

**M**ario Joseph (MJ): The Latortue regime turned the world upside down. Justice and the rule of law were thrown out the window. It was a dictatorship. ... [T]he 'civil society' groups and the upper classes were constantly demanding 'justice' during Aristide's term, calling him a predator, accusing him of all sorts of human rights violations. Then they got into power and they carried out the most unimaginable acts! ....

**Darren Ell (DE):** When a country goes through 32 *coup d'États* in 200 years, does a tradition of non-respect for law develop among those that are supposed to apply the law.

**MJ:** Definitely. People in power are lax in their application of the law.... The poor majority of Haiti see things very differently than the elites. Take the 2004 *coup d'État* as an example. The people were demanding that Aristide's mandate and the constitution be respected. The upper classes were demanding Aristide's departure.... The illiterate population of Haiti...were calling for law and democracy whereas the others were calling for anarchy!

**DE:** Let's talk about...the violation of human rights law....

**MJ:** ....[The] agreement signed in April 2004 between [the UN's military force] MINUSTAH and the [coup-installed] government of Haiti...gives complete immunity to MINUSTAH. I'm currently working on the case of July 2005 massacre in Cité Soleil [a Port-au-Prince slum].... [N]either the victims nor BAI can file a case against MINUSTAH because they're immune....

If *The Lancet* [article, "Human Rights Abuse and other Criminal Violations in Port-au-Prince Haiti, September 2-8, 2006,] cited 8,000 murders in Port-au-Prince between 2004 and 2006, we have to double this to reflect what happened throughout the country. Rape was used as a political weapon....

We've worked for over 200 already who've been locked up for their political affiliation, for refusing to accept the coup and for demanding a return to democracy.... The Canadian government funded NCHR [see pp.3-22] to prepare the [legal] cases of La Scierie, a case [of faked "genocide"] which led to the imprisonment of Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, Minister [of the Inte-

## An interview with Mario Joseph



Photo: Darren Ell

rior, Jocelerme] Privert and... [MP] Amanus Maette. [See pp.23-32.] ....

It is incredible that so-called democratic and civilized countries like Canada, France and the U.S. would participate in the disinformation campaign that led to the kidnapping of Aristide....

....And the hypocrisy! ...[After Latortue left power,] Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peter MacKay, criticized Haiti for the imprisonment of Yvon Neptune...but said absolutely nothing before, not even during Neptune's near-fatal hunger strike.... I don't understand how a globalized world can function with such hypocrites in power. These crimes would never be tolerated in Canada, France or the U.S., so why are these governments allowed to commit them in Haiti?

....In Cité Soleil...MINUSTAH is ...killing people.... The government, the media and even the international community act as if this is normal.... Take the...massacre of Dec. 22, 2006, carried out by MINUSTAH.... I have 22 death certificates in my possession.... We've got people with bullet holes all over their bodies but no journalists going down to find out how it happened.

**DE:** But we'll see this type of coverage on a website like HaitiAction.net.

**MJ:** Yes, and sites like IJDH [Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, see pp.4-6], thanks to people like... Lovinsky Pierre Antoine [see pp.6-7], Kevin Pina [see p.33] and others....

**DE:** ...[A] crime like this in Canada... would be on the front pages for weeks.

**MJ:** Absolutely. We've got unarmed

Haiti's leading human rights lawyer, a director of the *Bureau des avocats internationaux (BAI)*, is trying to redress crimes of the anti-Aristide coups of 1991 and 2004.

He insists the guilty must be held accountable, including members of the U.S., Canadian and French governments.

Needless to say, he does not receive Canadian government funding. Neither is he affiliated with the CIDA-supported lawyers' committee, CARLI, that helped spread fear and terror throughout Haiti after the Canadian-backed coup installed Gérard Latortue's dictatorship in 2004. (See "CARLI," pp.46-47.)

innocent people, young children, being shot to death.

**DE:** ...[T]he only reason given for these massive assaults on unarmed people is that "criminals," "bandits" or "gang members" are present....

**MJ:** Since the coup, these terms are used...to justify killing. Even if there are slight differences between Haitian, Canadian or American law, our legal systems share the same principles. You're innocent until proven guilty.... Since the kidnapping of Aristide, the process of legal accusation has been reduced to name calling: the word *chimère* is used like a death sentence. [See "*Chimère: The 'N' word of Haiti*, pp.50-51.] This is how all the political prisoners, members of Lavalas, were rounded up during the coup. Their names were announced on the radio! If your name was on the radio, you had to hide right away. .... Now they're looking for 'bandits,' the pretext used for the December 22 massacre.... It's as though the U.S. and Canadian Embassies no longer existed.... When Aristide was in power, these...[governments] did nothing but condemn human rights violations. Now, one would think these violations had ceased.... The question of excessive force is not even raised concerning MINUSTAH.

**Source:** Excerpts from an interview by Darren Ell, a Montreal-based photographer. For the complete interview, see "Fighting for the Rule of Law in Haiti," April 25, 2007. <[www.haitiaction.net/News/HIP/4\\_25\\_7/4\\_25\\_7.html](http://www.haitiaction.net/News/HIP/4_25_7/4_25_7.html)>