

Dear Colleagues,

Please find below the mainstream news on Haiti for October 12 – 20, 2006.

The AP and Reuters both reported on last week's brief battle between UN peacekeepers and Cite Soleil residents resulting in at least three deaths. A UN spokesperson claimed peacekeepers were simply removing debris blocking a road behind the main UN base in Cite Soleil. The AP reported UN troops leveled cinderblock homes, sending their residents scrambling from the bulldozers. The AP/International Herald Tribune article had reasonably fair coverage of resident's reactions and the resulting deaths following UN gunfire. The UN claimed they fired in self-defense but witnesses said that there was no gunfire, only rocks thrown by residents. However, the Reuters account says the UN claims they were attacked by one of Cite Soleil's "notorious armed gangs." The Reuters report closes with the well-worn phrase "several armed groups....are believed to be loyal to former President Jean Bertrand Aristide," without indicating the phrase's relevance to the story. This mantra, repeated enough, has the effect of branding all resistance to the UN and all armed crime in Cite Soleil as the product of "armed gangs aligned with Aristide."

Three CARICOM leaders completed a one-day fact finding trip to Haiti. The high profile visit came on the heels of a seven member CARICOM technical team assessment mission to Haiti. The CARICOM leaders expressed optimism that Haiti is back on "the right path" but have yet to allow Haiti to join CARICOM's single-market chiefly because "Haiti had yet to adopt a common external tariff waving duties and taxes on goods from other Caribbean nations."

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**1. Witnesses say 2 civilians killed in Haiti clash with U.N. troops**

**The Associated Press**

**International Herald Tribune**

**October 19, 2006**

[http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/10/19/news/CB\\_GEN\\_Haiti\\_Slum\\_Violence.php](http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/10/19/news/CB_GEN_Haiti_Slum_Violence.php)

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

A gunbattle broke out Thursday between U.N. troops and gunmen after peacekeepers bulldozed debris from a road in a volatile slum, and witnesses said at least two civilians were killed.

U.N. military spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Neuzivaldo Dos Anjos said peacekeepers removed old car frames and part of a wall lining a road in Cite Soleil, a vast slum on the edge of Haiti's capital and a base for well-armed gangs.

Dos Anjos said they were trying to clear debris to allow vehicle traffic on the road, which runs behind the main U.N. military base in the slum.

"While we were doing that we received gun shots and exchanged fire in self defense. No one was injured from our side and I do not have any information as to injuries on the aggressors' side," he said.

But residents said U.N. personnel razed at least one abandoned cinderblock home, sending people in nearby homes fleeing for safety.

Residents said they threw rocks at peacekeepers and accused them of opening fire, killing two men.

"I was inside my house when they (peacekeepers) started breaking things apart," said Naomi Exint, 24, who said part of her house was destroyed.

Dos Anjos said no homes were destroyed.

Weeping relatives screamed and fainted as emergency workers used a stretcher to carry off one man's body, which was covered by a blood-soaked white sheet. They said he was buying food at a market when he was shot.

The violence shattered a shaky calm that had prevailed in the area for weeks and added to residents' anger at an 8,800-strong U.N. force sent to restore order after armed rebels forced former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide from power in 2004.

The seaside slum, populated by rows of scrap-metal shacks and rutted dirt streets, is home to an estimated 300,000 people.

In a goodwill tour earlier this month, Haitian police entered Cite Soleil for the first time in nearly three years, shaking hands with residents and announcing plans to replace a base that was destroyed during the revolt.

## **2. At least three said killed in clash in Haiti slum**

**19 Oct 2006**

**By Joseph Guyler Delva**

**Reuters**

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N19270338.htm>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, - At least three people were killed in Haiti's largest and most dangerous slum on Thursday when a protest over the alleged destruction of homes by U.N. peacekeepers turned violent, witnesses said.

Residents of Cite Soleil -- a teeming warren of shantytowns on the southern tip of Port-au-Prince -- said the victims were shot dead by Brazilian peacekeepers.

The shootings came after angry protesters confronted the U.N. troops and accused them of razing homes to make way for a road, according to the witnesses, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals.

A spokeswoman for the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti, Sophie Boutaud de la Combe, said she was unable to say whether anyone was killed or wounded during the clash.

But she said U.N. peacekeepers had only been trying to break down a number of low-lying walls, to open up access to a paved road, when they returned fire after coming under attack from one of Cite Soleil's notorious armed gangs.

A Reuters' reporter saw the body of a middle-aged man killed during the clash, but was unable to confirm other deaths or witness claims that at least three children were injured.

Marc Evans Jean, one eyewitness, said someone had tried to hurl a Molotov cocktail at the peacekeepers but insisted no gunshots were fired at them.

Several armed groups in the impoverished Caribbean nation are believed to be loyal to former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was forced from power in February 2004 by an armed rebellion and pressure from the United States and France. U.N. peacekeepers were deployed four months later to stabilize the country.

### **3. CARICOM optimistic following Haiti trip**

**BY JACQUELINE CHARLES**

**Miami Herald**

**October 19, 2006**

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/haiti/15793160.htm>

PORT-AU-PRINCE - Three Caribbean leaders concluded a one-day fact-finding visit to Haiti Wednesday, saying they were pleased with the progress President René Préval has made toward reconstructing the country but concerned about the slow pace of international community assistance for that process.

**POWER BROKERS**

The prime ministers of Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis spent the day in meetings with Préval, Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis and all of the members of the Haitian Senate and lower House.

Following a luncheon hosted by Préval, they also met with 15 members of the private sector.

The heads-of-government meeting came two days after a seven-member technical team from the 15-member nation Caribbean Community arrived in Haiti to assess the situation following the February election of Préval and parliament.

The three visiting heads of government expressed optimism at the end of their one-day visit that Haiti is on the right path back to rebuilding following a violent revolt in 2004 that led to the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and then two years without a democratically-elected government.

Of special concern, according to delegation members, was the work needed to help Haiti benefit from the CARICOM single-market and economy initiative launched earlier this year. Once Haiti officially joins, certain skilled Haitians would be easily allowed to work in other CARICOM member nations.

The prime ministers were joined in their visit by CARICOM Secretary General Edwin Carrington and Assistant Secretary General Colin Granderson.

#### VISA DELAYS

During their meetings, the private sector members said they appreciated the visit as the beginning of a needed dialogue, according to persons at the session, but expressed concerns about other CARICOM members' visa requirements for Haitians. Some visa requests can take weeks.

"This is a big problem," said Bernard Craan. "These are the kinds of issues they have to tackle right away."

One solution suggested was that any Haitian businessman already holding visas from the United States, Canada or the European Union should be allowed to travel to other Caribbean nations without having to submit obtain other visas.

#### **4. Caribbean Leaders: Haiti Not Ready To Join Regional Trade Bloc**

**International Herald Tribune**

**October 18, 2006**

[http://www.ihrt.com/articles/ap/2006/10/18/business/CB\\_FIN\\_Haiti\\_Caribbean.php](http://www.ihrt.com/articles/ap/2006/10/18/business/CB_FIN_Haiti_Caribbean.php)

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti A high-level Caribbean delegation promised to support Haiti as it returns to democratic rule but said Wednesday that the troubled and impoverished nation was not ready to join a regional trade bloc.

Leaders from the 15-member Caribbean Community praised President Rene Preval's new government for working to steer Haiti toward stability after a 2004 revolt toppled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

"We found a clear commitment of the people responsible for government to move this country forward out of the very difficulties it finds itself," St. Kitts Prime Minister Denzil Douglas told reporters, as the leaders wrapped up a one-day visit.

Haiti was suspended from the Caribbean Community, or Caricom, after armed rebels forced out Aristide, the country's first democratically elected leader. It was formally readmitted in July.

In meetings with Preval and other officials, Douglas said the delegation observed "an openness" to bridge Haiti's deep political divide, noting that the country's Cabinet includes members of six political parties.

"We shall in fact advise the heads of government of the Caribbean Community to continue to embrace and work with Haiti," added Douglas, Caricom's chairman.

However, St. Lucia's Prime Minister, Kenny Anthony, said Haiti wasn't ready to join the Caribbean Single Market, which allows the free flow of goods, services and certain workers throughout 12 Caribbean countries with more than 6 million people.

Anthony said Haiti had yet to adopt a common external tariff waving duties and taxes on goods from other Caribbean nations, noting that talks to establish the mechanism were cut off after the revolt.

"Now we have to resume the process," Anthony said. "Essentially we will be able to move as fast as Haiti is prepared to go."

Haitian officials did not immediately comment.

The revolt plunged Haiti's ragged economy deeper into despair, sending inflation and unemployment soaring.

Douglas urged foreign donors to speed up aid disbursement needed for recovery, saying: "We are concerned at the slow pace of movement in this regard."

Other officials participating in the visit include Caricom Secretary-General Edwin Carrington and Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerritt.

Haiti, which has 8 million people, is Caricom's most populous member state.