

## **HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: June 28 – July 14, 2006**

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### **Three UN peacekeepers wounded in Haiti; mission beefs up street presence**

**UN News Centre**

**July 14, 2006**

As the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) geared up for a “strong and visible” presence on the streets of Port-au-Prince ahead of the birthday of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide this weekend, three peacekeepers have been wounded in the gang-ridden Cité Soleil neighbourhood of the capital city.

Two of the Brazilian blue helmets were hit by gunfire as they patrolled a main avenue in the area and the third was shot manning a checkpoint yesterday. Today, peacekeepers exchanged fire with armed groups in the suburb of Cité Militaire.

In February 2004, an insurgency forced Mr. Aristide, who had been elected President, to go into exile, and led to the establishment of MINUSTAH to help re-establish peace in the impoverished Caribbean country.

The mission helped organize presidential elections this past February, which were won by René Préval after a turbulent vote-counting period. Despite political progress, armed gangs continue to dominate poor neighbourhoods and to threaten stability.

## **Gang killings may be political**

**By Reed Lindsay**

**THE WASHINGTON TIMES**

**July 14, 2006**

GRAND RAVINE, Haiti -- The killings began before dawn. Gunmen walked through this hillside slum warning of a fire and yelling for residents to come out of their cinder block and sheet-metal shacks. Those who followed their advice were fatally shot.

Hours later, morgue workers and United Nations' peacekeepers piled corpses in one of the slum's main thoroughfares, a rocky streambed at the bottom of the ravine for which this neighborhood is named. The body count totaled 21, including three women and four children. Most of the victims were killed execution-style with a single bullet to the head.

"I've never seen anything like this," said Jean Gabriel Ambrose, the Port-au-Prince justice of the peace. "What is shocking is that all of the victims appear to have been innocent."

For several weeks, rival gangs had exchanged fire in a turf war over control of the slum. But family members, neighbors, human rights observers and police all agree the victims of last Friday's massacre were not gang members, making U.N. and Haitian officials suspect it was a politically motivated attempt to destabilize the newly elected government led by President Rene Preval.

"I don't believe it was a spontaneous attack," said Desmond Molloy, who heads the U.N. peacekeeping mission's disarmament program in Haiti. "This massacre creates an atmosphere of fear, and when people are afraid, it's very hard to establish any degree of stability."

The killings in Grand Ravine shattered five months of relative peace since Mr. Preval's February electoral victory. The election marked the first sign of improvement after two years of crisis and violence after the departure of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide into exile in February 2004.

In Grand Ravine and the neighboring slum of Martissant, opposing gangs made peace during a March 19 soccer match sponsored by the United Nations, and they handed authorities a grenade and a firearm in a symbolic gesture. But the truce did not last long.

"In recent weeks, we'd been aware of a heightening of tensions among the gangs in this area along political and territorial lines," Mr. Molloy said.

On one side was a gang based in Grand Ravine associated with Mr. Aristide's Lavalas party. On the other side were two anti-Aristide gangs -- one based in a slum called Ti Bwa and a second called the Little Machete Army.

The latter earned its name at a soccer match in August 2005 that ended with police officers shooting in the stadium and the machete-wielding gang hacking fleeing spectators to death.

Grand Ravine residents and government officials blame the Little Machete Army and the Ti Bwa gang for last week's massacre. What remains a mystery is what provoked it.

Haitian Police Chief Mario Andresol suspects the attack was related to the killings last year, which appeared to be a joint effort by the Little Machete Army and rogue police officers to eliminate the Grand Ravine gang, some of whose members were at the match.

Chief Andresol arrested 15 police officers for their participation in the soccer stadium killings, but the judge handling the case has since released most of them.

"This is my 13th conflict, and it's been the toughest one to find out what's really going on," said Mr. Molloy, who oversaw disarmament in Sierra Leone before coming to Haiti. "There are a lot of smoke and mirrors. It's very difficult to nail down the motives behind actions in Haiti."

## **Ongoing Violence Poses Numerous Challenges for Haiti**

**By Lisa Ferdinando**

**Voice of America**

**14 July 2006**

A top U. N. official says at least 20 people, including children, have been killed in recent violence in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince. Experts on Haiti express deep concern about the current situation in the impoverished nation.

The communications chief for the U.N. stabilization mission in Haiti, David Wimhurst, says the deadly violence erupted late last week between gangs in the slums of the capital.

He told VOA the United Nations has increased its patrols, and although the situation remains calm, there is reason to be concerned about the latest violence.

"I think this is an incident that was shocking, but is something also that might, we fear, signal the beginning of a more generalized security situation that's going to turn negative," he said.

He says securing the poorest areas in Port-au-Prince remains a challenge.

"We don't have control of these slum areas, and this is the main problem, and the government doesn't have the ability through its police force or through its justice system to effectively crack down on these sorts of gang operations," he explained.

Jean-Yves Clemenzo is a communication delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Haiti. He has been working in Port-au-Prince for a year.

"The last two weeks have been a little bit more difficult," he said, " there has been again a rise of violence, so it's more difficult to live now in Port-au-Prince. The basic humanitarian conditions haven't changed so much in one year, there are still basic needs to be fulfilled for the majority of the population in Port-au-Prince."

Clemenzo says it is calm outside the capital, but life remains difficult throughout the entire country. He said the elections earlier this year, in which Rene Preval became president, were a positive step and now Haiti needs the support of international donors.

"I think what is important now is that countries don't forget Haiti, there have been elections in February, many people took part in the elections," he said. "They elected a president, it's a very good sign. Now Haitian people need help and the international community has to support Haiti."

Philip Brenner, who is a professor of international relations at American University in Washington D.C., says health and security issues of Haiti should be of concern beyond that country's borders.

"You have disease that is becoming very rampant in Haiti, diseases that get transmitted and as people migrate, they'll migrate to the rest of the hemisphere," he said. "It becomes in everyone's interest to try to stabilize the situation of such extraordinary poverty."

Wimhurst, meanwhile points out that reform is needed in Haiti's judicial and police system, and the country needs investment and a long-term commitment for development.

"Until the situation in the poorest areas of the city is rectified, in the sense that the conditions in which people live, in which gangs flourish can be changed by investment by providing minimum standards of health and water, providing

electricity, and reengaging the economy so jobs are created, all of which are big pieces of a large puzzle, this situation is going to continue," he said.

An international donors conference for Haiti is set for July 25 in Port-au-Prince.

**Haiti: Some 20 people have been killed in the Ti Bwa and Grand'ravine districts from attacks launched by the "Ti manchèt" Army  
by Friend of Haiti - AHP  
Friday, Jul 14 2006**

Port-au-Prince, July 7, 2006 (AHP); Some 20 people were killed and several others injured by gunfire and stabbing over the past 72 hours during attacks launched by armed men belonging to the so-called "Ti Manchèt Army" (Small Machete Army) in the populist districts of Grand'Ravine and Ti Bwa in southern Port-au-Prince.

Several homes were also set on fire.

According to residents who were fleeing the region this Friday, the men of the Ti Manchèt Army began their killing spree after they accused residents of Grand'Ravine of having killed a member of their band.

This is the very same Ti Manchèt Army formed under the interim regime of Gérard Latortue that carried out a massacre of more than 10 people who were attending a soccer game sponsored by USAID in August 2005 in the populist quarter of Grand' Ravine.

These individuals, who operated in several populist neighborhoods side by side with officers of the Haitian National Police, had accused the victims of the massacre at that time of being supporters of the President-in-Exile, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The Director General of the Haitian National Police, Mario Andrésol, confirmed the deaths of more than 10 people in these districts in this latest violence.

Mr. Andrésol commented that teams have been sent to the scene to control the situation and to try to offer a solution. Shortly after he took over the job of director of the national police, Mr. Andrésol ordered an investigation to identify and arrest the authors as well as those who were behind the massacre of August 2005.

However most of the individuals arrested and charged with the massacre, including police officers, were set free by the interim government authorities.

The Deputy representing the third District of Port-au-Prince, Jean Clédor Miryl, for his part denounced this latest situation of violence developing in the districts of Grand'Ravine and Ti Bwa

Mr. Miryl is asking that the appropriate authorities intervene rapidly to prevent the situation from worsening.

## **Exodus back to Haiti possible**

**By IANTHIA SMITH, Guardian Staff Reporter**

**The Nassau Guardian**

**July 12, 2006**

Haiti's re-entry into CARICOM could mean a "mass exodus" of illegal immigrants from The Bahamas back to the impoverished country in the near future, it was claimed.

Haitian Ambassador to The Bahamas, Louis Harold Joseph, said last night that the mere fact that Haiti can once again sit at the table with other heads of government, could signal some help and hope for the country. But he was quick to admit that this turnaround for his country could take a long time to be realised.

"We are very pleased to be back to CARICOM and to be able to participate in all the meetings and also, we are very glad to see how the other countries in CARICOM are committed to assisting Haiti," he said. "I think this is a good gesture and this could only mean good things for Haitians wherever they are."

The CARICOM Secretariat excluded Haiti from its membership shortly after the sudden overthrowing of former Haitian President, Jean Bertrand Aristide, in February 2004.

Mr Joseph added that after being locked out of regional meetings for 28 months, officials in Haiti are excited to brush shoulders with Caribbean leaders, as they continue to look for help from their neighbours in their quest for stability. He added that this move could indicate hope for needy Haitians.

"I think certainly, some of them would like to go back to Haiti but I don't think it can happen at this time for one simple reason," said Ambassador Joseph. "Yes, Preval will bring hope to the country and to the people of Haiti, I agree with that. But now, we need to provide jobs to the people and this will take time. That's why I'm not sure that a lot of people are going back to Haiti now, I don't think so."

"If the country gets stable and we have a growth in the country, I'm sure a lot of them will go back. I don't want to raise expectations that a lot of people are going back to Haiti just because of Preval, but I don't think so. I think they want to see some change first."

But even as the poorest country in the region is welcomed back into CARICOM, Ambassador Joseph said Haitian nationals will play a vital role in ensuring that they benefit all they can from the organisation.

## **Ex-cop to head national security**

**BY STEVENSON JACOBS**

**Associated Press**

**Miami Herald**

**July 14, 2006**

POR-T-AU-PRINCE - President René Préval appointed a former police official to Haiti's top national security post, as the troubled nation confronts a new wave of violence blamed on warring street gangs.

Préval announced Luc Eucher Joseph's appointment as national security undersecretary Wednesday night at a conference for Haitians living overseas. The job had been vacant since a U.S.-backed interim government formally left office last month.

### **SURGE IN KILLINGS**

Joseph, a Préval ally and former head of the police internal affairs division, takes over as Haiti faces a surge in kidnappings and killings by well-armed street gangs based in the dense, lawless slums of the capital.

Last week, 22 civilians, including women and a child, were found shot to death in the Martissant slum in what some are calling a massacre. Witnesses said gangsters from a rival area broke into the victims' homes and shot them one by one.

The violence, after months of relative calm, raised fears of a return to the bloodshed seen following the February 2004 ouster of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's first democratically elected leader.

However, Préval insisted the recent troubles were criminal in nature and not politically motivated.

"Political safety has been largely achieved," Préval said. "The insecurity which currently prevails, in my opinion, is banditism related to misery, drugs and the release of certain gangsters" from prison.

Préval added that "certain corrupt police officers" were involved in crime.

The insecurity has provoked fresh criticism against an 8,800-strong U.N. peacekeeping force, which Haitian legislators say isn't doing enough to disarm the gangs.

U.N. officials say they are working to root out the gangs but that it's difficult to penetrate the maze-like slums where they operate.

U.N. troops exchanged gunfire with gang members early Thursday in the Pele slum for the third straight day, witnesses said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

### **SEEKING STABILITY**

As Préval's top advisor on national security, Joseph will be in charge of coordinating the government's strategy to restore stability -- a tall order in a nation of 8 million with only 6,000 poorly equipped police.

During Préval's 1996-2001 presidency, Joseph won praise for his efforts to purge the police force of corruption, especially officers involved in cocaine trafficking. However, he was forced to quit the post in 2000 after Aristide supporters staged violent protests demanding his resignation on grounds he did little to fight crime. He has worked in Haiti's diplomatic mission in Rome since 2004.

## **Haitians fear arrests in terrorist-attacks plot could derail immigration bill**

**By Alva James-Johnson  
South Florida Sun-Sentinel  
July 12 2006**

When federal officials arrested seven men and accused them of plotting terrorist attacks in the United States, many in South Florida's Haitian community felt uneasy.

Two of the men are Haitian nationals, and many Haitians worry some of the others could be of Haitian descent. That troubles many in the community who fear the arrests could derail an immigration bill in the Senate that would allow thousands of undocumented Haitians to legally remain in the country.

Ford Eloge, president of Total Immigration Services, a Lake Worth group that helps immigrants attain citizenship, said distraught mothers called his Creole radio show on WPSP (1190-AM) fearing the immigration status of their children was in jeopardy.

"I heard people crying about it because they believe in the future some of them won't be able to stay here," he said. "This situation has put a cloud over Haiti. It will stop foreigners' travel to Haiti. People would consider Haitians a threat."

Last month, federal authorities arrested Narseal Batiste, Stanley Grant Phanor, Lyglenson Lemorin, Patrick Abraham, Naudimar Herrera, Burson Augustin and Rotschild Augustine. According to a federal indictment, they were al-Qaeda wannabes who planned to blow up the FBI building in Miami and the Sears Tower in Chicago.

The seven alleged would-be terrorists belonged to the Moorish Science Temple, headquartered in a warehouse in Miami's Liberty City neighborhood, according to prosecutors. They are charged with two counts of conspiring to support a terrorist organization, one count of conspiring to destroy buildings and one count of conspiring to wage war against the government.

Abraham was in the United States illegally from Haiti and Lemorin is a legal permanent resident from Haiti, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. The others were born in the United States.

"The Haitian community is very concerned that the issue may negatively impact us," said Jean-Robert Lafortune of the Haitian American Grassroots Coalition in Miami. "This is a big concern for the community."

It's not the first time the U.S. government has linked Haitians to terrorism. In 2003, former Attorney General John Ashcroft directed the government to indefinitely detain David Joseph, a 20-year-old who was among more than 200 Haitians aboard a crowded boat who reached Virginia Key a year earlier. Authorities later deported Joseph.

Ashcroft cited national security concerns, but his decision angered some Haitian American activists who accused the attorney general of manipulating the terrorism issue to prevent Haitians from entering the country.

The recent arrests sparked similar fears. "This is only adding fuel to the fire and increasing the feeling that Haitian refugees are linked to terrorists," said Gepsie Metellus, of the Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center in Miami. "We've been down this road before."

Community leaders already were worried the Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act was in jeopardy because of the battle over immigration. Passed by Congress in 1998, it grants permanent residency to 49,800 Haitian immigrants who arrived by boat and have been living in the country since Dec. 31, 1995.

The Senate's immigration bill includes language that would expand the act to include Haitians who arrived by plane and children who became adults while their parents' immigration cases were pending.

The bill, if passed, would allow 3,000 to 5,000 undocumented Haitians to remain in the country legally, said U.S. Rep. Kendrick Meek, D-Miami, who persuaded senators to include the provisions. He said there is no evidence of terrorist cells or training camps in Haiti.

Eloge said most Haitian Americans come to America to build better lives, and they don't want to be viewed as terrorists.

"It's a very heavy label," he said. "It's not ours and we can't carry it."

**Haitian Death Squad Leader Arrested in US - For Mortgage Fraud**  
**Democracy Now!**  
**July 13, 2006**

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Former Haitian death squad leader, Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, who now lives in New York, was arrested last week for taking part in mortgage fraud. During the early 1990s, Constant led the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, or FRAPH. Human rights groups estimate FRAPH killed thousands of supporters of Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

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A former leader of a Haitian death squad who now lives in New York was arrested last week for taking part in mortgage fraud. During the early 1990s, Emmanuel "Toto" Constant led the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, or FRAPH. Human rights groups estimate FRAPH killed thousands of supporters of Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Constant has since admitted he was on the payroll of the CIA and has lived in New York for the last decade.

In November 2000, Constant was convicted in absentia by a Haitian high court for his involvement in the 1994 Raboteau Massacre. Two years ago he was sued in federal court on behalf of three women who said his soldiers beat and gang-raped women in Haiti.

Despite a deportation order, Constant has been allowed to stay in the US since he threatened to reveal the extent of his ties with the CIA.

On Friday, a judge set bail at \$50,000 dollars over the protests of prosecutors and human rights groups. Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's office said that Constant and five others defrauded banks out of more than \$1 million dollars in loans.

Kim Ives, independent journalist and former editor of the Haitian newspaper, *Haiti Progres*. He attended Constant's arraignment in Riverhead,  
Ray Laforest, longtime Haitian community organizer and activist living in Brooklyn.

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AMY GOODMAN: We're joined in our Firehouse studio now by Ray Laforest, longtime Haitian community organizer and activist. We're also joined by Kim Ives, who is formerly the editor of the Haitian newspaper, *Haiti Progres*. He attended Constant's arraignment in Riverhead. Let's start with you, Kim. The arraignment, what happened?

KIM IVES: Well, it was a real pleasure, Amy, to see Toto Constant in green prison drab and with his hands handcuffed behind his back. Here's a guy who was responsible for the killing and rape and terrorization of the Haitian population during much of the early '90s, and he was subdued. The Attorney General tried to get a bail of \$2 million on him as a flight risk, which certainly he would try to do, but the judge finally put a \$50,000 cash, so we'll see if he makes that.

AMY GOODMAN: And he met it, didn't he? Isn't he out?

KIM IVES: Not that I know, unless that's something that happened last night.

JUAN GONZALEZ: And the charges, specifically in terms of the fraud allegations, what do they involve?

KIM IVES: What they did -- he was part of a group of six people, which were selling houses falsely. He would find the straw buyers for houses. And this is just one of what the Deputy Attorney General told me was dozens that they have in the pipeline. This was one scheme where they would sell a house; the money that the bank would give for the mortgage would essentially be divvied up between the circle of people, and he was part of this ring.

AMY GOODMAN: So that's the crime he's allegedly guilty of. We'll see. He would have to be tried. Ray Laforest, your response to his arrest, but not for command responsibility for the deaths of perhaps thousands in Haiti during the first coup against Aristide, '91 to '94, one that certainly affected your family.

RAY LAFOREST: Yes. Well, first, we're not surprised. He's a man who grew up in a world of immorality of the Duvalier regime and whose father was a "general," quote/unquote, in the Haitian army and who was used to abusing people and not respecting any legality. So we're not surprised at all. And as you implied here, this is ironic that a man who is guilty of genocide against the Haitian people is arrested for a relatively minor offense, although I understand that we're talking about \$1 million and more. And so, although, as Kim, we rejoice to see some modicum of justice, our hearts are still heavy because the burden imposed on the Haitian people has been tremendous and continues to be so. So far, this is one chapter. It's an important one, because he's the most hated individual in Haiti since Papa Doc probably and somebody who has done much to earn that despise from the Haitian people and others.

JUAN GONZALEZ: Now, you have been in the forefront for years now of leading protests against the presence of Constant here in the United States. You've even led pickets of his office and his home in Queens. Could you talk a little bit about this whole situation with him, already been convicted in Haiti for crimes, but yet walking the streets freely here in New York for so long?

RAY LAFOREST: Well, first, I want to make clear that these efforts were never individual efforts. They have always been collective efforts on the part of the Haitian community. We considered him extremely important. If you watched what happened as the Haitian people struggled for self-empowerment in the years preceding Aristide's arrival as president, as poor as the conditions were in Haiti, the Haitian people always insisted on justice and respect. And for us to move forward, we could not tolerate the presence of such an individual in our midst.

And we knew that once people started denouncing his presence in the early 1990s, once he left Haiti, he was arrested, and he pretty much blackmailed the U.S. government by starting to reveal information. As Amy said, Allan Nairn did an amazing job making connection with the CIA. So we initiated a first demonstration against him at 26 Federal Plaza, not far from here, the INS immigration headquarters in New York, where he'd report every Tuesday. So we felt that we had to bring the message to him directly, and not only to let his neighbors know who this Haitian Dr. Mengele was in their midst, and give him and others who do crimes like him the message clearly that we will not accept, there is a price to pay for this kind of a crime.

AMY GOODMAN: Can you talk about the lawsuit, Kim Ives, that was brought against Emmanuel Constant on behalf of three unnamed women, Jane Doe 1, 2 and 3, raped in Haiti?

KIM IVES: The Center for Justice and Accountability in San Francisco did a good job in getting together, finally, three women who will testify, anonymously, about his role in organizing these gangs, which among other things raped women. This was part of the terrorization campaign. There was a few years ago a case, which was championed by the Center for Constitutional Rights, of Alerte Belance, who was also hacked to death or almost to death, left for dead in a mass graveyard, and managed to drag herself to the road and get back here to the States, where she brought a suit, as well. So this is the latest. And in fact, Moira Feeney over at CJA was working with the prosecutors here in New York state to track down Constant and follow some of his real estate shenanigans.

JUAN GONZALEZ: In one of the news accounts of his arraignment, there's an indication now that the immigration authorities say that there's an outstanding deportation order against him that they may try to implement. And I'm wondering, if there was a deportation order, why didn't they try to implement it before? And if they're going to implement it now, are they going to deport him to Haiti, or are they going to basically use that as an excuse to get him out of the country again?

KIM IVES: Well, we have to remember, the timeline was that Constant left Haiti on Christmas Eve '94, came to the States. For five months, he was hiding in plain sight. Finally, the U.S. government felt themselves embarrassed enough to arrest him.

AMY GOODMAN: This was under Clinton.

KIM IVES: This was under Clinton. And he was in jail for 11 months, from May '95 'til June '96. In '96, there was a deal cut, which we broke at Haiti Progres, which was basically between the CIA, State Department, Justice, to let him out if he kept his nose out of trouble and he didn't talk to the press and didn't do anything, because he had gone to 60 Minutes in December of '95 and said he worked for the CIA, admitted that he was getting paid 700 bucks a month. So after that he was put on ice, they thought. But he kept getting in trouble, and he kept talking to the press. So I think at this point he's kind of a liability for them, and I don't know if they'll cut him loose, so to speak. I mean, he's facing 25 years, if convicted on these charges, after which time, under the new immigration laws, he would automatically be deported.

AMY GOODMAN: Ray Laforest, in a piece in the New York Times about the whole Constant case, it says that his lawyer, Edward Palermo of Smithtown, Long Island, said Constant is pleading not guilty to the financial charges, but added he knew little of his client's past in Haiti or his immigration status. The lawyer said, "They want to make my client's political past in Haiti the background of the case for publicity and to prejudice the judge to set a high bail, when it really has nothing to do with these charges." Your response?

RAY LAFOREST: Well, again, lawyers will decide in this country what the relevance is, but for us it's a continuation of a behavior that requires attention. As Kim just said, this guy was hiding in plain sight. I remember as we were fighting immigration deportation against Haitians, when people who were forced to leave Haiti as a result of FRAPH's action were being pursued by the INS, when this

individual was sitting here without any consequences. So, for us, we believe that the whole package should be analyzed at once and that he should be considered an undesirable individual in the midst of the community of Queens on Long Island.

AMY GOODMAN: What would happen if he was deported to Haiti? It's quite something that this happens not during the reign of the U.S.-backed leader who was installed after Aristide was forced out in the U.S.-backed coup, but is now here under Rene Preval, the new president who was president after Aristide the first time. What do you think would happen?

KIM IVES: Well, he's already been convicted in the year 2000 for his role in helping to organize the massacre in Raboteau in April 1994.

AMY GOODMAN: In which, what happened?

KIM IVES: In which dozens of people were gunned down by FRAPH and the Haitian military, as they were protesting and fleeing. Some were shot in the sea. It was a terrible, terrible massacre. And he was one of many who were found guilty in absentia. It's for sure that he should be arrested. If the Preval government has the courage and capacity to do that remains another question. But he certainly should be, and there would be no doubt that the population would want to see him in jail.

JUAN GONZALEZ: And Ray, your sense of the impact of this arrest in Haiti? Haiti, for the most part, since Preval came in as president again, has dropped out of the mass media in the United States as an issue or concern. But your sense of the impact on the continuing battle for popular democracy in Haiti?

RAY LAFOREST: Unfortunately, many of the victims of FRAPH and Toto Constant are not around to appreciate what's going on. Alerte Belance, as horrendous as her wounds were, still was lucky enough to be alive and testify that this was taking place in Haiti. But, for us, it is clearly -- justice has to be met. We have to build a new society based on a new beginning. And some attitudes -- we have to create a system where these things are no longer possible. And besides the organizing of Haitian masses, clearly this kind of justice has to be met. And as Kim said, I'm not sure, there's an outstanding warrant from the Haitian government for his extradition, and we would hope that the Haitian government would exercise that option. This is a highly symbolic action that would indicate that we're putting the elements together into moving forward.

AMY GOODMAN: I want to thank you both very much for joining us. Ray Laforest is a longtime Haitian community activist, lives here in New York City. And Kim Ives is the former editor of the Haitian newspaper, *Haiti Progres*, and a producer at WBAI Pacifica Radio in New York.

**Haiti targets democratic governance**  
**The Greater Caribbean This Week**  
**July 9-22, 2006**  
**by Rubén Silié**

Speaking with President René García Preval during my recent visit to Haiti, I had the opportunity to converse with a political leader whose leadership demonstrates great wisdom. This wisdom is made evident in many ways, such as the profoundness with which he refers to the Haitian reality; the great prudence exercised in the presentation of his proposals; and consideration toward his political adversaries, whom he does not perceive as enemies, but instead as compatriots with different points of view.

Proof of this lies in the composition of his government, which comprises professionals from various parties that participated in recent elections. For Preval, this configuration is the basis upon which the democratic objective of re-establishing an ongoing dialogue that would facilitate policies of integration and reconciliation is constructed.

In this respect, the number one priority is that of regaining a climate of peace and stability, which would allow the merging of the internal forces that are necessary to achieve harmony among the nation's different social and political players, and in that way, involve all those who could make a contribution in the application of a development plan,. As a result, in his declaration, Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis speaks of "permanent and structured concerted action."

In order to fight against the sources of insecurity in which Haitians have been living for more than a decade, and in working to re-establish peace, the government has proposed an open fight against any type of criminality. In order to accomplish this objective, the government program is proposing, in response to the call of the population and the nation's needs, that the Haitian state be responsible for heading the police forces and apply a plan for general disarmament of the civil population that abuses the use of weapons to the detriment of its fellow citizens.

This proposal is closely linked to the interest in the Haitian state fully assuming sovereignty over its national territory, since for the time being, there are areas in the country where the state's presence is extremely precarious and others where it is non-existent. That is why the government plan includes the provision of work spaces and equipment for all territorial groups that are, according to the constitution, the foundation of that country's social and political power. This is one way to recognise each of these bodies' realms of power and to also give them the necessary formality to carry out the role that they are constitutionally called to play.

There is also talk of the need to rebuild the state and strengthen democratic institutions. To do so, the first step is to re-establish the authorities through which they, the institutions and the state, make themselves felt in the society, placing emphasis on strengthening justice, as a point of departure to guarantee the social arbitration necessary. A novel element of this restructuring proposal is the creation of a ministry that would be responsible for relations between the parliament and the executive power. Given the fact that Haiti has undergone several crises between those two bodies of political power, this initiative becomes important and is destined to play a relevant role.

Based on the foregoing, it can be said that the new Haitian government is striving to respond to the aspirations of a population, which, two hundred years after its emancipation, has been unable to secure an enduring democratic system. Instead, it has lived under the fears of authoritarianism, against which the Haitians have protested time and time again. Therefore, what they are living now is not an illusion, but rather a concrete utopia, based on the experiences of both a distant and recent past that have led them to value the meaning of democratic governance.

Dr. Rubén Silié Valdez is the Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States. The opinions expressed are not necessarily the official views of the ACS. Comments and reactions can be sent to [mail@acs-aec.org](mailto:mail@acs-aec.org)

**Propose Dominican-Haitian 'biological corridor'**  
**The Dominican Today**  
**July 13, 2006**

SANTO DOMINGO.- The Dominican Environment minister and his Haitian counterpart favor creating a biological corridor in the Azuei and Enriquillo lakes zone, to spark sustainable development in both countries, a proposal made during the "Regional Consultation for the World Environment Fund" (FMAM), which concluded yesterday in Barbados.

Max Puig's and Jean Marie Claude Germain's proposal highlights that the zone is part of Dominican Republic's only biosphere reserve, as classified by UNESCO, and has the Caribbean's most important lakes, from an ecological and social point of view.

Puig said that it's an unique ecosystem in the world and at the same time a source of food and income for the populations bordering Azuei lake, in Haiti, and Enriquillo, in Dominican territory.

"Only by working in a concerted manner will the Caribbean countries be able to protect their natural resources and to meet the Objectives of Development of the Millennium," he said.

The Dominican official feels that it's important for the Caribbean region to protect the Artibonito river basin and the cross-border water sources between Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Governments and civil society representatives from 16 Caribbean region countries attended the consultation in Barbados, as well as delegates from international organisms.

The meeting's objective was to know and discuss the new framework for allocating FMAM's financial resources in next the four years (2007-2010) and to receive recommendations from its members and partners strategic to efficiently apply the resources assigned to the focal areas of biodiversity and climatic change.

Since it's creation, as part of the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Summit, the FMAM is the international community's only financial mechanism which supports the governments' and their societies' efforts in environmental conservation on a planetary scale.

So far, the FMAM has supported almost 2,000 projects in 157 developing countries, with a US\$6 billion contribution and US\$20 billion co-financing in the areas of biodiversity, climatic change, and in reducing greenhouse gasses.

In the meeting also participated the representatives of the governments and of the societies of Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Santa Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago.

## **Caricom looks to new future with Haiti**

**The Antigua Sun**

**Thursday July 13 2006**

**by Patricia Campbell**

Caricom Secretary-General Edwin Carrington once again extended open arms to Haiti, during the last Meeting of the Caricom Heads of Government.

Haitian President René Préval attended the meeting in St. Kitts last week, marking the resumption of his country's participation in Caricom. Haiti, a full member of Caricom since 2002, was suspended from the regional organisation in 2004 after Former President Jean Bertrand Aristide was removed from power.

At the time, Caricom said that the suspension would last until a democratically elected government took over leadership of Haiti. Elections were held in February and, earlier this year, the Heads of Government indicated that Haiti's return to full participation was pending.

"In this initial annus mirabilis [a wondrous or fateful year], it is with immense pleasure that we welcome the return of Haiti to the Councils of the Caribbean Community," Carrington said. He said that Préval's presence at the meeting was "an indication that the people of Haiti have chosen to pursue the path of democracy." The Secretary-General also hailed Haiti's return as "a vindication of the principled position taken by the Caribbean Community on the occasion of the interruption of the democratic process in your country in 2004."

Carrington has promised the support of Caricom, especially in the immediate future since, he said "we know that the coming months will be crucial to the future development of Haiti."

"Today, after years of unrest, Haiti has been able to find constitutional normality once again - a new political regime has been put in place as a result of the elections in February and April, 2006 and the process will soon be completed with the organisation of municipal and local elections," Préval told the Caricom Heads.

"I hope that, at the end of my mandate in February 2011, the Republic of Haiti would have taken decisive steps on the long and difficult road of democratic stability and sustainable development. This stability and continuity must be the fruit of permanent dialogue already engaged between the social, political and economic sectors of our society."

Haiti's return to full membership of Caricom paves the way for the island to participate in regional integration measures, such as the Caricom Single Market and Economy.

Préval said that Caricom was "the natural place" for Haiti's integration and that he was pleased to oversee its return to this fold after twenty-eight months of absence.

"During the next five years of my new mandate, I will work my hardest to contribute toward the strengthening of ties between my country and yours, and I will work with you for the advent of a

Caribbean which will be more brotherly, stronger and more united when faced with mutual challenges.”

## **Haiti: US Ambassador admits Neptune is kept unjustly behind bars**

**AHP**

**by Indy Media**

**Thursday Jul 13th, 2006**

Port-au-Prince, The US ambassador to Haiti, Janet A. Sanderson stated on Tuesday that her government is concerned with the prolonged preemptive detention of former prime minister Yvon Neptune.

Mr. Neptune was incarcerated in June 2004 by the Gerard Latortue-led interim regime under the pretext that he was implicated in an alleged massacre in Scierie (97 kms north of the capital).

Mrs. Sanderson, who was speaking at her private residence, stated that she believed this situation is the result of Haiti's flawed judicial system.

She called on Haitians to adopt urgent measures to reform Haiti's legal system and to ensure the freedom of all prisoners who are unjustly behind bars.

Meanwhile, Jean Hector Anacasis, Hope Platform Senator in the West, called for the release of Lavalas activist Annette Auguste, better known as So Ann, as well as other women illegally incarcerated during the past several years.

The senator made these statements during a visit to a Pétion-Ville prison.

<sup>3</sup>It is unjust to keep So Ann in prison for all this time without any real charges brought against her<sup>2</sup> stated Mr. Anacasis denouncing the dishonorable and unmindful attitude of several Haitian feminist organizations who are otherwise very active in a number of other cases.

So Ann was arrested without an arrest warrant in the middle of the night in May 2004 at her private home by US soldiers.

When the marines later sought to release her due to an absence of charges, several organizations such as the NCHR/Haiti, now the RNDDH, pressed for her continued incarceration under the pretext that she was implicated indirectly in the violent incidents which occurred on December 5, 2003 at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Jean Hector Anacasis, who recalled that the current government is a government of national unity, called for a quick decision to be made in favour of So Ann's release, as the government prosecutor has affirmed that he has filed no charges against her.

He also called for the release of former prime minister Yvon Neptune who has been in prison for more than 24 months following accusations made against him by groups opposed to his government, the RNDDH and Ramicosm.

The parliamentarian stated he feared the death of Mr. Neptune in prison under the current government who has nothing to do with his imprisonment. He urged the appropriate authorities to assume their responsibilities in this area by releasing all of the political prisoners.

Marise Narcisse, an official from the Fanmi Lavalas political organization, also called for the release of all political prisoners and for the adoption of measures allowing all political exiles to return to Haiti.

According to Mrs Narcisse, these prisoners against whom no real charges have been made, should be cleared and liberated by the Préval/Alexis government.

She also called on the authorities to work towards meeting the social needs of the popular masses whose quality of life have deteriorated significantly during the past two years despite the more than 900 million USD received by Haiti from foreign donors through the ICF (Interim Cooperation Framework).

## **Haiti needs CARICOM**

**Thursday, July 13, 2006**

**The Jamaica Gleaner**

HAITI'S RECENT readmission to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has been accompanied by the expected reservations about the likely impact on the Community by its most populous member. The common perception is that Haiti's participation might not be the best thing for the Community.

We feel there is little reason for these concerns. CARICOM was justifiably clear about the reasons for suspending Haiti, as it was about the conditions under which Haiti would be readmitted. Had CARICOM not taken this position, it would have been seen to condone the violent overthrow of democratically elected administrations and the imposition of unelected rulers by countries with economic and military might.

With the election of Mr. René Préval's Government, Haiti has met CARICOM's conditions and has taken its place in the Community.

Mr. Préval is clear about how he expects participation in CARICOM will assist Haiti. He hopes that when he leaves office in five years, much would have been achieved in the political and economic stabilisation of his troubled country.

For its part, CARICOM must now work towards helping Haiti to realise these laudable goals. The Community's planned prime ministerial mission to Haiti must be followed by a programme of assistance wherever resources can be found.

Haiti will need help, and in varied and significant quantities.

Mr. Préval's plan for improvement will not be easy. Following a lull in the few weeks after he took office, criminal violence is again troubling the country. Gangs are murdering in disputes ranging from the use of a television set to watch World Cup Football matches, to control over narcotics trafficking.

Aspects of the country's social infrastructure - mainly health and education - need urgent and adequate attention if the country's rehabilitation is to be early and effective. Physical infrastructure and utilities, particularly electricity, need similar help. So, too, does the institutional infrastructure, mainly the judiciary that has been so discredited, particularly under the temporary, United States-backed administration of Gerard Latortue.

We suggest that in considering how to help Haiti, CARICOM should follow and support the examples being set by others. The European Union is increasing its levels of financial assistance to the country. Venezuela has made Haiti a beneficiary of its PetroCaribe energy programme. We urge regional and regionally-based businesses to follow the example of Digicel that is making beneficial use of a market that it has seen in Haiti.

While they may not be able significantly to assist Haiti with financial resources, we urge CARICOM leaders to consider ways in which they can provide social and institutional support that will complement what is being done by others. This could include, for a start, help in expanding Haiti's

civil administrative and business managerial capacity if the country is to be transformed into a modern, efficient economy to the benefit of other members of CARICOM.

**Haiti: Civil Servants Protest Lay Offs**  
**by AHP**  
**Wednesday Jul 12th, 2006**

Port-au-Prince, July 10, 2006 - (AHP) Employees who were unjustly dismissed from the public administration over the last two years organized a non-violent march in the streets of Port-au-Prince to urge the new authorities to reintegrate them and to liberate all political prisoners.

The march, organized by the Plateforme résistance populaire du Bel-Air (Bel- Air Popular Resistance) along with the "greater Lavalas movement" and the "coordination of progressive organizations", set out fromn the populist district of Saint-Martin and finished up at Constitution Square near the National Palace. Participants called on President René Préval to understand the necessity to urgently reverse the injustices and severe wrongs inflicted on hundreds of people and their families for political reasons. These citizens were fired solely because they were deemed partisan to the Aristide government following his forced departure on February 29, 2004, the demonstrators said.

Several of those dismissed from their positions with the national telephone service (Téléco), the national old-age insurance officer (ONA), the national port authority (APN), were subsequently arrested when they asked for damages. "We are not against the outreach policy of the president, but this policy cannot be accompanied by a strategy to close off all those who were sacrificed and who were used as cannon fodder to promote a new future," cried the demonstrators at the Constitution Square. Others called on the new government to "resist the opportunistic schemers who want to marginalize their voices as was done so skillfully under the Aristide government." A spokesperson for Fanmi Lavalas, René Monplaisir, gave his support for the rights of those employees unfairly laid off by the former Latortue regime who wish to assert their rights. They nevertheless applauded the new authorities for creating commissions to study the employees<sup>4</sup> files in an effort to come to a solution.

René Monplaisir announced an important meeting with various representatives of the popular sectors to help advance this struggle, he said. "We will continue to mobilize to ensure the rights of all citizens, said Lavalas activists. Activists at the July 10, 2006 demonstration also called for the release of hundreds of citizens, including former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, who has been in detention for almost the entire two years of the interim regime led by Gerard Latortue because of their political views.

To read more on the layoffs and failed solidarity of foreign labor institutions to stand up for layed off civil servants read: <http://labornotes.org/archives/2006/06/articles/f.shtml>

**EDITORIAL**  
**Contra Costa Times**  
**July 13, 2006**

Editorials Must deport Constant

THE NAME EMMANUEL "TOTO" CONSTANT may not ring any bells for most people.

But for Haitians who remember Constant as the cocky, ruthless head of the euphemistically named Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, or FRAPH, the name elicits sheer terror, and for good reason.

Back in the 1990s, FRAPH was an organization made up of civilians who did the Haitian military's dirty work.

That included maiming, raping and slaughtering thousands of supporters of then-exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Their goal was to prevent Aristide's return by any means necessary.

In 2000, Constant was convicted in absentia in Haiti for FRAPH's role in the Raboteau massacre.

One April morning in 1994, FRAPH henchmen set fire to shacks in the Raboteau slum. When the residents fled their burning homes, they were chased into the sea at gunpoint, where many were shot or drowned.

Constant also was sued recently in U.S. federal court by three women who allege that his FRAPH thugs beat and gang raped them because of their support of Aristide.

That this convicted human-rights abuser has freely walked the streets of New York for the past 11 years, speaks volumes about the shameful history of U.S. foreign policy in Haiti.

After the 1994 U.S. invasion that returned Aristide to power, Constant sneaked out of Haiti. He popped up in Queens, home to a large number of Haitian-Americans, including a number of his victims.

Haiti immediately demanded Constant's extradition and U.S. immigration officials arrested him. But then, Constant gave an interview to "60 Minutes" claiming that he had been a paid informant of the CIA, which, he said, had encouraged him to start FRAPH as a counterforce to Aristide's Lavalas movement.

INS officials released Constant, claiming that his life would be in danger if he were returned to Haiti.

The trauma that his mere presence inflicted upon his fellow countrymen didn't figure into the equation.

Now, after all these years, it appears that justice may finally be served.

Constant was arrested in New York last week in connection with a mortgage fraud scheme on Long Island.

He is accused, along with five accomplices, of defrauding banks by inflating real estate appraisals and using straw buyers. He allegedly got \$45,000 in exchange for forging documents.

Given his well-documented criminal history, Constant should have been denied bail, as prosecutors had requested. Instead, the court set bail at \$50,000.

However, the good news is that even if Constant does manage to come up with the money, he will be turned over to federal immigration officials who have orders to detain him.

This time, hopefully, the INS will get it right.

It's high time that the United States deported Constant back to Haiti to face the music.

Only then will his many victims finally achieve the justice that they deserve.

**To His Compatriots' Relief, Haitian Exile Is Arrested**  
**By COREY KILGANNON**  
**The New York Times**  
**July 11, 2006**

Like many of his neighbors, Emmanuel Constant left behind tumult in his homeland, Haiti, and found a more stable life in New York City.

The change was good. He became a real estate agent and lived in a spacious white house in Queens.

But Mr. Constant kept his nickname — Toto — a name that continues to stir fear and hatred among many Haitians, who know him as the man who in the early 1990's ran a paramilitary group that human-rights groups say raped, tortured or killed thousands to silence loyalists of the deposed president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

For many Haitians here, Mr. Constant's unapologetic attitude and his success in America simply added to the horrors he was accused of.

"Toto has blood dripping from his hands, and he has been living his cocky lifestyle in the middle of New York's biggest Haitian community," said Ray Laforest, 59, a Haitian immigrant living in Flatbush.

"For us, this just reinforces the deeply painful and unjust history of Haiti."

Mr. Laforest and many other Haitians were surprised last week when Mr. Constant finally was arrested, not on charges relating to his past, but in connection with a mortgage fraud scheme on Long Island.

He was arraigned on Friday in State Supreme Court in Riverhead on charges including grand larceny. Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's office said that Mr. Constant, 49, and five others defrauded banks out of more than \$1 million in loans by using straw home buyers and inflated appraisals.

The attorney general's office said Mr. Constant played a role in recruiting one of the straw buyers and in forging a bank statement that the bank relied on in giving a loan. The prosecutors said Mr. Constant was paid \$45,000.

A lawyer for Mr. Constant, Edward R. Palermo of Smithtown, said Mr. Constant was pleading not guilty to the financial charges, but added that he knew little of his client's past in Haiti, or his immigration status.

"They want to make my client's political past in Haiti the background of the case, for publicity and to prejudice the judge to set a high bail, when it really has nothing to do with these charges," he said.

In a memorandum to the judge, Mr. Spitzer's office called Mr. Constant a flight risk, and because of his association with "a violent paramilitary organization," urged that he be held without bail, or that bail be at least \$2 million.

Acting State Supreme Court Justice Michael F. Mullen set it at \$50,000. But even if Mr. Constant posts bail, he is to be turned over to federal immigration officials, who have orders to detain him, said Chief Alan Otto of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement bureau would not give any details about Mr. Constant's status.

He fled Haiti when Mr. Aristide returned to power in 1994. Immigration officials here detained him but ultimately decided not to deport him after Mr. Constant insisted that Haiti's unstable justice system would put him to death.

In 2000, Mr. Constant was convicted in absentia by a Haitian court for his involvement in a 1994 massacre, and he was sued recently in federal court on behalf of three women who said his soldiers beat and gang-raped them, under a "systematic campaign of violence against women."

It has always been a sore point with New York's Haitian immigrants that Mr. Constant has been allowed to live in exile here, said Kim Ives, a journalist who has written extensively about Mr. Constant in the New York Haitian press.

"If people weren't so afraid of him, he would be attacked the minute he walked on the street here," he said.

But, Mr. Laforest said, "Mentally, Haitians are still terrified of Toto; they're afraid his friends will have their house firebombed."

Mr. Constant remained on the margins of the Haitian community and would rarely walk in Haitian neighborhoods, both his friends and his enemies say.

But his distinctive face and 6-foot-4-inch frame made him easy to pick out. He was seen with friends at nightclubs and would appear alone at voodoo ceremonies. People would stare and whisper about Toto and the mass killings and rapes in Haiti committed by his band of guerrillas, a group known as Fraph and translated variously as the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti.

There was the woman at a train station, Mr. Laforest said, who nearly fainted after recognizing him from his newspaper photograph. There was a time Mr. Constant approached a Haitian man who was selling a house, who told Mr. Constant he looked familiar. Upon learning his name, he stood agape, and Mr. Constant quickly left.

For the past 10 years, Mr. Laforest has organized occasional demonstrations in front of Mr. Constant's home in Laurelton, Queens, at his offices, and at the location in Manhattan where Mr. Constant checked in weekly with immigration authorities.

"People were afraid that he was still a killer, but there were times I had to literally hold people back from rushing into his office and attacking him," Mr. Laforest said.

In the last couple of years, as the protests intensified, Mr. Constant, his companion and their young child began moving between Queens, Flatbush, New Jersey and Long Island, said Fritz Cherubin, a

friend of Mr. Constant who runs a business providing notary, fax and other clerical services to immigrants.

Yet many Haitians would not dare physically or even verbally attack Mr. Constant because of his dangerous reputation in Haiti and his continued connections with the old backers of his violent paramilitary organization, others said.

Giroboam Raphael, who owns a record store on Flatbush Avenue, said, "So many Haitians were afraid to do anything to Toto because he seemed untouchable.

"Toto always claimed he was working for the U.S. government in Haiti, so we all thought he was out of reach of the law," Mr. Raphael said. "It's strange that, with all the horrific things he did in Haiti, they arrested him for mortgage fraud."

Olisha Baptiste, 38, of Ditmas Park, said he saw Mr. Constant at voodoo ceremonies in Brooklyn, which consisted of drumming, prayer and consultation with spirits.

"It was always uncomfortable for me and the others that, 'My God, it is Toto Constant sitting here,' " Mr. Baptiste said. "This is one guy nobody wanted to be associated with, but no one ever said anything. We welcome everyone, and also we were afraid of his background. We all know what he is capable of doing. He is untouchable."

"Maybe those ceremonies were a place he could venture into quietly, just slip in and out without a fuss," he added.

But he never shrank from his past, insisting he was a hero and boasting of working as a C.I.A. informer and having powerful protectors, Mr. Laforest and others said.

"He liked to talk to the press a lot and make himself look powerful, but he never killed anybody," said Mr. Cherubin, his friend. "He's been running from people the past couple of years, but he's not a bad man."

**More than 20 dead in Haiti violence**  
**Caribbean Net News**  
**Wednesday, July 12, 2006**

PONT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): More than 20 people were killed in Haiti in recent days amid escalating violence involving armed gangs in Martissant, the southern suburb of the capital, UN officials said.

Soldiers from Sri Lanka that serve here as part of a UN stabilization force were rushed into the area in an attempt to restore order.

UN officials also appealed to the Haiti government, demanding that order be restored and people responsible for the killings be brought to justice.

## **Violence escalates in Haiti**

**Tuesday, July 11, 2006**

**by Vario Sérant**

**Caribbean Net News**

POR-T-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Once again, violence continues to escalate in Haiti when, last week, the district of Martissant erupted in violent chaos following a bloody confrontation between opposing rival groups, which left several dead.

According to a provisional report established by human rights leaders, at least ten people perished and several cottages were burnt.

Last month, human rights organizations alerted Haitian authorities to ongoing armed violence in the south and south-east suburbs surrounding the capital. Martissant is just south of Port-au-Prince.

Security concerns were significantly reduced after the election of President René Préval last February. However, violence has escalated over the last few weeks while law enforcement to contain criminal activities has not kept pace.

Last Thursday, President Préval announced plans to deal with the security issue by designating a Public Security State Secretary, a position already within the framework of the intended government structure.

## **UN troops find 16 bodies in Haiti**

(AP)

**The China Daily**

**July 10, 2006**

UN peacekeepers on Friday found the bodies of 16 people believed killed in a surge of gang violence, the latest sign the Caribbean nation's capital may be slipping back into disorder after months of relative calm.

The troops from Sri Lanka found the bodies in the southern Port-au-Prince slum of Martissant, a UN statement said. The slum was the site of a recent spate of gunbattles between warring gangs.

The victims apparently were shot to death in an hours-long gunfight among Haitian gang members fighting for control of the area, said Pierre Esperance, a local human rights activist.

The dead were civilians, not gang members, said Esperance, whose National Coalition for Haitian Rights has monitored gang activity in slums.

The Brazil-led UN peacekeeping force stepped up patrols where the bodies were found. Many residents fled the area for fear of more attacks, local radio reported.

The military forces in the area have increased their patrols to protect the population and prevent more acts of violence, the UN statement said.

The deaths were the latest in a series of killings and kidnappings that have gripped Haiti's tense capital in the weeks since the June inauguration of President Rene Preval.

Recent violence has raised fears of a return to the mayhem following a 2004 revolt that toppled then-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

## **Likelihood of torture could block deportation**

**July 12, 2006**

**BY ALFONSO CHARDY**

**Miami Herald**

Lionel Jean-Baptiste, the first naturalized American in recent times to lose his citizenship after being convicted of a crime, may avoid deportation to Haiti if he can show he could be tortured there, the immigration judge presiding over the case said Tuesday.

"He may not be deportable," said immigration judge Kenneth S. Hurewitz -- if Jean-Baptiste qualifies for protection under the Convention Against Torture. Under such a scenario, an immigrant in removal proceedings can stay if he presents evidence he would be tortured if returned.

Hurewitz's statement, at the end of Jean-Baptiste's first immigration court appearance since his June 14 detention, marked the first time an immigration court official conceded the possibility that the former citizen may stay.

The Haitian consul general in Miami said last week that Haiti will not take back Jean-Baptiste because he renounced his Haitian citizenship when he swore allegiance to the United States.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement would not comment on court developments.

"As a matter of ICE policy, we are precluded from commenting on pending litigation," said Barbara Gonzalez, an ICE spokeswoman.

Jean-Baptiste, 58, was stripped of his citizenship after a federal jury in Miami in 1997 convicted him of drug-trafficking charges.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement moved to revoke Jean-Baptiste's citizenship in 2000, not because he was convicted -- but because the conviction occurred while he was awaiting citizenship and was required to be a person of ``good moral character.''

The case departed from citizenship-revocation practice. Immigration officials generally seek to revoke a naturalized American's citizenship if they find evidence the person lied in the application process, typically trying to conceal a criminal record.

Jean-Baptiste had no criminal record when he applied for citizenship.

He was charged, arrested and convicted when he was already an American.

Hurewitz delayed the final outcome of Jean-Baptiste's initial court hearing until July 31 because André Pierre, the detainee's attorney, raised several legal objections.

He said ICE's allegations in the notice to appear, the charging document against his client, failed to note his former U.S. citizenship and ICE's actions violated regulations governing detentions for removal proceedings.

Among Pierre's contentions was that ICE was supposed to provide him with certified copies of both the arrest report and the final outcome of his client's criminal case -- but did not.

Pierre said he could not address the issue of whether his client may be tortured if returned to Haiti.

"I'm still gathering evidence," Pierre said.

But he said he will argue that his client cannot be deported to Haiti because Haitian authorities will not take him back.

**Undeclared war on Haiti's poor**  
**By Kent Rosenthal**  
**The Eureka Street, Australia**  
**July 11, 2006**

I decided to stop over in Miami on my trip back to Australia from Haiti—after all, Miami is the gateway to the Promised Land for many Haitians and others in the Caribbean, especially Cubans.

My taxi driver from the airport, being from the lesser Antilles island of Guadalupe, spoke a Creole dialect similar to that in Haiti, so he was delighted to have a chat in his own language as we crawled through peak-hour traffic on the way to Belen College’s Jesuit residence, the home of several exiled Cuban Jesuits who re-established their school in Miami 50 years ago.

The cabbie knew about poverty and politics in the Caribbean, and he understood the lure of a better life in the United States. When I told him I was working for Jesuit Refugee Service on the Haitian border near the Dominican Republic he remarked, ‘You know life is really tough here for an immigrant as well. I work constantly—long hours, long hours—my life is not my own.’

The Jesuit community where I stayed was celebrating the 50th year since they’d set up Belen College Jesuit high school in Miami. President Fidel Castro—a former student there—had closed down the college following the revolution. On my tour of the college, one of the pre-revolution Jesuits said the original school in Havana was even bigger. He was proud of the new school, but his eyes evoked a sense of nostalgia as he showed me the photo of the original school, which covered an entire foyer wall.

The well-equipped and prosperous new school boasts a ‘who’s who’ list of wealthy exiled Cuban benefactors. It has state of the art facilities, including a meteorology lab that provides hurricane warnings to the local media and city council. Following the tradition of the old Havana college, they have re-created the student barber shop. As a reminder of the old days, sitting on a side bench was a glass display cabinet protecting a blade and scissors allegedly used to snip Castro’s locks.

Soon-to-be ordained Jesuit deacon Frank, whom I’d met in the Dominican Republic, offered to show me some of the sites of Miami. Frank was born in the United States to Cuban parents. While passing through some lush, leafy and well-off streets of Miami, he commented, ‘I tell people in Cuba and the Dominican Republic that these (nice streets) are the result of socialism! It’s all organised and controlled by the local government. In this area you can’t park commercial vehicles and trucks near your home—that’s to keep things looking tidy.’

He mentioned that the problem with Cuban socialism was Freudian. Although Castro had been Jesuit-educated, he had a difficult upbringing and bad relationship with his father which he was still bitter about.

We headed into downtown Miami to visit the Jesuit parish of Gesu where Frank was to serve as Deacon at the Sunday Mass. The activity in central Miami is impressive—there is a building boom. Cranes and building sites are everywhere. On the church’s front steps was a Haitian-looking man slumped against the door asleep, his tin of coins dangling from his hand ready to drop. At the back of

the church as I waited for Mass to begin I noticed a railed-off section with statues of patron saints from all over Latin America. Each had their identifying name plate and national flags, with hand written petitions left by devotees, as well as cash notes, coins and candles. There were several devotees softly mouthing prayers and lighting candles. During the Mass a woman proclaimed the readings -from her accent I knew she was probably Haitian. Frank introduced me to her after Mass. She was caught by surprise when I started speaking in Creole. Her young daughter commented, 'Oh, I thought he was a white man.'

After Mass I glanced at the front page of the Miami Herald which had an article asserting that Castro was becoming more popular, due to the rise of leftist governments in the region. It made particular mention of newly-elected Haitian President Rene Preval's visit to Cuba. Preval is an ally and former government colleague of Jean Bertrand Aristide.

The ploy to divide the world into left and right, the so-called threat of communism, is still being used to manipulate, control and demonise any country or leader who aspires to help the have-nots and challenge the 'new world order.' The threat of 'reds under the bed' was the same ploy the United States and France used to polarise Haiti and rid it of Aristide, stigmatising him and thereby justifying his exile, even though he was popularly elected. Not only did he have a much-needed social reform agenda that threatened the oligarchy of Haiti's wealthy elite, he also happened to be a meddling priest.

In Haiti people are fond of using proverbs, and there's a particular one that aptly describes the situation of people in the dusty border town of Ouanaminthe where I worked -'Woch nan dlo pa konn doule woch nan soley' -which is a Haitian creole expression meaning 'The rock in the water doesn't know the suffering of the rock in the sun.'

Haitian proverbs have the annoying knack of forcing us to confront things we don't like to admit. In an egalitarian society like Australia we like to think life deals the same fate for us all -that we are all battlers, and that through sweat and willpower we can all overcome tough beginnings to eventually live a reasonable life. But through my work with Jesuit Refugee Service in this impoverished town on the remote northern border, I see that this is not the reality -that the new world order does not deal us all a level playing field. The rock in the sun cannot get ahead like the rock in the water.

Whether you're the rock suffering in the sun or whether you're cooling off in the water depends on where you were born, what passport you hold, what education you have, whether you speak French, whether your parents are peasants or well-off, whether your parents are married or if you have a birth certificate. Chance can deal a very cruel or kind hand in Haiti.

Living conditions in Ouanaminthe, a 'town' of around 100,000 inhabitants amount to an undeclared war on the poor. There's a lack of services, jobs, water, health, schooling, toilets, electricity, phones, garbage collection, legal system, and an unemployment rate of around 70 per cent. This makes Ouanaminthe a gathering place for human traffickers, smugglers and corrupt authorities ready to profit from people desperate to leave for the Dominican Republic.

Spend some time in Haiti and it becomes apparent what English author Graham Greene meant in *The Comedians* when he wrote of Haiti, 'Violent deaths are natural here. He died of his environment.'

Part of my work with Jesuit Refugee Service involved giving communications workshops to members of a community organisation monitoring human rights abuses along the border. I started one seminar by talking about the concept of ‘objectivity’ in the context of reporting an incident or event. The idea that a journalist is ethically obliged to provide a balanced report, from as many perspectives as possible, caused laughter among workshop participants when we started to apply it to the mainstream media. It was humorous for them to think that a national newspaper would give a poor peasant’s perspective on any given issue, even though this population represents the overwhelming majority of Haitians.

Many politicians and thinkers attack any attempt to reflect what we Jesuits refer to as ‘the preferential option for the poor’, claiming that it’s not objective, it’s immature, it’s naïve. Many claim that former president Jean Bertrand Aristide was forcibly and illegally removed from office; he has been internationally defamed and vilified. Yet what is more important: representing the interests of a small elite, or the overwhelming poor majority, as Aristide sought to do? Aristide is a controversial figure, but many in Haiti still believe strongly in his message.

Christianity challenges us to be objective, to look at reality, to reflect on it, and to do something about it. In Haiti, hardship and suffering create desperation to migrate, even when it means suffering the deplorable living conditions of the Dominican labour camps. And these conditions are the result of politics and business, both national and international that leads to poverty, illness, violence, crime, corruption and premature death. Advocacy work in poor countries such as Haiti is really a struggle to provide dignity, and not dignity in an abstract moral sense, or mere spiritual solidarity, but a quest for tolerable living conditions.

There’s a popular Haitian gospel song that’s been ringing in my ears since I’ve arrived back in Australia. I used to hear it on the radio in Haiti almost every day. It goes, ‘Why all these things? Why this division? Why these politics? Why can’t we sit...eat...and pray together?’

It’s a simple but powerful mantra. Surprisingly, it’s not a mournful tune. You could get up and dance to it! It’s a song that reflects the Haitian attitude to life -aware of the hardships faced everyday, but hopeful, cheerful and getting on with life. It’s a song our world needs to listen to as we stop to ask the tough questions, even as we’re bopping and grooving along in our daily lives.

## **U.S.-Backed Seminar Discusses Human Trafficking in Haiti**

**Ending scourge "essential" to Haiti's future, U.S. Ambassador Sanderson says**

**07 July 2006**

**By Eric Green**

**Washington File Staff Writer**

**US State Department**

Washington -- Haiti's transition to democracy is accompanied by heightened expectations for achievement in many areas, including success in countering human trafficking and smuggling, reported participants at a counter-trafficking seminar.

Representatives from the U.S. government and governments in the Latin America/Caribbean region, along with nongovernmental organizations, participated in the seminar, held June 29-30 in Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince. It was co-financed by the International Office for Migration (IOM) with the support of the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

The IOM, a nongovernmental group that works closely with the United Nations on migration issues, said in a June 30 statement that the State Department's 2006 Trafficking In Persons Report emphasized the importance of Haiti's new government demonstrating "tangible strides" in preventing human trafficking, protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers.

U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Janet Sanderson told the forum that for several years the Haitian government's efforts to combat trafficking in persons were "less than acceptable."

Consequently, the Haitian government was in danger of being categorized for what is called "Tier 3" country by the U.S. State Department, Sanderson told participants at the seminar, which was organized by Haiti's government and the Organization of American States. (See related article.)

Speaking in French, Sanderson said the Tier 3 categorization could lead to U.S. financial sanctions on Haiti, "but I hope ... the efforts of the new [Haitian] government can be the source of eliminating this problem here in Haiti." Tier 3 is the classification for countries whose governments do not comply with the minimum standards on fighting trafficking and are not making significant efforts to do so.

Sanderson said that after Haiti's former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide resigned his office in February 2004 and left the country, an interim government was established in Haiti and the United States decided to withhold comment concerning the country's efforts to combat trafficking in persons until the installation of a new, democratically elected government in Haiti. As a consequence, the State Department listed Haiti as a "special" country regarding trafficking in persons.

But now Haiti has a "choice," said Sanderson. "You have a new government, you have the opportunity to improve on your process and I hope we will be able to discuss the matter together and decide how we can together solve the problems posed by trafficking."

Sanderson said the United States would resume its regular evaluation regarding "your efforts in Haiti to combat trafficking in persons," adding that "the actions Haiti will take in the next months will be critical, crucial in demonstrating its commitment to reversing the plague of trafficking. In other words,

we hope that you ... the new government will face this scourge which is so difficult to overcome, so difficult to solve, yet this is absolutely essential for the future of the country."

Sanderson said that "we know things cannot change overnight. Therefore, we will wait in the expectation that significant progress will be achieved." The United States, she said, will help Haiti in its efforts to combat trafficking.

Sanderson said the U.S. Agency for International Development is working with an independent nonprofit organization, the Pan American Development Foundation, on implementing programs against trafficking in persons. The United States, she added, also has trained officials of the national Haitian police and judicial authorities, and provided police with equipment to help them work efficiently.

"However, much more still needs to be done to prevent traffickers from operating anywhere," Sanderson said.

According to the 2006 Trafficking In Persons Report, Haiti is a country of origin, transit and destination for the trafficking of men, women and children for domestic servitude, forced labor and sexual exploitation.

The report alludes to the "restavek" system (a person, usually a young orphan, who serves a family as an unpaid servant) as a particularly severe and prevalent form of internal trafficking.

The report said the Haitian government estimates that 90,000 to 120,000 trafficked children are in domestic servitude in the Caribbean nation. The Haiti section of the report is available on the State Department Web site.

**Regional leaders to visit Haiti**  
**The Sun, St. Kitts and Nevis**  
**July 07 2006**

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts – A prime ministerial team will visit Haiti later this year to make an assessment of the situation in that Caribbean Community (Caricom) state, Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit has said.

PM Skerrit told reporters while neither the date nor the composition of the delegation had been agreed upon, the regional leaders were hoping to meet with jailed former prime minister Yvon Neptune, who has been incarcerated for more than a year on criminal charges.

“We are hoping that a group of heads will visit Haiti and I am sure the heads will want to press for discussions with Neptune,” he said, noting that the matter had been raised informally with President René Préval Thursday, during discussions on Haiti.

“We need to ensure that the international community fulfils its commitment to Haiti in a practical and tangible way. Haiti does not need any consultants going into Haiti everyday... what Haiti needs is direct cash injection to address the fundamental issues of poverty, social conditions and ensuring that the young people and women find legal employment for themselves.”

The prime minister said Caricom would be sending a technical team to Haiti “with a view to working with the Haitian people in determining, with the Haitian people, what exactly they would like to see done for themselves.”

He said the regional leaders had also indicated that Haiti should have “direct access” to the petroleum fund, established by the Trinidad & Tobago government to assist Caricom countries deal with rising oil prices.

## **Inter-American Official Hails International Support for Haiti**

**Haiti's presence at Caribbean meeting signals continuing international support**

**July 6, 2006**

**By Eric Green**

**Washington File Staff Writer**

**US State Department**

Washington -- The presence of Haiti's president at a July 3-6 meeting of Caribbean leaders carries important symbolic value, says Albert Ramdin, the assistant secretary-general of the Organization of American States (OAS).

In a July 5 statement, Ramdin said the presence of the Haitian president, René Préval, at the meeting being held in St. Kitts and Nevis represents an "important signal" of the continuing support internationally and regionally for Haiti.

Addressing the St. Kitts meeting of a Caribbean regional grouping known as CARICOM, Ramdin reaffirmed the OAS's continued support to the new government and people of Haiti. Haiti had been suspended from CARICOM in 2004 pending the staging of democratic elections in the Caribbean nation, but officially was welcomed back into the organization after Préval was elected Haiti's president on February 7.

The United States and other members of an international donors group for Haiti congratulated Préval for winning the Haitian presidential election and offered to work with the Caribbean nation's new leaders. Préval was sworn into office May 14 in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince at a ceremony attended by a U.S. delegation headed by Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

According to a U.S. State Department fact sheet released May 25, the United States spent more than \$340 million in fiscal years 2004 and 2005 to improve governance, security, the rule of law and economic recovery, as well as to meet critical humanitarian needs in Haiti.

With projected additional expenditures of nearly \$200 million in fiscal year 2006, U.S. total assistance to Haiti in fiscal years 2004-2006 is expected to be more than \$530 million. The White House budget request for fiscal year 2007 includes \$194 million for Haiti, according to the fact sheet. (The fact sheet is available on the State Department Web site.)

Meanwhile, topics being discussed at what is formally called the 27th Meeting of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community, being held in the St. Kitts and Nevis capital of Basseterre, include the problem of human trafficking, regional cooperation against mitigating the effects of natural disasters, and the issue of migration, with particular emphasis on the loss of skilled and trained workers from the region.

Another prime topic at the meeting is expanding the movement for what is called the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, designed to help the region compete better in the global economy. That movement for a single market and economy involves the free movement in the Caribbean of goods and services, labor, and capital.

As part of U.S. efforts to work with its Caribbean neighbors to craft a common, practical agenda, the State Department hopes to launch a conference in 2007 in collaboration with Caribbean governments called the Caribbean 2020.

The Caribbean 2020, announced by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Caribbean community leaders following the secretary's March trip to the Bahamas, will seek to create a picture of what the Caribbean hopes to look like in 15 years and the actions needed to achieve this vision.

Thomas Shannon, the State Department's assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere Affairs, said Caribbean 2020 "will chart a pathway for U.S.-Caribbean relations that will have a profound effect not only on the Caribbean, but also on the United States." (See related article.)

## **Plan desired to help stabilize Haiti**

**AP**

**The Cayman Free Press, Cayman Islands**

**6th July, 2006**

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts (AP) – A top Caribbean Community official called on the group's member nations to quickly devise a plan to help stabilize Haiti, two days after the impoverished nation rejoined the regional group.

Albert Ramdin, assistant secretary-general of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, said Wednesday that cooperation on resources such as police will be critical to ease social problems in Haiti, which has seen an uptick in kidnappings and gang violence in recent weeks.

"We are living in very challenging times for Caribbean economies, but every country could train some police ... within their own police forces to strengthen the Haitian national police," Ramdin said.

Ramdin called on the 15-member community, known as Caricom, to dispatch trade specialists and medical personnel to the French-speaking Caribbean nation, which shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. He also asked newly inaugurated Haitian President Rene Preval to recommend how the Caribbean Community can best help Haiti.

"It now depends on the president to come up with a plan, a short-term social, economic reconstruction plan, so we can concretely indicate how much money will be needed and how much can be pledged," Ramdin said.

On Monday Preval addressed a summit of Caricom leaders to mark Haiti's re-entry to the body, which suspended his country's membership shortly after former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled in 2004 after a bloody revolt. Caricom had refused to recognize Haiti's U.S.-backed interim government, lifting the suspension only after it returned to democratic rule with elections in February.

Also Wednesday, incoming Caricom chairman and St. Kitts Prime Minister Denzil Douglas confirmed that regional leaders discussed Venezuela's bid for a U.N. Security Council seat, which the United States opposes, but said it was not an agenda item.

Washington officials have encouraged Caribbean and Latin American nations to support Guatemala rather than Venezuela for the region's rotating seat on the council, which may soon have high-stakes decisions to make about nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea.

If Caribbean and Latin American nations cannot reach consensus on a regional representative, the U.N. General Assembly will select one in October.

The summit, which marks Caricom's 25th anniversary, runs through Thursday in St. Kitts.

**U.S. Updates Travel Warning For Haiti**  
**By Matthew Borghese**  
**All Headline News**  
**July 7, 2006**

Washington, D.C. (AHN) - The U.S. Department of State has updated its travel warning for Americans in Haiti. The Department wants to "remind American citizens of the ongoing security concerns in Haiti and to advise that they carefully consider the risks when traveling there."

Officials add that they have "lifted the Ordered Departure of embassy employee dependents under the age of 21, but continues to advise U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Haiti to exercise caution at all times and review basic personal security procedures."

The warning cautions travelers to avoid "spontaneous protests and public demonstrations that can occur at any time, day or night, and may result in violence," adding, "visitors and residents must remain vigilant due to the absence of an effective police force in much of Haiti."

The Department say there is "the potential for looting; the presence of intermittent roadblocks set by armed gangs or by the police; and the possibility of random violent crime, including carjacking and assault.

Kidnapping for ransom remains a serious threat, with more than 50 American citizens, including children, kidnapped over the past year."

**Working for a better future in Haiti**  
**Marla Pierson Lester**  
**Mennonite Central Committee Press Release**  
**July 7, 2006**

Marie Rosy Kesner Auguste will never forget her first view of a prison in her hometown of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Assaulted by the smell of dank cells, the split plastic jugs that served as plates and how dirty and unwell prisoners looked, Auguste vowed to work on behalf of those incarcerated.

It was a drastic change. Then a second-year law student, she had chosen her career carefully, planning to earn money, hoping to live comfortably.

Galvanized by her visit to the prison, she approached the leader of the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH), telling him she wanted to help document abuses against prisoners and make sure people were held in a legal, just manner.

He urged her to look elsewhere. It is dangerous, he told her, and you might lose your life. He told her how he'd been shot because of his work. She remained undeterred.

Now a monitoring assistant for RNDDH, a partner organization of MCC in Haiti, Auguste meets with guards and officials and helps lead trainings to educate people about their rights.

Auguste says the most moving part of the job is meeting with prisoners and listening to their stories and their pleas and working with them to make sure their cases proceed through the justice system.

In Haiti, those who are arrested may be held at a police station for up to 48 hours in crowded holding rooms, where officials are not responsible for providing food or water. Auguste said she and co-workers have sometimes found people who have been held for weeks there.

They work to make sure prisoners are healthy and safe, investigating rapes and health crises, including a case earlier this year in which a prisoner with tuberculosis was held in a room with nearly two dozen other prisoners, exposing them all to the disease. They strive to make sure cases are moving through the justice system — and work to instill in prisoners the confidence to stand up for their rights.

"It's like you are trying to tell them, 'There is a hope. I'm here. I will help you to find justice,'" Auguste said.

This May and June, she, along with Guylene Clerger, an MCC worker in Port-au-Prince, gained new tools for their work in building peace.

They were two of 19 MCC-sponsored participants in Eastern Mennonite University's Summer Peacebuilding Institute.

The Institute, held in May and June in Harrisonburg, Va., brought together 195 participants from 45 nations to learn and share personal experiences about peace-building, conflict resolution, restorative

justice and trauma recovery. MCC sponsored participants from the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, South America and the Caribbean, many of whom work for MCC or partner organizations.

In the Institute, Auguste said, she learned how to present concepts of conflict resolution in a way that allows people to connect them to their daily lives. Her organization's program includes conflict resolution information, but it's often presented in an academic manner. She hopes to make it more down-to-earth.

For Auguste, the Institute also built connections between resolving conflicts and the broader vision for building peace — both of which tie closely to the human rights work she pursues.

"Now, I am looking at human rights with another point of view," she said.

For Clerger, who helps to coordinate MCC's responses to disasters in Haiti, attending SPI was a valuable opportunity to gain skills not only in conflict resolution but also in trauma healing.

"SPI gave me a new view and ability in how to deal with people in trauma," Clerger said.

In addition to Clerger's work with MCC, these skills can help her to work with street children in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, and to work with her church.

Clerger also plans to meet with MCC partners in Haiti, to pass on the skills she has learned.

**UN Troops Step Up Patrols To Deal With Haiti Violence**  
**AP**  
**July 2, 2006**

POR-T-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)--U.N. troops increased patrols in a volatile Haitian slum Saturday, a day after heavily armed gangsters killed at least 22 people, torched houses and forced residents to flee in the worst outbreak of violence in months.

A 26-year-old man was wounded by gunfire Saturday, residents said, in a second day of shooting in the Martissant slum in southwestern Port-au-Prince, where rival gangs have waged frequent gun battles in a fight for control of the area.

A recent spate of killings and kidnappings have gripped Haiti's tense capital, interrupting relatively calm conditions since the Feb. 7 election of President Rene Preval.

The violence has raised fears of a resurgence of lawlessness that engulfed the poor Caribbean nation after a February 2004 revolt that toppled then-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Friday's attack began when gang members from the nearby area of Grand Ravine stormed Martissant before dawn, breaking into homes and shooting people inside, residents said. The attackers set fire to several homes before fleeing.

The killings prompted many people, fearful of more attacks, to pack up their belongings and leave.

**Haiti returns to CARICOM's fold**  
**By JACQUELINE CHARLES**  
**Miami Herald**  
**July 3, 2006**

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts - Two years after Caribbean Community leaders meeting here refused to recognize Haiti's interim government, they returned here Monday to embrace its new president and re-engage CARICOM's poorest member-state.

Haitian President René Préval, fresh from visits to Paris, Brussels and Miami, arrived for the three-day CARICOM summit to officially resume his country's membership in the 15-nation regional bloc.

Haiti's return following a 28-month suspension on the heels of exiled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's 2004 ouster during an armed revolt was clearly the highlight of Monday's opening ceremony.

But a host of other topics face the CARICOM leaders, including the possibility of pursuing bilateral free trade agreements between the regional bloc and the United States and Canada.

The idea is quickly gaining momentum because the U.S.-backed Free Trade Areas of the Americas has stalled and Washington's Caribbean Basin Initiative, which allows most Caribbean products to come into the United States duty-free, is due to expire in 2008.

"We're looking at Canada and the United States," Richard Bernal, director general of the Regional Negotiating Machinery. ``They are very important trading partners for us."

In addition to trade issues, the region faces a laundry list of problems even though many island-nations -- Trinidad and Tobago, Turks & Caicos among them -- are experiencing a building and tourism boom.

Among them: what to do about the exodus of skilled nurses and teachers to the United States and elsewhere, and how to stop the tiny nations from becoming transit and destination points for prostitutes and child workers.

The U.S. State Department recently blasted Belize for not doing enough to address human trafficking, saying its laws were weak and unenforced. Belize's unmonitored borders with Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, the report said, has made it a ``source, transit and destination country for men, women and children trafficked for the purpose of labor and sexual exploitation."

Belize was so upset over its placement on the State Department's list of the worst offenders that its government asked that the issue be put on the CARICOM summit's agenda.

"We believe this is a very serious issue that affects all of us," said Belize Foreign Minister Eamon Courtenay. ``We would like to explore with our colleagues their views on it. It should be dealt with in a regional, hemispheric way."

But the issue most likely to dominate discussions over the next couple days is the effort by CARICOM to fully implement its own regional trade agreement, known as the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Although six countries -- including this twin-island nation in the eastern Caribbean -- are supposed to officially join, bringing the total to 12, there are still many issues to be worked out to help the lesser developed nations feel more comfortable with the agreement.

In addition, leaders here also must figure out how to persuade citizens back home that their islands won't be taken over by workers from neighboring countries as a result of the agreement, which allows for the free movement of certain skilled workers.

## **Bloc embraces reinstated Haiti**

**After a long absence that began with the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti returned to the fold of the Caribbean Community bloc.**

**By JACQUELINE CHARLES**

**Miami Herald**

**July 4, 2006**

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts - Two years after Caribbean Community leaders meeting here refused to recognize Haiti's interim government, they returned to this two-island nation Monday to embrace its new president and promise to help the bloc's poorest member-state.

"The community stands ready to work with you," CARICOM Secretary General Edwin Carrington told Haitian President René Préval, attending the three-day CARICOM summit to officially resume his country's membership in the 15-nation bloc.

"Today, after years of unrest, Haiti has been able to find constitutional normalcy," Préval replied in his speech. "I hope at the end of my mandate in February 2011, the Republic of Haiti will have taken decisive steps on the long and difficult road of democratic stability and sustainable development."

## **SUSPENSION**

Haiti's return ended a 28-month suspension sparked by the 2004 ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in an armed revolt and his replacement by an interim government regarded by CARICOM as lacking democratic legitimacy.

Though Préval's presence was clearly the highlight of Monday's opening ceremony, CARICOM leaders face a host of other issues during the summit, including the possibility of pursuing bilateral free trade agreements between the regional bloc and the United States and Canada.

The idea is quickly gaining momentum because the U.S.-backed Free Trade Areas of the Americas has stalled and Washington's Caribbean Basin Initiative, which allows most Caribbean products to come into the United States duty-free, is due to expire in 2008.

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Also on the agenda are talks on how Caribbean nations will vote on Venezuela's bid to win a seat on the U.N. Security Council. Washington favors Guatemala for the seat and has been lobbying Western Hemisphere nations to reject Venezuela.

"We need to deepen friendships in our neighborhood and beyond, so that when one door is closed either through arrogance, indifference or domestic preoccupation, we could make a call" to others, said Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Patrick Manning. "We must still go north, but we should also be able to head south, east or west of our borders."

## **EXODUS**

In addition, the CARICOM summit faces the exodus of skilled nurses and teachers to the United States and elsewhere, and how to stop tiny nations from becoming transit and destination points for prostitutes and child workers.

The U.S. State Department recently blasted Belize for not doing enough to address human trafficking, saying its laws were weak and not enforced. Belize's unmonitored borders with Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, the report said, has made it a ``source, transit and destination country for men, women and children trafficked for the purpose of labor and sexual exploitation."

## ON THE AGENDA

Belize was so upset over its placement on the State Department's list of the worst offenders that its government asked that the issue be put on the summit's agenda.

"We would like to explore with our colleagues their views on [the issue]. It should be dealt with in a regional, hemispheric way," Belize Foreign Minister Eamon Courtenay said.

One issue likely to dominate much of the summit discussions over the next few days is the CARICOM effort to fully implement its own regional trade agreement, known as the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Although six countries are supposed to officially join, bringing the total to 12, there are still many issues to be worked out.

## PLENTY TO DO

They include how to help the lesser developed nations feel more comfortable with the agreement and the fear in some islands that they will be overrun by foreign nationals because the pact allows for the free movement of certain skilled workers.

"Our people must be able to move, work and live freely in the region. Without that freedom, our integration process will stagnate and decline," Manning said.

## **Haiti drops lawsuit against Aristide**

**BY JAY WEAVER**

**Miami Herald**

**July 6, 2006**

Haiti's government has dropped its corruption lawsuit against ex-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in a Miami federal court, leaving the door open to refile it later.

The lawsuit, which accused the ousted leader of stealing "tens of millions of dollars" from the Haitian treasury and state-owned telephone company, was dropped by the government in a notice filed Monday with the court. It gave no reason for the decision.

The Haitian government reserved the legal right to refile the suit later against Aristide and others in his administration, which collapsed under pressure from an armed rebellion in 2004.

Lawyers for the Haitian government had asked a Miami federal judge for more time in March to pursue the suit, arguing they were unable to serve a summons on Aristide because he is living in exile in South Africa.

U.S. District Judge Marcia Cooke granted the request.

Then last month the Haitian government's lawyers gave Port-au-Prince officials until June 30 to decide on a legal course of action -- pursue the suit now or drop it temporarily.

Former interim Prime Minister Gérard Latortue has said the real cause of the delay was a dispute over money with the Chicago law firm handling the civil case. The firm, Winston & Strawn, did not reply to requests for comment.

Officials in the newly elected government of President René Préval, once an Aristide ally, declined to comment on the case.

Filed last November, the 74-page suit alleged Aristide ``abused his power and deceived and betrayed the Haitian people by directing and participating in ongoing and fraudulent schemes."

The suit, which never led to any substantive actions, was based on two reports by Haitian government investigators that accused Aristide of illegally pumping millions of dollars in public funds into shell companies and into his private charities.

**An easy and smart way to help impoverished Haiti**  
**THE NEWS TRIBUNE**  
**Tacoma, WA**  
**July 5th, 2006**

Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, an example of widespread destitution almost beyond belief.

More than 80 percent of its people live in extreme poverty. Haiti's average life expectancy is 53. The country's economy, battered by political upheavals and global competition, is on life support. Unemployment runs 50 to 70 percent.

With a very small and painless gesture, the U.S. Congress could give this suffering nation a vital economic boost. Congress should pass the HOPE Act.

The Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act could, according to estimates, quickly create as many as 20,000 jobs by granting Haitian garment makers duty-free entry to the U.S. market for apparel made from fabric made in the U.S.

A similar bill offered last year would have allowed duty-free entry for all Haitian-made apparel, regardless of the source of cloth. But the U.S. textile industry objected to the bill.

HOPE would not threaten U.S. workers. Most American clothing manufacturing has already shifted to lower-cost overseas locations. U.S. clothing importers strongly support the measure.

Economists believe boosting Haiti's garment industry would be more effective than foreign aid in creating desperately needed employment. Moreover, the HOPE bill would help Haitian firms make more woven goods like jeans or trousers rather than knit products like T-shirts. Woven goods bring much higher prices and the pieceworkers who make them earn more.

At least some of Haiti's garment plants are certified by international groups as meeting accepted standards for working conditions and health care.

Congress has a lot of big issues on its plate, but it would truly be a shame if it were to overlook this easy and effective way to show compassion for America's poorest neighbor in Latin America.

## **Haiti Re-Enters Caribbean Community**

**By CLIVE BACCHUS**

**The Associated Press**

**Washington Post**

**Monday, July 3, 2006**

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts -- Haiti's new government is committed to increasing stability and developing closer ties with its neighbors, President Rene Preval told a summit of the 15-nation Caribbean Community on Monday.

The group known as Caricom had refused to recognize Haiti's U.S.-backed interim government, lifting its suspension only after the country returned to democratic rule with elections in February.

"I hope that at the end of my mandate in February 2011, the Republic of Haiti will have taken decisive steps on the long, difficult road of democratic stability and sustainable development," Preval said.

The speech marked Haiti's re-entry into Caricom, which suspended the impoverished nation's membership shortly after former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled in 2004 after a bloody revolt.

"I will work my hardest to contribute to strengthening ties between my country and yours," said Preval, who took office in May.

Incoming Caricom chairman and St. Kitts Prime Minister Denzil Douglas said the group struggled with how to treat Haiti during the past year, but held fast that it would not deal with any government that did not reflect the will of the Haitian people.

Jamaica's new prime minister, Portia Simpson Miller, welcomed Haiti's return.

"The return of Haiti has restored Caricom to its full strength and has served to reaffirm that the democratic traditions of the Caribbean remain entrenched in the political fabric of our community," she said.

**CARICOM seeks free trade deal with USA following DR-CAFTA**  
**The Dominican Today**  
**July 5, 2006**

Santo Domingo.- The Caribbean Community, known as CARICOM, informed that it intends to seek a free trade deal with the United States, after Central American countries and the Dominican Republic sign the latter.

Sources disclosed that a special committee recommended all member states should expedite preparations as to whether the region will formulate before the United States such a proposal.

It is generally assumed that CARICOM nations would have much to gain, given that the U.S. already is the region's most important trading partner.

## **CARICOM SUMMIT - Haiti welcomed back**

**Wednesday | July 5, 2006**

**Ross Sheil, Staff Reporter**

**The Jamaica Gleaner**

BASSETERRE, St. Kitts:

GATHERED MONDAY in St. Kitts and Nevis for their annual meeting, CARICOM leaders joined to welcome Haiti back into the regional grouping while six countries of the nine-member Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) officially signed onto the CARICOM Single Market (CSM).

The countries are Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Jamaica, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad Tobago all joined on January 1.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the four-day Conference of Caribbean Heads of Government held at the East Caribbean Central Bank, host Prime Minister Denzil Douglas stressed that despite the delay, the OECS was still committed to further integration. Mr. Douglas stressed that the OECS economic sub-union, due in July 2007, should not be seen as an attempt to subvert the CSM.

"Indeed, as we accelerate and deepen the integration process in the OECS, it is our aim that the OECS union would be seamlessly integrated into the CARICOM Single Market and Economy," he said.

### **INTEGRATE COUNTRIES**

The sub-union, he noted, was crucial to assist the smaller OECS in what he said was "bound to be somewhat lopsided" in joining with larger nations. He said that the Regional Development Fund alone, currently set at US\$120 million with a target of US\$250 million, would not be sufficient to help those countries integrate with their larger neighbours.

Although as Ralph Gonzalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines observed, the OECS was pioneering ahead of the CSM nations with their own integration process, which includes their own currency, the Eastern Caribbean dollar.

Assuming Jamaica's role as leader of CARICOM external relations, Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller took the stage to a round of applause.

Mrs. Simpson Miller responded by telling her audience that: "To make regionalism real to our people, they must see that our deliberations and our decisions, have everything to do with improving their standard of living and reducing the poverty rate in our various countries."

### **STRENGTHENING OF TIES**

Welcoming Haiti and recognising the presence of Haitian President Renee Preval, who was also attending the conference for the first time, Mrs. Simpson Miller said that its return (it was expelled in

2004 following the overthrow of then president Jean-Bertrand Aristide) restored CARICOM to its full strength.

"We must now look forward to a future with Haiti taking its rightful place in CARICOM. We look forward to the day when Haiti will become a full participant in the CSME," she said.

Speaking through a translator Mr. Preval congratulated his fellow debutante, Mrs. Simpson Miller, as well as thanking her predecessor P.J. Patterson for his role in CARICOM.

Said Mr. Preval: "During the next five years of my new mandate, I will work my hardest to contribute towards the strengthening of ties between my country and yours and I will work with you for the advent of a Caribbean which will be more brotherly, stronger and more united when faced with mutual challenges."

## **Préval's European tour provides hope for Haiti's future**

**by Vario Sérant**

**Caribbean Net News Haiti Correspondent**

**July 5,2006**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: President Rene Préval's visit to Paris has encouraged support for Haitian political parties.

"France is in a period of pre-electoral presidential campaign. In such moments, the internal policies prevail," emphasised former senator Edgard Leblanc.

According to Leblanc, the leader of a principal political party within Parliament, Haiti would greatly benefit if bureaucratic constraints which limit development aid to Haiti were reduced. According to the coordinator of the Organization of People Fighting (OPL), France can act on two levels to increase support, bilaterally as well as on the level of the European Union (EU).

President Préval's delegates included several former presidential candidates, which many hope will enhance international cooperation and support. The social democrat Micha Gaillard believes this conciliatory image will increase international partners' confidence and will specifically push France and the EU to consolidate their cooperative efforts with Haiti.

The spokesman of the 'Fusion of the Social Democrats' hopes that France and the EU place Haiti on "the list of the priority countries to help." Gaillard discussed establishing a Joint French Haitian Committee which would unite experts of the two countries in order to define characteristics of cooperation with Haiti and implement actions accordingly.

Pierre Emile Rouzier, local businessman and former president of French Haitian Commerce Chamber (FHCC), hopes the meetings between the Haitian presidential delegation and leaders of France will encourage increased investment in Haiti.

The FHCC approached the French Embassy in Port-au-Prince to facilitate discussions between the Haitian President and members of the French employers organisation called "MEDEF," said Rouzier.

Rouzier expects the Haitian delegation to convey to the private sectors of local and international communities details of reform in the fields of justice and security which may attract capital, creating more employment and prosperity in Haiti.

"There is not enough national capital to develop the country. We need technicians and consistent capital to develop the country," stated Rouzier.

In an interview to the French daily newspaper "Le Monde", President Préval, who began his official visit to Paris last Thursday, expressed hopes for some debt forgiveness from France on the bilateral level (between France and Haiti). This (bilateral) debt amounts to some 65 million US dollars, and Haiti's total debt is over 1 billion dollars.

When the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Philippe Douste-Blazy, visited Haiti for President Préval's swearing-in on May 14, he announced that his country planned to increase aid to Haiti by 50 to 60 percent within the next few months.

The bilateral assistance of France primarily covers technical functions and the provision of equipment for the Haitian Criminal Investigation Department.

Paris also contributes in excess of 41 million dollars to the financing of the Interim Cooperation Program which was defined during the 2004 International Conference of donors and further developed in March 2005 during the Conference of Cayenne.

According to the French foreign ministry, France is the leading contributor of the European Development Funds (23.4% of the some 310 million dollars of the 9th EDF).

At the close of the Conference of Vienna in May 2006, President Jacques Chirac promised to work towards increased solidarity between France and Haiti. President Chirac made the announcement in the presence of representatives of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Since taking office, this was the first trip abroad of the Haitian Head (of State). Préval left Port-au-Prince on June 25, stopped in Miami where he attended the end of an international conference on tourism and then flew to Brussels, before arriving in Paris.

Before returning to Port-au-Prince, President Préval is visiting St Kitt and Nevis between July 3 – 5 to participate in the annual Summit of the Heads of State and Government of CARICOM. After two years of frozen relations, this participation marks the official return of Haiti within this important economic and political organisation.

**Haiti: CHAN Statement on Canada and Haiti's Political Prisoners**  
**by CHAN**  
**San Francisco Bay Area Indy Media**  
**Monday Jul 3rd, 2006**

"There are no political prisoners in Haiti."

- Paul Martin, November 15th, 2004

"Before Haiti can truly move forward and President Préval can begin to consolidate the fleeting prospect for democracy offered by his victory at the polls, the question of injustice under the ill-reputed, U.S.-backed Latortue interim government must be addressed."

- "The Search for Justice for Haiti's Yvon Neptune and his Fellow Inmates: All Political Prisoners," Council on Hemispheric Affairs, June 23, 2006.

Five months after Haiti's Presidential elections, thousands of pre-trial detainees and political prisoners remain within Haiti's horrid prisons. The list of political prisoners includes ex-prime minister Yvon Neptune, folk-singer and activist So Ann Auguste, grassroots activist Paul Raymond, and well-known rara musician Yvon "Zap Zap" Antoine. The conditions inside such prisons are horrific. Prisoners within Haiti's National Penitentiary, the country's largest and most well-known prison, are often kept in unsanitary conditions with no access to medical care. Detainees are kept in over-crowded cells without lighting or ventilation, are sometimes barred access to washroom facilities, and are often beaten by prison guards during recreation times. Further to this, what lavatory facilities that do exist within this area are close to the prison's water wells, raising concern about the contamination of water supplies.

At a press conference held on April 6th, 2006, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Haiti Thierry Fagart criticized the Haitian government for its treatment of prisoners. According to UN Spokesperson David Wimhurst, of the 4,034 people imprisoned nationwide, only 450 inmates (or 11%) had been convicted of any crime. In the case of jailed former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, even Roger Noriega, the former US Assistant Secretary of State for Hemispheric Affairs, has criticized the Haitian judiciary for its handling of his case, while Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Peter Mackay has publicly stated that he supports Neptune's immediate release. Further to this, it is clear, even from admissions by Fagart himself, that the vast majority of prisoners within Haiti's jails are from poor neighbourhoods, and lack access to basic legal counsel.

Although such recognition of the situation in Haiti's prisons is certainly heartening, the Canadian government, as well as the UN, share a responsibility for the conditions within these prisons, the policy of arbitrary arrest within poor neighbourhoods on the part of the Haitian Police and the UN Forces, and the continuing state of impunity for the wealthy and powerful within Haiti's judiciary.

#### **Police Brutality**

The Haitian National Police, whose UN training has been led by Canadian RCMP officials since the summer of 2004, have consistently been carrying out a campaign of arbitrary imprisonment and human rights abuses within some of the poorest neighbourhoods in Haiti's capital. Such acts of brutality have been documented in reports issued by Amnesty International, the Harvard School of Law, and the

Centre for the Study of Human Rights at the University of Miami. Training for such “anti-gang raids” or “weapon sweeps” has commonly resulted in the rounding up of men and women from poor neighbourhoods, in a sort of “preventative detention.” Deadly shootings upon peaceful demonstrations of supporters of the ousted Lavalas government were commonplace prior to the February 7th election, as documented by reports from AP and Reuters.

Sadly, such practices seem to have been taken over by members of the UN Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Increasingly, street youth within poor neighbourhoods have been targeted for pre-emptive arrests by the UN and HNP forces. A May 3rd, 2006 press conference held in Cite Soleil by the Haitian Human Rights organization AUMOHD culminated in a call by 200 community members and family of victims for reparations for human rights abuses and killings committed by UN forces.

MINUSTAH forces often detain Haitians who live in these neighbourhoods without warrant or charge, and then hand them over to the Haitian National Police for indefinite imprisonment. After the February 7th elections, these arrests continued, albeit to a much smaller degree, in neighbourhoods such as Pele. It should be pointed out that Canadian military and civilian personnel occupy prominent positions within the UN military command.

Canadian UNPOL officers were also present outside Haiti’s National Penitentiary on May 14th, 2006 after a number of prisoners broke out of their cells and staged a demonstration drawing attention to the illegality of their detention. Independent journalists videotaped Chinese UN soldiers firing into the prison during this demonstration. Prisoners claimed that 10 unarmed detainees were killed as a result.

### Canada and Haiti’s Prisons

Canada has been one of the key donor countries contributing to the reform initiatives of the United Nations aimed at Haiti’s prisons. As noted by Thierry Fagart of the UN’s Human Rights Commission in a March 17, 2006 interview:

“Canadians in particular are very involved in the prisons area. Both at the UNDP and MINUSTAH, the guys who are in charge are all Canadians.”

Canadian officials, working through the capacity of the UN Development Program (UNDP) or MINUSTAH offer training and other support to prison officials and guards. MINUSTAH also offers security at each of Haiti’s prisons.

Such logistical and security support is troubling due to the unsafe and brutal conditions found within Haiti’s prisons, as well as the tendency to offer special punishment for political detainees.

At present the UNDP does not even provide regular monitoring of the human rights conditions within Haiti’s prisons.

### Canada and Haiti’s Judiciary

For years, Haiti's judiciary has been plagued by corruption and impunity. However, the international community, in its judicial reform programs, has particularly favoured judicial partners which have shown their absolute contempt for Haiti's constitution, as well as basic human rights for Haiti's poor.

In particular, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is known to be funding coordinating members of the Group of 184, a powerful "civil society" organization composed almost entirely of members of Haiti's wealthy elite. The organization is lead by sweatshop owner and industrialist Andre Apaid, who was amongst the leading proponents of the coup against elected Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February of 2004. Apaid has also acknowledged ties to gang leaders, as noted in a Miami Centre for the Study of Human Rights report. The Group of 184 was also one of the main elements within Haiti which pressured the UN to "crackdown" on "gang neighbourhoods" such as Cite Soleil. This crackdown has resulted in the killings of numerous civilians in many poor neighbourhoods, and culminated in the July 6th, 2005 raid which left 23 civilians dead in Cite Soleil, including women and children, according to reports from Medecins Sans Frontieres staff.

In addition, judicial reform programs also offer funding to the Haitian Judges Association (ANAMAH). ANAMAH's director, Judge Jean Peres Paul has demonstrated a total disregard for human rights and the rule of law in Haiti. Peres Paul kept the Catholic Priest Gerard Jean-Juste, a "prisoner of conscience" according to Amnesty International, in prison for six months, even after he was diagnosed with life-threatening Leukemia. Peres Paul also recently presided over the release of 7 police officers who were arrested in connection with the August 2005 Gran Ravine massacre, in which 12 individuals were shot and hacked to death in a soccer stadium within the Port-au-Prince neighbourhood.

Such funding arrangements do little to establish an impartial judiciary that is willing to dispense equal justice to rich and poor Haitians. In addition, Canada has maintained CIDA funding for the clearly partisan "human rights" organization, the Reseau National du Defense des Droits Haitien (RNDDH), formerly known as NCHR-Haiti. RNDDH has been singularly responsible for the unfounded allegations that have kept Haitian Prime Minister Yvon Neptune in prison for over two years.

#### Conclusion:

Even after a bi-partisan Canadian Parliamentary delegation toured Haiti's National Penitentiary in April of 2006, few critical questions of Canada's role within Haiti's judiciary were raised. Most delegation members simply praised Canadian officials working in Haiti, while failing to address the difficult questions surrounding Canadian funding for organizations such as the RNDDH and members of the Group of 184. Sadly, such behaviour has followed the pattern of almost all of Canada's Members of Parliament; few have raised any questions of Canada's involvement in Haiti, and none have expressly called for the release of illegally detained pre-trial detainees in Haiti's prisons. Such silence has continued the policy of quiet consent to Canada's shameful and anti-democratic role in Haiti, first initiated under the previous Liberal government.

Such silence is unacceptable. Despite the possibility of a release of high profile political prisoner Yvon Neptune in the coming weeks, the time is long overdue for the Canadian government to recognize its own role in maintaining a stable system of impunity and in Haiti's judicial system. Such recognition is

vital if Canada's professed commitment to supporting democracy in Haiti is to be anything other than empty words.

As a result we, as members of the Canada Haiti Action Network, call upon the Canadian government to:

- In accordance with the Haitian Constitution, use all possible means, including diplomatic pressure and the withholding of salaries from officials within the Haitian justice ministry, to immediately free all of Haiti's political prisoners and pre-trial detainees, including Yvon Neptune, So Ann Auguste, Yvon "Zap Zap" Antoine, Paul Raymond and the countless others who remain in jail.
- Withdraw all support and command personnel associated with UNPOL. This UN body has played a clear role in aiding and perpetrating human rights abuses throughout the country and has displayed no clear intent of altering its conduct.
- Cease all funding arrangements with the Haitian Judges Association (ANAMAH) as a result of their unequivocal support for a regime of human rights abuses that have reigned in Haiti since February of 2004.
- Cease all funding arrangements with any judiciary or "civil society" members of the Group of 184; Cease all CIDA funding to the biased and wilfully negligent "human rights" organization RNDDH/NCHR-Haiti.

LET HAITI LIVE!

Canada Haiti Action Network,  
June 30, 2006

## **Peace comes to Haiti, but how long will it last?**

**Sunday, July 02, 2006**

**By Carol J. Williams,**

**Los Angeles Times**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Just a short walk from the gang-ruled slum he calls home, on a street he was afraid to tread less than six months ago, Eligene Mondesir has found the first paying job of his 55-year lifetime.

It's smelly, exhausting work, shoveling garbage from the gutters in the withering tropical heat. But Mr. Mondesir, like the 1,750 others hired by a foreign relief group, is grateful for the \$2 daily salary that allows him to feed more than a dozen family members.

In the tenuous peace that has prevailed since Haiti's Feb. 7 presidential election, faint signs of economic life have emerged, offering the first breath of hope in years that Haitians might finally escape decades of desperation.

But this luckless country has been at this crossroads before, and those who have seen their modest dreams of a normal life dashed by violence, misrule and corruption have learned to damp their expectations.

"I'll take it while it lasts," Mr. Mondesir says of the street-cleaning job on the volatile airport road -- work that will disappear at the first sign of gang warfare.

With the election of agronomist Rene Preval, a former ally and protege of exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the kidnappings and killings that had made this capital a war zone ceased as if someone turned off a light switch. Why, who and for how long remain questions no one can answer.

Mr. Preval has reached out to defeated rivals in putting together a new government and recovery plans. Some see the current calm as a breathing space accorded skeptical rivals. Others say it is just a pause for assessment of how to manage the new leader.

Gang violence ceased with Mr. Preval's election because the gunmen decided to give the new president "the gift of a truce" while they decide whether Mr. Preval will interfere with their criminal interests, speculates Mario Andresol, head of the Haitian National Police.

"I'm not too confident about security in this country," he said, pointing to an incident last month in which a Haitian judge freed an accused killer from prison in exchange for \$60,000.

The Brazilian-led U.N. peacekeeping force that has more than 9,000 troops and police in Haiti has responsibility for helping reform the judicial system, mission spokesman David Wimhurst said. But the more the world body's civilian advisory team learns about crime and justice here, the more they despair of the near future.

"Those who don't want a return of law and order can stir things up so easily," Wimhurst said.

John Currelly, who heads the Pan American Development Foundation's Clean Streets project for which Mr. Mondesir works, says of the post-election peace, "It is absolutely only a lull."

The only way to entrench stability, says the Haiti veteran who was kidnapped for ransom a year ago, is to improve the standard of living and demonstrate to Haitians that there is a dignified means of surviving without resorting to the gun.

But others warn that the post-election peace is as orchestrated as the violence was.

"The roots of the problems haven't been tackled yet -- that being the extreme misery of poverty in this country and the armed groups who still have their weapons," said Paul Denis, a leader of the Struggling People's Organization

**In Haiti, poverty leads to kidnappings**  
**By Samantha Epps**  
**Independent-Mail**  
**July 2, 2006**

Whenever a young man walked up and introduced himself to Bobby Boyer in Haiti, it was almost certain what he would say next.

Mr. Boyer, an American whose wife is Haitian, lived for two years in that country recently and saw examples of extreme poverty every day.

"Haiti is considered the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere," Mr. Boyer of Central said. "There are so little jobs. It was not atypical for a young Haitian man to go out of his way to introduce himself and shortly after that say, 'Is there a job I can have?' or 'Can you help me get a job?'"

Mr. Boyer, who lives with his wife and four children in Central, returned a few weeks ago from Haiti, where he taught for two years at a middle school while his wife worked for the Haitian government.

Magalie Boyer, his wife, is still in Haiti.

"There is a dichotomy," Mr. Boyer said. "A small percentage of the people are very wealthy, have the latest vehicles and the latest gadgets and are worth a lot of money. But the majority are quite poor."

When he and his wife walked the streets of Haiti, they marveled at the number of merchants lined up along the street holding aluminum pans filled with their wares. These merchants would try to sell candies, spaghetti noodles, eggs or anything they could find for a little bit of money, Mr. Boyer said.

"You see lots and lots of merchants right next to each other and all of them pulling a few dollars or less each day," Mr. Boyer said. "We would wonder how are they taking care of their families?"

A dictatorship that ended in the late 1980s gave Haitians the freedoms of speech and religion, but poverty has dramatically increased in the country over the past 20 years, Mr. Boyer said.

Haitians are mostly concerned with making enough money to feed their families and educate their children, Mr. Boyer said.

Haitian families are large, and it gets costly to feed a household, Mr. Boyer said.

"A lot of stuff is imported, so things are fairly expensive," he said. "They could get vegetables, fruit and meats at inexpensive prices at market, but in the stores, everything was more expensive."

Housing conditions are also poor for Haitian families, he said.

Education is a necessary expense.

"They really want to try to get their kids in school. They will start taking children as early as age 3," Mr. Boyer said. "Education is really important, but everybody can't afford it. Obviously there is a great deal of want there."

Mr. Boyer worked at an American-based, English-speaking Christian school, where he taught sixth grade. About 85 percent of the students came from wealthy families and the rest were missionaries' children, he said.

But even these children could not escape the reality of the country's economy, he said.

"The wealthy were targeted a lot for kidnappings,' Mr. Boyer said. "It was a straight business situation where we kidnap you, hold you for a while and your family pays money so we let you go. Working as a Christian in a Christian school, it was very typical when we took prayer requests to pray for relatives that had been kidnapped or these were kids whose parents were in business and had been shot at."

The 3-acre campus in the capitol of Port Au Prince is walled and gated, so the children feel safe inside.

"But they are dealing with internal issues such as, 'Are my parents okay?' and 'When we go outside the gates, there's a chance we could be kidnapped,'" Mr. Boyer said.

The brother of one of Mr. Boyer's students was kidnapped this past year, and the school gathered "praying and crying," he said.

"He was miraculously let go in about an hour," Mr. Boyer said. "But this is the environment that these children live in every day."

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**Chirac offers support to Haiti's new leader**  
**Friday, June 30, 2006**  
**CNN.com**

"France's heart beats for Haiti," Chirac told Preval at their meeting, according to Chirac spokesman Jerome Bonnafont.

Preval comes to improve long-chilled relations with Haiti's former colonial master.

Chirac made no firm promise of increased aid but vowed to help obtain rapid disbursement of funds from the European Union and international financial institutions, Bonnafont said.

Chirac said he was "aware of the serious tasks incumbent upon President Preval" and promised him "all the support of France in this moment of exceptional hope for Haiti," Bonnafont said.

Foreign aid -- along with remittances from Haitians living abroad -- account for the lion's share of the national economy. French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said during Preval's investiture in May that France intended to increase its aid.

The EU announced \$293 million in new aid to Haiti during a visit by Preval to Brussels, Belgium, this week. However, the aid, which could increase, is tied to reforms.

Preval said he hoped Chirac would take part in the development and reinforcement of Haiti's institutions and in its economic development.

Chirac also said France would support an extension of the U.N. mission in Haiti, and promised support in reinstalling security and democratic reforms, Bonnafont said.

In addition, Preval discussed France's role in changes to Haiti's police force, which he planned to address with Defense Minister Michele Alliot-Marie later Friday. He met Thursday with Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin.

Preval, a Belgian-educated agronomist, won the presidency in February elections. He was president from 1996 to 2001 and was the first president in Haiti's coup-marred history to leave office voluntarily at the end of his term.

His visit comes as France has been grappling with the darker episodes of its colonial past. A law passed last year tried to put a positive spin on colonialism, prompting uproar in its former colonies and at home. The offending passages later were stripped from the legislation.

France also has launched new initiatives to try to heal lingering wounds linked to its colonial legacy. Last month, the country held its first annual commemoration of victims of the slave trade. France abolished slavery in 1848, more than four decades after Haitian independence.

## **Haiti's President in France to Drum Up Financial Support**

**By Lisa Bryant**

**Paris**

**VOA News**

**29 June 2006**

Haiti's President Rene Preval is in Paris as part of a European tour to drum up financial assistance and help in restoring security and the rule of law to the impoverished Caribbean island. Lisa Bryant reports from Paris that Mr. Preval's presidency is being viewed positively by European governments.

President Preval's European trip has already delivered results. During his visit to Brussels Tuesday, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said the EU was increasing its aid to Haiti to \$293 million for the period of 2008-2013 - up \$82 million from this current five-year period. Mr. Barroso described developments in Haiti as going in the "right direction" since Mr. Preval's election as president this year.

Now, Haiti's leader is in France for talks on restoring security and the rule of law in Haiti, as well as more development assistance. He meets with French President Jacques Chirac Friday and top government officials. France is one of Haiti's leading donors, and French officials say Paris is prepared to increase its bilateral aid. In an interview with France's leading *Le Monde* newspaper, Mr. Preval also called for French help in writing off some of its international debt.

Christian Girault, a specialist on the Caribbean at the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris, says European countries view Mr. Preval's presidency as offering new hope for the country, after years of conflict and poverty.

"I think it's a fresh start," he said. "Haiti has been in a very bad situation for a long time. It's in shambles and the crisis is everywhere. On the political side, but also on the economic and social side."

Haiti is one of the world's poorest countries and its infrastructure and economy are in tatters. Besides being torn by conflict, Haiti is also rife with corruption and organized crime, which Mr. Preval vows to fight. Besides being in desperate need of financial assistance, Haiti also needs technical know-how - many of the country's best and brightest have emigrated to richer countries.

Mr. Preval served as Haiti's president from 1996 to 2001. Today, analysts like Girault view him as someone able to unify the country's various factions.

"I think it's good in a sense we have a man who is known, obviously, but he's also willing to work with all the parties involved," he said.

**Dominican agents are attacked by undocumented Haitians**  
**The Dominican Today**  
**July 3 2006**

SANTIAGO. - Dominican Immigration inspectors and soldiers were attacked by some of the 720 undocumented Haitians arrested last weekend, who resisted being taken to their country.

Immigration authorities said the immigrants repatriated were detained in several localities in the country's north region, an official source said today, adding that prior to being repatriated 500 undocumented Haitians were arrested on Saturday and Sunday in Santiago; 150 in Moca and the rest in the localities Jamao, Villa Trina and Gaspar Hernandez.,

Immigration assistant director for the North Zone, Juan Isidro Perez, told reporters that despite the attacks against his agency's members, the repatriations will continue, but always respecting the immigrants' dignity and rights.

In the last few days, 2,000 undocumented Haitians have been repatriated to their country in the Dominican north, according to the same sources.

Dominican Republic and Haiti share a more than 300 kilometer-long border, where charges of people-trafficking, and weapons and drug smuggling are frequent.

Although a real census does not exist, the Dominican authorities place number of Haitians in the country at about one million, mostly undocumented, and who work mostly in the sugarcane harvest and in construction.

**Dominican territory is used by Haitians go get to French colonies**  
**The Dominican Today**  
**July 3, 3006**

SANTO DOMINGO.- France's ambassador in the country said yesterday that thousands of illegal Haitians use Dominican Republic as a springboard to reach French territories in the Caribbean, mostly traveling to Guadalupe and Martinique, territories which don't require a visa, but affirmed that these two nations make efforts to control that situation.

Cécile Pozzo di Borgo said that many Dominicans also make the crossing just as the Haitians.

Investments

Pozzo di Borgo said that in the last few years French investments in the country has grown and has diversified because aside from tourism, they also make them in telecommunications and in commerce.

According to the French diplomat, in the last six or seven years French investments have reached 650 million dollars.

However, she affirmed that this interchange is not one-sided.

Interviewed by Guillermo Gomez in Channel 9 Color Vision, she added that in that time France has also shown interest for Dominican products, mainly organic fruits.

## **MIAMI HERALD WATCHDOG**

**Aristide probe is at a standstill**

**A 2-year-old corruption investigation of Haitian ex-President JeanBertrand Aristide is stalled in Haiti's legal system.**

**BY JACQUELINE CHARLES**

**Miami Herald**

**July 3, 2006**

Shortly after Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted as president in 2004, Haiti's interim government announced with fanfare that it would get to the bottom of alleged corruption in his administration. And for a while, it looked as though it would.

Four blistering reports from two government investigative commissions alleged that Aristide embezzled more than \$20 million of his country's meager public funds for the benefit of his private charities, his political party and several private firms that existed only on paper.

But two years later, the investigations have stalled, mired in Haiti's dysfunctional legal system, polarized politics, and uncertainty over the willingness of newly elected President René Préval to pursue the case against his one-time mentor.

Aristide also is under investigation by a federal grand jury in Miami, which has been reviewing allegations of ties to narco-traffickers, U.S. law enforcement officials say. The U.S. probe -- sparked by the rampant flow of cocaine through Haiti -- has resulted in 22 convictions of Haitian smugglers, ex-police officers and others.

But the legal wrangling in Haiti has turned so chaotic that the top corruption investigator, Jean-Yves Nol, was himself jailed for six days in May, accused of illegally trying to block a judge's order releasing about \$8 million from bank accounts of the charitable Aristide Foundation and other foundation-related accounts that had been frozen by investigators. The money was eventually released, Nol said.

Investigative Judge Jean Ostrict Hercules, who signed the release order and is the head a three-judge panel in charge of deciding whether to pursue criminal charges against Aristide based on the investigative reports, told The Miami Herald that such funds cannot be frozen indefinitely.

Hercules refused to discuss the merits of the reports alleging Aristide embezzlements, saying only that his panel has been unable to move the investigation forward because it has yet to receive approval from an administrative board that must first rule that public funds have been mishandled.

Separately, the hope of pursuing Aristide through a civil lawsuit filed in Miami last November also appears to be waning. The suit, based on two of the most damning investigative reports, has not led to any concrete actions. Lawyers for the Haitian government have asked for more time, arguing that they have been unable to serve a summons on Aristide because he is in exile in South Africa.

Former interim Prime Minister Gérard Latortue says the real cause of the delay has been a fight over money with the Chicago law firm handling the lawsuit. The firm, Winston & Strawn, did not reply to requests for comment.

"They made an arrangement for us to give them \$250,000 and the rest of the money . . . they would get from the frozen assets," Latortue said. But now, he added, 'Each time, they come and do a blackmail and say, 'You have to give us the money -- or nothing.' "

#### OFFICIALS REACT

Préval told The Miami Herald last week that he has asked top officials to "look into" the suit and the investigative reports on Aristide.

Former interim Justice Minister Henri Dorleans, investigator Nol and others involved in the corruption probes all insist that the Haitian investigation is ongoing. "I am determined to finish," Nol said. ``I love my country. . . . Somebody has to fight."

But the probes' future will depend largely on Préval. In Haiti's highly politicized legal system, he will have a strong voice on whether the allegations will be pursued or allowed to wither away. Préval, under pressure from Aristide allies and foes, has not said what he plans to do.

From the day the U.S.-backed interim government was installed after Aristide's ouster in 2004 amid a violent rebellion, it has insisted that proving Aristide embezzled public funds was its priority.

It created two commissions -- Nol's Central Unit for Economic and Financial Investigations, known as UCREF for its French acronym, and the Administrative Investigative Commission -- to probe Aristide's handling of funds back to 2001, the start of his second term.

All government agencies, the Central Bank and the state-owned telecommunications company, Teleco, were ordered to audit their books. Latortue at one point even demanded that a warrant be issued for Aristide's arrest.

No such warrant was ever issued. And after four reports to Hercules' three-judge panel -- two by each of the commissions -- not one person has testified before Hercules' panel. Haitian investigative judges act like U.S. grand juries, reviewing investigators' reports and deciding whether to file charges.

Dorleans defended the interim government's role in the Aristide case and blamed the lack of progress on the absence of a ruling by the administrative board known as the Superior Court of Auditors and Administrative Disputes. The board, whose 10 members were appointed by Aristide, began only in February to consider whether public funds were mishandled.

Board President Julien Simon told The Miami Herald that his agency received the four reports only in December, and has been unable to find financial documents substantiating the allegations.

Haitian investigators argue that because of the lack of documents, they need to question people linked to some of the allegations. But they cannot do so without an order from Hercules' panel.

## MOVEMENT OF FUNDS

The reports by UCREF base its allegation of embezzlement and money laundering on the elaborate movement of public funds -- funneled to three paper companies and four humanitarian organizations and then swished among them to make the origin and destination of the money difficult to trace.

The investigators reported that of the \$21 million diverted from government accounts, about \$2.4 million went directly to charities tied to Aristide and his Lavalas Family political party -- allowing him to take credit for humanitarian works and strengthening his image as a champion of the poor.

"The judges have been dragging their feet by not going further with the findings of the UCREF and Administrative Investigative Commission reports," said former interim Justice Minister Bernard Gousse, who oversaw the investigations before he was forced to resign last summer amid complaints that he was too focused on prosecuting Aristide.

"It's not politically motivated when you go after people who stole money from the state," Gousse told The Miami Herald. ``Now those people [Aristide supporters] are powerful enough to put a brake on the investigation and furthermore to have the main investigator arrested. . . . The world is upside down. Prosecutors cannot be the victims."

**Ambassador Says \$10 Million Sent To Haiti From Bahamas Annually**  
**By Candia Dames**  
**The Bahamas Journal**  
**June 28, 2006**

Up to \$10 million is sent out of The Bahamas to Haiti every year, according to Dr. Eugene Newry, the Bahamian ambassador to Haiti.

"Haiti supposedly has an unemployment rate of 70 percent," he noted. "We have under 10 percent. They have supposedly a dollar per day per person on an average. The reality is those figures are wrong."

Dr. Newry, who was the special guest on the radio Love 97 programme, "Issues of the Day" on Tuesday, added, "The reality is that from the U.S. alone you have \$1.2 billion sent by relatives to people in Haiti. Now you got to take that into account because they spend that money in the stores and on [other] things.

"From The Bahamas with its relatively small Haitian population, we have \$7 million to \$10 million going back to Haiti every year. Those are realities, but when you look at the figures about unemployment, you say 'a dollar a day.' The fact is they don't get a dollar a day. It's closer to \$2 a day."

Asked by the show's host, Wendall Jones, whether people in the Caribbean have an obligation to assist Haiti in its national development and the building of its economy to reduce illegal immigration, Dr. Newry said, "Yes".

He explained that it is in the economic interest of The Bahamas to assist Haiti.

"This is no charity we're talking about here," Dr. Newry said. "If you help Haiti (you help yourself)."

Dr. Newry said he has met with officials of the Chamber of Commerce in an effort to encourage Bahamians to see the value of investing in Haiti.

The ambassador also said it is "disastrous" for Bahamians to want to stay out of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) because they think they have nothing to trade.

"We should be the most outward looking people in the Caribbean," Dr. Newry added. "We should be like the Americans are in the world."

Putting forward an argument he continues to push, the ambassador said that Bahamians ought to be investing in Haiti and ought to offer services like construction.

He also said that he was working to get Haitians who are doing well financially to visit The Bahamas as tourists, but Dr. Newry said he hasn't had much luck in that regard.

"They don't come because of the impression that some people give that they would not be well treated," he said.

The ambassador also said it is difficult for any Haitian to get a tourist visa for The Bahamas "because of the degree of questionable, fraudulent visas that people have gotten. They can even get a fraudulent visa from over in the Dominican Republic."

Dr. Newry explained that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in an attempt to reduce the number of fraudulent visas looks "in a draconian, a very severe way" at how visas are issued to people coming out of Haiti.

But Dr. Newry said of all the countries "on earth" The Bahamas has been the most accommodating in terms of integrating Haitians.

While on the show, he also faced a series of criticisms from some callers who insisted that he was being "anti-Bahamian" in his approach to the Haitian situation, but Dr. Newry dismissed such suggestions as non-sense, saying the interests of the Bahamian people were his priority.

**Brazilian troops in Haiti will continue to perform routine activities**  
**Agência Brasil**  
**June 28, 2006**

Brasília - Brazilian troops will continue to carry out routine activities and fortify their positions in Cité Soleil, one of the most violent slums in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince. This information comes from Lieutenant-Commander Alberto Barbosa Nascimento, communications officer of the Brazilian peace force that is part of the United Nations (UN) Stabilization Mission in that country, the MINUSTAH.

According to Nascimento, the heightened activity of gangs in that country is related to the process of reinforcing the government and the police organs that put pressure on these groups. "The same procedures that have been followed since the operation began will be maintained, because we have a memorandum of understanding with the UN in which all these actions are spelled out. So what the other contingents have done will be continued," he said.

According to the MINUSTAH activities bulletin, Brazilian soldiers have been involved in at least four armed confrontations in recent weeks. Brazilian troops that were patrolling the Bel-Air neighborhood were attacked last week by seven armed men. The Army returned the fire, and one of the armed men was killed.

The lieutenant-commander said that the increase in gang activity coincided with the rotation of the Brazilian forces stationed in Cité Soleil in mid-May. The fifth Brazilian contingent arrived in Haiti on June 6. "It was precisely during this period that a gradual escalation of activities occurred among the gangs themselves and then against the posts occupied by Brazilian troops."

Nascimento went on to say that the troops have counted on the support of community leaders in both Cité Soleil and in the Cité Militaire neighborhood. These leaders, he said, are attempting to do community improvement and assistance work in closer association with the Brazilian battalion and the MINUSTAH troops.

Translation: David Silberstein

**Digicel invests additional \$22m in Haiti**  
**Caribbean Net News**  
**Thursday, June 29, 2006**

KINGSTON, Jamaica: Proparco has signed a Credit Agreement with Unigestion Holding S.A. to finance the development of Digicel Haiti, a new mobile telecommunication operator. The main project shareholder is the Digicel Group, one of the largest Caribbean mobile telecom operators.

With its US\$22 million loan, Proparco is the main lender of this project, which is also financed by IFC (World Bank Group), FMO (The Netherlands), EDC (Canada), Bank of Nova Scotia (Canada) and Citibank (which is also the arranging bank). The total debt financing amounts to US\$64 million.

Out of the Proparco US\$22 million loan, US\$10 million were drawn from the European Financing Partners (EFP) mechanism created by several European Financial Development Institutions and EIB.

Digicel Haiti will allow hundreds of thousands of new subscribers to access GSM services over the next years, contributing to a significant increase of the mobile penetration in Haiti, which was below 6% prior to Digicel's arrival on May 3rd, 2006.

Digicel Haiti should have multiple positive effects on the market: higher quality of service at more competitive rates, mobile services access to populations located in urban and peri-urban areas that were not served before. One month after its successful launch, Digicel Haiti has received an overwhelming response from the people of Haiti with a strong subscriber base already secured.

According to Colm Delves, Digicel Group CEO, "this new financing from Proparco allows Digicel to create the optimum capital structure in Haiti as it continues to roll out our operation. It also demonstrates a strong vote of confidence from the world's leading banks in the future of Haiti as well as an endorsement of Digicel Haiti's business success to date and our vision to bring the benefits of wireless technology into the lives of more and more Haitians".

This project will play a significant role in the social and economic development of Haiti: rollout of a state of the art telecommunication infrastructure at competitive prices, creation of thousands of direct and indirect jobs, additional income for the Haitian government and foreign direct investment. Therefore, the project contributes to the achievement of several of the UN Millennium Development Goals, such as the improvement of indicator 47 (Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 inhabitants (ITU)).

## **Drug probe targets Aristide**

**Haiti's ex-president is main focus of investigation of bribes from drug traffickers, but paper trail is lacking.**

**BY JAY WEAVER AND JACQUELINE CHARLES**

**Miami Herald**

**July 2, 2006**

Jean-Bertrand Aristide was a modern-day Moses to Haiti's poor masses, a former Catholic priest who rose to the presidency by promising to wash away the country's bloody and corrupt past.

But since his ouster as president in 2004, U.S. authorities have been investigating detailed accounts alleging that Aristide and several top aides sought and took millions of dollars in bribes from drug traffickers in Haiti, The Miami Herald has learned.

So far, a federal grand jury probe in Miami has led to 22 convictions of mostly Haitian drug traffickers, ex-police officers and a high-ranking politician close to Aristide. Although the exiled former president is a main target of the ongoing investigation, he has not been charged.

The allegations against the ex-president come from numerous sources, but the evidence has not risen to a level to press a case against Aristide, say U.S. law enforcement officials, who have been hampered by a lack of financial records.

Still, The Miami Herald has learned from interviews with about 20 law enforcement officials, defense lawyers and others involved in the case that Aristide has been accused of being at the center of his country's narco-trafficking and money-laundering activities from 2001 to 2004.

Authorities have gathered evidence, including testimony by cooperating defendants convicted in the case, alleging that:

- Soon after he took office in early 2001, Aristide held a meeting at his Port-au-Prince home with his presidential security chief, two government security advisors, the national police chief and a district commander to organize a scheme to shake down Colombian and Haitian drug smugglers for kickbacks for both his personal and political activities.
- Drug traffickers bribed Aristide to turn a blind eye to shipments of Colombian cocaine through Haiti, directly paying him hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash during regular visits to his home.
- Convicted drug kingpin Beaudouin "Jacques" Ketant personally delivered \$500,000 a month in a suitcase to Aristide's home, he told authorities. He said the suitcase had a combination lock set to 7-7-7 at Aristide's request because that was his favorite number.
- Traffickers gave Aristide \$200,000 to buy a helicopter in 2002, but the president pocketed the money and instead used government funds to rent a helicopter from Miami-based Biscayne Helicopters. Those same traffickers also bought a \$75,000 ambulance in Miami that was shipped to Haiti for the president's private charitable Aristide Foundation.

- Traffickers spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on carnival festivities in February 2002 that were arranged by the Aristide government. They also paid for some of Aristide's July birthday celebrations, his Lavalas Family Party and his foundation.
- At Aristide's direction, some of the traffickers' bribes helped buy weapons smuggled into Haiti to equip national police officers as well as pro-Aristide street gangs that harassed his opponents during his second term as president, between 2001 and 2004, according to former Haitian law enforcement officials and drug traffickers who are cooperating with U.S. investigators.

#### **ACCUSERS CALLED 'LIARS'**

Lawyer for Aristide calls accusations 'inconceivable'

Aristide's longtime lawyer, Ira Kurzban, said he does not believe the allegations against the former president.

Speaking generally, Kurzban said that the federal prosecution is politically motivated and that the U.S. government's witnesses are "liars" seeking to reduce their prison sentences by fingering the former president in their money-laundering and cocaine enterprise.

"It is inconceivable to me that Aristide would do anything for personal gain," Kurzban said, commenting on the ex-president's character. ``He was not a person interested in money."

So far the U.S. investigation has been built on testimony from many of the 22 mostly Haitian cocaine smugglers, police officers and others convicted in Miami in the past 2 ½ years. The probe, spearheaded by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) with help from the Internal Revenue Service, has focused on cocaine smuggling during Aristide's second presidential term.

The investigation continues as the Haitian government carries out its own separate inquiry into the Aristide administration and foundation records, so far concluding that the president had looted government coffers, Haitian government records show. The interim government that replaced Aristide two years ago filed suit in Miami last year to recover "tens of millions of dollars" allegedly stolen by the former president and others from Haiti's treasury and its phone company. Neither the Haitian investigation nor the civil suit alleges drug trafficking.

To this day, the 52-year-old Aristide remains intensely popular in Haiti and has expressed a desire to return home from exile in South Africa after the recent election of President René Préval, once an Aristide ally. That would upset Haiti's domestic politics and Préval's relations with the U.S. and French governments, which regard Aristide as a destabilizing factor in Haiti.

#### **CLAIMS UNSUPPORTED**

Probers report absence of incriminating records

While several witnesses have testified against the former president in the U.S. drug-trafficking probe, investigators have told The Miami Herald that they have yet to uncover bank records and other

financial statements that support the claims. The absence of such documents to solidify their case against Aristide has prevented authorities from seeking a federal indictment in Miami, U.S. law enforcement officials said.

Efforts to reach Aristide for comment on this story failed. Kurzban, who represented the Haitian government as its lawyer from 1991 to 2004, said he did not believe that the ex-president would agree to an interview.

Kurzban, who still speaks on Aristide's behalf, said that while people in Haiti were well aware of the country's drug-trafficking problem, it came as a "shock" to him when he learned that Aristide and others in his government became targets of a U.S. criminal investigation.

He said that, if anything, Aristide cooperated with the federal government in the crackdown on cocaine smuggling in 2003, including allowing Ketant to be turned over to U.S. authorities. He said that money donated to the Aristide Foundation went to the poor for relief programs such as rice subsidies.

Haiti, an impoverished country where cash and corruption go hand in hand, has long been a significant transit point for Colombian cocaine headed for U.S. streets. From there, it sometimes is smuggled directly to the United States. Another route: from Haiti to the Dominican Republic, west to Puerto Rico and then to the U.S. mainland.

During Aristide's second term as president, an estimated 10 percent of all cocaine smuggled into the United States flowed through the Caribbean corridor, especially Haiti, according to a 2006 federal report by the National Drug Intelligence Center.

Shortly after the Aristide government turned over Ketant to U.S. officials, the U.S. government broadened its drug investigation by looking into the Aristide leadership.

It was during a 2004 sentencing in federal court in Miami that Ketant accused Aristide of turning Haiti into a "narco-country" and being a "drug lord." Not under oath at the time, Ketant was sentenced to 27 years in prison and ordered to pay \$30 million in fines and forfeitures.

Behind the scenes, he began to cooperate as a key witness for prosecutors, providing details on his alleged payoffs to Aristide and others in exchange for a free hand to ship cocaine through Haiti to the United States. His testimony triggered some of the indictments against the 21 others on money-laundering or cocaine-smuggling charges, U.S. law enforcement officials said.

Another major witness was Aristide's former security chief, Oriel Jean, who was convicted last year in a separate federal case of money-laundering and sentenced to three years. He fingered the same drug traffickers, police officials and politicians -- including Aristide.

And during his testimony at two Miami trials last year, he linked Aristide to at least two people implicated in Haiti's drug trade and the U.S. investigation.

In sworn testimony at those trials, Jean said he was introduced in late 2001 or early 2002 to one drug lord, Serge Edouard, by Hermione Leonard, then the director of the national police's Port-au-Prince district and a woman who was close to Aristide.

"She told me that the president is aware that she has contacts" with major drug traffickers, he testified at Edouard's trial, without elaborating. Leonard, wanted by the DEA, is believed to be hiding in the Dominican Republic.

Jean also testified at trial that he and Aristide approved a national security ID card for Edouard in 2002. He testified that the security badge allowed Edouard to travel throughout Haiti without being stopped by police. Edouard was convicted in that trial on drug charges and is serving a life sentence.

Defense attorneys for Ketant and Jean declined Miami Herald requests to interview their clients.

Ketant also has told authorities that among other drug traffickers who paid off Aristide and members of his inner circle were Ketant's brother, Hector, and Gilbert Horacious, according to sources familiar with the case. Ketant said Horacious was a longtime friend of Aristide's who introduced him and other traffickers to the Haitian president, according to sources familiar with the case.

Ketant's brother was fatally shot in Haiti in 2003, and Horacious was gunned down last year in the Dominican Republic. Shortly after Aristide fled the country on Feb. 29, 2004, hundreds of thousands of dollars in rotted \$100 bills were found hidden in his home, according to U.S. news reports. U.S. federal investigators analyzed some of the bills but could not figure out where the money had come from.

#### ASSOCIATES ACCUSED

Several are alleged to have laundered money

While investigators have struggled to piece together a paper trail leading directly to the former president, they have identified several people in his government who allegedly helped launder drug money for him.

The Miami Herald has learned that the Ketant brothers and other major traffickers made cash contributions to the Aristide Foundation through one of its high-ranking members.

According to traffickers and U.S. law enforcement officials, Aristide allegedly ordered Port-au-Prince district police chief Leonard to pass any seized drugs on to Edouard and other Haitian traffickers for resale. The smugglers, in turn, donated some of the tainted proceeds to the Lavalas party or the foundation, they said.

Aristide also instructed Haitian Sen. Fourel Célestin, who represented the Jacmel area southwest of the capital, to solicit donations from drug traffickers for Lavalas, according to convicted drug smugglers, ex-police officers and U.S. law enforcement officials.

Convicted last year after a plea deal with Miami prosecutors, Célestin admitted taking a \$200,000 bribe to help secure the release of two detained Colombian traffickers. Célestin is now cooperating with prosecutors.

Under federal law, prosecutors would not have to prove that Aristide was personally involved in moving loads of cocaine to the United States -- only that he allowed traffickers to use his country and received kickbacks in return. If Aristide comes under a U.S. indictment, the threat of extradition to the United States might keep him from pushing to return to Haiti, according to legal observers. It may also keep Préval from worrying too much about the prospect of his former mentor's return.

After February's presidential election, Préval said that Aristide, like all Haitians, could legally come home. But he added a cautionary note, saying Aristide "must decide whether he wants to return, if there are legal and other actions" pending against him.

**EU links extra aid to reforms**  
**Miami Herald**  
**June 28, 2006**

BRUSSELS - (AP) -- The European Union offered millions in extra aid to Haiti's President René Préval on Tuesday if he continues reforms to stabilize and anchor democracy in his troubled Caribbean nation.

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso said the EU's executive office was preparing to send \$293 million in new aid, and possibly more if progress continues.

"We think the developments are in the right direction," Barroso told reporters after meeting Préval at EU headquarters. ``There was a real effort after the election to build a national consensus. President Préval came here with an important delegation with former opponents."

Préval said he aimed to foster new cooperation between political factions to address the needs of the population, notably on fighting poverty and improving basic needs like education, proper shelter and job creation.

"A big effort has been undertaken since the elections . . . to establish political stability," Préval said. He said his government's aim was to boost foreign investment in Haiti.

EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel said that "depending on progress," further aid was being planned. He said a majority of the announced aid package would go toward education and building infrastructure like roads, as well as filling the current government budget shortfall in Haiti.

The EU last October unblocked \$90 million in aid to Haiti, ending a freeze imposed almost five years ago in protest over electoral irregularities.

Préval has appealed to international donors to help fund road construction. The president has said he hopes investment will make Haiti attractive to tourists and bring the island nation out of its deep economic rut, which has made it the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.

Préval took power last month.

