

How Hillary Helped Ruin Haiti

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Global Research, April 13, 2016

[The Daily Beast](#)

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Much of the blame for Haiti's chaotic political scene can be pinned on Hillary Clinton's State Department, whose handpicked president has only made things worse.

Last week Haiti's Electoral Council postponed the nation's current presidential election indefinitely. The present chaos is a fitting coda to the recent presidency of Michel Martelly, a novice politician who governed accordingly.

Amid the current upheaval, the name Mirlande Manigat is well worth recalling. As Haiti struggled to dig out from the disastrous 2010 earthquake, Manigat stood poised to become its first elected female president—until Hillary Clinton's State Department intervened.

A former First Lady of Haiti and a respected university administrator, Manigat invoked Brazil's Lula as she ran on a moderately left-wing platform championing universal public education. Manigat, who holds a Ph.D. from the Sorbonne, also campaigned in the U.S., detailing at length her [vision](#) for Haiti.

Ominously, Dr. Manigat criticized the aid organizations that swarmed into Haiti after the earthquake. Singling out those groups' lack of accountability, Manigat [assured](#) *Time* that "My government will not operate the NGO way."

In late November 2010, Manigat, a Duvalier-era exile, topped a field of 19 candidates, garnering 31 percent of the vote and setting herself up for a runoff election against the initial 2nd place finisher, Jude Celestin. A close ally at the time with Haiti's then-President Rene Preval, Celestin barely edged out Martelly, the popular singer better known as Sweet Micky.

After the election results were announced in early December, Micky's devoted supporters rioted for three straight days. Hillary, in turn, told President Preval that if he didn't force Celestin to drop out, Congress would [cut off aid](#) to Haiti. Martelly soon became the second candidate in the runoff.



In March 2011, Sweet Micky parlayed his support from the Duvalier-aligned Haitian right and the U.S. into a comfortable victory. On the night he won the runoff, Hillary's State Department team celebrated, with her chief of staff Cheryl Mills [assuring them](#) that "You do great elections."

By the end of 2015, according to a congressional report, "much of the Haitian public" believed that international disaster relief money had been mismanaged, fueling calls for Martelly's ouster ([PDF](#)). Under Martelly, the Haitian gourde also depreciated by 30 percent, compounding the nation's rapidly growing food crisis.

Instead of the grandmotherly figure of Dr. Mirlande, in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake Haiti was ruled by a risqué, misogynist musician. Yet despite his volatile character, once in office Micky remained a consistent ally of the Clintons.

One year into Martelly's term, U.S. Ambassador Pam White informed Mills ([PDF](#)) that Haiti insiders viewed Martelly "not dumb as many may think [but] he is wild." Martelly soon appointed close Clinton ally Laurent Lamothe as prime minister, but Lamothe was forced to step down two years later.

When Caracol Industrial Park, a signature project of the Clinton Foundation, opened in Northern Haiti in October 2012, Sweet Micky joined Bill and Hillary at the ceremony. There Haiti's president and the U.S. Secretary of State heaped high praise on one another.

Martelly, Clinton declared, was the impoverished nation's "chief dreamer and believer." Sweet Micky, in turn, [said](#) the Caracol project showed that Haiti "is open for business, and that's not just a slogan."

The high-profile launch of the industrial park, *Time* reported, was also designed to rebut criticisms within Haiti regarding exactly where the many billions in post-earthquake aid money had ended up.

At the time, Martelly proclaimed that the Caracol project would deliver more than 100,000 jobs, while the Clinton Foundation vowed that it would bring 60,000 in five years. As of mid-2015, the [actual number](#) was closer to 5,000.

Throughout his five-year term, Martelly gave free rein to NGOs and foreign business interests. Amidst Haiti's ongoing turmoil, a simple question thus arises: Why, exactly, did Hillary Clinton's State Department support Sweet Micky instead of Dr. Mirlande Manigat?

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