

It said that a credible process and acceptance of the results were vital to the legitimacy and stability of the new government, which would usher in the return to constitutional rule.

Expressing regrets at the death of the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilisation Force in Haiti (MINUSTAH) as well as the plight of numerous victims of kidnapping and other forms of violence, the CC said that the National Haitian Police (HNP) and MINUSTAH have a difficult but critical task to improve public safety and security.

Stating that persons in arbitrary detention should be released and those charged should be quickly brought to justice, the CC said the "prolonged incarceration of political personalities without charge and the sluggishness of the judicial processes against those belatedly charged, compromise the human rights situation and complicate the security environment."

The CC said respect for human rights, observance of the rule of law and due process as well as independence of the judiciary are as important as curbing insecurity, encouraging dialogue and reconciliation in the creation of a favourable environment for elections and democracy.

DR, Haiti authorities jointly quell tension in the Southwest
The Dominican Today
January 15, 2006

SANTO DOMINGO. - Dominican and Haitian authorities held an emergency meeting yesterday to expedite a solution to friction stemming from several incidents which have took place in Pedernales and the Haitian town Anse-Pitre between people from both territories, which kept an atmosphere of tension and fear in the inhabitants of both sides of the border.

The meeting was held in the border between Ase-Au-Pitre and the Pedernales municipality, in which participated the governor Heberto Amadís Fernandez; the local head of Migration, Luis Chapman; a human rights representative the Army commander and other Dominican authorities, whereas for the Haitian part were Piet Marks, mayor of Anse Au-Pitre; the Jusice of the Peace and representatives of human rights there.

Yesterday, five Dominicans were arrested in Operation Vaquero (cowboy), accusd of assaulting several Haitians for reasons of revenge, after reports that the authorities of Anse-Au-Pitre had unjustly detained a Dominican. It was also reported that other Haitians had attacked other Dominicans in their territory.

Friday night, unidentified arsonists, presumably Haitian, tried to set fire with a bottle of gasoline, to the local Customs Office, next to the Army's border checkpoint. This information could not be confirmed.

Governor Fernandez said that the Dominican authorities have at all times to keep the good relations that have existed for years between Dominicans and Haitians on this side of the border.

For his part, Anse-Au-Pitre's mayor promised to arrest and to disclose the names of Dominicans and Haitians involved in drug trafficking, and affirmed that his country's authorities will punish those who try to violently disrupt the relations with Dominicans.

U.N. Haiti official: Brazilian killed self
UPI
Jan. 12, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Jan. 12 (UPI) -- Suicide is the official explanation for the death of the leader of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti, U.N. officials said on Thursday.

Lt. Gen. Urano Teixeira da Matta Bacellar had apparently committed suicide last weekend with a single gunshot to the head, said U.N. and Haitian investigators.

The 58-year-old leader was the head of the mission since last September.

Violence erupts at Haiti funeral
BBC News
Friday, Jan. 13, 2006

Violence has erupted in Haiti at the funeral of 24 illegal migrants found dead in the Dominican Republic.

Police and UN peacekeepers clashed with protesters as they tried to cross the border, leaving at least one dead.

The bodies of the 24 Haitians had to be taken back into the Dominican Republic, and were buried in a common grave.

Protesters were demanding an inquiry into the deaths of the migrants, who the Dominicans say suffocated in the back of a smuggler's lorry.

Some survivors said, however, that the truck had been fired at from a vehicle.

The Dominican police have arrested at least 20 people over the incident. Some reports say there are military officers among those detained.

Tensions

On Thursday, the Dominican authorities said they had tried to hand the bodies over to UN forces in Haiti, but the vehicle carrying the coffins was shot at from the Haitian side of the border.

The protests came as the number of Haitian migrants dead rose to 25, after a survivor died in hospital.

The lorry they were on was believed to have been transporting some 60 illegal immigrants from the Haitian border to the Dominican town of Santiago.

Relations between the two countries are strained over the hundreds of thousands of Haitians working illegally in the Dominican Republic, which shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with Haiti.

Protest Turns Deadly at Haiti-Dominican Republic Border
By VOA News
13 January 2006

U.N. peacekeepers clashed with Haitian demonstrators Thursday who were protesting the deaths of migrants being smuggled into the Dominican Republic earlier this week.

At least one person was killed and several others wounded in the border clash that came as the Dominican Republic said it had buried 24 of the migrants killed in Tuesday's incident.

Officials said another migrant died Thursday in a hospital, bringing the death toll to 25.

The dead were among 50 migrants hidden in the back of a truck that fled Tuesday when detected by border police.

Some witnesses say the victims suffocated and others that they jumped, or were thrown, from the speeding truck.

The truck driver is in custody and Dominican officials have pledged to conduct a complete investigation.

Some information for this report was provided by Reuters.

Freedom Center Inducts 2005 "Everyday" Freedom Heroes
WCPO.com
January 14, 2006

A man who spent the first 15-years of his life as a slave was one of seven people inducted as "Everyday Freedom Heroes" at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center this weekend.

Jean-Robert Cadet was abandoned on the streets of New York City when his owners moved to the United States from Haiti and discovered they could not keep a slave, or "Restavec" -- a term used for child slaves in Haiti.

He was honored Saturday night for dedicating his life to freeing Haiti's child slaves.

"We're not talking about a few hundred, but hundreds of thousands of children in Haiti who are still, who are in slavery," said Cadet.

Cadet wrote about his experience in the book, "Restavec: From Haitian Slave Child to Middle-Class American."

He will be returning to Haiti this winter to continue his efforts to improve the lives of the children there.

In addition to the induction ceremony Saturday night, a screening of the upcoming TV special, "Pepsicola Everyday Freedom Heroes," was shown -- featuring the stories of all seven who were honored this weekend.

The one-hour special will air on WCPO-TV (Channel 9) on March 9, as well as in other cities before spring.

Curtailling the violence in Haiti
A Times Editorial
St. Petersburg Times
Published January 14, 2006

Security in Haiti already was in free-fall before the United Nations' top peacekeeper there apparently took his own life last week. His death may force the interim government to carry through with elections - now, on the fourth try, scheduled for Feb. 7. But what Haiti needs more than a mirage of democracy is a police force that can protect 8-million people and inspire confidence in a central government. The United Nations must step up to the job.

Police are investigating the death of Gen. Urano Teixeira da Matta Bacellar of Brazil, the commander of the 7,400 U.N. peacekeeping troops who was found at his hotel Saturday with a reportedly self-inflicted gunshot wound. The peacekeepers justly have been criticized for failing to take on the armed gangs that terrorize the country with impunity. Beyond a handful of smash-and-grab raids to generate headlines, U.N. troops have done little to disarm the bandits who effectively control many towns, slums and roads, making it impossible for the government and aid groups to function. Haiti's business leaders fired back Monday, calling a general strike in hopes of pressuring U.N. forces to halt a wave of kidnappings.

Elections at the earliest date are important to both name a permanent successor to the ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and give the new government a sense of legitimacy as it begins the process of national reconciliation. But how can the U.N. and inter-American states hope to organize a credible election if violence keeps poll workers and ballots from entire areas of the country? U.N. forces need a more aggressive mandate to round up and disarm the gangs. More money needs to be spent training a national police force. International organizations also need to follow through with a host of domestic reforms, from professionalizing the armed forces and creating an independent judiciary to instilling respect for human rights.

No government, elected or not, could hope to reverse Haiti's poverty or crime rate with the nation's corrupted political system. Foreign donors will refuse to gamble much on Haiti until security improves. That's why holding to a February election means little unless the United Nations is prepared to change conditions on the ground. The United States should offer more aid and logistical support to make the peacekeepers' presence felt. Only by removing more guns from the streets can Haiti hope to create opportunities to break a stifling culture of crime and violence.

Report “extremely tense” situation in Haiti, near Dajabón
The Dominican Today
January 13, 2006

SANTO DOMINGO.- The local media is reporting a continuous “extremely tense” situation in the Haitian side of the border in the city Dajabon, as Haitians protest the shutdown of the transit between the two countries.

The CDN news channel reports that a United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (Minustah) patrol vehicle was attacked by the Haitians who threw stones, to protest the suspension of the weekly market held in that city between merchants from Dominican Republic and that country.

“Thousands of Haitians try to enter to the market,” said the CDN reporter via telephone from Dajabon, adding that the protesters burned tires on the Haitian side of the gate which defines the international border. He said that all along the Dominican side of the border the patrols were reinforced.

The turmoil in Dajabon and neighboring Ounaminthe, in Haiti, began when a truck carrying the caskets with at least 21 of the 24 Haitians who died of asphyxia near the city Navarrete (northwest) on Wednesday, and another afterwards in a Santiago hospital, were taken for burial in their country, but the funeral motorcade met with an angry mob which opened fire on it and pelted it with stones, with 2 protesters dead and several injuries from the ensuing confrontation.

In this capital, president Leonel Fernandez appointed the ministers of Justice, the Armed Forces, the Immigration director and the National Police Chief to conduct the investigation in the deaths of the 24 Haitians, tragedy which has once again strained the relations between Haiti and this country.

Albuquerque: General's death will not foil Brazil's mission in Haiti

Érica Santana

Reporter –

Agência Brasil

Jan. 13, 2006

Brasília - Brazilian army commander in chief, general Francisco Roberto de Albuquerque, declared, yesterday (12), that the death of general Urano Teixeira Bacellar will not interfere with the task that Brazil is carrying out in Haiti. "We shall complete this mission, as we are doing with so many others that have been entrusted to us in the past. Be assured that this fact will not deter us. We shall see the name of Brazil held aloft and honored on the international stage," the commander in chief affirmed in an interview on National AM Radio's "Brazil Magazine" program.

In general Albuquerque's opinion, Brazil has a duty to continue heading the United Nations (UN) Peace Mission in Haiti, mainly because of the international prestige it confers on the country. "This is a globalized world. We have to show results. We are collaborating with the peace process," he affirmed.

He also underlines respect for human rights, the defense of peace, and cooperation among nations as essential to the peace mission. "We want to create conditions to establish this democratic State, which is so important, especially here on this American continent of ours, which is where Haiti is."

According to the general, the working conditions the Brazilians face in Haiti are normal. "Troop morale remains as high as ever, demonstrating the excellent preparation and the worth of the Brazilian soldier." Brazil is currently engaged in nine peace missions, and, according to the army commander in chief, will continue "to participate actively in missions undertaken by international bodies."

Albuquerque informed that he intends to accompany the two generals nominated for the post of military commander of the Peace Mission in Haiti on their trip to the UN. He said that his priority there will be to discuss operational aspects of the mission. After that he expects to go to Haiti to visit the Brazilian troops.

Translation: David Silberstein

Protesters in Haiti denounce violence

BEN FOX

Associated Press

Kansas City Star

Jan. 12, 2006

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - Chanting protesters filled the narrow streets of a notorious slum on Thursday to denounce violence and political chaos after clashes between gangs and U.N. peacekeepers reportedly killed one person and wounded at least 17.

Hundreds of people, including political activists, gang members and children, shuffle-danced to the blaring of horns and banging of drums toward two U.N. armored personnel carriers at the edge of Cite Soleil, then veered off toward the sea without confronting the peacekeepers who patrol the slum's perimeter.

Organizers said they feared that U.N. peacekeeping troops would soon attack Cite Soleil, a warren of bullet-riddled shanties with raw sewage flowing in trash-clogged canals.

The peacekeepers are under pressure to take more aggressive measures against slum gangs that authorities have blamed for a wave of kidnappings in the Haitian capital.

"The population is standing up to say 'No' to U.N. persecution in Cite Soleil," said John Joel Joseph, an activist for Lavalas, the political party of ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. "Every day, we are counting dead bodies."

On Wednesday, shooting broke out between the two sides after nightfall, according to aid workers and residents.

One of the wounded was a 12-year-old girl who was shot in the thigh. On Thursday, she was sprawled on a dingy mat in the shade of a concrete wall, shielding her eyes from the blazing sun.

Sushil Kujur, who works at a Missionaries of Charity clinic at the edge of the slum, said workers treated seven people with gunshot wounds, including a man who was shot in the abdomen and died on the way to a hospital. Another 10 people were treated by the Belgian and French sections of the aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres, officials said.

The aid groups said they couldn't be certain where the gunfire came from.

Kujur said his clinic has treated about 70 people for gunshot wounds in the last four months, including 10 who later died, and that some were not involved in clashes with U.N. troops.

"They are hitting innocent people," he said.

U.N. spokesman Damian Onses-Cardona said he did not have any information on the violence. Cite Soleil, home to some 300,000 people, is a stronghold for supporters of Aristide, who was forced to flee the country following a rebellion nearly two years ago, and of Rene Preval, a one-time ally of the ousted president who is considered the front-runner in the Feb. 7 presidential election.

Meanwhile, Onses-Cardona said a preliminary investigation has confirmed that the Brazilian commander of U.N. peacekeepers in Haiti, who was found shot to death on Saturday, had committed suicide.

Defence denies Spanish responsibility for Haiti shooting
By: ThinkSpain, Spain
January 13, 2006

A spokesman for the Defence ministry is claiming that Spanish troops were not responsible for shooting dead a Haitian protester on the border with the Dominican Republic, and insist that the fatal shot was fired by a local immigration officer.

Earlier this morning, the Reuters news agency had reported that Spanish troops on a UN peacekeeping mission had opened fire on an angry crowd of Haitian protesters, who were trying to cross the border into the Dominican Republic in protest at the deaths of 24 of their compatriots, who died of carbon monoxide poisoning in the back of a truck as they were trying to cross the border illegally.

The Defence ministry has since issued a contradictory statement, affirming that Spanish troops had only fired warning shots over the heads of the protesters, and that a Haitian immigration officer was responsible for the man's death.

According to Defence ministry sources, UN troops had been attacked and had rocks thrown at them by those taking part in the protest, which seems to have been organised by organised criminal gangs dedicated to the trafficking of illegal immigrants.

The chief of staff of the Dominican Republic Armed Forces, General Rafael Radhames Ramírez Ferreiras, said that he understood that two protesters had been killed, and confirmed that seven others, including two UN soldiers, had been injured.

Neither of the injured UN troops is Spanish.

Caricom ministers discuss Haiti situation
Radio Jamaica
January 13, 2006

A report on the political situation in Haiti was among matters discussed at the 17th meeting of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Council of Ministers, which began in Guyana on Friday. CARICOM Secretary General, Edwin Carrington, said the meeting would also consider and approve a budget for the CARICOM Secretariat that had been discussed earlier this week by the Budget Committee.

Haiti has not been invited to attend activities of the regional integration grouping ever since President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was controversially removed from office in February 2004.

But CARICOM has been monitoring the situation in the former French colony, especially as the country seeks to elect a new head of state and a legislative council.

The elections, which have been postponed on four occasions, will be held in early February.

Dr. Carrington said the central issue at this time is the responsibility of the Council to ensure the efficient operation and orderly development of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

Meanwhile, on Friday Spain denied reports that its soldiers were responsible for the fatal shooting of a Haitian man during a demonstration on Thursday.

The incident occurred as officials from the Dominican Republic were burying 24 Haitians who reportedly suffocated while being smuggled into that country in the back of a van on Tuesday.

Some survivors claim shots were fired from another vehicle.

**Doctors confirm jailed Haiti priest has leukemia
Leading The Charge, Australia
13 January, 2006**

By Joseph Guylor Delva Thu Jan 12, 5:55 PM ET

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - An outspoken Haitian priest jailed on murder allegations but considered a prisoner of conscience by a human rights group is suffering from leukemia, a Haitian medical examination has found.

The confirmation that popular Roman Catholic priest Gerard Jean-Juste is seriously ill is likely to increase pressure on Haiti's interim government to release him from prison, where he has been held for more than six months.

Jean-Juste is widely viewed as the natural successor to former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was ousted by an armed revolt in February 2004.

His supporters believe Jean-Juste was jailed to prevent him from running -- and likely winning -- a presidential election originally scheduled for November but now due to take place on February 7 after repeated delays caused by incompetence, violence and logistical problems.

U.S. doctors reported after visiting the parish priest over Christmas that he had leukemia. But the interim government resisted calls for him to be given a formal medical examination until Tuesday, when he was suddenly taken by authorities to a hospital.

A report sent to the interim authorities by Dr. Jacques Boncy, who conducted Tuesday's medical examination, confirmed he has leukemia, medical sources said on Thursday.

Jean-Juste's lawyer, Mario Joseph, said he had also seen Boncy's report.

"We have received the report and it is a serious and urgent matter," Joseph told Reuters.

"We have attached a copy of the doctor's report to a correspondence we sent to the investigative judge to request bail so that our client may receive the medical treatment he urgently needs."

Jean-Juste was arrested on July 21 last year on allegations he was involved in the kidnapping and the killing one week earlier of a well-known Haitian journalist, Jacques Roche.

Authorities have since brought additional accusations of weapons violations.

The Roman Catholic priest has denied the charges and said he was in Miami at the time of the murder. Amnesty International calls him a prisoner of conscience jailed for expressing views that the interim authorities do not like. Members of the U.S. Congress have also called for his release.

Stop UN's plan for a new massacre in Haiti
Por Haiti Action Committee
Centro de Midia Independente, Brasil
13/01/2006

In the nine days since January 1st, at least 23 civilians have been shot to death by UN forces in Cite Soleil, according to reports from human rights workers in the Haitian capital.

Stop UN's plan for a new massacre in Haiti
Urgent Action Alert from the Haiti Action Committee

As UN's Brazilian commander is found shot dead on his hotel balcony...

New UN massacres in Cite Soleil could come any day now

Be on the alert. The situation in Haiti is dangerous and moving fast.

In the nine days since January 1st, at least 23 civilians have been shot to death by UN forces in Cite Soleil, according to reports from human rights workers in the Haitian capital. Consider these developments:

1. Brazilian General Bacellar, who's been commanding UN forces for barely four months, was found shot in the head Saturday on the balcony of the 5-star Hotel Montana. Officials called it an apparent suicide. Late last week, Bacellar had tense meetings with UN and coup regime officials and the right-wing business elite. They reportedly put "intense pressure" on the general "demanding that he intervene brutally in Cite Soleil," according to AHP.

This coincided with a pressure campaign by Chamber of Commerce head Reginald Boulos and sweatshop kingpin Andy Apaid, leader of Group 184 [the business group that helped mastermind the February 29, 2004 coup that ousted President Aristide]. Last week Boulos and Apaid made strident calls in the media for a new UN crackdown on Cite Soleil, the sprawling, impoverished neighborhood that is a stronghold of support for President Aristide and his Lavalas Party and a center of resistance to the coup regime.

2. On January 6 the Chilean UN chief Juan Valdes announced that UN troops would "occupy" Cite Soleil, "and warned that civilians could be harmed," reported Guy Delva for Reuters. Valdes told a local radio station: "We are going to intervene in the coming days. I think there'll be collateral damage but we have to impose our force, there is no other way," Reuters said.

According to "some UN officials" quoted by Reuters, Bacellar [who has not been shy about shooting up Cite Soleil in the past] "had opposed Valdes' plan" to escalate even further the UN military operation in Cite Soleil. This is an operation characterized by repeated UN killings of innocent civilians throughout 2005 and so far in 2006 -- "aggressive" by any standard, but not apparently aggressive enough for Boulos, Apaid and the US-backed coup regime.

3. Bacellar's death comes on the heels of Boulos's call for a "general strike" January 9, aimed at forcing the UN mission to get tough on Cite Soleil "bandits"-- a code word for Lavalas supporters. Apart from the absurdity of the Chamber of Commerce calling a "general strike" -- it was an employer strike basically ignored outside the capital -- it does show that Haiti's business elite is once again beating the drum for more brutal UN armed incursions against the poor. This brings to mind a similar high-pressure campaign by the business elite -- just before the July 6th UN massacre of at least 60 civilians in Cite Soleil.

4. To justify a possible new crackdown in Cite Soleil, the coup regime has made absurd claims that Cite Soleil is a haven for "Colombian drug traffickers," and a hiding place for the victims of kidnappings that have plagued the Haitian capital. But the kidnappers are hardly the poor residents of Cite Soleil, surrounded as it is by UN troops. The kidnappers are mostly well-connected to the business elite and coup regime. Even Police Chief Andresol admits the National Police are involved in much of the crime wave, including kidnappings. And what "Colombian drug trafficker" would be hanging out in a tin shack in Cite Soleil, without clean water or electricity, and sewage flowing in the street?

5. Replacing Bacellar as interim UN military force commander is General Eduardo Aldunate Herman, a Chilean army officer who served the brutal dictatorship of General Pinochet as an officer in the CNI, the Chilean political police. Aldunate Herman has been accused of participating in the 1973 overthrow of Chile's elected government, and of involvement in the 1976 killing of a Spanish diplomat. He is a graduate of the US Army's School of the Americas.

If we take UN chief Juan Valdes at his word, this could be another massacre in the making. UN troops showed on July 6, 2005 in Cite Soleil, and on many other occasions, that they will shoot and kill men, women and children in their homes, in their beds, as they go about their daily chores.

Now is the time to act -- to let them know the world is watching and demands an end to the killings!

Contact the following official. Demand that he intervene to stop a new massacre and occupation of Cite Soleil!

* Juan Gabriel Valdes

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Haiti

Phone: 011-509-244-9650 or 9660 Fax 011-509 244 3512

Business trade suspended at border with Haiti
The Dominican Today
January 13, 2006

Dajabon.- Haitian merchants did not return to the customary Friday marketplace here, and the town resembled a cemetery.

Thousands of merchants usually come to this locality on the riverbed of the Massacre River. But today, there were none.

Hotels and bread & breakfast rooms were at full capacity with potential buyers from Santo Domingo.

This city that is known as the Dominican-Haitian marketplace, today gave the impression of a tombs town.

Haiti's Deadly Class Divide
Class war takes on a new meaning in Cite Soley
by Leslie Bagg
and Aaron Lakoff
ZNet
January 13, 2006

Port-au-Prince, January 10/06 - Driving into Cite Soley on January 8th, the day Haitians were supposed to go to the polls in a presidential election, there is no mistaking the fact that we are entering an occupied zone. The streets are almost deserted, the atmosphere tense, and UN armored personnel carriers patrol the streets.

Cite Soley, one of Port-au-Prince's poorest neighborhoods, is home to around 500,000 people living in abject poverty. According to Jean-Joseph Joel, the Secretary General of the local branch of Fanmi Lavalas, the area's residents are virtual prisoners, and their movements restricted by armed police at checkpoints. Vilified as bandits or chimeres by the elite-run press, he says they face persecution if they do manage to escape the neighborhood. There is no work and signs of malnutrition are obvious in the children.

Since the February 2004 coup d'etat that ousted democratically elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Cite Soley has been one of the battlefields where a war against Haiti's poor majority is being waged. Multiple killings of civilians have been committed by UN forces carrying out the will of the country's elite and of the international community. Dieunord Edme, a Cite Soley resident, shows us the place in the market where his wife, Annette Moleron, was gunned down by MINUSTAH (Mission Nations Unies Stabilization en Haiti) soldiers on January 7th during an operation that claimed the lives of four women in a marketplace. He shows us bullet holes in the metal roof over the market's stalls.

Victims of the deadly July 6th 2005 UN massacre, an event documented by the Haiti Information Project, which the UN denies ever happened, show us their scars. One woman lifts her shirt to show us where the MINUSTAH bullet entered her then pregnant belly, ! and the mark of the cesarean section performed to remove the baby that was killed. As we drive out of the neighborhood we pass a horribly bloated corpse by the side of the road. A MINUSTAH tank is parked nearby, keeping watch. Local residents say the man, who worked as a porter, was killed five days previously but every time someone went to try to remove the body, MINUSTAH started firing. It is apparent that they want to keep his body as a warning to others.

This ugly violence that has swept Cite Soley in the last week, and for many months prior, does not come out of thin air. Someone above the UN is calling the shots, and they wield lethal power. Reginald Boulos, the president of the Haitian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and sweatshop magnate Andy Apaid – both members of the Canadian and US-backed Group 184 – called for a one-day general business strike Monday. The stated goal of this strike was to put pressure on MINUSTAH to clamp down harder on crime! and kidnappings. As an announcement heard on Radio Metropole stated in a threatening tone, “Don't leave your houses. Let the police and the military do their work. Anyone who leaves their house takes their life into their own hands.”

However, more than anything, this strike has served to highlight the extreme class divide in Haiti, one that before the elections is becoming increasingly more deadly. Indeed, many of the more upscale businesses in the country did observe the strike. Driving through Port-au-Prince, we observed that the doors of major businesses such as Texaco, Shell, Scotia Bank, and upscale grocery stores remained shut. However, for the majority of Haiti's population who slave away to bring home a per-capita income of \$200 per year, the day continued as if normal. Workers who toil in the informal economy – street vendors, runners, tap-tap (taxi) operators – lined the streets, unable to skip a day's work just because! the island's wealthiest said so.

Our experience in Cite Soley today showed us the other side of this business strike, and what the MINUSTAH clamp down looked like to Port-au-Prince's poor. Jean-Joseph Joel gives us his analysis of the situation. Because of its large population and tendency to vote unanimously, Cite Soley has the power to sway an election. Joel explains that MINUSTAH is under intense pressure from the business elite to make it possible for their presidential favourite, Charles Henri Baker, to have a winning chance in the elections. At the moment, the only candidate able to walk down the streets of Cite Soley is Rene Preval, the candidate supported by the mass base of Lavalas. Preval's posters are the only ones to be seen anywhere in Cite Soley – territory where the elite dare not tread.

For General Urano Teixeira da Matta Bacellar, the Brazilian head of the United Nations military mission in Haiti, the pressure may have been too much! . He was found dead in his hotel room on January 7th. He apparently committed suicide after a tense meeting with Reginald Boulos. Joel says that Cite Soley residents are nervous, as the subject of that conversation was pressure on MINUSTAH to crack down harder on Cite Soley before the elections. The fact that Bacellar was replaced by Gen. Eduardo Aldunate Herman, a Chilean Pinochet-era figure and alleged human rights abuser, does nothing to help Cite Soley residents rest easier.

Jean-Joseph Joel's hope is that the international community will change its position on Haiti and side with the majority of Haitians rather than supporting the elite and the UN mission here. However, it doesn't look like change is in the air. Pierre Pettigrew, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a man many Haitians know by name, has recently announced that Canadian forces will remain in Haiti, despite escalating calls for their removal.

Sources told us that two more people were killed in the marketplace by MINUSTAH forces shortly after we left it on Monday. Residents speculated that these killings were retributions for talking to the media, as we had been out for the whole morning conducting interviews with locals. The people of Cite Soley risked their lives so their story could reach the public in countries like Canada and the US, whose governments continue to support MINUSTAH's actions. It remains to be seen what effect their sacrifice will have.

[Leslie Bagg and Aaron Lakoff are two independent journalists and activists from Montreal. They will be in Haiti for the month of January, filing reports focused on the role of Canada in the country. They can be reached at montrealtohaiti@resist.ca]

Locals Report On Haiti Kidnapping
Members of Faith Missions Inc. assist in safe return of father and sons
01/12/06
By Chanin Rotz-Mountz
Fulton County News, PA

A Haitian liaison known for his work with county-based members of Faith Missions Inc. was kidnapped along with his two sons en route to school last Wednesday morning but were safely returned home after a ransom was paid.

In a updated report sent to local Faith Missions Inc. members by Harrisonville residents Marlin and Linda Hollinshead, Pastor Francois "John" Eney and his sons Mike and Woodney were about to pull into their school in Port au Prince during the morning hours of January 4, when eight men with guns reportedly surrounded their car. The street until that time had been empty and in the moments before a United Nations car had passed the Eney family.

The men originally demanded \$100,000 in U.S. currency, which Eney repeatedly told them he could not furnish. Only when Woodney asked if they were going to kill his father did the men separate the 4-year-old boy from his father and brother. The men, according to the Hollinsheads, continued to beat Eney and reunited the trio in a building in the ghetto.

The family was permitted a phone call home, and Eney's wife, Guerdia, was informed the kidnappers required \$50,000 for their safe release. The matter was brought to the attention of Pastor Villejune, who spoke with local members of Faith Missions Inc. Pastor Villejune was only able to raise \$832 after contacting various people and holding a prayer meeting.

Hollinshead elaborated in his correspondence, food consisted of small portions of rice and beans and Eney and his sons slept on the floor. A taxi driver was also brought into the humid building by the men and beaten in hopes of getting a ransom.

"Earlier when they were hitting John and asking him for money, he told them he didn't have money and he said he felt compelled to laugh. They asked him why do you make fun of us. He (John) said 'No, I'm not laughing at you. I am a pastor and everything I have told you is the truth and you do not believe me, so I know nothing but to laugh,'" said Hollinshead.

At 5 p.m. on Friday, the Eney family and two women, who were being held by the kidnappers as well, were released after \$7,000 was sent through Western Union by Faith Missions Inc.

"John said he is thankful the Lord allowed him to have this experience, it has changed his life. It will give him the wisdom to help others if this happens to them," related Hollinshead. "He said he never knew he had so many friends, even ones that he has never met, that prayed for him and his family. He searched for words to express how he could thank everyone, but all he can say is 'thank you, thank you!'"

While Pastor Eney intends on sharing accounts of the abduction, he has indicated the men did not know he was connected to any type of mission or United States citizens. They have, however, kept his car, cellular phone and son's schoolbooks in exchange for an additional \$1,000 in cash.

"To conclude, John had just charged the battery on his cell phone, so he prayed that the phone would not work because he was afraid someone would try calling him. Would you believe the battery went dead?," stated Hollinshead.

Local members of Faith Missions Inc. travel on an annual basis to Haiti to complete missionary work. The primary objective of the group is to provide physical support in the form of buildings and programs.

In 2003 the group replaced the roof structure on a church, which had been severely damaged by an earthquake. The year before it was a school that received a new roof. No on-site activity was conducted from November 2003 until October 2005 because of the the severity of the political unrest.

In 2005, the group engaged in some roof repair and other building maintenance on the Faith Mission compound. While on site, a group of Haitian men works alongside the mission members to receive training and to assist in the work effort. An additional segment of Faith Mission conducts healthcare clinics. The effort combines the training of nationals to provide very basic health screening/care with addressing some of the healthcare needs of the people.

**Haitian Bourgeoisie Blamed for Attacking U.N.
Chilean foreign minister Ignacio Walker**

Associated Press

Jan. 12, 2-006

Haiti Democracy Project web page item #3415 (<http://www.haitipolicy.org>)

Chile's foreign minister on Tuesday said a "tremendous campaign of hate" may have contributed to the suicide of the Brazilian general heading U.N. peacekeeping efforts in Haiti.

A senior U.N. official confirmed to The Associated Press that Lt. Gen. Urano Teixeira da Matta Bacellar, who was found dead Saturday in his hotel room in Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince, shot himself in the head. But Brazilian and U.N. officials were still investigating.

"It is so tremendous the hatred campaign launched through the radio by a group against the United Nations, against Juan Gabriel Valdes, that this may have been one of the elements that could explain the suicide" of Bacellar, Foreign Minister Ignacio Walker said.

Two Chilean nationals hold key positions in Haiti: Valdes is the U.N. special envoy to Haiti and Army Gen. Eduardo Aldunate Herman was named interim commander of the 7,000 peacekeeping troops following Bacellar's death.

Walker said Valdes is a target of the campaign, which he attributed to small minority groups, but did not identify. "There is a Haitian bourgeoisie, united to business groups, that apparently opposes the election process," he said.

He added that those groups have in the past opposed democratic processes. Chile has some 600 men in the peacekeeping force who will remain there until June 30, according to a Senate deadline.

Valdes said he discussed the situation in Haiti in telephone conversations over the weekend with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Jose Miguel Insulza, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States. He didn't elaborate.

Elections in Haiti have been postponed four times and are now set for Feb. 7.

Haitians Facing Kidnappers on Their Own
Reginald Boulos on National Public Radio, All Things Considered, 2006-01-12
Haiti Democracy Project web page item #3417 (<http://www.haitipolicy.org>)
National Public Radio
All Things Considered
January 10, 2006

ROBERT SIEGEL, host:

This is ALL THINGS CONSIDERED from NPR News. I'm Robert Siegel.

MICHELE NORRIS, host:

And I'm Michele Norris.

Haiti has set a new date for national elections, the first since the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide two years ago. The vote is now scheduled to take place February 7th. It has been postponed four times due to violence and inadequate preparation. Over the weekend, the country suffered a new blow with the death of the top UN commander in the country. And as Amelia Shaw reports, Haiti is also being crippled by an explosion in kidnapping.

AMELIA SHAW reporting:

On Christmas Eve, Ruben George(ph) and his family were on their way to attend a family gathering in Tabar(ph), a middle-class suburb of Port-au-Prince. As they neared his brother's house, four armed men jumped out of a truck, shot their guns in the air and ordered the family out of the car.

Mr. RUBEN GEORGE: (Through Translator) It was atrocious. They put their guns to our heads, and when my six-year-old didn't lower his head, they beat him with the gun.

SHAW: The family was taken to a windowless one-room shack in the heart of a slum. For two nights, they waited for their relatives and friends to be called and for a ransom to be paid.

Mr. GEORGE: (Through Translator) They hit me in the face with a gun and said, 'That's what you get for chasing out Aristide.' Then they made us call people and they would say, 'Make sure you tell them where you are. You're in Cite Soleil. No one can come here to find you.'

SHAW: In the end, nearly \$20,000 changed hands, a hefty sum for a struggling working-class family. The Georges are among the latest victims of a multimillion-dollar business flourishing in Port-au-Prince's biggest slum, Cite Soleil. Armed gangs loyal to former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide control the violence-ridden slum, making it the ideal place to hide kidnapping victims. The United Nations says that as many as 10 people are being kidnapped a day, and the targets are everyone from the city's wealthiest residents to the vegetable vendors on the street.

Prominent businessman Reginald Boulos says that 400 people were kidnapped in December alone. He wonders how this can happen in front of nearly 8,000 UN troops.

Mr. REGINALD BOULOS (Businessman): We hear that today there are massive distribution of weapons over the last two weeks in Cite Soleil. And because of the fact that they are completely under a not-controlled area, they're able to get up, come in the city, pick up people, kill people and go back inside, and nobody can go after them.

SHAW: The UN began its peacekeeping mission in June of 2004, three months after then-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced into exile following a violent uprising. Since then, the troops have struggled to quell the waves of violence that strike the city, many of which emanate from Cite Soleil. The UN, known locally as MINUSTAH, has taken a lead in preparing Haiti's national elections, but last week officials postponed elections for the fourth time and many Haitians, like Boulos, have grown frustrated.

Mr. BOULOS: Please understand that we appreciate the work that MINUSTAH is doing so far, but it's not enough. And if it's not enough, we're going to fail. And if we fail, we're all going to fail. The UN will fail, the international community will fail, the government will fail, but most importantly, Haiti will fail. And again, the rest of the world will say, 'Oh, once more again, Haiti failed.'

SHAW: Boulos adds with the current violence, there is no way the country can hold elections. As chairman of the board of commerce, Boulos has called for a general strike this week to protest the kidnappings and urge UN troops to track down on gangs in Cite Soleil, but UN spokesman Damian Cardona says that conducting military operations in the winding alleyways of Cite Soleil is not that simple.

Mr. DAMIAN CARDONA (Spokesman, United Nations): We have to be careful. The context of Cite Soleil, being Islam-created almost 50 years ago with the smaller streets, a lot of local population sometimes are being used in the past as human shields--women, children--to protect the gangs that are going there. So we have to measure also the collateral damage we are going to do there if we do--with our operation.

SHAW: The unexpected death of military commander General Urano Bacellar has added another twist to the UN's mission. The loss of the UN's top military commander is another tremor in Haiti's increasingly unstable political landscape. While the UN struggles to regroup, Ruben George and his family are also struggling to put back their broken lives.

Mr. GEORGE: (Foreign language spoken)

SHAW: Ruben says the kidnappers keep calling his family demanding more money, and his kids are terrified of the dark. He's looking into ways to leave the country. With so much violence, he says, it just doesn't make sense to stay. For NPR News, I'm Amelia Shaw in Port-au-Prince.

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THE SINKING OF THE ESPERANCIA | TRAGEDY AT SEA

Twenty-four years after a group of Haitians washed ashore on South Florida beaches, 12 remain unidentified and unclaimed.

BY LUISA YANEZ

lyanez@MiamiHerald.com

Jan. 15, 2006

The sea smashed the wooden freighter to bits, pulled the Haitians under water and then, day by day, spat their bodies back along condo-studded beaches from Broward to Palm Beach counties. Authorities recovered the bodies of 21 men and women, victims of the nighttime sinking of the 49-foot Esperancia on March 1982.

Nine were mourned by loved ones.

But 12 others were lost in time, never claimed, never identified.

Today, they remain entries in the FLorida UnIdentified Decedents DataBase, a website created in 2002 and maintained by the state's 24 medical examiner districts and used by law enforcement officials in Florida and nationwide to match names with unclaimed bodies.

The bodies had spread out over 15 miles of beach over several days. At the time of the tragedy, the Broward Medical Examiner's Office, which took custody of all victims, said it would do everything possible to identify those who died on the freighter, a freighter whose name meant hope in Creole.

Edwina Johnson, now chief investigator, said she still remembers grief-stricken Haitians filing into her office, clutching photos of loved ones in their hands.

"We haven't handled so many deaths at once again," said the 21-year office veteran.

The medical examiner had to set up a refrigerated trailer in the rear of its building.

In the end, investigators had little information on the nameless dozen unclaimed.

Most victims had washed ashore nude, caked in sand. They had no fingerprints on file in the United States. The nine men and the three women appeared to be between the ages of 21 and 35; three of the males may have been as young as 11.

All the victims had meager personal effects, mainly the clothes not torn off by the pounding surf. Among the clues: One Haitian woman wore two yellow-metal band rings and two of the men carried keys in their pocket. Most washed ashore on Highland Beach and farther south.

What little information investigators finally culled from the victims is featured on the website. Michael Britt, a supervisor of investigations for the Collier County Medical Examiner's Office, who maintains the website, holds little hope the Haitians will ever be identified.

"From my past experience, when you're dealing with individuals who do not have any family in this country, and the people searching for them live in a region like Haiti where they would not know how to navigate our legal system, it is very difficult to put a name to them," he said.

Funerals were donated for all the unidentified Haitians, who were buried at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Cemetery in North Lauderdale, said Teresa Martinez, a spokeswoman for the Archdiocese of Miami.

A bronze marker notes how they died and their anonymity. It reads, in part, in English and Creole: "In loving memory of those who lost their lives in search of freedom . . . and whose names are known to God alone."

"These Haitians were a modern day incarnation of Lazarus dying at the doorstep of the richest nation in the world," said Father Thomas Wenski, an advocate of Dade's Haitian community who is now Bishop of the Diocese of Orlando.

Wenski recalled the tragedy of the *Esperancia* came only five months after another Haitian freighter, the *Nativite*, sank in the waters off Hillsboro Beach in Broward; the bodies of 33 washed ashore. A day after the *Esperancia* sank, Dave McDaniel, 67, a retired school principal from Ohio, was walking on a Boca Raton beach with his son, Scott, then 11. They saw a line of bodies in the surf. "We knew right away who they were," he said.

Q&A: UN Must 'Stay the Course' in Haiti

By MARY CRANE

New York Times

January 12, 2006

From the Council on Foreign Relations, January 12, 2006

Mary Crane is a writer for the Council on Foreign Relations website, cfr.org.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno, undersecretary-general for UN peacekeeping operations and former French ambassador to the European Union, says real progress has been made in Haiti. The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has been wracked by violence since the February 2004 ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and elections there have been postponed four times because of instability. But Guehenno says Haiti is moving "closer to a key milestone," the rescheduled elections February 7, and most of the country "is more or less...stabilized." For real progress to be made, however, the United Nations must be clear it is ready to "really stay the course." He spoke with cfr.org's Mary Crane January 9, 2005.

Let's start by summing up the United Nations' presence in Haiti since the departure of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide two years ago. Can you tell us what the status of UN peacekeeping forces is in Haiti?

Maybe I should start by saying that the United Nations has been involved in Haiti several times in the past, and I think when we were requested to come back to Haiti after the departure of President Aristide, it was clear, I think to everybody, that this time the international community should really stay the course and learn from past failures.

The main lesson from the past failures is that there was never a sufficiently comprehensive effort in Haiti. An election is an important event, but an election is the beginning of something, not the end, and it has to be complemented by a much broader effort to rebuild the state. And that's why in Haiti today we want to address the situation on a number of fronts. First, of course, is to bring security to Haiti. The beginning of the mission, as you know, was difficult because the troops were not necessarily prepared for the challenges they encountered.

And where are most of the troops from?

Most of the troops come from Latin America. We have troops from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala--there are a number of Latin American countries. These are the main countries. The leadership of the mission is also from Latin America. Since the tragic death of [UN mission commander] General [Urano Teixeira da Matta] Bacellar this weekend, we will certainly have another Brazilian commander and we are in touch with Brazil to identify a suitable force commander. It's really our intention to keep a Brazilian force commander and Brazil has made a major commitment to the mission.

So when I look at the strategy of the mission, [the] first [priority is] to bring a measure of security. Everyone is focused on what is not yet right--that is, the disarray in [the capital] Port-au-Prince. But what I see is the progress that has [been made] in the rest of the country. When you look at what the situation was even a few months ago, when [there were] road-blocking attempts in the northern part of

the country, that has stopped. Myself, I was in Port-au-Prince earlier this year in June and I wanted to visit some of the tough places and one of them was Bel Air. The only way I could visit Bel Air was in an armored personal carrier with a blue helmet and jacket, and now you can walk in Bel Air.

Today, there is one place that remains a very tough spot indeed and that is [the Port-au-Prince suburb of] Cité Soleil, which is a focus of our attention. We are not going to let the situation in Soleil fester. This is a touchy situation because it's a slum, an urban environment with a high-density population. It's the kind of place that's very difficult to operate a military force. We are looking at ways to strengthen our posture there so we can stop the activity of the gangs and at the same time not hurt civilians.

The gangs that are conducting the kidnappings?

The gangs that are conducting the kidnappings and that sometimes participate in drug trade and the proliferation of weapons in Haiti. This is a serious threat. In one part of Haiti--the road that is alongside the Soleil slum--that is where most of the kidnappings happen, as well as in the slum itself, which is a very dangerous place at this stage. We've been discussing that with our military and our police and we're going to intensify our operations in that part of Port-au-Prince. What I'm driving at is when you look at Haiti today, six months ago there were many spots which were "no-go" spots. Today there is one place that is a no-go spot--that is Soleil--but the rest of the country is more or less quite, or being stabilized.

Now, I think Soleil is tough, also, because we are getting closer to a key milestone in the life of Haiti after the departure of President Aristide, and that is the election. I think now the election is becoming a reality. It has been postponed several times, and now we are told we are going to have a firm date in early February and I'm very pleased. We'll have to stick to that date. I think the prospect of the elections is making a number of spoilers nervous.

What needs to change between now and the February 7 elections for the vote not to be postponed again?

I think the main difficulties for the election so far have been logistical. It's been a major effort of the Organization of American States. They have put a lot of work there. There have been difficulties in producing the cards and then distributing them and making sure that everybody will collect the cards and that they will vote. So for that, you need enough time to inform the people so that they are in a position to vote on the day of the election. We are now quite convinced that there is no major technical impediment to the election.

The only real threat is the people who do not want an election, because in an election, there will be winners and there will be losers. Haiti has been really afflicted by this sort of winner-take-all culture, where people feel that they can't afford to lose. Our message is, "Yes, there will be winners and losers but it will be in a fair and transparent election." We will make sure that is the way the election happens. We will also make sure the winners respect the losers and that Haiti after the election will not sideline all the people who lost election. I think that is very important and that Haiti has to move beyond that culture of winner-take-all. One of the reasons for the mission to be strong in Haiti is precisely [to help] get over that.

Now, that is not a message that appeals to everybody and I think, to be frank, our voice has not always been strong enough on that. We haven't been heard as much as we should have been. We have to be very clear that we will really stay the course, supporting a police that is respected by every Haitian; a judiciary system that is a fair judiciary system; basically supporting a state of all Haitians, not a particular group of Haitians. And that way I think people will be much better prepared to accept the result of the election, whatever that result may be.

These challenges touch on my last question, which is that the challenges Haiti poses are similar to challenges the UN faces in other peacekeeping operations. What conditions are necessary for peacekeeping success? And what reforms are you considering that will ensure future operations are successful, as part of Secretary-General Kofi Annan's larger reform plans for the United Nations?

Well, Haiti is a very good example of the need to connect peacekeeping and peace-building. In a peacekeeping mission, the troops with the blue helmets, they can stabilize the situation. But really, the foundation for long-term success is to have a state that can deliver the basic services of a state, starting with security and the rule of law. If that doesn't exist, any success is very precarious indeed. And that has been the past experience of Haiti, where the international community focused on one part of the equation and forgot about the other part. And I do hope that this time we will be consistent and coherent enough to focus as much on the peace-building as on the peacekeeping side of Haiti. That's really for me what success would mean.

What specific actions do you plan to take to combine the peacekeeping and the peace-building processes in Haiti?

It's not just the policing, for instance, which has been done in the past. You also need to look at the judiciary and at the basic structures of the state. Because if you have a police force that is not paid; if you have a leadership that is not transparent; and then if you do not have a judiciary, effective corrections very quickly start to unravel. That is what has happened in the past. So you need to have a much more holistic strategy. You need to be much more comprehensive in your approach. That is usually the case.

The particular challenge of Haiti is that it is a very proud country. It was one of the first independent countries [in the region] and it has been independent for 200 years, now. So it's a very fine line for the international community to tread on. We have to be strong, we have to be forceful, but we have to be respectful so that, on the one hand, we make it clear we are not going to support anything that is corrupt or doesn't support the interest of all the Haitians. On the other hand, we do understand that this is not our country; this is a country where we are guests and where we have to help and support.

Humanitarian tragedies the world has forgotten

By Liz Szabo,

USA TODAY

Jan. 15, 2006

Nearly 4 million people have been killed in Congo since war broke out in 1998 — the largest conflict-related death toll since World War II, according to the International Rescue Committee. Yet aid groups say the suffering in the central African nation and other war-torn areas has gone largely unnoticed by the world.

"There is nothing worse than being forgotten," says Nicolas de Torrente, executive director of the relief group Doctors Without Borders in the USA.

The medical aid agency has singled out 10 global health crises as the most underreported humanitarian tragedies of 2005. In addition to Congo, the group cited health emergencies in Chechnya, where people face the dangers of disease as well as land mines; Haiti, where thousands have been injured by political violence; northeastern India, where more than 90 were massacred in October; southern Sudan, where thousands remain homeless; Somalia, which has had no functioning central government since 1991; Colombia, wracked by a 40-year-old civil conflict; northern Uganda, where 1.6 million live in refugee camps; and Ivory Coast, where war has devastated the health care system. Doctors Without Borders included a 10th problem that affects countries throughout the world: the lack of research into medical treatments specifically designed to treat AIDS and HIV in impoverished countries.

Media coverage can make a crucial difference, Torrente says. In the first six months of last year, the food crisis in the African nation of Niger received very little news coverage. A report by the BBC excited interest around the world, however, and helped increase humanitarian assistance, Torrente says. Coverage of the December 2004 Asian tsunami also inspired tremendous charitable giving.

While the media still devote a lot of time to disasters, budgets for reporting on other international stories have dwindled in recent years, says Charles Davis, an associate professor at the Missouri School of Journalism. News corporations find it easier and cheaper to "focus on the mundane and the trivial, the celebrity-driven news over the real needs of real people," Davis says, adding that Doctors Without Borders' report illustrates "everything that's wrong with journalism."

But journalists play crucial roles in unstable regions, Davis says. Beyond calling attention to suffering, he says, reporters also help hold public officials accountable. "Having a journalistic presence in a place like the Congo is about more than merely the daily story; it's about Congolese officials knowing there is daily scrutiny of their actions," Davis says. "Now you have corrupt officials, and they feel no eyes on their backs."

George Rupp, president of the International Rescue Committee, says the new report may paint too bleak a picture. While many viewers are turned off by problems that seem hopeless, he says, those who hear about progress may be more willing to invest in solutions.

Rupp says security has been restored in parts of Congo patrolled by 17,000 United Nations troops. And villagers are rebuilding their homes and replanting crops in regions of Darfur in Sudan, protected by

7,000 troops from the African Union. Rupp says he's concerned, though, that these international bodies lack the money to protect all of those who need their help. Without additional news coverage, countries may feel little pressure to increase aid.

"When we do get the resources and put the troops in, there is a clear improvement in health and mortality," Rupp says. "We know what works. We just have to have the resources to do it."

