

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 3, 2007

## *Support Debt Cancellation for Haiti*

Dear Colleague:

We urge you to cosponsor *H.Res. 241*, a resolution that calls for the complete cancellation of Haiti's multilateral debts.

On May 14, 2006, Rene Garcia Preval was sworn in as the President of Haiti, following democratic elections in which 2.2 million Haitians – more than 60 percent of registered voters – participated. President Preval's election is a sign of hope for the people of Haiti who have suffered tremendously as a result of violence and natural disasters. However, the government of Haiti needs the support and assistance of the international community to ensure national reconciliation and sustainable development for the Haitian people. Debt cancellation is essential to this process.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Haiti owes over one billion dollars to multilateral financial institutions. Of this total, \$21.4 million is owed to the IMF, \$507.1 million to the World Bank, and \$533.9 million to the Inter-American Development Bank. Much of this debt burden was accumulated during the oppressive rule of the Duvalier regimes, neither of which used the money to benefit the Haitian people.

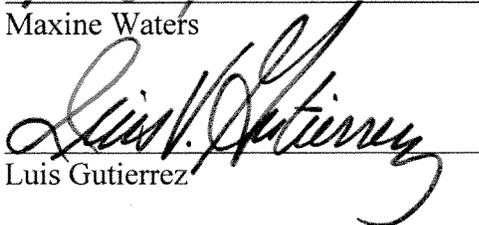
H.Res. 241 urges the IMF, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and other multilateral financial institutions to cancel Haiti's debts completely and immediately. The resolution also urges the Secretary of the Treasury to use the voice, vote and influence of the United States within these institutions to accomplish this important goal. Cancellation of Haiti's debts will enable the democratically-elected government to improve health care, education and other essential government services; invest in critical infrastructure; and improve the lives of the Haitian people.

We hope you will join us and support complete debt cancellation for the people of Haiti. If you want to cosponsor this resolution or need further information, please contact Kathleen Sengstock of Congresswoman Waters' staff at x52201.

Sincerely,



Maxine Waters



Luis Gutierrez



Spencer Bachus



Barbara Lee



---

18 May 2007

Dear member of Congress:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, are writing today to encourage you to **support House Resolution 241**. House Resolution 241 would direct the United States Executive Directors at the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to **immediately cancel Haiti's debts** to those institutions.

We note that all of these institutions have already agreed to cancel Haiti's debts. They recognize that Haiti's debt burden is unsustainable, and that the funds used to service this debt would be better served being used to save lives and educating Haiti's future leaders. However, under the processes that have been proposed Haiti will have to wait at least three years before receiving this debt cancellation. A three-year delay means that people will continue to suffer from lack of access to health services and education budgets will be strained. The reason for the delay is the insistence by these institutions that Haiti undergo further policy and structural reform under the framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

**We ask you to consider the following:**

Haiti has been undergoing market oriented structural reform for over twenty years. Indeed, Haiti already has the lowest public sector employment rate in the Western Hemisphere, as well as the lowest average tariffs. Less than twenty percent of Haiti's children are able to attend public schools, and access to health services is seriously restricted.

The lowering of tariffs on agriculture have generated mass displacement in rural areas, adding pressure on already under-funded public services, particularly health and education, in urban areas. Since 1986, Haiti has averaged annual growth rates of *negative* two-percent, so that today eighty-percent of Haiti's people live on less than \$2 a day – fifty percent on less than \$1 dollar a day. In other words the policy reforms that have been mandated in Haiti over the last twenty years by these same institutions have not worked. What can Haiti gain by three more years of the same?

Over half of Haiti's current debt to the World Bank, IMF, and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) was accumulated by the Duvalier dictatorship and the military juntas that governed Haiti after his departure. Less than 50 percent of IDB loans and only 35 percent of

World Bank loans that Haiti is currently being asked to pay off were actually distributed to an elected government.

Haiti will pay \$56-70 million a year to service debts to the IDB and World Bank, a total of \$170-200 million over the next three years. This is equivalent to the annual budgets for education and health combined (approximately \$180 million a year).

### **What does three years mean?**

The most recent World Health Report (2006) estimated that Haiti's government spends \$10 per capita on health – or \$83 million a year. (The U.S. government spends \$2,500 per capita on health.) With this budget, Haiti has 25 doctors, 11 nurses, and 1 dentist per 100,000 people. Only 24% of women are accompanied by a trained health provider during childbirth and only 18% of births happen in a health facility. Haiti has the highest HIV/AIDS infection rate and the lowest coverage of potable water in the Western Hemisphere. The low levels of public expenditures on health also means that services nearly always require a fee – which puts even the most basic healthcare out of reach of the majority of Haitians.

As a result, between now and the end of fiscal year 2010 in Haiti 90-100,000 children will die before reaching the age of 11 months and another 30-40,000 will die before reaching the age of 5 years. Haiti's under-five mortality rate is 1500% higher than in the United States. Based on the number of live births in the United States each year a comparable under-five mortality rate would translate into 1.5-1.8 million children dying over the same period of time – 1,600 a day!

Approximately 6,000 women will die during childbirth in Haiti between now and October 2010. In the United States, with 35 times the population, the total number of deaths will likely be less than 2,000. At the same maternal mortality rate as Haiti, nearly 100,000 women would die in the United States during childbirth over a comparable period.

\$180 million will not change all of this overnight. But it could have a dramatic impact now in extending health services to thousands of people.

In conclusion, since the World Bank, IMF, and IDB have already agreed to cancel Haiti's debt, and considering that remaining debt service is largely on debts accumulated by former dictators, we ask you to support House Resolution 241 and work to ensure that the people of Haiti are not forced to wait three more years to receive this debt cancellation.

Sincerely,

**Quixote Center/Haiti Reborn**  
Tom Ricker, Co-director

**Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti**  
Brian Concannon

**Jubilee USA Network**  
Karen Joyner, Communication and Advocacy Coordinator

*(Additional organizations– alphabetical)*

**Alliance for Global Justice**

Chuck Kaufman, Director

**Campaign for Labor Rights**

Jon Hunt, National Coordinator

**Delaware County Pledge of Resistance,**

Ronald Coburn, MD and Paula Bronstein

**Democracy for Haiti**

Jean Yves Point-du-Jour, Co-Director,

**East Timor Action Network / Madison (Wis.)**

Eric Piotrowski, co-coordinator

**Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean**

Scott Wright, Director

**Fondasyon Mapou**

Eugenia Charles, Executive Director

**Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA**

Marty Jordan, Co-Director

**Haiti Action Committee**

Marilyn Langlois, Volunteer Coordinator  
San Francisco Bay Area

**Haiti KONPAY**

Melinda Miles and Joe Duplan, Co-Directors

**Haitian Priorities Project**

Jacob Francois, Co-Founder

**Haiti Rights Vision (VIDWA)**

Anne Sosin, Coordinator

**Human Rights Accompaniment In Haiti**

Tom Luce, President

**Haiti Solidarity Network of the Northeast**

Kay Coll, SSJ

**Jubilee Northwest Coalition, Seattle, WA.**

Betsy Bell, Chair and Alice Woltdt, Treasurer

**Madison Women for Peace: a CODEPINK**

affiliate (Madison, Wis.)

Diane Farsetta, co-founder,

**Marin Inter-Faith Task Force on the Americas**

Dale Sorenson, Director

**Mennonite Central Committee**

Theo Sither, Legislative Associate for  
International Affairs

**Mothers on the Move, Bronx, NY**

Wanda Salaman & Taleigh Smith

**Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala**

Andrew de Sousa, National Organizer

**NY Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador**

Wendy Vasquez

**Nicaragua Network**

Katherine Hoyt, National Co-Coordinator

**Nicaragua-US Friendship Office**

Rita Clark, Director

**Office of the Americas**

Blase Bonpane, Director

**Parish Twinning Program of the Americas**

Theresa Patterson, Executive Director

**Partners In Health**

Donna J Barry, NP, MPH, Advocacy and Policy  
Manager

**Pax Christi Maine and Pax Christi Portland (ME)**

William Slavick

**Philadelphia Buddhist Peace Fellowship,**

Karen A. Wisniewski and Dom Roberti

**Portland Peaceful Response Coalition**

William R. Seaman

**Project 2000 International**

Majolie Zephirin, President

**Rochester Committee on Latin America**

**St. Joseph Worker Foundation, Inc.**

Jane A. Wildeman, , Founding  
Administrative Director,

**Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

The Leadership Council, Monroe, Michigan

**TransAfrica Forum**

Nicole Lee, Executive Director

**Sustainable Organic Intergrated Livelihoods.**

Sarah Brownell, Sasha Kramer, and Kevin Foos, directors

**U.S. El Salvador Sister Cities****Venezuela Solidarity Network**

Banbose Shango, Regional Coordinator

**Visitation Hospital Foundation**

Theresa Patterson, Executive Director

**Voices for Global Justice**

Carlos Alamo-Pastrana, Beth Currans, Oscar Gil, Mark Schuller, Molly Talcott, and Michele Zimney

**War Resisters League**

John M. Miller, Treasurer

**Washington Office, Presbyterian Church, (USA)**

Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory, Director

**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - Haiti Issue Committee**

Shirley Pate

**World Mission Ministries, Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

Rosemary Huddleston, OP

*Individuals (organizations listed for identification purposes only)*

Rev. David Borglum,  
Member of Alameda Peace Network & United Church of Christ

William "Burr" Datz  
Director of Leadership Development, Washington and Lee University

Deborah Dimmett  
Community Learning Exchange

Caroline Emmons  
St. Francis Xavier Parish in Missoula MT

Vince Gallagher  
Pax Christi, Southwest New Jersey Chapter

Carol J. Griesemer  
Joplin, MO

Rev. Rich Lang:  
Pastor, Trinity United Methodist Church, Seattle, Wa.

Peter and Gail Mott,  
Co-Editors, INTERCONNECT

Peter Mott,  
Coordinating Committee, Latin America Solidarity Coalition

Carolyn S. Scarr, program coordinator,  
Ecumenical Peace Institute/Clergy and Laity Concerned

Robert V. Taylor  
Dean of Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Seattle

Martha J. Wili MD  
Peoria, IL

Rev. Ann C. Rogers-Witte,  
Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries,  
United Church of Christ, and Co-Executive, Global Ministries

Rev. David A. Vargas,  
President, Division of Overseas Ministries,  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Co-Executive, Global Ministries



## **FACT SHEET** **Haiti's Debt** March 2007



Institute for Justice  
& Democracy in Haiti

Haiti is the most impoverished country in the Americas. 80% of the population lives in abject poverty and one out of nine children dies before reaching her fifth birthday. Life expectancy is 53 years and nearly half the population cannot read. Haiti's government is forced to divert \$56 million per year from fighting this poverty to reimburse International Financial Institutions (IFIs) that were established to help countries like Haiti fight poverty. Over half of Haiti's \$1.3 billion debt is for loans granted to Haiti's dictatorships, especially the brutal and corrupt Francois "Papa Doc" and Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier dictatorship. Haiti's onerous and odious debt should be cancelled immediately without conditions, as a matter of justice and as an essential tool in the global fight to end poverty under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### **From Enslaved Colony to Indebted Republic**

Haiti's legacy of debt began shortly after the country won independence from France and abolished slavery in 1804. France threatened to invade and re-establish slavery, unless Haiti compensated it for the loss of the "property", including slaves. With French warships positioned off the coast, Haiti gave in to French demands in 1825, and agreed to pay 150 million francs (equivalent, with interest, to \$21 billion today), financed by a loan to a designated French bank in return for recognition of Haiti's sovereignty.

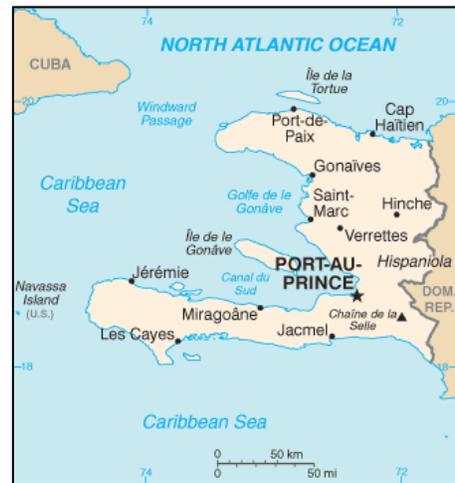
This enormous debt – equal to ten times Haiti's export revenues – placed a heavy burden on the new country. Haiti was forced to send any available cash to France, diverting revenues from investments in infrastructure, education and government services. The world's first black republic descended into a spiral of debt and underdevelopment from which it has never recovered.

From 1957 to 1986, Haiti was controlled by the father/son dictatorship of Francois "Papa Doc" and Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier. For nearly thirty years they spent foreign "assistance" on fur coats and brutal death squads like the *Ton Ton Macoutes*. An audit revealed that Jean-Claude Duvalier diverted at least \$500 million in the last six years of his reign alone. Newspapers reported that his wife Michele Duvalier spent \$20,000 on a weekend shopping trip to Manhattan. This theft was widely reported, yet donor countries and IFI's continued to send money so long as the Duvaliers stayed in the anti-communist camp.

### **Haiti's Debt Today: A New Form of Slavery**

The Haitian people are still paying for the crimes of their past leaders. 45% of the country's current external debt was incurred by the Duvaliers, while the country's lenders turned a blind eye to the corruption. Not only did these loans fail to benefit the Haitian people, the consequent debt service payments continue to cost the country millions of dollars that could be better spent on education and health. Meanwhile, harmful economic policies mandated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank continue to undermine the country's ability to chart its own development path.

In April 2006, the World Bank and the IMF added Haiti their heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) debt cancellation program, on the heels of the election of a constitutional



president, Rene Prével in February. Yet, the HIPC program will not actually cancel Haiti's debt for several years, and will come with painful strings attached: the banks will require Haiti to undertake neo-liberal economic "reforms", that will certainly aggravate the country's poverty in the short term, and may do so in the long term. These economic policy strings will continue to drain Haiti's productive capabilities and reduce its already minimal social safety net, while causing deadly delays. Under the conditions of the World Bank and IMF's debt relief program, Haiti will not qualify for cancellation until 2009 at the earliest—by which time the country will have sent the IFIs \$138 million taken from programs to build schools and provide clean water and health care.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Haiti's largest creditor, also added Haiti to its debt relief program, in 2007 after protracted negotiations. But IDB debt relief will also take time, and impose painful economic "reforms." In the meantime, Haitian children will continue to die of preventable diseases, and grow older without learning how to read.

### **Debt Cancellation: An Opportunity for a Fresh Start**

Immediate cancellation of Haiti's debt to the World Bank, IMF, and IDB would free much needed resources to fight poverty and help the country to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The IMF projects that without debt relief, more than one-tenth of the central government's revenue over the next four years will go to foreign creditors to service the country's external debt. Imagine the impact if this money were instead used for poverty reduction.

**Debt relief works.** Social spending has risen by 75% in countries that have received debt relief, with funds used to abolish school fees, provide free immunizations, fight HIV/AIDS, and improve access to safe drinking water. Canceling Haiti's debt could increase the environmental budget tenfold to reverse the environmental degradation that leaves Haiti vulnerable to tropical storms and mudslides that have claimed thousands of lives in recent years. Alternatively, the amount could double the resources spent on education or triple the funds spent on AIDS prevention.

**100% debt cancellation and an end to economic conditionality could allow the new president and the people of Haiti an opportunity to build a stable democracy and work toward a future free from poverty and want.**

Just as Rene Prével's presidency marks a fresh start and hope for an end to the unrest that has plagued Haiti since the February 2004 coup d'etat, 100% debt cancellation and an end to economic conditionality could likewise give the new president and the people of Haiti an opportunity to build a stable democracy and work toward a future free from poverty and want.

### **Take Action: Urge your Representative to Cosponsor H.Res. 241**

You can help Haiti achieve immediate debt cancellation without delays or strings attached by calling your Member of Congress today and asking them to co-sponsor the Haiti debt cancellation resolution introduced by a bi-partisan group in the House of Representatives (H.Res. 241). To co-sponsor the resolution, tell your Member's staff to call Kathleen Sengstock in Representative Maxine Waters' office at (202) 225-2201 (Waters is one of the initial co-sponsors). If your Representative has already co-sponsored the resolution, please call to thank them. To find contact information for your Representative, visit <http://www.house.gov/writerep>.

For more information, and to take action, see [www.jubileeuusa.org](http://www.jubileeuusa.org) or [www.HaitiJustice.org](http://www.HaitiJustice.org).

Sources: World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, Central Bank of the Republic of Haiti, The United States Library of Congress – Federal Research Division Country Profile: Haiti (May 2006), *Wall Street Journal*, "Impoverished Haiti pins hopes for future on a very old debt" by José De Córdoba (January 2, 2004), and *Jubilee USA*, "Break the Chains of Haiti's Debt" by Mark Schuller (May 20, 2006).

*'Baby Doc' Duvalier, Haiti's exiled dictator, lives life of luxury St. Petersburg Times (Florida) September 21, 1988, Wednesday, City Edition*

Times Publishing Company  
St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

September 21, 1988, Wednesday, City Edition

**SECTION:** NATIONAL; Pg. 7A

**LENGTH:** 1164 words

**HEADLINE:** 'Baby Doc' Duvalier, Haiti's exiled dictator, lives life of luxury

**BYLINE:** SUSAN SACHS

**DATELINE:** MOUGINS, France

**BODY:**

MOUGINS, France - Far from the bloodshed, political chaos and poverty of his homeland, Haiti's former president-for-life Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier lives in luxurious exile in this hilltop Riviera village.

It's been 2 1/2 years since Duvalier fled Haiti with a planeload of suitcases and frightened relatives after nearly 30 years of family rule.

However sudden that departure appeared at the time, Duvalier and his wife Michelle certainly were prepared financially. In France, they come and go as they please, and that means first class all the way.

Every few months, they settle in at the Bristol Hotel in Paris, just down the street from their favorite high-priced boutiques. Their shopping sprees have netted trunkloads of haute couture outfits, fine leather goods, Chinese antiques and precious jewelry.

At home in the \$ 40,000-a-year villa rented from Saudi Arabian arms dealer Adnan Kashoggi, the 37-year-old Duvalier is said by visitors to spend his days watching big-screen television. Ferrari sports cars are parked in the driveway. A security guard patrols the grounds with a rifle slung across his chest and German shepherds at his heels.

"Monsieur and Madame Duvalier do not receive journalists," said the man who answered their telephone recently. "That is the rule of the house."

But the family's days of undisturbed exile may soon take on an unfamiliar chill.

After rejecting the argument that France has no jurisdiction to try them, a French appeals court in Aix-en-Provence is now expected to begin preliminary hearings next month on embezzlement charges against the Duvaliers and their associates.

The civil lawsuit, brought by the government of Haiti, accuses them of skimming \$ 120-million of state money from such activities as the lottery, food sales, the army budget and hospitals.

After months of stalemate, some movement is visible in the Haitian government's worldwide hunt for Duvalier assets.

In the past two months, newly discovered bank accounts in Paris and London have begun to yield clues as to how the Duvaliers finance their expensive lifestyle.

More important, the Haitian government's request for access to bank records in Switzerland, where investigators believe a large amount of money is hidden, may produce some results by the end of the year.

Although Swiss banks have been under orders for two years to freeze any known Duvalier accounts, Haiti has been unable find out how many - if any - exist.

Last month, though, a Geneva court ordered Geneva banks to open their records. Duvalier has appealed, but lawyers say a final ruling covering that judicial district could come within a few months.

"We've made tremendous progress and we continue to make tremendous

progress," said Curtis Mechling, one of the New York lawyers representing the Haitian government. "It's going to be a long fight."

In an interview with the newspaper *Le Monde* in May, Duvalier estimated his fortune at "much less than \$ 100-million" and claimed it is the result of "well-managed savings." In previous interviews, he has said that his wealth is inherited from his family and that of his wife.

"Even the Queen of England has money," said Dominique Poncet, a lawyer representing the Duvaliers in the Swiss proceedings. "It doesn't mean necessarily that it was taken from the state treasury."

Soon after the Duvaliers left, the Haitian government seized or placed liens on about \$ 10-million in family properties in the United States and France, including a luxury apartment in Trump Tower in New York and a \$ 2-million chateau north of Paris.

Finding cash has proved more difficult. The search has led to at least five countries and uncovered dozens of bank accounts.

"They keep the money moving," said Bruce Dollar, an investigator with Kroll Associates in New York. "They have some pretty sophisticated advisers and legal minds working on this for them."

As often as not, bank accounts are emptied hours before courts order them frozen. This summer, for example, a French newspaper reported that \$ 29-million was withdrawn from two of the Duvaliers' London bank accounts just before a court impoundment order.

None of the lawyers involved would comment on the report or disclose how much money was believed held by the Duvaliers in London.

The only other clue comes from a British appellate court opinion in July, referring to "the vast amount of money involved" in the London case.

After ordering the disclosure of their assets, the judges chastised the Duvaliers for their "plain and admitted intention . . . to move their assets out of the reach of courts of law."

The Duvaliers' own lifestyle in France has given investigators some of their best leads. A peek into their world was provided recently when Michelle Duvalier's personal notebook was seized during a police search of the Mougins villa.

The handwritten entries cover two years of shopping sprees. Some are described in detail, like the \$ 10,000 Hermes saddles for the children and the \$ 13,000 cigarette holder, one of the more than \$ 450,000 worth of items purchased at Paris jewelers during one six-month period in 1987.

On a four-day shopping trip to Paris last October, according to the account, the Duvaliers spent \$ 71,000. The month before, a similar visit cost \$ 35,000 for hotel rooms, tips, chauffeur-driven cars, restaurants and clothes.

"Spending money is the hobby of these people," said Yann Colin, one of the Haitian government's Paris lawyers.

The notebook also referred to \$ 200,000 spent at Givenchy for Michelle Duvalier's 1987 winter wardrobe. French police were sent to look at Givenchy's records, which revealed the existence of the Duvalier bank account in London.

Information gleaned from the London accounts, in turn, led to the discovery of suspected Duvalier bank accounts currently being used in Switzerland, according to Haiti's Geneva lawyer, Henri Torrione.

"We still don't know anything of a precise nature," he said. But the recent court rulings around the world that favor the Haitian government," Torrione added, "are great victories."

*Ban Expiring, Haitians Fear Return of the Tontons Macoute The New York Times March 31, 1997, Monday, Late Edition - Final*

Copyright 1997 The New York Times Company  
The New York Times

March 31, 1997, Monday, Late Edition - Final

**SECTION:** Section A; Page 4; Column 3; Foreign Desk

**LENGTH:** 870 words

**HEADLINE:** Ban Expiring, Haitians Fear Return of the Tontons Macoute

**BYLINE:** By LARRY ROHTER

**DATELINE:** PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

**BODY:**

Ten years ago, Haiti approved a new Constitution prohibiting officials of the recently deposed Duvalier family dictatorship from seeking public office. But that ban is expiring, and the prospect that former leaders of the Tontons Macoute may soon re-enter public life has the Haitian Government scrambling to take countermeasures.

An old lawsuit against members of the Duvalier family and their entourage has been revived, and President Rene Preval has warned of a renewed threat from the Tontons Macoute, the Duvaliers' dreaded private security force, even as his aides seek to reassure the population that they have nothing to fear.

The Duvalier family first took power here in 1957, when Francois Duvalier, known as Papa Doc, was elected President and initiated a period of brutal and corrupt rule that lasted three decades. Early in 1986, Jean-Claude Duvalier, the dictator's son, known as Baby Doc, was overthrown in a popular rebellion and fled to France with a large chunk of the state treasury.

On March 29, 1987, a Constituent Assembly approved a new Constitution denying political rights for a decade to "any person well-known for having been by his excessive zeal one of the architects of the dictatorship." The 10-year ban also applied to all those "denounced by public outcry for having inflicted torture on political prisoners" or "for having committed political assassinations."

For several weeks now, the country has been awash with nervous rumors that Jean-Claude Duvalier himself plans to come back to Haiti. Diplomats here say that is extremely unlikely: he still faces criminal charges here.

Nevertheless, Mr. Duvalier's former father-in-law, Ernest Bennett, returned recently. At a restaurant in the upper-class suburb of Petionville, Mr. Bennett, who used his ties to the Duvaliers to reap a fortune, even led a group of diners in cheers of "Long Live Duvalier!"

Mr. Bennett is reported to have left Haiti in late February, after the Government filed a suit against Mr. Bennett, his daughter Michele (now estranged from the former dictator), and 36 other former officials and sympathizers of the Jean-Claude Duvalier dictatorship, charging that they had misappropriated public funds.

"This came up because these guys started coming back, which I thought was pretty brazen," said Ira Kurzban, an American lawyer who represents the Haitian Government in efforts to recover assets the Duvaliers sent abroad. "There was no

sense of anyone being brought to justice who was a figure in any of this, which is why the Bennett suit is important."

The Haitian Government, which estimates that the Duvaliers and their associates pilfered more than \$500 million from the treasury during their last five years in power, has already won judgments of \$11 million against the Duvalier family in American courts. They have been able to retrieve little of that, though Mr. Kurzban said the Government expected to take possession soon of an apartment of Michele Bennett's on the East Side of Manhattan.

Whether pro-Duvalier forces still represent a threat to public security and political stability here, however, is a subject of considerable debate. In a recent speech, Mr. Preval evoked the specter of their return to rally support for his Government and its unpopular policies.

"We have a police force that is young, short of equipment and beleaguered," Mr. Preval said. "If you don't help them, the Tontons Macoute, who are watching from the sidelines, will stage a coup d'etat, just as they did in 1991, which will force us to go into hiding."

But some of Mr. Preval's supporters argue that it is important not to overstate the possibility of a resurgence of the Tontons Macoute.

"As a political force, they are completely finished," said Gerard Pierre-Charles, leader of the Lavalas Political Organization, the center-left political party that has the largest bloc in the Haitian Parliament. "The Duvalierists have no leadership, no ideology and no army."

The director of the United Nations mission here, Enrique ter Horst, described the neo-Duvalierists as "a spent force" politically. But it does not necessarily follow, he cautioned, that they no longer constitute a security threat.

"There are still people from that part of the political spectrum who do meet and have dreams of organizing a coup d'etat, which only shows how gravely they are misinterpreting the new political situation," Mr. ter Horst said.

Still, some public officials said that they had begun to detect a certain nostalgia for the Duvalier era among groups dismayed by the lack of economic growth since democracy was restored in 1994.

"The population is so disappointed by the current rulers of the country that some of them say, 'It wasn't so bad when we had a dictatorship,' " said Jean-Robert Sabalat, a Foreign Minister under President Jean-Bertrand Aristide who is now a member of the Senate.

"After the Macoutes were defeated, they dispersed throughout the country," he said. "But when they see misery growing and disagreement among the people in power, they get more confidence in themselves and say, 'The people who used to criticize us are doing worse, so why don't we come up again?' "