



The International Community Should Pressure the Haitian Government
For Prompt *and* Fair Elections

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Haiti Six Months Later: Reports from the Ground

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Elections Can Be Held in Haiti

The Haitian government has announced that presidential and parliamentary elections will be held November 28, 2010. However, given the extensive destruction wrought by the January 12, 2010 earthquake, achieving this goal will require significant assistance from the international community. Elections are necessary to fulfill constitutional obligations and if elections are not held, Haiti's extraordinary difficulties will be compounded by the lack of a credible, democratic power in Haiti.

- **President Préval has issued decrees announcing elections will be held this year:** Préval has authorized the CEP to begin preparing for elections and decreed that presidential and parliamentary elections will take place November 28, 2010. He has publicly expressed his belief that elections are necessary for Haiti's post-quake recovery and long-term development and that, despite the massive difficulties faced, elections are crucial to avoid leaving a "political vacuum" when his term is up February 7, 2011.
- **UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon says it is possible to hold elections this year:** "The UN mission in Haiti has said it is possible to organize elections before the end of the year even if the country has not fully recovered from the earthquake's devastation."
- **USAID/International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) report that elections can be held this year:** "IFES believes the operational branch of the CEP is technically capable of organizing [elections] assuming their preparations are not delayed any longer and . . . problems and issues are addressed and solved."

Requirements for Elections

National Identification Cards (CINs)

CINs are required by the Haitian electoral law to vote, thus, national identification cards must be produced for new registrants and for those whose cards were lost or destroyed in the earthquake. It is estimated that 550,000 CINs will need to be distributed. The production and distribution of CINs is the legal responsibility of Haiti's National Identification Office (ONI), which estimates that it can currently generate approximately 100,000 cards per month. However, the ONI has had difficulties in the past with this responsibility and Haiti has only one CIN-producing machine, so a breakdown or even delay in production could prove catastrophic for the entire operation.

In the elections held in Indonesia after the tsunami, citizens were able to obtain temporary identification that enabled them to participate in the election. IFES has suggested issuing temporary IDs as a solution in Haiti. The temporary IDs would need to be recognized by the Ministry of Justice as equivalent to CINs for the purpose of these elections only. This would resolve the CIN production and distribution problem. Otherwise, Haiti will need more CIN-producing machines to reach the demand and prevent further delay. These machines could be purchased with aid money or borrowed from other countries.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the fact that most IDPs and rural residents in Haiti will not be able to appear at the ONI to obtain CINs. In Sri Lanka, mobile teams that enter areas of refuge to process IDPs' requests for replacement documentation have been successful. IFES has suggested setting up reallocation and polling centers (RPCs) that include ONI agents to handle CIN requests.

Electoral Lists/Registration

The Electoral Register, consisting of all eligible voters, will be produced from data extracted from the ONI register. The CEP must also prepare the General Election List (LEG) containing all registered voters and Partial Electoral Lists (SARAs) for each voting center. The process of updating the electoral list must begin no later than July. The two major problems with the Civil Registry, and therefore the electoral lists, are: (1) the removal of the deceased and (2) the reallocation of the people displaced after the earthquake to polling centers.

It will not be possible to remove the names of the deceased from the lists before the elections, but "there are very effective mechanisms in place to prevent another person from using a deceased's identity to vote, mainly the photo on the CIN and on the electoral lists, and the use of the indelible ink," which is already required by law. The use of indelible ink in the 2005 Iraq elections was considered an adequate measure to prevent voting more than once.

The CEP has proposed opening RPCs to allow all voters to choose the center they wish to vote at on polling day. Mobile RPCs, such as those used in Sri Lanka, or RPCs located in or close to IDP camps should be used to encourage voter participation and prevent manipulation of the system to systematically exclude certain voters who cannot afford or arrange transportation.

Polls

The CEP faces two major challenges regarding polling stations: 1. Almost half of the polling stations in Port-au-Prince were destroyed in the earthquake, and 2. Internally displaced persons must be assigned new polling centers based on where they are now located. At least 2 Voting Centers must be established in each communal section. The CEP must also recruit and train election supervisors for each voting center.

In Bosnia, OSCE staff organized repairs to damaged buildings for use as polling stations. Another tactic to facilitate voting in Bosnia was the use of buses to transport voters to polling stations. Taking into account the lessons learned through the Bosnian election experience, this could provide a viable option for IDPs in Haiti.

Recommendations

- Support the use of mobile or easily accessible RPCs to issue IDs and register voters.
- Pressure the Ministry of Justice to recognize temporary identification for these elections.
- Provide extensive voter education through media and community meetings.
- Support the establishment of absentee polling stations and providing transportation for voters who otherwise would be unable to vote.
- Place polling stations in areas allowing IDPs, poor and disabled Haitians to participate.
- Condition funds on allowing extensive international monitoring and observation.

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