

Dear Colleagues,

Please find below the mainstream news on Haiti for August 11-21, 2006.

Well known Haitian singer and activist Annette Auguste “So Ann” was released from prison on August 14<sup>th</sup> along with other prominent political prisoners Paul Raymond Jr., Yvon Antoine and George Honore. Auguste and the others openly advocate for the immediate release of hundreds more political prisoners.

James Pringle’s “Nostalgia for a Dictator” claims that ‘the father-son dictatorships of Papa and Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier, from 1957-1986, are now viewed by many Haitians as a kind of Belle Epoque – and tubby Baby Doc’s rule, especially, as a golden age”, but cites a single “older Haitian” as proof. The article fails to cite any survivors of the 30,000 people killed by the Duvalier dictatorships, or the hundreds of thousands beaten, tortured or left to rot in prison.

The RFK Memorial Center for Human Rights filed a Freedom of Information Act request in 2003 for information regarding the US role in blocking Inter American Development Bank loans to the Haitian government in 2001. The US Treasury has yet to respond to this request, leading the RFK Center to sue the US Government for compliance.

An August 17<sup>th</sup> Reuters article reported on Cite Soleil gangs’ agreement to disarm by the following week. However, by Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> the gang leaders refused to disarm citing continued violent raids by UN peacekeepers and Haitian Policemen. The UN Security Council extended its mission to Haiti for another six months with a slight reduction in troops (from 7,500 to 7,200) and a slight increase in police personnel from 1,897 to 1,951.

Major news coverage of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Aids Conference in Toronto spotlighted some improvements in Haiti’s fight on AIDS. Dr. Jean William Pape and Dr. Paul Farmer discussed improvements in diagnosing, treating and caring for Haitian AIDS patients. Improvements in care have come not only in direct medical services but also treating the disease [considering](#) the challenges faced by those living in extreme poverty and/or rural and isolated areas. The August 14<sup>th</sup> Miami Herald article mentions the latest paradox emerging between AIDS patients who receive free medical care, drugs and food and those patients with other diseases [who](#) don’t receive the same benefit package. Partners in Health offers a complete healthcare package to all indigent patients. “In a study we did in rural Haiti, we found most of our patients with HIV disease spent more than half of all their time and other resources looking for food” said Dr. Paul Farmer.

The McClatchy newspapers’ Tim Funk wrote two pieces last week highlighting general biases of US immigration laws as well as stark differences between certain nationalities such as that between Haitians and Cubans. The differences are largely influenced by domestic politics and powerful lobbies such as the influential Cuban American lobby in South Florida. The Tim Funk and Danica Coto story highlights some of the lesser known special immigration privileges awarded based on Congressional influence. Both domestic and foreign politics appear more influential than the original intention of instruments such as Temporary Protection Status (TPS) to assist countries overburdened by natural or man-made disasters. While TPS has been denied to Haitians, fleeing both kinds of disasters, or Pakistanis in the wake of last year’s devastating earthquake, it has been granted and renewed to El Salvadorans whose openly pro-American President contributed troops to Iraq. As Funk and Coto bluntly admit “fairness has never been a requirement or a tradition in fashioning U.S. immigration law.”

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**1. Prominent Aristide backer freed from Haitian jail**

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

by Joseph Guyler Delva

Caribbean Net News

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: A well-known singer and supporter of ousted former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide has been freed from prison where she was held on what she decried on Tuesday as politically motivated charges.

Criminal court magistrate Fritzner Fils-Aime issued the release order late on Monday for Annette Auguste, known as So Ann and jailed for more than two years, and three other prisoners, after deciding there was no proof they were linked to violence.

Auguste, 62, and the three others were militants of the Lavalas Family party of Aristide, a priest turned politician who fled his impoverished Caribbean nation in 2004 in the face of an armed rebellion.

They were arrested over an outbreak of violence at a university and the wounding of its dean but no evidence was produced, as in the cases of many other former Aristide allies jailed during the U.S.-backed interim administration of prime minister Gerard Latortue.

"There has been no evidence linking those people to these incidents," said Judge Fils-Aime.

About a dozen prominent Aristide allies -- including former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and former Interior Minister Jocelerme Privert -- have been freed since President Rene Preval took over from the interim government in May.

"The interim government and its allies had locked me up because they were aware of my capacity to mobilize the masses," Auguste told Reuters.

"They wanted to make sure I did not play any political role that could benefit Aristide. As a brave woman, I confronted that injustice with courage, but it feels good to be free again," she said.

The three other Aristide militants released along with Auguste were Paul Raymond Jr., Yvon Antoine and George Honore.

Preval, a former Aristide ally, said recently that about 100 Aristide allies had been released since he took office.

But Auguste said hundreds more were still being held.

## **2. Meanwhile: In Haiti, nostalgia for a dictator**

**By James Pringle**

**International Herald Tribune**

**August 21, 2006**

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/08/21/opinion/edpringle.php>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

A pantheon is where the illustrious dead of a nation are honored. So why, one wonders, are the sinister momentos of François "Papa Doc" Duvalier on display, along with the elegant anchor of Christopher Columbus's wrecked caravel Santa Maria, in Port-au-Prince's national pantheon museum?

There is Papa Doc's black top hat, gold-handled cane and thick spectacles, all of which Duvalier affected to make himself resemble Baron Samedi, the voodoo divinity of the graveyards, and thus be more feared.

"Poor Haiti and the character of Dr. Duvalier's rule are not invented, the latter not blackened for dramatic effect," Graham Greene wrote about "The Comedians," his novel of expatriate life and love under Papa Doc's tyranny. "Impossible to deepen that night."

It's an indication of how bad things have become in Haiti that Papa Doc has now been quietly rehabilitated. In fact, the father-son dictatorship of Papa and Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, from 1957 to 1986, are now viewed by many Haitians as a kind of Belle Epoque - and tubby Baby Doc's rule, especially, as a golden age.

"Papa Doc was the best president we ever had," one older Haitian recalled. "In these days, all children went to school, and poor people ate free at government-sponsored messes. Nothing happened to you if you didn't challenge Papa. At least, you knew where you stood."

I had traveled to Haiti partly to see whether the gossip columnist Aubelin Jolicoeur, the model for the character Petit Pierre in "The Comedians," had survived. I was hoping to enjoy a refreshment with him beneath the slowly turning ceiling fans on the balcony of the famed turn-of-the-century Hotel Oloffson, on which Greene based his Hotel Trianon.

But the hotel's Haitian-American proprietor, Richard Morse, told me that Jolicoeur had died last year in his late seventies - appropriately, on St. Valentine's Day; the flamboyant "Aubie" was a great ladies' man.

Today, a suite at Oloffson's is named after him - others are christened for Greene, Mick Jagger, who stayed here in the '70s, and Truman Capote.

I also stayed at Oloffson's, one of the few guests, and sampled what Morse rightly calls the hotel's infamous rum punches.

Morse, a musician and anthropology major, runs a 14-piece band that on Thursdays plays rock mixed with voodoo rhythms. He is philosophical: "If things are good, we will have tourists. If bad, we will have journalists," he says.

In 2002, Newsweek named the decrepit but characterful Oloffson's one of its five favorite grand hotels worldwide. Sadly, the hotel's mangy mutt, dubbed Papa Dog, has gone to canine heaven.

The calm that followed President René Préval's election victory in February has changed into anarchy in the three months since he took office in May, though Préval is no tyrant, locals say.

"Be careful," a Lebanese art gallery manager warned me urgently as I browsed pictures of vibrant Haitian art in Petionville, the cool, hillside town where the mulatto elite lives above Port-au-Prince. "You could be kidnapped at any moment."

Security has disappeared again. The road to the international airport is unsafe, and, according to a UN stabilization force spokesperson, under daily automatic weapons fire. When my car broke down on the uphill climb to Petionville, a houngan, or voodoo priest, stopped to pick me up before the gangs did. After two decades of political violence, Haiti is awash with guns.

It's even risky to walk around central Port-au-Prince by daylight. Small wonder I saw almost no tourists. As a "blanc" (white), as the Haitians call out to Americans or Europeans as they chivvy you for a dollar, you stand out like a sore thumb.

Life expectancy for the 8.3 million Haitians continues to fall, though it is already only 52. Illiteracy is at 80 percent. The country looks ruined, its hillsides stripped of trees for charcoal. Annual per capita income is \$390.

The magic and mystery of Haiti, and its beguiling charm, seem to have vanished. After so much horror, Haiti is no longer exotic. Even the voodoo drums I used to hear seem stilled in nights darkened by power outages. Almost no one feels optimism for the future.

For the present, at least, it is, as Greene wrote four decades ago, "impossible to deepen that night."

James Pringle previously visited Haiti as a Reuters correspondent.

**3. South Africa: Aristide Welcome to Stay**  
**By MICHAEL WINES**  
**New York Times**  
**August 17, 2006**

The deposed Haitian president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, is welcome to remain in exile in South Africa for as long as he likes, but neither he nor the South African government anticipates that he will stay forever,

the foreign minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, told Parliament. Mr. Aristide, left, who left Haiti in 2004, lives outside Pretoria in circumstances akin to those of a cabinet minister, she said. Critics have accused President Thabo Mbeki of according luxury accommodations to Mr. Aristide, who was widely accused of corruption and misrule. Ms. Dlamini-Zuma said, however, that Mr. Aristide's exile fit an international mandate to create peace and stability in Haiti.

#### **4. Group Sues for Info on Haiti Loans**

**By MATT APUZZO,  
Associated Press Writer  
Los Angeles Times**

**August 15, 2006**

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/politics/wire/sns-ap-haiti-loans,1,4691517.story?coll=sns-ap-politics-headlines>

WASHINGTON -- A human rights group asked a federal judge Tuesday to force the Treasury Department to release information about whether it blocked millions of dollars in development loans to Haiti.

The dispute dates back to 2001, when international lenders suspended more than \$500 million in loans and grants to the impoverished country after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's party swept to victory in legislative elections that opponents said were rigged.

The Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights says the U.S. government wrongly told the Inter-American Development Bank to withhold \$146 million in loans approved for public health and education in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere.

Aristide called the move "genocidal." Eighty percent of the country's 8 million residents lives in abject poverty.

The center filed a Freedom of Information Act request in 2003 seeking documents about the U.S. government's role in blocking the loans. The lending process is not supposed to be political, the center said.

Though international aid to Haiti has since been restored and a new government is in place, the center says it needs to know the motives behind the process.

"There's a precedent for intervention that can stop these loans at a critical point and there's no guarantee this isn't going to happen again," said Monika Kalra Varma, the center's acting director. "We don't think we can effectively battle that today if we don't understand how it happened."

The lawsuit, filed in a Washington federal court, seeks an order forcing treasury officials to comply with the information request.

Neither the Treasury Department nor the Inter-American Development Bank had an immediate comment Tuesday morning.

#### **5. Haitian gangs agree to give up their weapons**

**Reuters**

By Joseph Guyler Delva

17 Aug 2006

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N17430108.htm>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - Armed gangs in Haiti's largest slum pledged on Thursday to hand over their weapons to the government next week, heeding President Rene Preval's call for a peaceful disarmament.

The move came a week after Preval and Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis demanded that the gangs surrender their weapons or risk being killed.

William Baptiste, a gang leader known as Ti Blan, said the gangs in Cite Soleil, a teeming seaside slum outside the capital, would give up their weapons at a ceremony next week.

"We are going to hand over our weapons to the constitutional government on Monday because we want peace," Ti Blan, a spokesman for the gangs in Cite Soleil, told Reuters.

"The use of those weapons only leads to violence and that's not what the society needs," said Ti Blan.

He urged the government to disarm all armed groups, including those linked to Haiti's small but wealthy elite and to political foes of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The gangs in Cite Soleil, which is home to thousands of Aristide supporters, were mostly responsible for violence aimed at destabilizing the U.S.-backed interim government installed after Aristide was ousted from power on Feb. 29, 2004.

The gangs said they took up arms against the interim government to protect themselves and slum residents against repeated attacks by the Haitian police and U.N. peacekeepers.

Past attempts to disarm the gangs have failed or have produced only a few weapons.

Preval, a former Aristide protege, won elections in February and took office in May.

"We held those weapons to protect ourselves and our communities from the interim government which was our enemy," Ti Blan said. "Now, since we don't consider Preval's administration an enemy, there is no more justification for us to keep those weapons."

The U.N. sent its peacekeeping force -- now numbering about 8,000 soldiers and police -- to restore order shortly after Aristide was pushed from office by an armed rebellion.

The U.N. Security Council on Tuesday renewed the mission for another six months.

The gangs said they had invited media and diplomats to witness the weapons handover to Haitian authorities and representatives of the

Demobilization, Disarmament and Reinsertion program, run by the United Nations.

Several other gangs are expected to make the same move in the coming days, said a government official, who did not want to be named.

## **6. Haitian gang leader to Préval: We will not lay down weapons**

**By Stevenson Jacobs**

**Associated Press**

**Miami Herald**

**August 22, 2006**

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/15329157.htm>

Citing deadly raids by U.N. peacekeepers and summary executions by state police, a major gang leader defied President Préval's call to disarm.

PORT-AU-PRINCE - A major gang leader on Monday defied Haitian President René Préval's orders to disarm, saying his followers would give up their weapons if U.N. peacekeepers stop conducting raids in the slums.

Earlier this month, Préval told gang members suspected of being behind a surge of kidnappings and attacks that they must disarm or face death. Gang leader Amaral Duclona's refusal to comply sets up one of the biggest challenges to Préval since he became president in May.

### **GANG RECONSIDERED**

Duclona said he and his men in the Port-au-Prince slum of Cité Soleil had planned to disarm on Monday but reconsidered because of what he called deadly raids by U.N. troops.

"As long as [U.N. troops] keep attacking, we are not going to lay down our weapons," Duclona told reporters in the seaside slum, sitting on a red motor scooter.

A military official denied that U.N. troops were launching unprovoked attacks in Cité Soleil, a densely populated shantytown lined with bullet-pocked homes.

"If armed gangs do not attack us, we will not fire at them," said Lt. Cmdr. Neuzivaldo Dos Anjos, a spokesman for the military of Brazil, which heads up the 8,800-strong U.N. force in Haiti.

U.N. troops and Haitian police have been battling slum-based gangs, forcing many residents to flee and killing some gang fighters. On Monday, a group of Catholic nuns fled their primary school after their compound was hit by gunfire, residents said.

U.N. peacekeepers were deployed to Haiti to help restore order following the 2004 revolt that toppled then-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, now exiled in South Africa. Préval is

hugely popular among Haiti's poor masses and had pledged to crack down on violence and encourage foreign investment.

Duclona, considered Haiti's most wanted man, said the government should send envoys to Cité Soleil to negotiate.

## PEACE GUARANTEES

"We are willing to negotiate as long as they guarantee they won't come into the community and kill people," Duclona said. "The assurances we're asking for are our lives and the lives of the people."

The United Nations mission in Haiti and the government had no immediate comment on Duclona's statements.

Duclona said Préval's warning earlier this month that police would eliminate gang leaders who refuse to disarm has led to more deaths.

"There are members of the police who are killing people," Duclona said. "I think it was a very bad statement."

Haitian police have committed arbitrary arrests, torture and even summary executions, U.N. human rights official Thierry Fagart said last year. National Police chief Mario Andresol has vowed to cleanse the police force of corruption.

### **7. UN extends Haiti mission, adding police, cutting troops**

**AFP**

**Caribbean Net News**

**Thursday, August 17, 2006**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,,-6018123,00.html>

UNITED NATIONS, (AFP): The Security Council on Tuesday extended a UN mission to Haiti by six months, with additional police and fewer soldiers.

A resolution adopted unanimously prolongs until February 15, 2007 the UN Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH).

The number of UN troops deployed in Haiti will drop to 7,200 from 7,500, while the number of police will grow to 1,951 from 1,897, a rise of 54.

The council also authorized the addition of 16 prison guards "in support of the government of Haiti to address the shortcomings of the prison system."

In his most recent report on Haiti to the Security Council, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan sought a greater police presence in the mission -- specifically 54 criminal experts to grapple with an upsurge in violence that has rocked Haiti.

Haiti has suffered an upsurge of kidnappings and armed attacks, which had begun to trail off after the election of President Rene Preval on February 7.

Some 8,700 soldiers and police from several countries have been in Haiti for two years attempting to restore order unleashed after the ouster of former president Jean Bertrand Aristide on February 29, 2004.

The UN mission has come under heavy criticism from some Haitians as lax and ineffective against crime and violence.

#### **8. Amid unrest, Haiti gains in fight on AIDS**

**BY JACOB GOLDSTEIN**

**Miami Herald**

**August 14, 2006**

<http://www.bradenton.com/mld/bradenton/news/world/15304389.htm>

The outlook for people with AIDS in Haiti is improving, even as the fate of many Haitians sick with other diseases remains bleak.

PORT-AU-PRINCE - Even as an unstable government, warring gangs and frequent kidnappings have brought despair to many in Haiti, the fate of AIDS patients has begun to improve.

Haiti has long had the highest AIDS rate outside of Africa, and for years the impoverished country lacked the money to buy AIDS drugs, leaving thousands to die. But since 2003, when a massive influx of foreign support for treatment began, the number of people receiving AIDS drugs has climbed from a few hundred to nearly 8,000.

Testing for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and care for patients who have HIV but do not yet need drugs are also increasing across the country, with funding to bring care to nearly all who need it by 2008.

'The prospects for controlling the AIDS epidemic in Haiti look very good,' said Dr. Jean William Pape, one of several Haitian AIDS doctors discussing Haiti's progress at this year's International AIDS Conference, which opened Sunday in Toronto.

Progress has been so dramatic that a story now making the rounds in Haiti describes patients who become distraught when they learn they don't have AIDS -- because they know that AIDS patients receive free medicine, treatment and sometimes food, all of which are often unavailable to those with other illnesses.

The implication: The infusion of more than \$100 million in foreign aid has in many parts of the country boosted the level of support for AIDS patients far above the care given people with other illnesses in the fragmentary national healthcare system.

'We are putting a diamond into mud,' said Dr. Georges Dubuche, of Management Sciences for Health, a nonprofit group that runs several healthcare projects in Haiti.

Doctors are not suggesting that there is too much money for AIDS care in Haiti. The funding -- most of it targeted directly to a handful of nonprofit healthcare groups, largely bypassing government agencies --

has begun to address the acute inequality that emerged in the 1990s, when expensive new drug cocktails transformed AIDS into a manageable disease in rich countries, while patients in poor nations continued to die because they couldn't afford the drugs.

'I felt dead. My mother had to carry me in,' said a 37-year-old woman who came to Gheskio, Pape's clinic, three years ago. The clinic, a bustling research center set behind concertina wire and across the street from a crumbling slum where U.N. soldiers clash with armed gangs, now sees thousands of patients.

'Since I came here, everything changed,' the woman said. 'I couldn't walk; I walk now. I couldn't eat; I eat now. No more vomiting. No more diarrhea. It's like I'm back to the world.'

But as the acute inequality of access to AIDS drugs has eased, broader, chronic inequalities have returned to the fore. Life expectancy in Haiti is 53 years for men, 56 for women. One child in eight dies before age 5 -- and only 20 percent of those children have HIV, reports one recent study.

Nationwide, 2 percent to 3 percent of Haitians are infected with HIV -- down from 6 percent a decade ago.

'There are 97 percent of people with other diseases and other issues,' said Dubuche, who cites care for pregnant mothers as an example. 'We are putting prevention of mother-to-child transmission [of HIV] into maternity wards that are not proper. Many things are not there -- drugs, IVs. There is no operating room. Most of them can't do blood transfusions.'

The disparity between AIDS patients and others is apparent at the Immaculate Conception Hospital in Les Cayes, one of several provincial public hospitals with new AIDS treatment teams.

Gheskio oversees the project in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. International funding pays for drugs, laboratory equipment, local staff members and mobile teams -- comprising a doctor, nurse, social worker, pharmacist and lab technician -- that make regular training and monitoring visits to each site.

#### HUNDREDS GET DRUGS

About 200 patients now receive AIDS drugs at the hospital. The staff is treating hundreds more who are HIV-positive but don't yet need drugs, and dozens of new patients are tested for HIV every day.

Some of the money flowing in to the AIDS project has benefited the hospital as a whole. For the first time in years, for example, the hospital can consistently pay its water and electricity bills every month, although power outages are still frequent, said Dr. Reynold Grand'Pierre, the Gheskio physician who manages the national expansion program.

But because people with ailments other than AIDS must pay for care, the hospital's main wards -- large, concrete rooms with open windows and rows of metal beds -- remain half-empty.

'Some patients don't come because they don't have enough money,' said Dr. Roland Charles, an internist at the hospital. ``People stay home and die sometimes.'

Some of those people are dying of AIDS but either don't know that free AIDS care is available or don't know that they have the disease. Grand'Pierre hopes to address this by pushing HIV testing out to clinics nationwide.

On Haiti's rural Central Plateau, the nonprofit group Partners in Health/Zanmi Lasante is addressing the same problem by making a complete package of basic healthcare available free to indigent patients, whether or not they have HIV.

Since 2003, the group -- which has its Haitian base in Cange, on the Central Plateau, and also has offices in Boston, where its founder, Paul Farmer, is on the Harvard faculty -- has expanded outward from a single site into formerly dysfunctional public-health clinics throughout the Central Plateau.

#### DONATIONS HELP

The group used AIDS dollars to launch the expansion but added additional funding from foundations and individual donors to offer care to all patients. Within months, traffic at the expanded clinics skyrocketed. The holistic approach has been essential to finding HIV patients, said Dr. Joia Mukherjee, the group's medical director.

'There was this concept that if you had centers for [HIV] testing, people would come find out their status,' she said. 'But in rural areas, at least, that doesn't happen, because people don't say, `Hey, I wonder if I have HIV today.' They come into clinics because they're ill.'

One of the clinics, in the tiny town of Boucan Carre, sits down a muddy track and across a river from the main dirt road that runs through the plateau. The building that formerly housed the clinic is now a staff eating area and is barely big enough to hold a stove, table and sink. Behind that building, a new two-story structure houses a small inpatient hospital, maternity ward, X-ray facilities and several consultation rooms.

The clinic, which saw about 10 patients a day before the expansion, now sees more than 200. Doctors at the clinic are following 350 HIV patients, including 150 on AIDS drugs.

And working in the remote villages that surround the clinic are 65 accompagnateurs, villagers trained by Partners in Health and paid \$40 a month to make daily visits to a half-dozen or so patients to monitor their health and make sure they take their medicine.

The program has been cited as a model for developing AIDS programs in poor, rural settings worldwide. Yet even here, the outlook is grim for many patients who lack jobs, and whose makeshift huts don't keep the rain out.

'They get soaking wet every night. They have no income,' said Dr. Louise Ivers, a Partners in Health doctor who works on the Central Plateau. 'Those are things that are fundamentally associated with disease -- with tuberculosis, with diarrhea. Without a road, patients can't get to the clinic.'

Throughout Haiti, poverty has remained in many ways a more intractable problem than HIV.

Gheskio and Partners in Health have paired with other organizations to provide food to patients -- but the patients often end up sharing the food with hungry family members. Many are too poor to afford even basic transportation.

One recent morning in Les Cayes, a field worker from the treatment center in Les Cayes travels to the countryside to find an 11-year-old boy who urgently needs treatment but missed his appointment because his father lacked \$3 for bus fare. (See accompanying story.)

Later that day, a woman brings in her pill bottle so the doctor can check on whether she has taken all of her AIDS medication. Strict adherence is essential, because when patients miss doses, the virus can mutate to become resistant to the medication.

Last year, Pape and his colleagues published a paper in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine, showing that, even through waves of widespread violence and civil unrest, Gheskio's patients took their drugs as faithfully as patients at U.S. clinics.

But today, there are two pills too many left in the bottle; the patient has missed a dose, she explains, because she ran out of food and did not want to take her pills on an empty stomach.

It's very important that you take your pills every day, the doctor says, even if you have no food.

## **9. AIDS patients' life in Haiti is better**

**So much so, in fact, that there is some jealousy over the care they get, compared with typical ills.**

**By Jacob Goldstein**

**McClatchy Newspapers**

**Philadelphia Inquirer**

**August 19, 2006**

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/living/health/15310005.htm>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - Although unstable government, warring gangs and frequent kidnappings have brought despair to many in Haiti, the fate of AIDS patients has begun to improve.

Haiti long has had the highest AIDS rate outside Africa, and for years the impoverished country lacked the money to buy AIDS drugs, leaving thousands to die. But since 2003, when a massive influx of foreign support for treatment began, the number of those receiving AIDS drugs has climbed from a few hundred to nearly 8,000 people.

Testing for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and care for patients who have HIV but do not yet need drugs are also increasing across the country, with funding sufficient to bring care to nearly all who need it by 2008.

"The prospects for controlling the AIDS epidemic in Haiti look very good," said Jean William Pape, a Haitian AIDS doctor who discussed his country's progress at this year's International AIDS Conference, held this week in Toronto.

Progress has been so dramatic that a story making the rounds in Haiti describes patients who become distraught when they learn they do not have AIDS - because they know that AIDS patients receive free medicine, treatment and sometimes food often unavailable to those with other illnesses.

The implication is that the infusion of more than \$100 million in foreign aid has boosted the level of support for AIDS patients far above that given those with other illnesses in the fragmentary national health-care system.

"We are putting a diamond into mud," said Dr. Georges Dubuche of Management Sciences for Health, a nonprofit group that runs several health-care projects in Haiti.

Doctors are not suggesting that there is too much money for AIDS care in Haiti. The funding has begun to address the inequality that emerged in the 1990s, when expensive drug cocktails changed AIDS into a manageable disease in rich countries while patients in poor nations died because they could not afford the drugs.

As the acute inequality of access to AIDS drugs has eased, broader, chronic inequalities have returned to the fore. Life expectancy in Haiti is 53 years for men, 56 for women. One child in eight dies before age 5 - and only 20 percent of those children have HIV, one recent study reported.

Nationwide, from 2 percent to 3 percent of Haitians are infected with HIV, down from 6 percent a decade ago.

The disparity between AIDS patients and others is apparent at Immaculate Conception Hospital in Les Cayes, one of several provincial public hospitals with AIDS treatment teams.

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About 200 patients now receive AIDS drugs at the hospital. The staff is treating hundreds more who are HIV-positive but do not yet need drugs, and dozens of new patients are tested for HIV every day.

**10. Food a basic need in HIV fight, U.N. agency says**

16 Aug 2006

Reuters

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N164866.htm>

TORONTO, Aug 16 (Reuters) - Drugs are no good without food in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the essential role of proper nutrition has been forgotten, the United Nations World Food Program said on Wednesday.

Organizers of the 16th International AIDS Conference marked a small victory with the announcement that more than 1.6 million people globally now receive lifesaving HIV drugs.

But without proper food, victims of the disease have little will to live, the World Food Program said.

"In a study we did in rural Haiti, we found most of our patients with HIV disease spent more than half of all their time and other resources looking for food," said Dr. Paul Farmer, a professor at Harvard Medical School who has worked in Haiti since the AIDS epidemic started 25 years ago.

Living proof: 28-year-old Joseph Jeune was skeletal before being placed on a food program that included rice, beans, iodized salt and at one point, meat. His family had already purchased his coffin.

"I wouldn't be alive," Jeune, a shoe-shiner from Lascahobas, Haiti, told Reuters through a translator.

"It's the guts that hold up the body. If the gut is empty, how can you stand up?"

Farmer, who has treated Jeune, said he has gained 45 pounds (20 kg) since he was put on the food program, more than half of it in the first two months of therapy.

Now Jeune, who traveled from Haiti to Toronto for the conference, looks slim and healthy.

"If you don't have anything to eat and you have HIV/AIDS you've got two diseases, HIV and hunger," said Jeune.

"I was washed out, I was weak, weak, weak. But since I've had food assistance, I feel strong."

Jeune said being hungry also makes having the disease eat away at you psychologically.

"These medicines, when you start taking them, they whisper in your ear 'you need to eat, you need to eat,' they make you hungry," he said.

"When you wake up in the morning, you take your medicines and you haven't eaten, it makes your stomach bite you."

Farmer, who is also co-founder of Partners in Health, a nonprofit organization, said, "We don't know how to treat this advanced disease without food." Some drugs also need to be taken on a full stomach, or be soon followed by food, he added.

The World Food Program, which provides food assistance to 21 of 25 nations with the highest HIV prevalence rates, and the United Nations AIDS agency UNAIDS say that between 3.8 million and 6.4 million people need nutritional support from 2006 to 2008, at a cost of \$1.1 billion.

It costs 66 cents a day to provide nutritious food to an AIDS patient and his or her family, the groups said. (For more stories related to the Toronto international AIDS Conference, please go to [http://today.reuters.com/news/globalcoverage.aspx?type=aids&src=GLOBALCOVERAGE\\_wire](http://today.reuters.com/news/globalcoverage.aspx?type=aids&src=GLOBALCOVERAGE_wire))

## **11. Immigration law favors Cubans over Haitians**

**By Tim Funk**

**San Jose Mercury News**

**August 14, 2006**

WASHINGTON - It's a classic case of U.S. immigration law favoring one nationality over another: Cubans vs. Haitians.

"Both are coming by boat, both are coming to Florida," says Doris Meissner, a senior fellow at the Migration Policy Institute, a non-partisan think tank in Washington. "But the law is sympathetic to the Cubans and unsympathetic to the Haitians."

Immigrants from Haiti are trying to escape poverty, chaos and violence.

Cubans get a legal break partly because they are fleeing Fidel Castro's communist regime - America's enemy for nearly half a century, says Meissner, who headed the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service in the 1990s.

But U.S. policy in this case, she adds, is also "a reflection of domestic politics."

Translation: The Cuban American community in Florida is a political powerhouse - especially in the Republican Party.

Cubans' special status can be traced to the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act. Passed by Congress in the midst of the Cold War, it was designed to welcome those leaving the communist island - and "to poke a finger in the eye of Castro," says Angela Kelly, deputy director of the National Immigration Forum.

Cuban Americans liken those fleeing Castro's dictatorship to East Germans who managed to scale the Berlin Wall.

A Florida-bound boatlift of more than 37,000 Cubans in 1994 caused then-President Clinton to tinker with the policy.

Called "wet foot/dry foot," it says Cubans stopped at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard can be sent to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for an asylum hearing. If approved, they're sent to a third country - not the United States.

But those who make it to land still get what often amounts to automatic asylum.

Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., tried to change that in 1996, calling the Cuban act a relic and including a repeal of it in his rewrite of immigration law.

Enter Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla. He persuaded the Senate to strip the measure from Simpson's bill and affirm special treatment for Cuba until a democratic government is elected there.

Haitians apprehended - on land or at sea - can still apply for asylum. But few get it.

In 1998, Congress passed the Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act, which let certain Haitians living in the United States become legal residents.

But a Haitian and a Cuban who arrive in the same boat still can be treated differently under the law.

"One goes to the detention center," says federal immigration spokesman Michael Defensor. "The other goes to (Miami's) Little Havana."

## **12. Foreign policy often dominates U.S. immigration policy**

**By Tim Funk and Danica Coto**

**Kansas City Star**

**August 14, 2006**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - In a national debate fixated on Mexicans sneaking across the border, there's been barely a peep about how arbitrary and political U.S. immigration law can be.

Congress, the White House and U.S. immigration agencies have developed over the years a complex patchwork system that favors some groups and nationalities over others.

Did you know that:

220,000 Salvadorans - many of them illegal immigrants now living in the Carolinas - can legally stay and work because the Bush administration has offered them "temporary protected status" for the past five years?

Irish-American members of Congress - including Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass. - were able to set aside thousands of "green cards," a path of eventual citizenship, for thousands of Irish immigrants?

Cubans who make it to U.S. soil can legally stay and apply a year and a day later for permanent residency? Those fleeing the communist Castro regime are probably the biggest winners in the U.S. immigration game.

Most Cubans who leave make the dangerous 100-mile trip by boat. But in October 2004, Charlotte's Jocelyn Honorate did what a growing number of

Cubans do: She flew to Mexico, then headed for the U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint in Hidalgo, Texas.

"I'm Cuban," she told the guard.

A few days later, she was released, leaving behind clothing for other detainees - Haitians, Guatemalans and others - who eventually would be sent back home.

"It was hard talking with them," remembers Honorate, now 26 and a legal U.S. resident who works for a Charlotte architectural firm. "They were people without hope."

By contrast, Honorate and 40 other Cubans got this greeting by speakerphone: "Congratulations! You've all been approved. Welcome to the United States!"

That legal break dates to the Cold War.

Hoping to strike a blow against Fidel Castro, Congress passed the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act.

No such blanket welcome exists in U.S. law for those who'd like to emigrate from other Communist countries - China, North Korea, Vietnam. One reason: None of those countries have an exile community with the political clout of Cuban Americans in South Florida.

After Castro's decision to cede power, the Bush administration announced plans to speed up family visas to make it even easier for some Cubans to come.

That latest step "has more to do with a handful of political races in Florida in November than with rebuilding Cuba," charged the Federal for American Immigration Reform, a group that wants tougher immigration laws.

Angela Kelly of the National Immigration Forum, which wants more welcoming laws for immigrants, agrees: "You can't deny the high degree of influence by the Cuban lobby."

Ditto the Irish lobby, which has long had pull with powerful Irish-American politicians in Congress.

In the late 1980s, Rep. Brian Donnelly, D-Mass., added amendments that enabled more than 10,000 illegal Irish immigrants to get legal status. And in 1990, Rep. Brian Morrison, D-Conn, was able to set aside 40 percent of 40,000 so-called "diversity visas" for natives of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

One of Morrison's allies: Sen. Kennedy, whose office said his efforts were aimed at the unintended consequences of a 1965 law that made it harder for Irish to come because most no longer had immediate family here.

"He wants to help the Irish and others who don't have family connections and have no other way to emigrate," said Kennedy spokeswoman Laura Capps.

The lesson: It never hurts to have a U.S. senator on your side.

Or a U.S. president.

El Salvador became a "temporary protected status" (TPS) country in 2001, following two earthquakes that killed 1,000 people and destroyed more than 200,000 homes.

After intense lobbying by the Salvadoran government, the TPS was just extended for another 12 months. That means Salvadorans who were living in the United States in 2001 - many of them illegally - can stay and work for another year. TPS comes up for renewal or termination every 12 to 18 months.

TPS is designed to aid countries reeling from a natural disaster, civil war or other destabilizing situation. But nations that qualify have been denied.

Pakistan had 80,000 people die in an earthquake last year. It doesn't have TPS even though 50 groups and 34 members of Congress have asked for it.

The government of Colombia has also asked for TPS, to no avail, even though the South American country is plagued by guerilla conflict and narco-terrorists.

And why has Haiti's request for TPS been denied? With poverty, violence and unstable governments, "what nation has suffered more?" asks Joan Friedland of the National Immigration Law Center, which promotes the rights of low-income immigrants.

Meanwhile, some of the seven TPS-designated countries get extensions though their disasters happened long ago. Christopher Bentley of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services says "assessments" and "studies" help decide whether to extend TPS and whether holders can return safely home.

But some experts see politics in the process, saying President Bush is using TPS to boost the pro-American government in El Salvador, as other Latin American countries such as Venezuela and Bolivia flirt with anti-Americanism.

Salvadoran President Antonio Saca sent 400 troops to Iraq. And El Salvador was the first nation to implement CAFTA - Bush's trade pact with Central American countries.

Salvadorans in the United States send home \$2.5 billion every year - \$250 million of it from TPS holders. Keeping those "remittances" flowing to voting families in El Salvador is a political plus for Saca and his conservative party.

El Salvador's TPS designation "has to be political," says Charlotte immigration attorney Phillip Turtletaub, who represents some local TPS holders. "Those (earthquakes) happened years ago. Come on!"

Being pro-American and sending troops to Iraq are no guarantees of winning the immigration game, however.

Poland, which ordered troops to Iraq too, would like better immigration benefits. Polish citizens who want to visit the United States are irked that they have to get tourist visas. They want to be part of America's "visa waiver" program, along with 27 other staunch U.S. allies. Citizens of those countries need only a passport to visit the United States.

This year, the U.S. Senate approved an amendment to its immigration reform package that would exempt Poles from the visa requirement. Among the sponsors: Sen. Barbara Mikulski, the great-granddaughter of Polish immigrants.

But it's not law yet, and there's also the pesky truth that many Poles who do come to the U.S. don't return home, making them illegal immigrants.

Still, U.S. politicians who visit the ex-Soviet block country say the Poles feel like second-class friends.

Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., says he was peppered with the same question: "Why don't you treat us the same?"

Fairness has never been a requirement or a tradition in fashioning U.S. immigration law. Since 1875, when the Supreme Court ruled that immigration is a federal matter, Congress has felt free to discriminate.

"Immigration law is so wide open that Congress could, theoretically, pass a law saying only 6-foot-tall, blue-eyed Norwegians can come," says Dan Kowalski of Bender's Immigration Bulletin, an online guide to U.S. immigration news.

It's never gotten that wacky, but Congress did vote in 1882 to ban Chinese immigration - a law that wasn't repealed until 1943.

From the 1920s until the 1960s, immigration quotas also gave preference to white Northern Europeans.

Since then, a host of factors ranging from foreign policy to political clout have shaped laws and rules about who can come legally and who can't.

U.S. immigration officials can cite reasons," says Josh Bernstein, director of federal policy at the National Immigration Law Center.

But, he adds, "at the individual level, (the system) is unfair. Immigration policy is a hodgepodge of measures and standards that are always made in a compromise of policy and politics."

Making special cases for some nations' immigrants has its defenders.

Honorate, the Cuban woman who moved to Charlotte, says living under communism is something not even the poorest Mexicans have had to endure. She still gets angry about government policies and the

suffering in Cuba. She remembers authorities removing air conditioning from a family car so everyone "could be equal."

Also grateful: Jose Romero, a 31-year-old Charlotte construction worker who now earns three times what he did in his native El Salvador.

He got TPS five years ago after living in the U.S. illegally for five years.

Romero told his fellow construction workers, most of them Mexican, about his TPS. They were happy for him, but jealous.

"They're never going to give us anything," he said the Mexicans told him.

Now Romero has peace of mind.

"You're free and you're happy," he said. "It's the freedom of having a piece of paper that everyone wants."