

Supporting the People of Haiti

RECOMMENDATION

1) Call on all authorities in Haiti, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United States, Canada and France, as well as Brazil, Nepal, and Jordan (those countries who have large contingents of troops assigned), to work for rapid implementation of the following:

- a) Release of all political prisoners,
- b) Guaranteed freedom of speech and assembly,
- c) The safe return of Human Rights Activist Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine,
- d) A thorough investigation of all allegations of United Nations troop raids in Cité Soleil and elsewhere regarding perpetration of violent attacks, rapes and sexual exploitation, and where misconduct has occurred, ensure the restoration of the subject villages, homes and families, and compensation to innocent victims.
- e) All alleged violators to be brought to justice and duly punished if guilty,
- f) Withdrawal of foreign military forces from Haiti, and support for democratic processes in governance,
- g) Jean-Bertrand Aristide must be free to return to Haiti, in accordance with the Haitian Constitution.

2) Urge Senator Dianne Feinstein to support S. 2261 with the Amendment passed in the House that adds a Sense of the Congress that, due to the current humanitarian and political instability in Haiti, including food shortages and political turmoil, the Secretary of the Treasury should use his influence to expedite the complete and immediate cancellation of Haiti's debts to all international financial institutions, or if such debt cancellation cannot be provided, to urge the institutions to immediately suspend the requirement that Haiti make further debt service payments on debts owed to the institutions.

3) Request Representative Barbara Lee [CA-9] to introduce legislation to establish an Independent Commission on the 2004 Coup d'Etat in the Republic of Haiti, and request Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein to introduce similar legislation in the Senate.

4) Express our city's solidarity with the people of Haiti to achieve much needed peace and improved living and working conditions and extend a standing invitation to President Aristide to once again visit the City of Berkeley.

5) Direct the City Manager to send copies of this Resolution to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, United States Secretary of State Dr. Condoleeza Rice, Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, Representative Barbara Lee, President René Prével of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and the Ambassadors of Canada, France and Brazil.

BACKGROUND

The 2004 Haiti Coup d'Etat resulted in the premature end of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's second term, and the installation of an interim government led by Prime Minister Gérard Latortue and President Boniface Alexandre.

Many of the supporters of the Fanmi Lavalas party and Aristide, as well as progressive and independent observers worldwide, denounced the rebellion as a foreign controlled coup d'état orchestrated by Canada, France, and the United States to remove a democratically elected President.

The people of Haiti have suffered tremendously as a result of violence, high unemployment, widespread hunger and natural disasters since the 2004 coup. They need real support from the international community to provide jobs for sustainable development under Haitian control. Debt cancellation is essential to this process.

Cancellation of Haiti's debts will enable Haiti to improve health care, education and other essential government services; invest in critical infrastructure; and improve the lives of the Haitian people.

Attachment 1: "U.N. Troops Accused of Human Rights Violations in Haiti," Maria Luisa Mendonca, Americas Program, Center for International Policy, January 29, 2008.

Resolution adopted by the Berkeley, California City Council, May 20, 2008 by unanimous vote.

