

# Ottawa Conference: Five Years after 2004 Coup, Ottawa Initiative 2009 Takes Stock of Canadian Role in Haiti

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, February 27, 2009  
27 February 2009

Region: [Canada](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 21st, 2009**

## **OTTAWA FEBRUARY 28th CONFERENCE PUTS HAITIAN DIASPORA IN DRIVER'S SEAT OF RECONSTRUCTION**

### **Five Years after 2004 Coup, Ottawa Initiative 2009 Takes Stock of Canadian Role in Haiti**

OTTAWA – Members of Ottawa's Haitian community hope that a conference focused upon examining the role of foreign countries in Haiti will spur the Haitian Diaspora to take the lead role in rebuilding and healing the impoverished Caribbean nation.

The Ottawa Initiative on Haiti 2009 will bring together community leaders, authors, activists, and thinkers from across the political spectrum in Haiti and North America. Unlike similar events in the past, including a recent conference held at Ottawa University, organizers hope that this event will be a dialogue lead by Haitians, particularly those living outside of Haiti. Remittances of Haitians living in North America currently account for an estimated 30% of Haiti's GDP.

But the conference, which is being held five years to the day after Canadian Forces took part in the forced removal of Haiti's elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, will also take a critical look at many of the shortcomings of the so-called "stabilization" efforts of the UN and the Canadian and US governments in Haiti.

"What Canadian decision-makers continue to ignore is that the people of Haiti, although very poor, have been wrestling the so-called 'international community' for control of their destiny for over two centuries," says Jean Saint-Vil, an organizer of the conference and member of the Ottawa Haiti Solidarity Committee. "We are subjects of our own history, we have our own proposals and approaches for using powerful assets of Haitian culture (e.g. Konbit), digital technology and new media that can play a huge role in bringing Haiti out of its current state of crisis."

The conference will feature live video feeds from influential activists from Haiti including

**Camille Chalmers**, the executive director of the NGO PAPDA, and **Patrick Elie**, who served as the secretary of state for Haiti in 1995. Also featured will be **Edwidge Danticat**, author of *Krik? Krak! And Brother, I'm Dying*, **Marcus Garcia**, Haitian journalist with *Haiti en Marche*, New York-based poet, lawyer, and activist **Marguerite Laurent**, Canadian Foundation of the Americas Director **Carlo Dade**, and **Peter Hallward**, UK-based author of *Damming the Flood: Aristide, Haiti, and the Politics of Containment*. Other speakers from the Haitian community in Ottawa and Gatineau will feature prominently as well.

*"What people often forget is that Haiti is a country with a huge population of young people," says Jean Guillaume, newly-elected Vice-President Social of the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa. "Although the ongoing food crisis, and the fall-out from the Hurricanes in the fall of 2008, is still taking a disastrous toll on the people of Haiti, there is a lot of potential good that can come from linking together progressive youth and students from all over the world with youth-lead organizations in Haiti."*

*"Haiti's crises are in many ways compounded by the brain drain of qualified professionals who are being deliberately drawn to Canada and the United States.," says Raymond Dubuisson, a member of the Outaouais Committee for the Reconstruction of Haiti (CHORHA) and the Ottawa Haiti Solidarity Committee. "Where will Haiti's new generation of doctors, lawyers, and agronomists come from?"*

*The Ottawa Initiative on Haiti 2009 takes place on February 28th from 9am to 5pm in the Alumni Theatre at the University of Ottawa, and is presented by the Ottawa Haiti Solidarity Committee, the Ottawa Haitian Students Club, the Students Federation of the University of Ottawa, and AKASAN.org .*

*For More Information:*

*Jean Saint-Vil, (613) 482-2549, [info@akasan.org](mailto:info@akasan.org)*

*Jude Jean-Francois, (613) 745-0833*

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Global Research](#), Global Research, 2009

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Global Research](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted

material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)