

Media Coverage of Haiti's Sham Elections

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What if a national election was held and virtually no one showed up? That's precisely what happened in Haiti. On April 19, scheduled senatorial elections were to fill 12 open seats. However, after majority Fanmi Lavalas (FL) candidates were disqualified on a first time ever procedural technicality, party leaders called for a national boycott, and Haitians responded overwhelmingly with estimates of as few as 3% of eligible voters participating.

According to Rene Civil, one of the boycott's leaders:

"What we (saw was) the non-violent resistance of the Haitian people to undemocratic elections. There is no way they will be able to call Senators elected in this process legitimate. You cannot hold elections with the majority political party" excluded.

Ronald Fareau, another leader, added:

"We want to congratulate the international community for their hypocrisy in these elections. They spent over \$17 million on another electoral fraud in Haiti while our people continue to suffer from malnutrition and illiteracy."

In 2005, coup-ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide said:

"The people of Haiti want life and not death. They want peace and not violence. They want democracy and not repression."

Except briefly under his leadership, they've gotten none of the three, most recently on April 19 when again they lost out, including by distorted media coverage.

AP headlined: "Few Vote in Haiti After Clash in City." In fact, the election was virtually trouble-free, save for sporadic incidents between president Rene Preval's Lespwa party and its rival L'Union in Mirebalais in the Central Plateau region - away from Port-au-Prince and unrelated to FL. Overall, the day was remarkably calm, peaceful, and quiet as nearly everyone stayed home.

One Cite Soleil incident involved a L'Union party member accused of bribing voters with money and food, again unrelated to FL, with no effect on the outcome that's clearly discredited and illegitimate.

However, AP referred to elections "held under the threat of unrest....President Rene Preval's supporters clashed briefly in the capital (the Cite Soleil incident) with backers of a rival party....and hundreds of protesters raided polling places and dumped ballots in Mirebalais," grossly misreporting the Central Plateau incident.

With so few ballots cast, results should be easily tabulated. However, another AP report headlined: "Haiti will likely wait days for election results....an election official said Monday....It will take at least eight days to count ballots trucked in from the countryside," said Jean-Marc Baudot, a Canadian consultant serving as logistics coordinator for Haiti's Provisional Election Council (CEP). He added that officials hadn't been able to gauge turnout, but "it appeared" to be low.

Preval refused to comment until official results are known. US Ambassador Janet Sanderson downplayed the fiasco stating: "Historically, off-year elections in the United States as well as in other countries tend not to be as well-attended as presidential elections. We'll have to see" how this one turns out.

UN paramilitaries said it's hoped that Haitians will "await calmly the publication of results....and that any dispute will be pursued through legal channels." Of course, Haitians have none by Washington-imposed diktats and MINUSTAH blue helmets on the ground as enforcers.

The Voice of America (VOA) reports Washington propaganda to the world. On April 19, it headlined: "Violence mars Haitian Elections (forcing) Election officials (to) shut down polling places in one of Haiti's 10 administrative regions after protesters....dumped ballots in the streets." It exaggerated the Mirebalais incident, unrelated to Lavalas, with no effect whatever on the results. It was isolated, minor, but unexplained in VOA's report along with other key electoral information - to portray it as ordinary, normal, legitimate, and, of course, "democratic."

The rest of its report said little more than turnout was light, FL candidates had been disqualified, and Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere - suppressing news about Washington's iron fist, its quashing real democracy ruthlessly, and repressing it under military occupation.

Meanwhile, five Lavalas hunger strikers occupied Haiti's parliament protesting their electoral exclusion. Preval ordered them arrested, but thousands of supporters held SWAT teams, Haitian National Police (PNH), and UN paramilitaries at bay. As a result, FL leaders fled to safety and had to hide out to avoid Washington diktats to apprehend them - for daring to support democracy, demand April elections be nullified, and re-held during scheduled national elections in November.

Courageous Haitians pay dearly in their struggle for freedom because America stands relentlessly in their way.

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