

HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: MAY 16 – MAY 22, 2007

NYC judge kills plea deal for ex-Haitian strongman

5/22/2007

By TOM HAYS

The Associated Press

Staten Island Advance, NY

NEW YORK (AP) — A judge denied a plea deal for a former paramilitary leader on Tuesday, saying criminal allegations against him in Haiti were so serious he doesn't deserve a break in his Brooklyn bank fraud case.

Charges that Emmanuel "Toto" Constant ordered killings and torture in the Caribbean nation in the 1990s, if true, "are heinous, and the court cannot in good conscience consent to the previously negotiated sentence," State Supreme Court Justice Abraham Gerges said in a written ruling.

Constant, 50, who has lived in the United States for more than a decade, pleaded guilty earlier this year to second-degree grand larceny with the understanding he would be sentenced to one to three years in prison.

Last week, lawyers for the state attorney general's office and the federal Department of Homeland Security had urged the judge to reduce Constant's sentence to time served — about 10 months — to speed his deportation to Haiti.

The Center for Constitutional Rights had opposed the deal, telling the judge that Haiti's justice system was too chaotic to ensure Constant would face justice. The civil rights group also argued the proposed sentence in the fraud case was too lenient, given his history.

The decision by Gerges means Constant will be forced to withdraw his plea and stand trial on charges he defrauded lenders out of more than \$1.7 million. If convicted, he would face five to 15 years in prison.

"Today's ruling was a victory for Constant's victims, both in Haiti and New York," said Jennie Green, a senior attorney with CCR.

Constant's lawyer, Marie Pereira, did not immediately return a phone message.

In court on Monday, Pereira called the allegations in Haiti "frivolous" and argued they should have no bearing on the fraud case. The defendant also told the judge there was no evidence that could "link me to any type of massacre, execution, kidnapping, rape or anything of that sort."

Constant, the 6-foot-4 son of a military officer, emerged as the feared leader of the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, or FRAPH, after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's presidency was toppled in 1991.

Human rights groups allege that between 1991 and 1994, FRAPH terrorized and slaughtered slum-dwellers loyal to Aristide. When Aristide returned to power in 1994, Constant fled to the United States.

Despite a 1995 deportation order, Constant was allowed to remain because of instability in Haiti. He kept a low profile, living with relatives in Queens until being jailed last year in the mortgage fraud case.

A Conversation with Paul Farmer
by Dorinda Elliot
Conde Nast Traveler
Published June 2007

Six years ago, the head of the U.S. Agency for International Development said that there was no point in sending AIDS medications to Africa because rural Africans couldn't administer the treatment themselves. Since then, Harvard University medical anthropologist Paul Farmer has revolutionized the way the international health community views treatment for the poor. With clinics in Haiti, Peru, Russia, and Rwanda, his nonprofit Partners in Health has shown that it is possible to bring effective medical care—including anti-retroviral drugs—to even the most impoverished communities. He spoke with Condé Nast Traveler's Dorinda Elliott

CNT: How has your experience in Haiti changed you?

Farmer: I have been radicalized—I've come to see jobs as a right and not starving to death as a right. There's a cycle of poverty and illness in rural areas. What we try to do is break that cycle. Some people try to make sure everyone is going to school, others try to create employment. We do health care, education, and jobs. The reason these people can't pull themselves up is they're too sick.

CNT: How do you go that last mile, to get the treatment into the countryside?

Farmer: Let's stop whining about the fact that there is no infrastructure and no personnel. What about all those unemployed people who would love to be health care workers? We hire them, train them, and pay them. Patients need "accompaniment"—people who will say, "I understand that your kids need someone to walk them to school because you don't feel well." I'm always surprised when people say that's not sustainable.

CNT: After all the talk about the need to fight global poverty, are we in the developed world doing enough?

Farmer: Why don't we just keep our promises? As part of the Millennium Development Goals, the rich countries promised that 0.7 percent of their GNP would go to overseas aid, and we're only at something like 0.15 percent. You need capital to bring people out of poverty.

CNT: Are there problems resulting from the current wave of do-goodism?

Farmer: Not long ago, we had no resources at all. Now we have resources that are not always being used wisely. If the funding is for a rural project, then the project should be set up in the country, not in the city. A lot of aid money never gets to the poor at all. The planners just don't know how to spread it out to the villages. We know how to do that.

CNT: What can travelers do?

Farmer: I travel all the time. My assumption when I get upgraded to first class is that the people sitting there are interested but don't get to see what I see on a daily basis. So I talk to them. When they learn

about the problems, they often do something. People don't realize how little it takes to make a difference.

CNT: Are you uncomfortable with luxury travel?

Farmer: No! I've met many wealthy people who've come to support this work because of luxury travel. Sure, it can highlight social inequalities, but I also see the promise of travel as a force for good. Most people who are not poor don't have contact with poor people, so there's a wall. Travel is a way to break down that wall.

CNT: Would you feel uncomfortable if you saw a luxury resort in Haiti?

Farmer: What wouldn't I give to have Haiti become a tourist destination again! If Haiti had the tourism base of, say, Jamaica, there would be fewer hungry people.

CNT: What places stand out in your mind?

Farmer: The grasslands of Kenya's Chyulu Hills [see "Room with a View"], where herds of zebras and antelope and giraffes roam, is probably the most beautiful spot in the world. Rwanda, where my family lives, is the second. It's very stable politically. It's a fantastic place, and the best place to see gorillas.

Judge: Former Haitian paramilitary leader must be tried on New York City charges
The Associated Press
International Herald Tribune
May 22, 2007

NEW YORK: A former paramilitary leader wanted in Haiti on murder and torture charges must first be tried in a local mortgage fraud case, a New York judge ruled Tuesday.

Lawyers for the state attorney general's office and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security had urged the judge to sentence Emmanuel "Toto" Constant to time served, about 10 months of a proposed one to three year sentence, to speed his deportation to Haiti.

State Supreme Court Justice Abraham Gergesover instead decided to undo Constant's plea deal, forcing him to withdraw his guilty plea and stand trial on charges he defrauded lenders out of more than \$1.7 million. If convicted, Constant would face five to 15 years in prison.

The Center for Constitutional Rights has claimed that Haiti's justice system is too unstable to ensure Constant's case there is properly prosecuted. The civil rights group also argued the proposed sentence in the fraud case was too lenient, given Constant's background.

The Haiti allegations, if true, "are heinous and the court cannot in good conscience consent to the previously negotiated sentence," the judge said in the written ruling.

Haitian Cites Fear of Return in NY Court

Tuesday May 22, 2007

By TOM HAYS

Associated Press

The Guardian Unlimited

NEW YORK (AP) - A former paramilitary leader wanted in Haiti on murder and torture charges insisted Monday that he has become a scapegoat for atrocities in the Caribbean nation and would be killed if he were forced to return.

"If I ever touch Haiti, I will be executed at the airport," Emmanuel "Toto" Constant said in a rambling, emotional plea to a judge overseeing his mortgage fraud case in state Supreme Court.

The dire warning was a switch from last week, when Constant, 50, told the judge he did not fear going back because he had done nothing wrong.

On Monday, Constant repeated claims that he had worked with the CIA while head of a Haitian paramilitary group in the 1990s. He also said he was "promoting reconciliation" at the time but has become a target of political persecution.

Last week, prosecutors urged Justice Abraham Gerges to sentence Constant to time served, about 10 months of a proposed sentence of one to three years, to speed his deportation to Haiti to face charges there.

Gerges postponed the sentencing after the Center for Constitutional Rights claimed Haiti's justice system was too unstable to ensure Constant's proper prosecution. The civil rights group also argued the proposed sentence in the fraud case was too lenient, given Constant's background.

The judge has suggested he might reject the plea deal, forcing Constant to withdraw a guilty plea and go to trial on charges he defrauded lenders out of more than \$1.7 million. If convicted at trial, Constant would face five to 15 years in prison.

Constant's attorney, Marie Pereira, argued that the deal was reached "with full knowledge of these frivolous allegations" and should be honored.

The judge said he would rule Tuesday.

Constant, the 6-foot-4 son of a military officer, emerged as the feared leader of the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, or FRAPH, after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's presidency was toppled in 1991.

Human rights groups allege that between 1991 and 1994, FRAPH terrorized and slaughtered slum-dwellers loyal to Aristide. When Aristide returned to power in 1994, Constant fled to the United States.

Despite a 1995 deportation order, Constant was allowed to remain because of instability in Haiti. He kept a low profile, living with relatives in New York until being jailed last year in the fraud case.

Venezuela giving Danny Glover \$18m to direct film on epic slave revolt
Rory Carroll in Caracas
Monday May 21, 2007
The Guardian Unlimited

Venezuela is to give the American actor Danny Glover almost \$18m (£9m) to make a film about a slave uprising in Haiti, with President Hugo Chávez hoping the historical epic will sprinkle Hollywood stardust on his effort to mobilise world public opinion against imperialism and western oppression. The Venezuelan congress said it would use the proceeds from a recent bond sale with Argentina to finance Glover's biopic of Toussaint Louverture, an iconic figure in the Caribbean who led an 18th-century revolt in Haiti.

It will also give seed money for a film version of *The General in His Labyrinth*, Gabriel García Márquez's novel about the last days of Simón Bolívar, who liberated much of South America from Spanish colonialism.

Glover, 60, who starred with Mel Gibson in the *Lethal Weapon* series, and more recently with Eddie Murphy in the film *DreamGirls*, is a civil rights activist and supporter of Mr Chávez's radical leftwing policies.

A document from the congress's finance commission said the culture ministry would be a partner with Glover and give \$17.8m for "scripts, production costs, wardrobe, lighting, transport, makeup and the creation of the whole creative and administrative platform".

The project could mark a breakthrough for Villa del Cine, a new government-funded studio outside the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, which is part of Mr Chávez's effort to combat what he sees as American cultural hegemony.

Glover, who visited Caracas at the weekend, told the Guardian that he would direct the film, titled *Toussaint*. "It's so advanced that you can taste it. We've scouted locations within 75km [45 miles] of Caracas. I can do everything I need to do with this film from here." He said he had been in talks with the government, but was unaware that a decision had been made until journalists tipped him off about the congress's announcement. "That's the first I've heard of it," he said.

He suggested that there was still some uncertainty over whether the venture would go ahead. "One of the major axioms in theatre is never talk about anything until the deal is signed. There's a lot of deliberation that goes on before something actually happens."

It appeared that the congress timed the announcement to coincide with a media conference in Caracas hosted by the television network Telesur, a Venezuela-funded regional answer to CNN. Glover is on the board.

It would not be the first declaration to run ahead of reality. Mr Chávez once said the director Oliver Stone planned to make a film about him, but it came to nothing. However at the president's request, Villa del Cine, which was inaugurated last year, is making a film about Francisco Miranda, who lit the

fuse of South America's liberation. A lavish production with hundreds of extras and battle scenes, its costumes and sets could work for the Haiti film.

Toussaint Louverture is a towering figure in the region's history. A freed slave of African descent, he led thousands of slaves in successful campaigns against British, Spanish and French troops before being betrayed, captured and exiled. He died in 1803, just before his followers succeeded in establishing the island's independence. William Wordsworth wrote a sonnet about him.

Glover said he wanted to educate the US about the story. "It's been essentially wiped out of our historic memory, it's been wiped clean."

The actor is chairman of the TransAfrica Forum, an advocacy group for African Americans and other members of Africa's diaspora, and a vocal critic of the Bush administration. Along with the singer Harry Belafonte, Glover is the best known celebrity supporter of Mr Chávez, whom he considers "remarkable". He is a regular visitor to Venezuela.

Venezuela's congress, which consists entirely of Chávez supporters, also said it would give \$1.8m to develop a screen treatment of *The General in His Labyrinth*, by a Venezuela-born director, Alberto Arvelo. Some rate Gabriel García Márquez's account of the final days of Bolívar along with the Colombian writer's better known novels, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

To build consciousness of what Mr Chávez calls "21st-century socialism", the government has funded nationwide screenings of Charlie Chaplin's classic film *Modern Times*, about the exploitation of US factory workers during the depression.

Switzerland to return funds from Haiti's Baby Doc

22 May 2007

Reuters

By Laura MacInnis

GENEVA, May 22 (Reuters) - Switzerland is set to return 7.6 million Swiss francs (\$6.2 million) next month which it seized in accounts belonging to former Haitian ruler Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, a senior Swiss official said on Tuesday.

Under an agreement proposed by Switzerland, a large portion of the frozen funds would be given to Haiti for humanitarian projects but the rest will be given back to the former dictator, exiled in France, and his family.

The funds, blocked since Duvalier was ousted in 1986, will be released on June 3 unless the government in Haiti produces last-minute evidence tying the money to corruption or crime, said Paul Seger, legal adviser at the Swiss Foreign Ministry.

"There is a glimpse of hope that we will find some kind of miracle solution before that date," Seger told Reuters in a telephone interview, noting Haitian investigators have promised to intensify their efforts as the deadline approaches.

"The settlement will foresee that the majority of the money will be used for projects of a humanitarian and social nature in Haiti," Seger said, declining to specify the amount until the deal is signed.

Over the past 20 years, Switzerland has returned nearly \$1.3 billion in loot stashed by Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, Peru's former spy chief Vladimiro Montesinos and Nigeria's leader General Sani Abacha to their homelands.

Legal and practical hurdles have so far prevented such a resolution in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, where authorities failed to gather adequate legal proof that the Duvalier fortune was ill-gotten.

Similar issues have also ground proceedings to a halt in the case of 8 million Swiss francs (\$6.49 million) belonging to the late Zairean strongman Mobutu Sese Seko, held since 1997.

Authorities in the country -- now the Democratic Republic of the Congo -- have not yet produced evidence that the funds were illicit. Swiss law requires the funds to be released by the end of 2008 if no resolution is reached in the case.

"We will have a bit of time," Seger said.

Judicial experts argue that poor countries, particularly those with institutions ravaged by war and unrest, need legal assistance to recover money stashed abroad by corrupt leaders.

Switzerland has argued for faster global implementation of a U.N. anti-corruption convention that criminalises bribery, money laundering and the embezzlement of public funds. The pact obliges countries to return illegally acquired assets.

Dominican, U.S. agents detain 11 Iraqis who came from Haiti
The Dominican Today
May 22, 2007

Santo Domingo.- Government security agents and United States embassy officials are questioning a group of 11 Iraqis, 2 pregnant women and a 3 year old boy among them, who arrived in the country in transit from Haiti.

Upon arriving in the Las Americas International Airport, Dominican intelligence and U.S embassy officials detained the Iraqis, and escorted them to the Quality Hotel, located near the airport, where they stayed.

They were detained for security reasons and could be deported in the next hours.

According to Immigration authorities quoted by the newspaper Diario Libre, the foreigners arrived in the Dominican Republic in transit, with an itinerary that includes Venezuela, Colombia, Curaçao and Argentina, though without a visa to enter those countries, according their own statement.

“All that’s necessary is being done to return them to Haiti, country of origin as the law establishes”, said an Immigration supervisor in the terminal, who refused to give his name.

Among the detained Iraqis are Nissam Luma, Nissam Mahir, Elda Loayi, Nisam Mazir, Elsa Kaesar, Jamel Dalea, Kekmet Ehab, Manssur Dane and a minor.

Victims of Haitian Boat Disaster Buried

Sunday May 20, 2007

By STEVENSON JACOBS

Associated Press

The Guardian Unlimited

CAP-HAITIEN, Haiti (AP) - The remains of dozens of Haitian migrants who died when their boat capsized off the Turks and Caicos Islands were returned to their homeland Saturday and buried in a common grave, angering relatives who were not given a chance to identify their loved ones.

Family members clutching photographs of victims wept as the 59 bodies - wrapped in black bags and marked "John Doe" or "Jane Doe" - were unloaded from a cargo ship in Cap-Haitien's seaport, two weeks after one of the deadliest disasters to hit Haitians in years. Officials said the bodies were badly decomposed and could not be readily identified.

"God will welcome each one of you, our compatriots. You should not have had to take to the seas and leave your country," the Rev. Hubert Constant, the archbishop of Cap-Haitien, said after blessing the 28 male and 31 female victims.

More than 160 migrants were aboard the overcrowded sloop when it capsized May 4, flinging them into choppy, shark-filled waters.

The bodies of 61 migrants were recovered and more than a dozen are missing and presumed dead. Some had been eaten by sharks. Two bodies were buried in Turks and Caicos.

The 78 survivors have accused a Turks and Caicos patrol boat of ramming their vessel as they approached shore and towing them into deeper water.

The Turks and Caicos government is investigating but has said the migrants were being towed toward shore when their boat overturned in rough seas.

The deaths provoked an outpouring of grief in Haiti and underscored the peril migrants face when they take to the seas in rickety boats.

"It's like trying to fly across the Atlantic in an airplane that hasn't had an oil change in four years," said U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer James Judge. "It's extremely dangerous and not worth the risk."

During a brief memorial ceremony at the seaport, a church choir sang hymns as the bodies were placed in simple wooden coffins and loaded onto trucks. As the coffins were driven to the cemetery, sobbing relatives ran alongside, yelling out their names.

"We came here to bring our brother home but the government hasn't told us anything," said Max Metellus, whose brother, Jean-Baptiste Metellus risked the voyage after years of struggling to survive on meager earnings from selling lottery tickets.

The coffins were later buried in a common grave, stacked one on top of the other, in Cap-Haitien's St. Philomene cemetery as hundreds of people looked on from rooftops. Fifty-nine unmarked white crosses were placed above the grave.

“We never would have wanted him to be buried this way. This hurts us deeply,” Metellus said.

Georgemain Prophete, an official in the northern Haitian city, said many of the bodies were unrecognizable and were buried immediately “to spare relatives the emotional burden” of having to try and identify them.

Police arrested six suspected migrant smugglers and seized two migrant boats in an operation Friday, Prophete said.

That Haitian migrant tragedy
The Jamaica Observer Editorial
Tuesday, May 22, 2007

The Turks and Caicos Government, we notice, has decided not to comment on the deaths of at least 61 Haitian migrants in Turks and Caicos territorial waters until after two investigations into the tragedy are completed.

One of the investigations, we are told, is being conducted by the Turks and Caicos Islands, while the other is being carried out by three British government experts.

The allegations made against the Turks and Caicos coast guards by the survivors, and reported by wire services so far, are indeed horrific, and if found to be true, should not be allowed to go unpunished. For if the Haitians have given an accurate account of what really happened on May 4, the Turks and Caicos Government will have on its hands a case of mass murder.

However, what we have so far is one side of the story. Therefore, we are unable to make an informed judgement, and as such the Turks and Caicos authorities accused in this matter are entitled to be presumed innocent.

What we do know for a fact is that at least 61 Haitian migrants died when the small sailboat in which they were travelling capsized in shark-infested waters near the shore of Providenciales. The Haitians have claimed that their sloop, which was carrying approximately 160 people, was rammed by a Turks and Caicos patrol boat which then towed them into deeper water and abandoned them.

The survivors have also alleged that the patrol boat crew used wooden batons to beat back some of the Haitians who tried to pull themselves aboard the patrol boat. Many of the migrants did not know how to swim and were screaming "God help me!" in the darkness, the Associated Press reported one of the survivors - 19 year-old Lovderson Nacon - as saying. Other migrants, the survivor is reported to have said, were run over by the patrol boat after the capsizing.

This very tragic incident, however, brings into larger focus the problem of Haitian migration and the impact it is having on the Caribbean. It is difficult not to feel some amount of empathy for the Haitian people who risk their lives in overcrowded boats in desperate bids to escape the abject poverty that has been strangling their economy for many years.

However, the cold, hard fact is that this kind of activity carries with it serious health, security and economic risks - risks with which we here in Jamaica are not unfamiliar. The poor Haitians, however, will not stop trying to enter other countries in the region illegally in search of a better life until they are convinced that their own country offers them the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty. That, we acknowledge, will not happen overnight.

That is why this newspaper supported last October's Caricom prime ministerial mission to Haiti, led by St Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Denzil Douglas, who had pledged to do "everything possible" to help influence "tangible benefits" for the Haitian people.

The needs in that country, we know, are many and cannot be met in short order. Therefore, Caricom needs to be clear on what assistance it can offer, how soon it can deliver on that offer and just how effective the offer can be.

Babies live short lives under Haiti's pitiless poverty

Monday, May 21, 2007

By Isabelle Lignier

Caribbean Net News

JEREMIE, Haiti (AFP): The cries of Pia Francesca's wailing mother echo in the corridors of this Haitian town's hospital, as her baby's tiny body lies lifeless under a white sheet just four months after her birth.

The 20-year-old mother, Alcindor Macula, has just learned that the grinding poverty plaguing the people of the poorest nation in the Americas was too much for her fragile baby.

Hunger and dehydration took Pia Francesca's life.

The mother is fed up with the misery that stole her baby's life. No one is there to support her. She screams, she wants to see Pia Francesca.

But she is ushered to the exit of the hospital in the town of Jeremie in southwest Haiti.

Back home, her blind father and an insensitive brother await her. She also has another child, five-year-old Pierre, who she says is "also very skinny."

The young woman looks like a child herself, with an emaciated body whose skin is covered with blotches.

"I don't have enough to feed my children," she says, sobbing. "I don't make any money. I don't have enough to get medical care for them either."

Just moments earlier, she was still holding Pia Francesca in her arms, alive. The international aid group Medecins du Monde (MDM) (World Doctors) had just given the baby a boost with an injection.

Pia Francesca recognized her mother. But she still looked weak, barely able to move or keep her eyes open.

"At this age, the children succumb in a just a few days," says doctor Jean-Khit Dely, MDM assistant coordinate for Haiti's Grande-Anse region.

Pia Francesca had arrived at the hospital eight days earlier. Her mother had been slow bringing her daughter to the hospital even though she suffered from fever and diarrhea.

"The poorest people here are slow to come to health facilities," Dely said. "They see sickness as an evil act, and first consult doctors practicing traditional medicine."

The cost of health care is also an issue, he said.

"Most people can't pay and end up showing up in emergency rooms when it is too late," he said.

Macula went into debt to pay the 21 dollars for Pia Francesca's hospitalization. She will have to sell her belongings to repay it.

Haiti, which shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, is one of the poorest countries in the world with 80 percent of its population living under the poverty line.

Children under five years old suffer deeply from this destitution: Their death rate is a staggering 123 out of 1,000 while one in four are malnourished and six percent from acute malnutrition. By comparison, in the United States, the mortality rate is eight out of 1,000 children under five.

Half the deaths of Haitian children under five are cause by acute respiratory infections and diarrhea. Jeremie's hospital offers gut-wrenching examples of poverty's pitiless effect on toddlers.

Just steps from Pia Francesca's now empty bed, another mother cries.

Elena Lavature, 40, a mother of six, is by the side of her five-year-old son, Kesnel, who has lied in a hospital bed for three months. His eyes are closed, his body thin.

"I'm unable to feed my children," laments Lavature, the widow of a fisherman. Two of Kesnel's brothers are also very skinny, she says.

The nurses have seen no improvement in Kesnel's condition. He is in a coma.

Lavature knows her son will suffer the same fate as Pia Francesca. "My baby is going," she says.

Haitians Demand Arrest of Luis Posada Carriles
September 30th Foundation calls for Justice in Port-au-Prince
By Wadner Pierre
Special to The Narco News Bulletin
May 22, 2007

On May 21st members of the September 30th Foundation (or Fondasyon Trant Septanm) gathered before the United States embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The group is made up of and works with victims of the 1991 and 2004 coup d'états in Haiti. For years the group has been a leading critic of U.S. policies towards Haiti.

The group has now expanded its campaign; calling for the arrest of non-Haitian human rights abusers, also covertly trained and financially backed by U.S. intelligence agencies. Protestors in front of the embassy waved photos of Cuban exile Luis Posada Carriles with a large red-x across his face.

A former US intelligence operative, Posada has both acknowledged and been accused of involvement in various terrorist attacks and plots in the Western hemisphere. The most infamous occurred with the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner, which killed seventy-three people. Carriles claims his "only objective was to fight for Cuba's freedom". But in 2006 after entering the United States from a boat that motored up the coast of Central America and Mexico, Posada was picked up by U.S. Authorities.

On April 19th 2007 Posada was able to pay bond and was released from U.S. custody. In a recent interview the family of an Italian killed in the 76' bombing decried the release of Posada by U.S. Authorities. Authorities in both Venezuela and Cuba have called for the extradition of the Cuban exile.

Members of the September 30th Foundation say they feel a special bond with the families of those killed by Posada, because they too have suffered from paramilitaries and terrorists trained by the CIA. They pointed out that the "Posada of Haiti", Emmanuel Constant (the founder of the FRAPH paramilitary death squad also backed by the CIA) is currently undergoing a trial in the United States.

The United States refused to return Constant to Haiti when the elected governments of Preval and Arisitde requested his extradition in the past. Constant was convicted in absentia for his role in the "Raboteau Massacre" that took place in Gonaives in April 1994.

D.R. 2007 HaitiAnalysis.com

Following the 2004 coup d'etat in Haiti, human rights groups documented a massive wave of repression that took the lives of thousands in Haiti's poorest communities. Speakers from the September 30th Foundation, holding up megaphones, spoke of their solidarity with the people of Cuba and Venezuela. Cuban doctors are widely loved in Haiti for the healthcare services they have provided. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez visited Port-au-Prince in March to wide acclaim from Haiti's poor.

For more information visit HaitiAnalysis.com

The question not asked
By Brian Concannon
The Guardian Unlimited
May 21, 2007

The scandal over the salaries paid to World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz's friends and lover opened the door to good questions about both the bank and its president. Wolfowitz's resignation answered some of them, but one of the best questions of all has yet to be asked: is there a larger problem with an institution claiming to be "working for a world free of poverty" paying those salaries to anyone?

The World Bank insiders who launched the scandal by revealing the annual salaries of Mr Wolfowitz's domestic partner, Shaha Ali Riza (\$193,590), and Bush Administration collaborators, Robin Cleveland and Kevin Kellems (\$250,000 and \$240,000 respectively), have not raised this question.

That may be because the controversial salaries were not out of the ordinary. Ms Riza defended her pay as "quite common for World Bank staff that have years of experience, background and education similar to" hers. And government officials and international development groups who have used the salary scandal to make broader critiques of Wolfowitz's policies at the bank, especially his signature "anti-corruption" campaign, failed to raise any larger questions about salaries at the bank.

But the people who actually live with the consequences of World Bank policies - the world's poor - would certainly ask about the other salaries, if given the chance. The bank measures national incomes with a figure called per capita GNI (Gross National Income), which is roughly the annual value of the production and income of a country divided by the number of people living there.

According to the bank's website, the average per capita GNI for all the low-income countries (over a third of world population) is \$875 (£439) per year. Mr Kellems made more than that every day before he resigned on May 7. Haiti has a per capita annual GNI of \$450. So on average, 430 Haitians could live on the equivalent of Ms Riza's annual salary.

The bank justifies its salaries by comparing them not to the average income in Port-au-Prince, but to salaries in the private sector, where many of its talented employees could find work. It claims it needs to pay competitively to attract "the brightest, most talented people in the world".

But competing with the private sector for workers may make the bank less able to fulfill its mission of fighting poverty. The bank has financial policies like private banks, but it also has political, moral and social policies. The bank tells poor governments how much they can spend on healthcare, which in countries like Haiti helps determine how many children needlessly die of treatable but untreated diseases. It decides what kinds of "corruption" are tolerable, and which kinds justify cutting off funds for schools and clean water in poor neighbourhoods.

An economist making \$250,000 or \$160,000 a year, no matter how talented, may be the least qualified of all to evaluate these non-financial policies. The economist may be able to precisely calculate the impact of health ministry budget cuts on Haiti's debt service payments, but on that salary could never understand the impact of closing a neighbourhood health clinic on a Haitian parent struggling to feed, cloth and care for a family on \$1.29 per person per day.

Questions about bank salaries would be harder to ask if the "brightest, most talented people in the world" had done more for the poorest, most disadvantaged people in the world. But many of the bank's borrowers are poorer now than they were when the bank started to help them. In Haiti's case, the economy has, on average, shrunk almost 2% per year (adjusted for inflation) for the past 25 years.

In the 1980s, the bank loaned millions to the dictatorship of Jean Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, knowing that the aid was being siphoned for fur coats and paramilitary thugs. Those loans are now due, with interest. The World Bank is siphoning money back from the spare coffers of Haiti's elected government every month in loan payments - \$957,240 scheduled for May, \$2,365,870 in June.

So Haiti will forgo paying teachers and nurses to pay the loans so the bank can pay its staff the salaries of whole Haitian neighbourhoods (that lack teachers and nurses) to fight poverty. Poor Haitians would tell us that if the bank wanted to fight corruption, stopping those siphons would be a great place to start.

New Routes and New Risk, as More Haitians Flee

Reuters

By MARC LACEY

New York Times

May 19, 2007

PROVIDENCIALES, Turks and Caicos, May 16 — There is no conceivable way to get from this island to Miami by bus. But the traffickers who ply Haiti's northern coastline in search of those willing to risk their bleak lives for better ones abroad tell some tall tales to fill their rickety boats.

Turks and Caicos authorities are unhappy with the Haitian influx.

They describe this island chain, 150 miles off Haiti's northern coast, as being an easy hop to Miami, the ultimate goal of most migrating Haitians. Sometimes they tell migrants from Haiti's interior that the United States is a bus ride away as they talk of the big paychecks and full stomachs that await them.

The reality is different, of course, as was made clear when an overloaded Haitian sloop capsized off the coast of Turks and Caicos recently. As many as 90 migrants may have died in that episode, which passengers on the vessel blamed on the aggressive tactics of the local police.

They were part of a swelling number of Haitians abandoning their country this year, apparently disillusioned with the slow pace of change coming from Haiti's year-old government. But with patrols along the Florida coastline making it increasingly difficult to land there, desperate Haitians are "island hopping," as the United States Coast Guard calls it, looking for alternative routes and badly straining relations with their neighbors.

Turks and Caicos is hop No. 1, and it is not altogether happy about it. Local Haitians charge that authorities' efforts to combat illegal migrants have become so aggressive that they believe accusations that a police boat may have caused the capsizing of the Haitian vessel on May 4, despite official denials.

Haitians now make up a huge percentage of the population here, exceeding the number of other residents, according to government estimates. With migrant boats landing regularly, authorities here and across the Caribbean are struggling to contain them.

"It's a tremendous strain on the government, and we'd appreciate international assistance," said Lee Penn, who runs the detention center for illegal migrants in Providenciales, the financial capital of Turks and Caicos. "We're feeding them and housing them and repatriating them — and it's costing us."

What exactly happened at sea on May 4 remains uncertain, and is still under investigation by maritime authorities from Britain, which administers the territory.

But it is clear that the voyage was hellish. After a day and a half packed together in a tiny craft, with nothing but water all around, the migrants finally saw lights on the horizon as they approached Turks and Caicos. Excitement grew, and then dreams turned to nightmares.

With a police boat on the scene in rough waters, the Haitian boat went over on its side. Screams filled the air and bodies hit the water. In all, 61 dead Haitians were plucked from the sea, some of them with shark bites. Twenty or so others were never found.

“The closest thing I could compare it to was Katrina, with that many people floating in the water,” said Lt. Cmdr. Jennifer Arko, a Coast Guard helicopter pilot who responded to the scene and who had done search-and-rescue work over post-hurricane New Orleans.

Of the 69 men and nine women who survived, none would succeed in escaping their desperate lives back home. All were flown back to Cap Haitien, a city on Haiti’s northern coast and a major departure point for migrants.

Inspector Hilton Duncan of the Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force said it was a fierce storm, not the police, that forced the Haitian sloop to capsize. He acknowledged that the crowded boat was being towed to shore by the police when it went over. Immediately, he said, a rescue effort ensued, involving the police, other government boats, good Samaritans and the Coast Guard.

“For five officers on a boat, at that time of morning, with that type of weather, rescuing 78 people ought to bring a commendation,” said Inspector Duncan. “But people don’t see it that way.”

But before they were returned home, the surviving Haitian migrants charged that the Turks and Caicos police boat had not responded to their capsized vessel, as the police originally said.

The migrants charged that the police had rammed them in the rough waters and that the overloaded sloop went over when it was being hauled farther out to sea by the police boat.

“We fell into the water and many people drowned,” Marcelin Charles, 37, one of the passengers, told The Associated Press. “I was swimming past dead bodies left and right.”

The tragedy focused attention on the growing exodus of Haitians in recent months and the increasing enforcement efforts to thwart them. In April alone, the United States Coast Guard picked up 704 Haitians at sea, almost as many as the 769 migrants interdicted during all of last year.

President René Préval took office last May amid high expectations that he would end a long bout of violence and economic stagnation. But reversing course has proved challenging: after a spike in kidnappings at the end of 2006 that terrorized residents of Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital, the United Nations peacekeeping force in Haiti has only recently begun to make headway in controlling the insecurity there. Meanwhile, hunger and joblessness linger.

The Haitian migrants follow the wind to the Bahamas, to Bermuda, or here in Turks and Caicos, any place that might offer a way to make a living or might take them closer to the United States.

It is a pattern similar to that of other Caribbean migrants. Cubans, for instance, are trying alternative routes to escape that island. The emerging route: west to the Mexican coast and then overland to the United States border.

But Haitians have it harder than others. They are not allowed to stay if they reach American soil, like the Cubans. They are not granted temporary protected status while their countries recover from war and natural disasters, like those who have fled Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

And if they make it ashore on Turks and Caicos, their efforts at escape have just begun.

Immigration agents are on the lookout for illegal Haitians throughout the eight inhabited islands that make up Turks and Caicos, demanding proof of legal residency from everyone they stop.

“We’re a small country, and if these people are continuing to come, it causes problems for us,” Mr. Penn said. “We’ve become a stepping stone.”

Residents here speak of the need to maintain their identity. A British territory, the islands have a governor appointed by Queen Elizabeth as well as a local premier. One government survey estimated the population at 33,000, only a third of whom are longtime residents. Haitians make up the bulk of the foreigners.

In recent months, immigration agents in search of illegal Haitians have waited outside Haitian churches on the island to grab parishioners without papers. In one case, they barged inside All Saints Baptist Church and took five migrants out. Legal Haitians who hire or house a migrant — or even allow one into their homes — face legal jeopardy, local Haitians say.

Residents recall that back in 1998 another boatload of escaping Haitians died off the shore here, after the police fired at the boat. Authorities say they were firing warning shots and did not cause that vessel to capsize.

“We’re still human and ought to be treated that way,” said James Prosper, a Haitian-born pastor who has lived in Turks and Caicos for 24 years and who complained to the government recently about the rough treatment endured by those caught without papers.

“If a Haitian is mistreated, I feel it, because it’s in my blood,” said Ronald Gardiner, a Haitian-born businessman who is now a “Belonger,” as citizens of Turks and Caicos are called.

On Turks and Caicos, Haitians pick up trash and sweep the streets. They make the hotel beds and pour the concrete.

The tourism industry here is booming, a far cry from the 1990s when a Gallup poll found the islands had the lowest name recognition in the world. Now, Hollywood stars vacation in hidden bungalows. Other well-heeled sun worshipers fly in on tickets that can cost less than the several thousand dollars some Haitians pay to get a spot on a sloop.

The police here say some migrants smuggle drugs and guns, which means every sloop is considered a security threat. In fact, the recent deaths revived a call among local officials to create a defense force to better patrol the surrounding waters.

“These are poor people seeking a better life but among them are criminals,” Inspector Duncan said in an interview. “We believe some of them may be former members of the Tontons Macoute,” a reference to the armed thugs who ruled the Haitian countryside during the long years of the Duvalier dictatorships.

The Haitian authorities hope the tragedy may help keep more Haitians home. They are considering using photos of the latest overturned vessel and the resulting bodies thrown into the sea as part of a public education campaign to discourage others from making the trip.

“The answer to migration is economic development and, as you know, that won’t happen overnight,” said Louis Joseph, who is Haiti’s ambassador to the Bahamas. “When you don’t have money to eat or to send your children to school, you don’t know what to do. So you leave — or you try, like these people did.”

Radio Journalist Shot and Killed in Haiti, UN Condemns Attack
By VOA News
18 May 2007

Officials in Haiti say gunmen shot and killed a prominent radio journalist in the northern port town of Gonaives earlier this week.

Authorities say two unidentified attackers ambushed Alix Joseph Wednesday, shooting him repeatedly. Joseph was the manager of Radio Provinciale in Gonaives.

Local media stations went off the air Thursday to protest the killing.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti condemned the attack and pledged to help authorities investigate and prosecute the killers.

Some information for this report was provided by AP .

Haiti: UN Police Providing Medical Services
Friday, 18 May 2007
Press Release: United Nations

Providing Medical Services Part Of UN Police Role In Haiti: Commander

Along with its security and law-enforcement role, the Senegalese specialized United Nations police unit in Haiti continues to help civilian doctors provide medical services in some of the poorest areas of the capital, Port-au-Prince, its commander highlighted recently before ending his mission to the impoverished country.

Officers from the Formed Police Unit (FPU) provide free consultations, medicine and hot meals to people from Cite Militairé and Village Solidarité, the UN Mission in Haiti MINUSTAH said in a press release, adding that most of those receiving treatment are women and children.

“Since our arrival in Haiti, we initiated a policy of taking charge of medical services... officers must carry out development actions outside of their security activities. Thus they provide reinforcement to civilian doctors in offering consultations to the population,” said the contingent commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Hassan Diouf.

The most common cases treated are children or adults suffering viral infections and those who have been involved in road accidents. Shooting victims also receive help. In addition, Senegalese officers working with charity organizations, distribute food to the poor three times a day, including inside orphanages.

Working closely with the Haitian National Police, FPU officers are also helping restore law and order in the violence-ridden country, through regular patrols and crowd control, efforts that along with the work of other UN and national units has improved security, said Lieutenant-Colonel Diouf.

“When I arrived in Haiti the security situation was bad but it is now very different,” he said, voicing satisfaction with the work of the men under his command.

In particular, in recent months the mission has stepped up efforts to crack down on criminal gangs. Since the start of the year, more than 400 gang members have been arrested.

MINUSTAH is currently staffed with almost 9,000 uniformed personnel, including over 7,000 troops and 1,800 police, along with 444 international civilian personnel, 727 local civilian staff and 165 UN Volunteers.

Gunmen Kill Radio Journalist in Haiti
By STEVENSON JACOBS, Associated Press
Los Angeles Times
May 17, 2007

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Gunmen killed a journalist in northwestern Haiti, shooting him 11 times outside his fiancee's house, his radio station said Thursday.

Alix Joseph, director of private Radio Provinciale in the port town of Gonaives, was ambushed late Wednesday by two assailants as he sat in a car with his fiancee, who escaped unharmed, said Frantz Justin Altidor, a journalist at the station.

"She screamed 'Oh my God, they got us,' and started running. She thought Alix was right behind her," Altidor said. Colleagues returned hours later and found Joseph's body on the floor of the car.

Police have not identified suspects or established a motive.

Altidor said he did not know if Joseph, 38, had received threats, but said some people were unhappy with the station's reporting on local crime.

Altidor said Radio Provinciale and other stations in Gonaives went off the air Thursday to protest insecurity in the town, a base for armed gangs blamed for a string of recent killings.

Last month, gunmen in the city shot and killed a former journalist with ties to ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide while he slept. His killers were not caught.

Attacks on journalists are common in Haiti, but they have dropped since the 2006 election of President Rene Preval, according to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists.

Haitian Flag Day Celebrated
May 21, 2007
By: Wadner Pierre
HaitiAnalysis.com

Friday May 18, 2007 marked the 204th birthday of the Haitian flag. Activities were organized by the Haitian government and its citizens. In a break with tradition, the Prime Minister, rather than the President, was the first to visit the city Arcahaie where the flag was created.

The president attended a traditional mass given by the archbishop Serge Miot Joseph in the cathedral of Port-au-Prince.

Later in the day large crowds gathered around the National Palace to hear the President's speech. Uniformed flag carriers marched before the palace as groups of children played nearby. Some of the children imagined themselves as Haiti's early leaders, Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

President Rene Garcia Préval declared in his address to the nation that his priority over the next year would be to fight corruption:

"I declare this year, the year of the fight against the corruption within the police, the judges, the customs offices, the employees of the DGI (Directorate-General of the Taxes), those who do not want to pay their taxes. The battle against corruption is the battle for progress and the advancement of the country".

The plan is widely supported, as corruption has long afflicted both public and private sectors. However, partisans of Fanmi Lavalas in attendance questioned why President Préval did not set a date for the return of former elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who lives in exile in South Africa since his forced departure. The Fanmi Lavalas movement is thought to be widely responsible for the successful election of Préval.

The slogan chosen by the government to celebrate the 204th birthday of the flag is "Nou any fe yonn". Near the national palace a large ten-sided star was used to symbolize the ten provincial departments of Haiti.

Fanmi Lavalas and PPN hold May 17th demonstration in Port-au-Prince
By: Wadner Pierre - HaitiAnalysis.com
May 18, 2007

On May 17th a few thousand supporters of Fanmi Lavalas and the National Popular Party marched through the streets of downtown Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The marchers appeared united in calling for the return of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the country, the departure of foreign soldiers, and over condemnation of the mass layoffs that took place in the civil sector workforce during the interim government of Alexandre Boniface and Gerald Latortue.

Following the overthrow of Aristide's elected government in 2004, a neoliberal economic framework with backing from international financial institutions was put into effect by the interim government. Haiti maintains one of the lowest rates of public sector employment in the developing world.

A fourth plank of the march was to call for the freedom of political prisoners. Some human rights investigators report that nearly a hundred political prisoners, such as René Civil, remain in jail. However, last month the New York consul of the Haitian government claimed that there are "no political prisoners" in Haiti. Under the Perval government a number of those jailed by the interim authorities (and described as political prisoners) have been released from jail.

Anti-Arms Trade Group Releases Study on Canada's Role in 2004 Coup d'état

By: Richard Sanders –

HaitiAnalysis.com

May 16, 2007

Press for Conversion, the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade's (COAT) magazine, has now released a 50-page issue providing detailed studies of Canada's role in the coup. The magazine looks closely at both Canada's role in aiding and abetting the 2004 coup d'état in Haiti that ousted President Aristide's democratically-elected government and supporting the illegal, coup-installed regime that was responsible for the two-year, human-rights catastrophe that followed. To order copies of the magazine visit the Press for Conversion website. Press for Conversion based out of Ottawa, Canada was founded in late 1988 to expose and oppose ARMX (Canada's largest weapons bazaar). The organization has helped organize many anti-war rallies, marches, vigils, conferences and campaigns against the arms trade, air/war shows, war toys and Canada's hypocritical role in U.S.-led wars, invasions, interventions and regime changes.

COAT Examines Haiti

In early 2004, a U.S.-funded, trained and armed paramilitary force of former CIA-backed death squads and soldiers from the military (that President Aristide had disbanded in 1995), attacked Haitian police stations, massacred government supporters and released human rights abusers from prisons. The U.S., Canada and France did nothing to assist Haiti's beleaguered democracy. Instead, they actually demanded that Aristide's elected government share power with political representatives of Haiti's wealthy corporate elite that had lost the 2000 elections and supported the rebels. On February 28, President Aristide was kidnapped and forced into exile by U.S. Marines, with considerable help from a foreign occupation force of largely Canadian and French troops. That day, Haiti's popular government—which had a clear mandate to govern until 2006—was illegally replaced by a puppet regime that was approved by Aristide's political opposition, the occupation governments and the UN Security Council. The brutal, coup-installed regime that ruled for the next two years was responsible for a reign of terror in which thousands of pro-democracy, pro-Aristide supporters were killed and many jailed without charge.

Haitian Community to Demonstrate at Sentencing of Former Death Squad Leader

By: Ray Laforest –

HaitiAnalysis.com

May 14, 2007

On Tuesday, May 15, 2007 from 8 to 9 a.m., Haitians will picket outside the Supreme Court of New York at 320 Jay Street in Brooklyn to demand that the judge sentencing former death-squad leader Emmanuel "Toto" Constant for mortgage fraud apply the maximum penalty possible.

Emmanuel "Toto" Constant was a CIA agent and terrorist leader of the death-squad FRAPH during Haiti's 1991-94 coup d'état, which claimed the lives of 5000. He fled from Haiti to the United States in December 1994 when a Haitian court issued a warrant for his arrest for murder and torture. From 1996 until his arrest by New York State authorities last summer, Constant enjoyed de facto political asylum and a comfortable lifestyle as a mortgage broker in Queens and Long Island, despite extradition requests from Haiti for his crimes against humanity.

On Tuesday, demonstrators will be calling on the judge to take into account Constant's human rights record when sentencing him for grand larceny and fraud in a real estate scheme, for which crime he pled guilty to arrange a plea bargain for a maximum of three years. Normally his crime of lining up straw buyers for mortgage fraud brings a 25-year sentence.

"We are outraged that Constant has only been prosecuted in the U.S. for relatively minor crimes like mortgage fraud when he has carried out such terrible crimes and terror in Haiti as a death-squad leader," said Ray Laforest of the Haiti Support Network, one of the groups calling the action. "It will be an even greater scandal if the judge reduces his sentence for the real-estate swindles he has taken part in."

Other groups sponsoring the picket-line in front of the court-house are the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) in New York, the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) in California, the International Action Center (IAC), and the Haitian community group KAKOLA.

In 2005, the CJA filed a lawsuit against Constant in New York on behalf of three women raped in Haiti by the FRAPH. In October 2006, Judge Sidney Stein of the Southern District of New York found Constant liable for torture, attempted extrajudicial killing and crimes against humanity.

In 2000, a court in Haiti convicted Constant in absentia for his role in the "Raboteau Massacre" in Gonaives in April 1994, in which dozens of people were killed by FRAPH thugs and Haitian soldiers.

"Emmanuel Constant deserves to serve a long sentence for what he did to the people of Haiti. If we can send him to jail for defrauding a bank, then so be it. It's a start," said Jennifer M. Green, Staff Attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Tragedy highlights uneasy relations with 'non-belongers'

BY TRENTON DANIEL

Miami Herald

May 13, 2007

PROVIDENCIALES, Turks and Caicos -- The Providenciales airport offers a primer in the uneasy relations between locals and foreigners on the Turks and Caicos' largest island.

Inside the bright-white Customs room, travelers line up in separate categories: "visitors" and "returning residents," and "belongers." Visitors are tourists, and returning expatriates and belongers are locals or longtime resident expats.

Of course, the signs above don't mention the "non-belongers," the group of people who enter the island through its illegal port: the pristine shoreline. And into that category fall many Haitians.

Talk about Haitians in this British dependency was rekindled last week after a 30-foot sailboat carrying about 160 migrants from northern Haiti overturned off Providenciales Island as a Turks police boat towed the vessel. At least 61 bodies have been recovered and 78 survivors were put in a detention center, later repatriated to Cap-Haitien.

Survivors on Thursday told The Associated Press that a Turks patrol boat rammed their vessel, towed them into deeper water, and abandoned those who fell into shark-infested waters. Survivors also said some migrants were beaten with batons as they tried to climb aboard the patrol boat and that others were run over.

Turks officials have declined to comment, saying they are investigating, as are British maritime experts.

The accident came days after the Turks government imposed a May 1 ban on all sloops and boosted coastal patrols after a sharp increase in armed robberies.

ATTITUDES

It's not hard to see who makes a handy scapegoat.

One cab driver called Haitians a "a big problem." So did another.

A Turks TV newscaster on the migrant beat didn't feel it possible to seek out migrants' relatives on Provo, as locals call Providenciales.

"Haitians keep to themselves," she said.

That sort of attitude extends beyond the island.

An American tourist eavesdropping on a conversation between me and Miami Herald photographer Al Diaz inquired about the migrants' "story."

"Excuse me, I couldn't help but overhear," he said. "The Haitian boat people who died -- that's a story?"

A visit to the Five Cays neighborhood in south Provo helps explain why this is indeed a story.

After climbing a rocky road in our rental sedan, Al and I eased down a tiny hill ringed by makeshift homes (cinderblock, wood). At the base: a large church, a dozen or so cars parked out front.

We told the ministers at the Messenger Baptist Church about our story. The pastor later interrupted the service to say the congregation had guests -- two reporters from The Miami Herald who wanted to speak to anyone who thought he or she had relatives on the boat.

Two men approached us: Ernst Pierre, 29, and Wilfrid Mon-Premier, 30. Pierre said he had a godson aboard. Mon-Premier said he had a 16-year-old brother.

I told Mon-Premier no children were detained. He knew what that could mean.

"I still don't know if he's really dead," he said. The detention center declined to let the media and relatives speak to survivors.

I gave Mon-Premier a ride home, over and down the hill. He lived in what a neighbor of his called the Bassy Yade section of Five Cays. The bouncing rhythm of Haitian music, compas, came from a pick-up stereo. Housing consists of single-room wooden homes and cinderblock rooms.

There we found more people who believed they had relatives on the boat. Some residents -- many from the northern city of Cap-Haitien -- said they got frantic calls Friday, the same day the sloop turned over. Brothers, sisters and cousins gambled on the voyage.

Of course, the Haitian migrant issue is a controversial one in South Florida -- fueled in part by the organized Haitian community. Lawyers and activists rush to their side when needed.

But in Five Cays, legal help is hard to come by.

The people who gathered between the pastel-colored wooden homes laughed when I asked about their seeking attorneys or staging protests.

"The police don't collaborate with us Haitians," said Camillus DuRosca, 32, a steelworker. DuRosca said he was ordered to leave when he visited the detention facility the day before -- a demand also issued to Haitian church leaders who had gone there.

In the cluster, there were others who said they had relatives on the boat, and they wanted to talk. One pulled out a color portrait of his 21-year-old cousin, Jeanie. On the boat, he said.

NUMBERS UNCLEAR

During the three-day trip, we met with a government official to learn more about immigrants' contribution to these tourist-filled islands. Here, people from someplace else build the infrastructure for an industry aimed at people from someplace else. Migrants' handiwork is evident throughout, in the shells of high-end resorts and hotels along the shoreline. Locals say construction companies hire out workers from places like the Philippines and Malaysia.

The official declined to say much.

"[Turks and Caicos] has certainly changed in terms of development," he said. ``Certainly, we don't have the indigenous population to sustain it. We have to bring the labor from other places."

U.S. EXCERPTS | Haitian refugee calamity
The Rev. Jerry Falwell Saving Haiti
The Miami Herald Opinion

The recent surge of Haitians taking to the seas to flee their destitute country resulted in a terrible calamity — a capsized sailboat and 61 souls lost, some of them chopped up by sharks. Then came even worse stories from survivors, alleging a crime of indescribable inhumanity.

Survivors said that a Turks and Caicos Islands patrol boat had rammed their sailboat, towed it into deeper water and abandoned all aboard the crippled vessel to the sea and sharks.

This much is clear: The more that the United States and the international community can do to stabilize Haiti's politics and help to rebuild its shattered economy, the less likely it would be that desperate people would cast their fate and lives to the sea.

Falwell a driving force

From The Dallas Morning News

Not since Martin Luther King Jr. has a religious leader left as powerful a mark on America's political culture as the Rev. Jerry Falwell, who died Tuesday.

Conservative evangelicals spent most of the 20th century on the political sidelines, by design.

Falwell turned them around by launching the Moral Majority in 1979. More than any single figure, he gave organized voice to conservative Protestants' concerns about abortion, feminism, sexual immorality and the ongoing secularization of American society.

New life is no life for U.S. ex-cons in Haiti

By Gary Marx

Tribune foreign correspondent

South Florida Sun Sentinel

May 17 2007

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—In recent years, U.S. authorities have deported to Haiti some 2,000 criminals of Haitian descent under a controversial policy that some officials here say has helped fuel a wave of kidnappings and other violent crime.

The deportees, who have been convicted in the U.S. of crimes ranging from armed robbery to sexual abuse, often grow up in America and return to this impoverished land, instilling fear in other Haitians while facing their own hardship and discrimination.

"It's been rough," said Augustin Saint-Ville, 30, who said he was deported from the U.S. a decade ago after serving 5 1/2 years in prison for selling crack cocaine. "I want to go back. You've got to have money to be in Haiti, and there is no money."

The deportation of criminals has become a sore point between the U.S. and Haiti, which is struggling to absorb an increasing number of ex-cons at a time when the judicial system has collapsed, its prisons are overcrowded, the police force is weak and political stability is tenuous.

"It is a very sensitive issue," said Raymond Joseph, Haiti's ambassador to the U.S. "In the past, we've asked that they slow down the pace [of deportations] because some of the deportees are hardened criminals who learned their trade in America."

In December, Haitian Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis said U.S. authorities threatened to cut assistance to Haiti if it refused to accept the deportees.

U.S. diplomats in Port-au-Prince deny making such a threat and challenge the assertion that criminal deportees, known here as "DPs," imperil public security.

"I'm not sure I've seen any statistics that would bear out the allegations that deportees are responsible for the crime wave," Janet Sanderson, the U.S. ambassador to Haiti, said in an interview. "I think the crime wave in Haiti goes much deeper than that."

Role of deportees disputed

Fred Blaise, chief spokesman for the United Nations police force in Haiti, said not a single criminal deportee is among the hundreds of Haitians arrested in recent months during a major crackdown by UN troops against Haiti's powerful street gangs.

Diplomats and police say the gangs are largely responsible for the nation's 603 kidnappings in the past 16 months, along with many other serious crimes.

"People have had that big myth that there was a bunch of criminal deportees that were involved," said Blaise, who represents the police component of the UN's 8,000-strong peacekeeping mission in Haiti. "It ended up being not true."

Still, many deportees say the Haitian government's effort to demonize them has made it difficult to find jobs or achieve broader acceptance.

"Everyone is so afraid of us even though we haven't done anything here," said James Felix, 31, a Belle Glade, Fla., resident deported in January after serving 17 months in prison for cocaine possession and child neglect. "We are looked at as killers. We are public enemy No. 1."

Scorned as 'troublemakers'

Like many Haitians, businessman Georges Sassine said he would never hire a criminal deportee because he considers them "troublemakers."

"There are too many good people here," said Sassine, who owns a textile factory and is vice president of the Haitian Manufacturers Association. "Why am I going to hire a reject?"

The battle over criminal deportees dates back to 1996 when the U.S. changed immigration law to make it easier to deport aliens for crimes ranging from theft to drug possession.

Last year, U.S. authorities deported 88,662 criminal aliens, with the majority going to seven Latin American and Caribbean nations: Mexico, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, Jamaica and Guatemala.

Politicians throughout the region blame the ex-cons for a surge in street gangs and violent crime. The Caribbean now has the world's highest homicide rate.

Ex-Haitian Strongman Willing to Go Back

Wednesday May 16, 2007

By TOM HAYS

Associated Press

The Guardian Unlimited, UK

NEW YORK (AP) - After trying to stay in the United States for more than a decade, a former Haitian strongman said Tuesday that he is willing to return to the Caribbean nation, where he faces murder and torture charges.

"I have no fear to be deported to Haiti," Emmanuel "Toto" Constant said in state Supreme Court in Brooklyn, where he had been scheduled for sentencing in a mortgage fraud case.

Lawyers for the state attorney general's office and the federal Department of Homeland Security urged Justice Abraham Gerges to sentence Constant in the fraud case to time served, about 10 months of a proposed 1- to-3-year sentence, to speed his deportation.

Gerges postponed the sentencing after the Center for Constitutional Rights claimed that Haiti's justice system was too unstable to prosecute Constant. The civil rights group argued the proposed sentence in the fraud case was too lenient, given Constant's background.

The Haitian government has "clearly demonstrated" it can fairly prosecute Constant, said Ajay Bhatt, an attorney with the Department of Homeland Security.

The judge suggested he might kill the deal, forcing Constant to withdraw a guilty plea and go to trial on charges he defrauded lenders out of more than \$1.7 million. If convicted, Constant would face five to 15 years in prison.

After demanding to speak to the court, 50-year-old Constant stood at the defense table and complained that the allegations in Haiti were "purely political" and "should have no bearing on the case here."

Another hearing was set for Monday.

Constant, the 6-foot-4 son of a military officer, emerged as the feared leader of the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, or FRAPH, after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's presidency was toppled in 1991.

Human rights groups allege that between 1991 and 1994, FRAPH terrorized and slaughtered slum-dwellers loyal to Aristide. When Aristide returned to power in 1994, Constant fled to the United States.

Despite a 1995 deportation order, Constant was allowed to remain because of instability in Haiti. He kept a low profile, living with relatives in New York until being jailed last year in the mortgage fraud case.

**Attention News/Entertainment Editors:
National Film Board of Canada - Important mission to Haiti
Canada Newswiere
May 16, 2007**

MONTREAL, May 16 /CNW Telbec/ - Claude Joli-Coeur, Acting Government Film Commissioner and Chairman of the National Film Board of Canada, has directed an NFB mission to Haiti since May 13. Today, he and Haiti's Minister for Culture and Communication, Daniel Elie, signed an agreement on cultural cooperation.

Since the return of democracy in Haiti, Canada has played an important role in the global improvement of the situation in the country. During a visit to the NFB in fall 2006, the special advisor to the Minister for Culture and Communication requested the Film Board's support in the cultural reconstruction of Haiti. Since cinema is an invaluable way of creating social cohesion, the NFB will offer a collection of documentary, fiction and animation films to be broadcast on Haitian national television and other broadcasters in Haiti. The NFB's mission will include assessing the possibility of setting up training projects in filmmaking, that specifically use cinema as a social tool.

"To offer a complete view of Canadian cinema, we'll give 212 films from the NFB collection to the Haitian government for broadcast on television in Haiti and on the educational network," said Claude Joli-Coeur. "We've chosen some of the greatest titles in the collection to represent the diversity of our films as well as various points of view on the social and cultural life in our country and elsewhere. We hope this first step will lay the foundation for a fruitful long term partnership."

The National Film Board of Canada produces and distributes bold and distinctive social issue documentaries, auteur animation and digital content that provide the world with a unique Canadian perspective. Since its founding in 1939, the NFB has created over 12,000 productions and won over 5000 awards, including over 90 Genie Awards. The NFB also received its 12th Academy Award(R) this year for the animated short *The Danish Poet*, directed by Torill Kove. The NFB is renowned for its technical innovations and is a leader in content for new platforms. For more information about the NFB or to order films, go to www.nfb.ca or call 1-800-267-7710.

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Women engulfed in Haiti's violence spasm, rape on the rise
South Asian Women's Forum, India
AFP
Wednesday, May 16, 2007

Rocked in recent years by kidnappings and street robberies, desperately poor Haiti is caught in the grip of a new violent scourge -- a rising number of sex assaults against women.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP) - As recently as a decade ago, violence here almost always was of the political variety. But today, the Caribbean island nation is wracked by street-level brutality, sometimes by individual attackers, sometimes by roving gangs, visited more often than not against women.

Researchers said about 80 percent of victims of violence in Haiti are women, of whom about 40 percent were attacked within their own homes. And in the capital city Port-au-Prince, gang rape has become a shockingly familiar phenomenon.

Robed Congo Noel, a social worker with the Medecins du Monde nonprofit group observed that violence here is linked in large part "to the inferior station of women in our society."

In addition to women, minors also are at risk: more than 55 percent of sex assault victims are between the ages of 10 and 17.

Because the phenomenon is so new and because Haiti's other needs are so great, there is little in the way of a support system for the sexually abused.

"The victims, be they battered women, young female rape victims or abused children, end up somehow normalizing their experience or blaming themselves -- whether or not they submit to their attacker," said Michaele Israel, a leader in the Martissant shantytown on the southern outskirts of Port-au-Prince.

The upsurge of violence in many ways is not surprising. This impoverished country for generations has suffered through coups, violence and unspeakable poverty.

But the violence has mushroomed in the wake of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's 2004 ouster. According to statistics compiled by the United Nations, there were 142 kidnappings in November and December 2006 alone.

Riots and pillaging from years of upheaval have wrecked the few functioning parts of the fragile economy, and drug trafficking is out of control.

The lawlessness also is fed by the lack of a functioning criminal justice system, the continuing poverty and a flood of some 200,000 illegal weapons that have deluged the country in recent years, according to some estimates.

And there is little in the way of an armed government presence to maintain order: Haiti's army was disbanded in 1994, and its police force, widely viewed as corrupt and incompetent, numbers fewer than 7,000.

"Violence is everywhere in our society -- but (speaking about it) is also taboo," said Emmanuel Joseph who runs a crisis intervention center in Carrefour, a poor section of the Haitian capital.

"The victim often has little choice but to remain mum" about it, he said.

The old rules of social order and civility have fallen away, increasing the vulnerability of Haiti's victims. One rape victim, Emilienne, 33, was attacked while visiting a trusted physician in mid-April.

"He made me wait a long time and when night fell, he advised that it wouldn't be wise for me to go home because of the general lack of law and order. He suggested I spend the night nearby at the home of a friend of his," she said.

It was there, however, that the same doctor brutally attacked her and forced her to submit to sex.

"I trusted him," she later said ruefully. "He was a doctor."

Emilienne said she is fortunate in having the support of relatives to cope with the effects of the abuse.

"My family supports me, but they're worried about me," she said. It's so easy here to kill someone," she said.

Emilienne counts among the few who have managed to fight back, with the help of the group Kay Fanm -- a women's collective fighting against sexual exploitation. Thanks to the work of lawyers and social workers at Kay Fanm, her accused rapist is now behind bars and awaiting trial -- a rare occurrence in Haiti.

"All I want is justice for myself and for all the raped women who don't dare speak out," Emilienne said.

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Rainy season hits Haiti hard

16 May 2007

Source: Concern Worldwide - Ireland

Reuters AlertNet

More In Haiti, the rainy season runs officially from May to July and coincides with hurricane season in the Caribbean, which runs from June to November. However, this year in Haiti the rains came early.

Early flooding

In March, 11 people died and 1,584 families lost their houses due to flooding in various localities across the country. It's a sign of Haiti's vulnerability that this could happen after "only" four days of moderate to heavy rainfall due to a cold weather front. The Haitian government made funds available to the Civil Protection Department to help victims. MINUSTAH (UN Mission in Haiti) also gave support to improve access in areas where road conditions made them inaccessible by car.

Impact on Concern's work

None of Concern's project areas were affected and national authorities did not call for a general mobilisation, meaning that they felt local agencies were able to manage with some help from the government and the UN.

Disaster response

Concern Haiti has, as part of its Disaster Risk Reduction programme, a depot with emergency supplies and kits which will be distributed in the case of an emergency. Concern has two types of kit: kitchen kits, which contain kitchen/cooking utensils, pots, dishes and cutlery; and hygiene kits, which contain basins, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes and buckets. Each kit caters for a family of five. Concern also provides plastic sheeting, blankets and linen when necessary.

Chances slim, Haitians take to sea to flee poverty, violence

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

By Clarens Renois

Caribbean Net News

PETIT-GOAVE, Haiti (AFP): Adras, 24, is one of the scores who sit here listlessly in small groups, at the base of trees lining the shore, or in scrappy dinghies, longingly looking toward the United States, far over the horizon to the northwest, beyond Cuba.

"There has to be death to bring life," said the young husband and father. "I'll die one day or another; I can sit here and wait for something that will never come, or, better, I can go find a life," he said.

The odds are only one in ten, some say. But Adras is among thousands of Haitians so desperately mired in poverty and surrounded by violence that they are willing to risk everything aboard rickety vessels to get to US shores.

At least 61 perished when their overloaded vessel capsized near the Turks and Caicos north of Haiti on May 4, ending the hopes of as many as 150 people aboard seeking to make their way to a new home.

The boat was intercepted by the local navy and foundered while being towed into port, according to the US Coast Guard, with 78 people rescued.

Last week an official of the northern Haitian island of La Tortue said another boat carrying 137 had left there for the United States at the end of April. No word has been heard of its fate.

But without jobs, without money, without hope, the people in this small port town 66 kilometers (miles) south of Port-au-Prince don't see any future in staying at home.

"With the cost of life, the joblessness and misery, people don't have a choice," said Dully Chardonette, a student in Petit-Goave.

"But the whites watch the coast and don't let anyone get past," he added, referring to the US Coast Guard's vessel Hamilton keeping watch off Haiti's coast, each week turning back hundreds of hopeful emigrants.

"Everything in life is about luck," said Ronald, 40 and jobless. He too is ready to risk all despite the low odds of success. "Ten percent chance," he estimates.

The attitude permeates this country, on the western half of the same Caribbean island as the wealthier Dominican Republic.

Decades of corruption, political instability and mismanagement have left Haiti's 8.5 million million people in grinding poverty. Eighty percent live on less than two dollars a day and 70 percent of the working-age population lack jobs.

The daily lawlessness and poverty consumes the capital as well as the countryside.

The one-year-old government of President Rene Preval has staked its future on decreasing the constant insecurity.

With the help of the 9,500 police and soldiers of the UN Minustah peacekeeping force, there has been some progress -- especially since they began a series of raids in December on gang centers in the Cite Soleil shantytown of 300,000 and other dangerous areas.

"The year has been very positive, especially in the plan for security," said Edmond Mulet, a Guatemalan who is the UN special representative for Haiti. "For the first time in years there is political stability."

"The turnaround came at the end of last year after dozens of kidnappings of children by the gangs, which forced President Preval to stop trying to hold talks with these groups and given the green light for Minustah for strong-arm operations" in Cite Soleil, said Thierry Faggart, a French lawyer working with Minustah on human rights issues.

The soldiers were able to arrest the heads of several notorious gangs, helping to cut the level of kidnapping and cocaine trafficking. Local social activist Alexandre said he is no longer afraid to go into the poorest areas in the middle of the day. "Before we wouldn't think of it," he said.

Faggart said the support of the international community has been important to getting a grip on the situation -- "despite resistant in the justice apparatus, corroded by corruption," he said.

"Security is completely linked to establishing equal justice and to the fight against poverty," he said. But the improvements are coming too slowly for many. For those on the coast, the risk of arrest or death on the perilous sea is outweighed by the slight possibility of success.

"If we cannot make it to the United States, there is the Bahamas, or other islands. In any case it is better," said Tchaly, 21 years old and waiting for his chance to leave.

Finance minister says economic signs improving
The Toronto Star
May 16, 2007

Haiti's moribund economy, long mired in political instability, is beginning to show signs of life as the government takes steps to reduce inflation and poverty and increase tax revenues, says Finance Minister Daniel Dorsainvil.

He said the currency, the gourde, has strengthened against the U.S. dollar, exports are up and the inflation rate has gone from 46 per cent in 2004 to 8.5 per cent at the end of President Rene Preval's first year in power. Government revenue has increased by more than 30 per cent, he said, and there are plans to broaden the tax base of the poorest country in the Americas.