

JILAP Declaration – Translation

August 12, 2015

3rd position of JILAP on voting day August 9, 2015

JILAP mobilized 1300 people to observe the first round of 2015 legislative elections. When we consider that elections are a democratic exercise that allows institutions to take root to make democracy grow, always faithful to its work, the Commission sent eyes to each territory of the country to see how the process was unfolding. Although the voting day ended, there are various aspects of the process that merit attention. Here's what the Commission observed:

1. Concerning the number of voters who voted:

Participation was very low, the number of people besides *mandataires*, observers, political parties and people involved in the electoral process like members of the voting centers wasn't more than 25 in each voting center. The number of *mandataires* varied and there were some who didn't have the proper identification papers.

2. Concerning the police:

Even if the police had a security plan for the elections, in various places, the presence of the police was stronger in some places than in others. Various measures the police foresaw and announced were not respected. For example, **cars and motorcycles didn't respect the 300 meter distance from the voting center, there were many illegal guns in the hands of bandits, and all the measures that were announced were not respected.** Desperate supporters of candidates took advantage of the weakness of the police to misbehave, like throwing rocks, shooting to wound or kill people, beating members of the centers, filling ballot boxes, threatening voters, and stealing ballot boxes in various places in various departments of the country:

- In the North department, we note Limonad, Katye Moren, Gran Rivyè di Nò, Dondon, Fò Sen Michel in the town of Cap Haitien.
- In the Southeast, in the voting center Celie Lamour, in Peredo, in voting center Makari, in the commune Kay Jacmèl, in Segen and in the commune of Marigo.
- In Grande Anse especially in the town of Jeremie, in 3 voting centers: Lise Nò Aleksy, Lise Jèn Fi and the locale of EFAKAP.
- In the Northwest, in Mole Saint Nicholas, in Mawouj, in the locale of Bono, voting center Fatima in the town of Port de Paix.
- In the Northeast, in Terrier Rouge, Granbasen, Ouanaminthe, Ferye, Bwadlorans.
- In Artibonite, in Dedin, in Ti Rivyè Latibonit.
- In the West, we note lekòl Nasyonal Izidò Bwawon on Lama road, lekòl nasyonal Jan Franswa Koven on Bòjla road, the voting center Riyèl Vayan, Lekòl Kolonbi nan Boudon, disorder in Jeremie, the voting center Bwalo in Kavayon, in lekòl Sent Terèz, in Aken, the 4th section of Jangle, many gunshots in the Kafou Fèy high school caused panic; in the communes of Akayè, Kabarè, Tigwav, Leogane, Cite Soleil and Kòniyon-Granbwa.

3. **Concerning observers, *mandataires*, and candidates:**

There are several organizational observers who took the place of voting center members so they could protect the interests of some political parties. That's how in Jacmel a group of observers bearing the name MINOEH were giving orders to the voting center members for PHTK.

Something that's new this time is that many organizations observing the elections were either close to the government or some political parties. In different places in the country, there were many *mandataires* from political parties who were involved in the mayhem and even continued to campaign for their candidates inside of voting centers. Various candidates and their supporters were involved in violence and they put a lot of pressure on people inside the voting centers.

4. **Concerning the CEP:**

The electoral council's machine didn't work well, the electoral lists were not correct, and various voters couldn't find their names on the voting lists. Many personnel didn't show competence in the jobs they had to do. Cards for the political parties' *mandataires* and accreditation cards for the observers and journalists weren't ready in time, and in several voting centers, citizens had trouble finding their names. There are many voting centers that didn't respond about receiving the process because their space was so small. Handicapped people, people who don't see well, people of advanced age couldn't fulfill their civic duty because there was nobody to help them. There are other positions the CEP took during the electoral process that didn't work well, like: use of technological means (internet, SMS) to register, to find voting centers, and other information. Those means were not accessible to everyone. There wasn't enough of a communications campaign to help people learn how to use them. Similarly, there wasn't enough of a campaign to show the voters how to vote.

Recommendations:

While we await an observation report with more details, JILAP asks the CEP to:

- 1) Correct the partial electoral lists and publish them in a reasonable timeframe so people have the means of verifying in advanced.
- 2) Use a means that will help the population understand everything that's being done.
- 3) All of the advice and directions the CEP passes should work on the Election Day. If there's an SMS address, it should be working on the day of the election. The CEP should build a solid rapport with the telephone companies.
- 4) Devote the middle of August and September to revise and correct the partial electoral list. Give the citizens more opportunity to indicate address changes. Publish the new list in the middle of the month of September so the citizens can verify.
- 5) Voting bureaus and centers located in a good space, accessible and putting out good materials.
- 6) Amend the electoral decree to solve the question of the number of *mandataires* in a voting center. Each political party should have a *mandataire* for each voting center. It's not possible for the elections to become an election for *mandataires* and political party observers only.
- 7) Cards and badges of *mandataires* and national observers should be ready a week before the election date.

- 8) The CEP security agents should be better-selected, should be more active and know their roles.
- 9) Give each voting center a person who has the right to help the voters find their voting center.
- 10) Act firmly against all candidates and supporters who are violent. This way that candidate can't go to the next elections. There should be verification on all of the ballot boxes that are stolen or disappear.
- 11) Consider the elections work experience of the observers to improve the organization of the elections.
- 12) Meet with the candidates for each department and discuss the results before they're published, something that could help reduce contestation because when four eyes meet, lies end.

JILAP believes the elections are too costly, so that's why they should be well-organized and permit true participation of citizens to express themselves.

Because elections in Haiti cause fear, people don't go vote to defend their rights. Major efforts should be made at the level of civil society and moral forces to help re-establish confidence and to encourage citizens to go fulfill their civic duty. The danger of illegitimate people representing or leading the country will always continue when the voters don't go out to vote.

The Commission salutes the courage of everyone who participated in realizing the voting day of August 9, 2015. It is ready to receive grievances and testimonies of interested people on the authors of violent acts before and during the voting day.

(Signed by Jocelyne Colas Noel Appolon, Av., "National Director of Observation" and Rovelsond, "Responsible")