

Haiti: Hooligans Tied to President Martelly Attack Opposition Militants Demanding Higher Wages

May Day Demonstration

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Global Research, May 06, 2015

[Haïti Liberté](#)

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#), [Poverty](#)
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Hooligans attached to the regime of President Michel Martelly and Prime Minister Evans Paul attacked about 30 militants from the Dessalines Coordination (KOD) party as they loudly demonstrated at an official event for International Workers Day in front of Haiti's National Palace on May 1.

The KOD militants had marched about three miles from the Industrial Park with hundreds representing unions, popular organizations, and student groups. The demonstrators loudly shouted their demands for a 500 gourdes (\$10.57) a day minimum wage. Many marchers affiliated with KOD also called for an end to the United Nations military occupation of Haiti and the resignation of President Martelly before the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections, now scheduled for August, October, and December 2015.

At the official ceremony on the Champ de Mars, regime thugs assaulted the chanting KOD militants, who fought back. A melee ensued in front of the stage where Martelly and Paul were sitting.



Near a stage where President Martelly sits, KOD leader Oxygène David, surrounded by CIMO police, holds up a sign reading "Down with the Exploitation of Workers."

"We so panicked Martelly with our action that it became clear that he did not know what to say," stated KOD leader Oxygène David after the struggle. "There was a security officer behind Martelly who sent a guy to come take the sign I was holding high. When he came to me, I gave him a shove. I received a lot of blows today, but I also gave a lot of blows."

Police of the Company for Intervention and Maintenance of Order (CIMO) eventually dispersed the demonstrators who came to protest at the Martelly government's official

celebration, a Labor Fair.

Workers from some unions carried signs saying “Down with Yellow Unions that Collaborate with the Bosses!”

KOD distributed a flyer explaining how May 1st began as a day to remember the repression against workers in the U.S. in 1886. “Today, this same American government, which crushed its own working class, is carrying out the same repression in Haiti,” the flyer read. “Since the 1970s, U.S. corporations have sent much of their manufacturing to Haiti because workers here earn only \$5 per day. In the U.S., the minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour.

“In 2011, the U.S. government carried out an electoral coup d’état to put the Martelly regime in power in Haiti so that it could continue to keep the working class in poverty, continue to steal the land of peasants on Ile à Vache and the homes of residents in downtown Port-au-Prince, to tax working people sending money and making calls from the U.S., along with a lot of other theft, corruption, and repression.

“Now, they need to do another electoral masquerade for those who don’t understand the game. KOD says ‘NO,’ the Haitian people will not be ambushed again. KOD demands that Martelly and MINUSTAH [UN Mission to Stabilize Haiti] leave so the country can have free, fair, and sovereign elections. Having the MINUSTAH, OAS, and Washington decide who wins elections in Haiti, that can’t happen again! This business of money buying the election, the way the bourgeoisie does it in the U.S., that is not good for Haiti, it is not good for democracy!”

KOD has called for a massive demonstration on May 18, beginning at Fort National in Port-au-Prince, to demand the departure of Martelly and MINUSTAH before any elections are held. The highly patriotic date marks the 212th anniversary of the creation of the red and blue Haitian flag.

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