



Press Statement
Richard Boucher, Spokesman
Washington, DC
October 12, 2004

Violence in Haiti

The United States condemns the violence in Port-au-Prince, Haiti that began on September 30. Armed gangs and groups who support former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide have launched a systematic campaign to destabilize the interim government and disrupt the efforts of the international community to assist the Haitian people. Over the past two weeks, pro-Aristide thugs have murdered policemen, looted businesses and public installations, and terrorized civilians. On October 11, pro-Aristide gunman killed three people in random attacks; there are reports that one parent was killed while walking his child to school. These attacks recall the worst days of Mr. Aristide's rule, which was characterized by the criminal use of street gangs to spread violence and political repression.

It is all the more reprehensible that the pro-Aristide forces have launched their campaign of violence at a moment when the people of Haiti are still suffering from the catastrophic flooding in Gonaives, which claimed over 2,000 lives. We call upon leaders of Fanmi Lavalas to break with the party's legacy of violence and criminality that tarnished its image during the rule of Mr. Aristide, and to participate peacefully in the electoral process.

The Interim Government of Haiti led by President Alexandre and Prime Minister Latortue represents the best hope for progress in Haiti. The United States Government will continue to assist the rebuilding and reform of the Haitian National Police. We have confidence that the United Nations Stabilization Force's, MINUSTAH, capacity to protect the Haitian people will continue to increase in the days and weeks to come.

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