

Haiti, US-Installed “Stooge Regime”. Long-Suffering Haitians Want Change

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Haitians know adversity and anguish as well as anyone. They’ve experienced over 500 years of oppression, slavery, despotism, colonization, reparations, embargoes, sanctions, deep poverty, starvation, crushing debt, and natural calamities from destructive hurricanes to a dozen regional magnitude 7.0 or greater earthquakes.

Except briefly after their successful 1804 revolution and under Aristide, they’ve been denied legitimate governance and freedom. They continue suffering today under stealth Duvalierist Michel (“Sweet Micky”) Martelly. He’s a US-installed stooge.

He wasn’t elected. He was anointed. He’s Washington’s man. A March 2011 runoff process installed him. He took office in May. He fits the neoliberal/imperial mold. He’s an anti-populist former Kompa singer.

He has longstanding ties to Haitian elites, militarists, reactionary Duvalierists, and thuggish Tonton Macoute assassins. He enforces predatory neoliberal harshness.

UN Blue Helmet MINUSTAH occupiers and internal security forces enforce state-sponsored repression. Haitians wanting freedom and justice are denied. Activists are targeted.

Their liberating struggle continues. They’ve had enough and want change. Since September, they’ve held large protests, gone on strike, and massed in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere across the country.

On September 30, huge crowds commemorated the 21st anniversary of the 1991 coup against Aristide. In February 2004, a second one followed.

Protests continue. On October 15, Haitians came out in force in Port-au-Prince. At issue is government corruption, broken promises, high living costs, unaffordable food prices, and other unaddressed issues.

Under ideal conditions, Haitians endure hardships most Americans can’t imagine. How can they when Western media say little. US television explains nothing.

Haitians accuse Martelly of serving business and elite interests. At the same time, vital people needs are ignored. He promised relief and delivered betrayal. One protester spoke for others, saying:

“Martelly is wasting the meager resources of the country to buy luxury vehicles and for international trips that don’t bring anything to the country.”

Another said, "Grassroots organizations are going to organize with other political forces to mobilize the rest of the country against this corrupt regime supported by a few members of the international community."

Others said plenty more. On Sunday, they came out in force. They demanded Martelly resign. Hundreds of thousands remain homeless nearly three years after the devastating January 2010 earthquake.

Rebuilding efforts focus on commercial development and other projects benefitting Haitian elites. Ordinary people are ignored. No one cares if they live, die, suffer or starve.

They get by best they can in squalid makeshift camps. They're little more than flimsy tents and shacks made from bed sheets, tarpaulin, wood scraps, or metal parts. They're unsafe to live in. Normality is nowhere in sight or considered. Authorities able to help don't care.

Haitians want to leave but have no place to go. They're desperate, impoverished, unemployed, and for many falling ill untreated. They're vulnerable to torrential rains, deadly diseases, and water-borne ones like cholera. Since winter 2010, it claimed thousands of lives. Deaths continue regularly.

Life in Occupied Haiti is hellish. Hoped for help doesn't come. International aid falls far short. New homes to replace destroyed ones aren't planned.

Haiti's 1987 Constitution called its republic "indivisible, sovereign, independent, cooperative, free, democratic, and social...." Like France, its national motto is "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Basic rights were established.

Article 19 guarantees "the right to life, health, and respect of the human person for all citizens without distinction, in conformity with the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man."

Article 22 "recognize(s) the right of every citizen to decent housing, education, food and social security."

Article 24 guarantees "individual liberty." Other fundamental rights were established.

Aristide alone respected rule of law provisions and enforced them. Despots before and after him trashed what they should have supported. Martelly's as bad as the rest of them. He follows a long shameless tradition.

On June 12, 2012, he went further. He got lawless constitutional amendments established. They affirmed diktat executive power. They reinstated Duvalierist death squads. He violated constitutional provisions doing so.

Before he left office, Rene Preval and parliament rushed through similar amendments. The day before his term ended, they were published.

Parliamentary protests followed. Changes didn't correspond to what passed. Amendments were suspended. Weeks after taking office, Martelly published a decree suspending them.

He established a committee to make recommendations. Everything was done secretly. Constitutional law was violated. He hardened tyranny.

Perhaps with tongue in cheek, the Congressional Research Service said on August 1, “There is still much to be accomplished in the democratization of Haiti. (M)outing public frustration” is understandable.

Political activist [David Oxygene](#) went further. On June 19, he was arrested. He was targeted during one of many Port-au-Prince demonstrations. People attending demand help for Haiti’s poor, disadvantaged, unemployed, and homeless.

Oxygene heads Haiti’s Movement for Liberty and Equality by Haitians for Fraternity (MOLEGHAF). Charges against him were bogus. Fellow activist Duckens Charles was arrested and imprisoned at the same time.

Oxygene’s lawyer convinced a judge to release him. On August 30, he and Charles were freed together. Last spring, Oxygene was warned to stop protesting. Otherwise he’d be arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned. He and others like him are vulnerable.

Martelly wants no opposition. He’s playing hardball to silence dissent. Independent journalists are endangered. Outspoken Haitian lawmakers risk trouble.

In early October, Senator Moise Jean Charles challenged Martelly, saying:

“We are not only in the streets against the high cost of living, corruption, nepotism, bad governing, dictatorship, but equally to demand (his) departure....”

Oxygene won’t be silent. Deep poverty, corruption, state repression, and other unaddressed issues are too intolerable to ignore.

“We demand social services like work and decent housing,” he said. “We’re not asking for a couple little jobs here and there. We’re asking for a fundamental change that allows the poorest folks to have a decent life, to make a decent living.”

“Martelly promised that he was going to make change but nothing has changed, and people see that. People’s bad situations have gotten worse. There is growing discontent in the quarters populaires, or poor neighborhoods, where young men don’t have work and families go hungry.”

During two months in prison, he and around 100 others were crammed in a cell meant for 34. They got small amounts of untreated water. Drinking it risks disease, even death.

“Conditions are really harsh,” he said. “People fight every day. “Men stab one another, smoke, take drugs, and become frustrated because of the” appalling conditions. “Their frustrations” boil over. They take it out on each other.

Arrest and imprisonment strengthened his activism. He knows he’ll be arrested again. So do others like him.

“These kinds of things can either break you and make you turn away from the struggle, or they can fortify you to battle harder for change. For me, it made me stronger to continue the struggle and never give up until I see change or until they kill me.”

“*Ann nou batay pou viktwa final, pou chanjman mond la,*” he says. Let’s fight for the final victory, for the world to change. It won’t happen unless ordinary Haitians and people

everywhere do it on their own. It's the only way.

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