

CANADA IN HAITI FACT SHEET

1997: Rene Preval becomes embroiled in dispute with opposition parties over legislative elections. The World Bank and IRB hold up funds for Haiti demanding to see progress on “free market reforms”

1998: US blocks more aid to Haiti - effectively taking the side of unpopular political parties in their disputes with the government.

2000: Aristide’s Famni Lavalas party wins landslide victory in legislative elections. OAS declares elections free and fair but later reverses itself over the calculation of voting percentages in 8 senate seats. OAS argues those seats should have gone to a second round. 14,000 local and national level positions were contested.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy attends “Friends of Haiti” meeting with US officials. US announces it would withdraw assistance for presidential elections that year. A month before the presidential election, USAID commissioned polls predicted the strong turnout and landslide victory for Aristide that took place. His opponents boycotted.

Canada begins its campaign for UN to recognize the “Responsibility to Protect” that would facilitate intervention in the affairs of weak states.

2001: At the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City Prime Minister **Jean Cretien** reportedly “lectured” Aristide on the “shortcomings” of the 2000 elections.

Guy Philippe leads a military assault on Haiti’s National Palace. This coup attempt is successfully foiled.

2002: Canada and the EU join the US aid embargo on Aristide government and drastically increase funding for antigovernment NGOs.

Canada backs OAS resolution 822 (authored by US diplomat Roger Noriega) which gave opposition in Haiti an effective veto over the resumption of foreign aid.

2003: High Level meeting in Ottawa hosted by Denis Paradis, Canada’s Secretary of State for Latin America and Francophonie. According to reporter Michel Vastel, the consensus was that “Aristide had to go” and making Haiti a UN protectorate was considered.

2004: Guy Philippe along with former soldiers and death squad leaders invade Haiti from Dominican Republic but stop short of the National Palace where they were repulsed in 2001.

US troops fly Aristide to the Central African Republic as the airport is patrolled by Canadian troops.

Gerard Latortue installed as Haitian Prime Minister.

2005: Report published by the University of Miami School of Law estimates at least 700 political prisoners were jailed in under Latortue’s regime - the vast majority supporters of Aristide’s Famni Lavalas party. Report revealed that Philippe Vixamar, Haiti’s Deputy Minister of Justice for 15 months after the coup, was a direct employee of the Canadian International Development Agency (**CIDA**)

2006: Lavalas base elects Rene Preval as president despite repression and attempted fraud.

Study published in the Lancet medical Journal estimates 8,000 murders and 35,000 rapes in the greater Port-au-Prince area alone under the Latortue regime - 4,000 murders found to be politically motivated and perpetrated by anti-Lavalas groups.

MORE DETAILS ABOUT CANADA'S ROLE IN THE COUP OF 2004

* Philip Vixamar (noted above) helped secure approximately \$170,000 of **CIDA** funding for **NCHR** - a human rights group that collaborated extensively with the Latortue regime. It led the campaign to imprison Yvon Neptune, former Prime Minister under Aristide, whom Amnesty International belatedly declared a political prisoner. In 2005 **NCHR** changed its name to **RNDDH** at the request of its parent group in New York which wanted to distance itself from the work of its Haiti affiliate.

* Several **Quebec unions** received hundreds of thousands of dollars from **CIDA** to work in Haiti. They became vocal critics of Aristide's government but ignored widespread repression of the Confederation of Haitian Workers (CTH), Haiti's largest labor organization, after the coup

* **Rights and Democracy** - a group funded entirely by the Canadian government - issued reports on Haiti (before and after the coup) that relied heavily on **NCHR**. Predictably, they were supportive of the coup.

* **L'Association Quebecoise des Organismes de Cooperation Internationale (AQOCI)** - a Quebec based network of development groups - also used information provided by **NCHR** to urge the Liberal government (just prior to the coup) to remove all support from the "Lavalas party regime".

* **The Concertation Pour Haiti (CPH)** - an coalition of Quebec based unions and NGOs - used information supplied by **NCHR** to blame Lavalas supporters for the violence after the coup.

* In March, 2004, **Oxfam Quebec** testified before Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs parroting Canadian government's line on Haiti. In July of 2005 Oxfam Quebec was approved for \$15 million worth of **CIDA** projects.

* **Alternatives**, a progressive Quebec based NGO that receives 50% of its funding from **CIDA**, also published articles supportive of the Canadian government's policy in Haiti.

SOURCES

[1] "Canada in Haiti" by Yves Engler and Anthony Fenton

[2] Athena R. Kolbe and Royce A. Hutson, "Human rights abuse and other criminal violations in Port-au-Prince, Haiti: a random survey of households," The Lancet, Vol. 368, No. 9538, September 2, 2006,

[3] Thomas M. Griffin, University of Miami School of Law: Haiti Human Rights Investigation: November 11-21, 2004