

Haiti: Largest Anti-Government Demonstration to Date Demands President Michel Martelly's Resignation

Corruption is unprecedented. Unemployment, inflation and insecurity are surging around the country

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Global Research, November 27, 2014

[Haïti Liberté](#) 26 November 2014

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

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On Tue., Nov. 25, tens of thousands poured through the streets of Port-Au-Prince to demand the departure of President Michel Martelly. Observers and journalists reported that it was the largest anti-Martelly march yet during October and November, which have seen many outpourings around the country but particularly in the capital.

As usual, the marchers began in front of the churches St. Jean Bosco in La Saline and Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Belair and converged at Rue Saint-Martin. After marching up the Delmas Road, they took Delmas 32 to Bourdon, and then marched on the National Palace. A week earlier, on Nov. 18, [police fired on](#) a similar large march at Delmas 32, killing at least two and dispersing the demonstration.

Among the many chants of the demonstrators, most noteworthy was “No negotiations with Martelly!” and “Martelly must leave for Haiti to be free!” The marchers also called the Haitian president a corrupt dictator, liar, murderer, drug-dealer, and kidnapper.

The nationwide mobilization has been dubbed “Operation Burkina Faso,” echoing the mass mobilization that successfully drove long-time president Blaise Compaoré from power in that country last month. Martelly plans to begin ruling by decree on Jan. 12, 2015 when Parliament expires because he has held no elections during his three and a half years in power.

“Martelly, here are the roaches!” roared the crowd, referring to a remark made by Communications Minister Rudy Hériveaux, a former Lavalas ally, about anti-government demonstrators some weeks ago.

Since Martelly has come to power, he has organized three carnivals a year and zero elections. He has corrupted state institutions, particularly the judiciary and Parliament. He replaced elected mayors with his own hand-picked representatives. Corruption is unprecedented. Unemployment, inflation and insecurity are all surging around the country.



Tens of thousands marched through Port-au-Prince on Nov. 25 without major police violence, perhaps due to the "good cop" warnings to Martelly by MINUSTAH chief Sandra Honoré.

In front of the Palace on the Champs de Mars, the demonstrators made it all the way to the 2004 Tower, where the police formed an impenetrable wall. Nonetheless, the demo did not finish with tear-gas, gunshots, or any other major incident like others in past weeks.

The police restraint was likely due to the Nov. 24 remarks of Sandra Honore, the head of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), who is trying to play the role of "good cop."

In an effort to brake the population's growing radicalization faced with outrageous illegal arrests and police violence, she said: "The freedom to demonstrate and freedom of expression are rights guaranteed by international conventions, enshrined in the Haitian constitution and supported by the law."

"The right to demonstrate and freedom of opinion is a sign of the consolidation of democracy in Haiti, and efforts must be made by both sides to avoid any recourse to violence, defamation, intimidation of all kinds, or acts that may contribute to peace and stability," she continued. "As part of strengthening the rule of law, it is up to Haitian authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure that the right to peaceful protest is respected and that offenders are prosecuted... The period from Nov. 25 to Dec. 10 marks 16 days of activism for the protection of human rights, it is up to all to reject violence in all its forms to move towards a stronger Haiti, more stable and more respectful the rights of all."

"Operation Burkina Faso" will continue with mass demonstrations on Nov. 28 and Nov. 29, with the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, a Martelly regime backer, as one of the demonstrators' destinations.

The leaders of several opposition political parties and organizations marched in the Nov. 25 protest, including Dr. Maryse Narcisse, Dr. Louis Gerald Gilles, and Dr. Schiller Louidor of the Lavalas Family, Turneb Delpé and Serge Jean Louis of the MOPOD political platform, activists from KOD, MOLEGHAF, Embark to Change, MONOP, and Grenadier 07, among others. Students, schoolchildren, teachers, and union members also took part in the march.

Partial list of the political prisoners whose release demonstrators demand

Josué Florestal , Enol Florestal

Jean Robert Vincent

Louima Louisjuste

Jean Anthony Nazaire

Nadal Aristide

Cleevens Aristide

Biron Odigé

Rony Timothée

Jean Lamy Matulnès (policeman)

List of the 18 people arrested on Oct. 17 who are still in prison

Jean Harry Delassin

Hérard Seradieu

Moïse Roody

Jean Jacques Renaut

Lovenson Mersier

Paul Joanel

Ralph Desilus

Lormicil Isaac Homme

Mérisier Jean Louiné

Louiredant Louivens

Clergé Jeff

Chervin Midlin

Sampeur Jonas

Laguerre Angello

Fritzner Montinat

Charles Altès

Vladimir Pierre

Partial list of people allegedly assassinated by the Martelly regime

Octanol Derissaint (vendor)

Fritz Gérald Civil (militant)

Georges Honorat (journalist)

Paul Ambroise alias Tikoton (militant)

Michaël Benoit alias Pouchon (militant)

Walky Calixte (policeman in Martissant)

Daniel Dorsinvil (human rights militant)

Judge Jean Serge Joseph

Police Inspector Yves Michel Bellefleur

Girldy Lareche

Partial list of people persecuted by the Martelly regime

Dr. Jean Bertrand Aristide

Senator Moïse Jean Charles

Lawyer André Michel

Lawyer Newton St-Juste

Edouard Joël Vorbe (Pacha)

Jean Nazaire Thidé

Assad Volcy

Franco Camille

Deputy Arnel Bélizaire

Rony Jean Philippe

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