

Haitians March on Canadian Embassy

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Global Research, March 31, 2021

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

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

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People everywhere around the world love and respect Canadians, or so we’re told. So how do you explain what’s going on in Haiti?

On Sunday protesters in Port-au-Prince marched on the Canadian Embassy. “Madame Boukman — Justice 4 Haiti” posted a [video](#) to Twitter showing police in front of Canada’s diplomatic representation in Haiti. Madame Boukman quoted two men waving a Russian flag saying, “Long live Russia. Canada go home.” (In an indirect criticism of US/Canadian backing for dictator Jovenel Moïse, Russia’s Foreign Affairs Minister recently said they were concerned about “political instability” and “[ready to](#) help Haitians restore political stability, maintain internal security and train personnel.”)

Ha ha. Protesters in [#Haiti](#) at the Canadian Embassy waving a Russian flag. They are demanding the Canadian Embassy shut down to be replaced with a Russian Embassy. “Long live Russia. Canada go home.” pic.twitter.com/OfoEnmjvE6

— Madame Boukman – Justice 4 Haiti ☐☐ (@madanboukman) [March 29, 2021](#)

Madame Boukman’s post elicited [anger](#) from some offended Canadians. But anyone who follows Haitian politics knows protesters regularly target Ottawa. On October 27, 2019, Molotov cocktails were thrown at the embassy in Port-au-Prince. A tire was also set alight in front of Canada’s diplomatic representation in Haiti. *Voice of America* reported that protesters “[attempted](#) to burn down the Canadian Embassy.”

A few days earlier [rocks](#) were thrown at Canada’s diplomatic outpost. An October 2019 Radio Canada story began with the image of a Haitian holding a sign saying: “Fuck USA. Merde la France. Fuck Canada.” Three years earlier a demonstrator at the front of a protest carried a large wooden cross — as if crucified — bearing the US, French and Canadian flags. The caption on a Reuters video from a protest in 2014 noted, “[thousands](#) of Haitians take to the streets of Port-au-Prince to protest the government of President Michel Martelly, as well as the government of Canada for supporting Martelly.”

Protesters regularly speechify against Canadian imperialism. The 2019 documentary *Haiti Betrayed* includes a man yelling in front of the embassy in Port-au-Prince: “We don’t have anything against Canada! Why are you against us?” In a 2013 *Journal of Haitian Studies* [article](#) Jennifer Greenburg describes a “student from the Artibonite” interjecting in an “animated conversation” at a vocational school where she taught. The young man takes a water bottle and places it on the ground. “‘This is Haiti,’ he says, and grabbing another student’s backpack, ‘is the US, Canada — the powerful countries.’ He lifts the backpack just above the water bottle and ‘every time we come up,’ lifting the water bottle from the ground near my feet, ‘they keep us down,’ crushing the water bottle to the ground with the bulky knapsack.”

After Uruguay announced it was withdrawing its 950 troops from the United Nations Mission to Stabilize Haiti in 2013, senator Moïse Jean-Charles took aim at the countries he considered most responsible for undermining Haitian sovereignty. The country’s most trusted opposition figure according to a 2019 poll, Jean-Charles said, “[Brazil](#), Argentina, and Uruguay are not the real occupiers of Haiti. The real forces behind Haiti’s military occupation — the powers which are putting everybody else up to it — are the U.S., France, and Canada, which colluded in the Feb. 29, 2004 coup d’état against President [Jean-Bertrand] Aristide. It was then they began trampling Haitian sovereignty.” Jean-Charles added, “we are asking the Americans, French, and Canadians to come and collect their errand boy because he cannot lead the country anymore.”

Days after I poured fake blood on foreign affairs minister Pierre Pettigrew’s hands and yelled “Pettigrew lies, Haitians die” during a June 2005 press conference on Haiti, Aristide was asked about the incident. In an interview from South Africa, he told journalist Naomi Klein the Canadian government had Haitian “[blood](#) on its hands.” He stated, “[the coup](#), or the kidnapping, was led by the United States, France and Canada. These three countries were on the front lines by sending their soldiers to Haiti before February 29, by having their soldiers either at the airport or at my residence or around the palace or in the capital to make sure that they succeeded in kidnapping me, leading [to] the coup.”

For their part, left-wing weekly newspapers *Haiti Progrès* and *Haiti Liberté* described Canada as an “occupying force”, “coup supporter” or “imperialist” over one hundred times. In one instance, the front page of *Haiti Liberté* showed a picture of President René Préval next to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and two Canadian soldiers. Part of the caption below read, “Préval under the surveillance of the occupying forces.”

Haitian anger towards Canada is wholly understandable. During this century Canada has helped [destabilize](#) an elected government, [plan](#) a coup and invade to topple a president. It has also [trained](#) and financed a highly repressive police force, justifying their politically motivated arrests and killings. Ottawa has also backed the exclusion of Haiti’s most popular political party from participating in elections and helped fix an election. After a terrible earthquake Canada [dispatched](#) troops to control the country and later propped up a repressive, corrupt and illegitimate president facing massive protests.

The truth is Canada has repeatedly sided with oppressors of ordinary Haitians. They have many good reasons to hate our government.

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