



Harold Pinter appeals on behalf of the Haiti Support Group

Dear Friend,

It's now over two years since United Nations troops intervened in Haiti to 'restore democracy', and the story has disappeared from the news pages. Has the intervention allowed Haitians to pursue their dream of a democracy which satisfies the needs of the majority?

The answer is no. According to the grassroots organisations on the ground it has instead contributed to a life of continuing misery for these the poorest people in all the Americas.

In Haiti the reality is that the UN troops have merely established a veneer of stability. Armed gangsters loyal to the former dictatorial and military regimes walk free in an atmosphere of total impunity. There has been no effective disarmament, and the demobilised former soldiers have recycled themselves into gangs and private armies that prey indiscriminately on the people. There have been just a handful of prosecutions for the thousands of crimes that took place during the three year reign of terror.

Documents and papers (totalling 160,000 pages) taken from the Haitian Army and death squad HQs by US soldiers two years ago have still not been returned to the Haitian government. These papers contain evidence that could help convict the killers and torturers, but the US refuses to release them because it would show the extent of CIA involvement.

Insecurity and injustice continue to block the Haitian people's efforts to organise to bring about an end to hunger, illness and illiteracy.

On top of all this, Haiti is now suffering an economic coup d'état that is every bit as serious as the military coup led by ex-General Raoul Cédras. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are enforcing the application of a structural adjustment programme that threatens all hope of equitable development and progress. Many people in Haiti refer to this plan as the 'Death Plan', and are struggling against pitifully low wages and policies that are destroying the country's peasant economy.

A leading Haitian opponent of the 'Death Plan', who recently visited the UK at the invitation of the Haiti Support Group, said "Neo-liberalism is eating away at workers and the poor in both the North and the South. The only antidote to globalisation is internationalism."

As well as arranging UK speaking tours by Haitian activists, the Haiti Support Group works to both assist, and learn from, the Haitian struggle by:

- disseminating information from Haiti's democratic grassroots sector,
- facilitating links between progressive Haitian and British organisations,
- briefing students and journalists in the UK,
- lobbying aid agencies and the European Union,
- showing films and videos,
- and organising talks, exhibitions, and concerts.

I urge you to back the Haiti Support Group which, through its contacts with Haiti's grassroots organisations, is able to expose the truth about the international community's intervention. Haiti's grassroots organisations are the key to the development of a genuine, participatory democracy that can transform the country if they are given a chance. But Haiti does not exist in a vacuum. We can help.

Please affiliate to the Haiti Support Group by returning the enclosed blue form with a membership fee, or make a donation.

Yours sincerely

Charles Pinder

