

U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

[TEXT ONLY](#) [HOME](#) [WHAT'S NEW](#) [FAQS](#) [SEARCH](#) [GLOSSARY](#) [FEEDBACK](#) [TRANSLATE](#) [PRINTPAGE](#)

Immigration Services and Benefits Programs

[Overview](#)

[National Customer Service Center \(NCSC\)](#)

[Emergency Travel](#)

[Naturalization](#)

[Citizenship](#)

[Green Cards \(LPR\)](#)

[Temporary Visitors](#)

[Employer Information](#)

[Inter-Country Adoptions](#)

[Temporary Protected Status](#)

[Trafficking in Persons](#)

[Asylum](#)

[Overview](#)

[History](#)

[Asylum FAQ](#)

[Two Paths to Asylum](#)

[Affirmative Asylum at a Glance](#)

[Affirmative Asylum Process](#)

[Types of Asylum Decisions](#)

[Coercive Family Planning](#)

Haiti

Response to Information Request Number:	HTI04002.RIC
Date:	March 04, 2004
Subject:	Haiti: Information on the Armed Revolt
From:	CIS Resource Information Center
Keywords:	Haiti / Armed resistance movements / Coup d'état / Human rights violators / Opposition forces / Political violence / Revolutions / Uprising

Query:

Who is leading the armed revolt in Haiti? What groups are taking part? What do we know about their past? Have they been involved in human rights violations?

Response:

Two principal armed groups took part in the armed revolt that toppled the government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. One is the Gonaïves Resistance Front, led by Jean Pierre Baptiste (alias Jean Tatoune), Buteur (Butteur) Métayer, and Wynter (Winter) Etienne. This is the group that initiated the insurrection with the seizure of Gonaïves on February 5, 2004. A second group, headed by Guy Philippe and Louis Jodel Chamblain, consists primarily of former members of the Haitian Armed Forces (Forces Armées d'Haïti, FAd'H) who slipped into Haiti from the neighboring Dominican Republic. They have called themselves the National Liberation Front. Though their political antecedents vary greatly, the two principal armed groups share a common pattern of serious human rights violations.

NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

Until 1990, Louis Jodel Chamblain was a sergeant in the Haitian Armed Forces, and a member of its elite Corps des Léopards. He is alleged to have headed a death squad under President-for-Life Jean Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, who fled the country for exile in

Reasonable Fear
Screenings

Asylee Adjustment

Resource
Information Center

Training Materials

Refugees

Humanitarian Parole

SAVE (Verification
Program)

1986. In 1993 he co-founded the paramilitary organization FRAPH (Front pour l'Avancement et le Progrès d'Haïti, Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti), whose acronym is phonetically identical to the French/Creole word for "hit." He served as its "Coordinator," the number two leadership position behind Secretary-General Emmanuel "Toto" Constant. The other two members of its central committee were Alphonse Lahens, a prominent Duvalierist, and Mireille Durocher-Bertin, a lawyer who was murdered in 1995 (HRW 27 Feb 2004, Williams 29 Feb 2004).

Chamblain was in direct control of FRAPH death squads that operated during the period of "de facto" military rule from 1990 to 1994. He fled to the Dominican Republic in 1994 after U.S. forces restored democratic rule. On September 17, 1995, a Haitian court convicted Chamblain "in absentia" of taking part in the September 1993 assassination of Antoine Izméry, a Port-au-Prince businessman who favored restoring democratic rule under then-exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. On November 16, 2000, another Haitian court convicted Chamblain of "voluntary, premeditated homicide" in connection with the April 1994 massacre of men, women, and children in the Gonaïves slum neighborhood of Raboteau. He also had a role in the assassination of Justice Minister Guy Malary, who was machine-gunned to death with his bodyguard and driver in October 1993. According to a 1993 CIA Intelligence Memorandum obtained by the Center for Constitutional Rights through the Freedom of Information Act, "FRAPH members Jodel Chamblain, Emmanuel Constant, and Gabriel Douzable met with an unidentified military officer on the morning of 14 October to discuss plans to kill Malary" (AI 16 Feb 2004, Charles 15 Apr 2002, HRW 27 Feb 2004).

In mid-February 2004, Chamblain slipped over the Dominican border with a group of some twenty former members of the Haitian Armed Forces. On February 14, two Dominican soldiers were killed at the Dajabón border crossing near the Massacre River by unknown assailants who took their guns. The following day, Chamblain's forces seized the city of Hinche in the Department of the Center, about 20 miles from the Dominican border. Dressed in camouflage fatigues, body armor and riot gear, they looted and burned the police station, killed the district police chief and his bodyguard, and emptied the prison. Former Army Sergeant Jean Baptiste Joseph announced "The army is no longer demobilized. The army is mobilized" (WASHINGTON POST 19 Feb 2004).

There had been numerous prior reports of armed incursions by former members of the Haitian military. In 2002, a group led by ten former Haitian army soldiers began operations along the Massacre River on the northern border with the Dominican Republic. They repeatedly slipped across the border to avoid capture (Wilson 18 Nov 2003). On May 6, 2003, over a dozen armed men attacked the Péligre hydroelectric dam in east-central Haiti near the Dominican border. They killed two security guards, set fire to the control room, and fled in a stolen hospital vehicle. On July 25, 2003, unknown assailants ambushed a Ministry of the Interior vehicle in Ouasèk, near Pernal, after the occupants installed a communal council in the border town of Belladère. The attackers killed four civilian ministry employees – Wilfrid Thomas, Chériel Augustin, Jean Marie Dépeignes and Adrien Célestin

– then reportedly mutilated and burnt their bodies (AI 8 Oct 2003).

Guy Philippe is a former army lieutenant who received police training at the Gerardo Alberto Enríquez Gallo police academy in Quito, Ecuador, between 1992 and 1995 (Trenton 20 Feb 2004). Upon his return to Haiti in 1995 he became commander of the Ministerial Security Corps (Corps de Sécurité Ministeriel, CSM). Described by United Nations observers as "cowboys" and "uncontrollable," the CSM was a special police unit whose members wore civilian clothes and rode in unmarked vehicles. The CSM was implicated in serious human rights violations under Philippe's leadership, including a series of shootings of innocent persons in Cité Soleil on March 6, 1996 (NCHR Jan 1997). On October 9, 1996, HNP Director General Pierre Denizé removed Philippe from his post for "violation of human rights" and "diversion of funds" (Inspection Générale 9 Nov 1998).

Philippe nevertheless served as police chief of Delmas, a large northern suburb of Port-au-Prince, from 1997 to 1999. During that time, the joint UN-OAS Civilian Mission to Haiti reported that dozens of suspected gang leaders in the area were being summarily executed, most by police under the command of Philippe's deputy, Inspector Berthony Bazile. Philippe was transferred to Cap Haïtien in 1999, where he served as police chief for a year. In November 2000, he and a half dozen other police officers were called in for questioning about meetings in which they allegedly plotted to overthrow President René Préval. All of the officers, including Philippe, instead fled to the Dominican Republic. Haitian and U.S. sources allege that Philippe was involved in drug trafficking both while heading the police in Cap Haïtien and during his exile in the Dominican Republic (Cody 2 Feb 2001, HRW 27 Feb 2004).

Haitian officials alleged that Philippe was involved in a series of attacks on the HNP on July 28, 2001. Gunmen in military uniforms assaulted police posts in the capital and three other towns, shouting "Long live the Army!" They began by seizing the National Police Academy in Port-au-Prince. In a subsequent retreat toward the Dominican Republic they attacked the police station in Mirebalais, 30 miles northeast of the capital, then briefly seized the border town of Belladère. In the course of their attacks, they killed five police officers, including a police commissioner, and wounded fourteen more (POHDH Aug 2001, NEW YORK TIMES 18 Aug 2001, Reuters 19 Dec 2001).

On August 8, the Dominican ambassador to Haiti confirmed that ten former Haitian soldiers had taken refuge in his country (Quixote 17 Aug 2001). On October 24, the Dominican Republic, which does not have an extradition treaty with Haiti, granted temporary residency to eleven men wanted in connection with the July 28 attacks. Ten of the eleven said they were former members of the Haitian Armed Forces (FAd'H); the eleventh said he was a member of the opposition (Cala 24 Oct 2001).

Before dawn on December 17, 2001, armed men wearing military uniforms attacked the National Palace in Port-au-Prince. Haitian authorities said there were 33 attackers, who

shot to death two policemen on the scene, wounded six others and riddled palace walls and windows with bullet holes. An assailant identified as Chavre Millot was said to have been killed at the palace. Authorities said they found false Dominican documents on his body. As the attackers fled several hours after the initial assault, they shot to death two bystanders. Four commandos were reportedly killed while attempting to cross the border into the Dominican Republic, and another was said to have been wounded and captured near the Dominican border. Authorities identified him as Pierre Richardson, saying he was a former soldier who had also taken part in the July 28 attack on the National Police Academy (Norton 18 Dec 2001, San Martin 19&20 Dec 2001).

Richardson told reporters he had participated in a "coup d'état." He said he had attended meetings in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo with former Cap-Haïtien police chief Guy Philippe, and that Philippe had said they could count on backup support organized by former Army Colonel Guy François. That support never materialized, he said. Richardson's allegation led to the arrest of François (MIAMI HERALD 21 Dec 2001).

On the day of the attack, Guy Philippe placed calls to news media denying involvement, and saying he was in the Dominican Republic. But Dominican officials said they had no record of his being in the country at the time of the attack. What is known for sure is that Philippe moved to Ecuador about a month after seeking refuge in the Dominican Republic in November 2000, but for unexplained reasons returned to the Dominican Republic two weeks before the December 17, 2001 attack. The day after the attack he flew back to Ecuador via Panama, but was denied entry at the airport in Quito. He then returned to the Dominican Republic on December 25, where an airport immigration inspector let him pass despite instructions to detain him and return him to his port of origin. The inspector was reported to have been fired, and on December 28, Dominican president Hipólito Mejía announced that Philippe had been located and placed under house arrest (San Martin 27 Dec 2001, MIAMI HERALD 29 Dec 2001, ORLANDO SENTINEL 30 Dec 2001). But Mejía turned down Haitian extradition requests. In 2003, Dominican authorities briefly detained Philippe for questioning about allegations that he had been meeting with former Haitian military leaders to plot a coup against the Haitian government (Bracken 18 Feb 2004, Daniel 20 Feb 2004).

GONAÏVES RESISTANCE FRONT (aka Artibonite Resistance Front)

Like Louis Jodel Chamblain, Jean Pierre Baptiste (alias Jean Tatoune) was convicted of "voluntary, premeditated homicide" in the 1994 Raboteau Massacre (AI 16 Feb 2004, Charles 15 Apr 2002). Unlike Chamblain, who fled Haiti, Baptiste was imprisoned in Gonaïves. But on August 2, 2002, members of an armed gang popularly known as the Cannibal Army rammed a hole in the prison wall with a stolen tractor, freeing 160 inmates, including Baptiste (MIAMI HERALD 9 Jul 2002).

The Cannibal Army, formally known as Popular Organization for the Development of

Raboteau, was the personal armed force of Gonaïves strongman Amiot Métayer. It was formed in the 1980s in a poor seaside neighborhood of Gonaïves to resist Duvalierism. Because of its opposition to the "de facto" military regime of 1990-1994, it was targeted for attack by the army and FRAPH, leading to the Raboteau Massacre. Following the restoration of democratic rule in 1994, it became one of many "popular organizations" (organisations populaires) promoted by LaFamni Lavalas as vehicles of community empowerment. According to Cannibal Army members, they were first armed in the year 2000 to provide protection to polling places for that year's elections. In December 2001, following the armed attack on the National Palace, they were approached by messengers from Aristide asking for their support in putting down a "coup d'état." They responded by torching the homes of opposition leaders, including the home of evangelical Protestant Minister Luc Mésadiou in northern Gonaïves. The gang killed two members of Mésadiou's opposition Christian Movement for a New Haiti (MOCHRENHA), and burned their bodies (Norton 18 Dec 2001 & 6 Aug 2002, Wilson 13 Feb 2004, HRW 27 Feb 2004).

Foreign governments and international human rights organizations then challenged the government to prosecute vigilantes as a sign of good faith in upholding the rule of law. In July 2002, police arrested Métayer on charges of masterminding the violence in Gonaïves. On July 8, Métayer supporters responded by torching the Gonaïves customs house, demanding his release. Though the government did not release Métayer, it did transfer him from Port-au-Prince to the Gonaïves prison, from which he was soon freed by fellow gang members on August 2. The Cannibal Army then burned down the Gonaïves city hall and courthouse as thousands of protestors took to the streets to demand the ouster of President Aristide. Soon thereafter, Métayer dropped his call for Aristide's removal amid speculation that a private deal had been struck (MIAMI HERALD 9 Jul 2002, Norton 6 Aug 2002, NEW YORK TIMES 10 Aug 2002).

In February 2003, Investigating Judge Marcel Jean fled to the United States, after being threatened by "people from the National Palace" for refusing to clear Métayer. The following month, deputy prosecutor Henock Genelus fled to the Dominican Republic with his family. He said he had refused to dismiss charges against Métayer at the request of a representative of President Aristide, and that he left "to escape being killed" (Norton 18 Mar 2003). On May 15, government prosecutor Louizelme Joseph told Radio Métropole that the new judge assigned to Métayer's case had dropped all charges. From Florida exile, Investigating Judge Marcel Jean, who had previously been assigned the Métayer case, said "Someone can't kill people, burn their houses, and burn the courthouse and not be brought to justice ... I think this raises serious questions about the future of the country. This country has no future if this is how justice will be treated" (Lynch 16 May 2003).

On November 21, 2002, Radio Étincelle in Gonaïves suspended broadcasting after Cannibal Army activists accused the station of "working for the opposition," and threatened to burn it down. Four days later, assailants set fire to the studio, damaging a generator and other equipment (CPJ 2003). In response to threats from the Cannibal Army, four journalists – Jeaniton Guerino and Gedeon Pesendien of Radio Etincelles, Jean-Robert

Francois of Radio Métropole, and Henry Fleurimond of Radio Quiskeya – went into hiding, then fled to the Dominican Republic on February 14, 2003 (Cala 18 Feb 2003).

On September 22, 2003, Métayer was found dead on a side street of Gonaïves. He had been shot at close range, once in each eye, and once through the heart. He had last been seen leaving his home in the company of a former government employee who was a frequent visitor to the Presidential Palace. Concluding the assassination had been ordered by President Aristide, the Cannibal Army began blocking Gonaïves streets with burning tires, and with barricades assembled from old car frames, boulders, and trash (Norton 24 Sep 2003, Regan 26 Sep 2003, MIAMI HERALD 4 Oct 2003, Williams 29 Nov 2003).

Violent protests continued intermittently until February 5, 2004, when the group seized control of the city and renamed itself the Gonaïves Resistance Front. At least seven persons – including three police officers – were killed and twenty injured in gun battles before the police fled. Gang members set fire to the home and gasoline station of Mayor Stéphan Moïse, as well as the homes of other known Aristide supporters. They also torched the police station as officers fled, and released more than a hundred inmates from the city jail. Confiscated police weapons were distributed to rebel supporters. On the following day, thousands of demonstrators shouting "Aristide must go!" vowed to repel any attempt by the government to retake the city (AP 6 Feb 2004, LOS ANGELES TIMES 7 Feb 2004, Ottey 7 Feb 2004, THE GUARDIAN 7 Feb 2004) .

The government attempted to regain control of the city on February 7, but was repulsed. A convoy of 150 heavily armed police officers arrived from Port-au-Prince. Thousands of residents stoned them as they passed, then surrounded them, cutting off escape routes with barricades of burning tires, auto carcasses, and boulders. Several police officers were killed; one was lynched; the bodies of others were dragged through the streets and mutilated (Ottey 8&9 Feb 2004).

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

References:

Amnesty International (AI). "Haiti: Perpetrators of Serious Past Abuses Re-emerge" (London: AMR 36/006/2004, 16 Feb 2004).

Amnesty International (AI). "Haiti – Abuse of Human Rights: Political Violence as the 200th Anniversary of Independence Approaches" (London: AMR 36/007/2003, 8 Oct 2003), p. 8.

Associated Press (AP). "Rebels Take Over Haiti's Fourth-Largest City" (6 Feb 2004).

Bracken, Amy, and Trenton Daniel. MIAMI HERALD. "Rebel Vows Capital Attack" (18 Feb 2004).

Cala, Andrés. Associated Press. "Four Haitian Journalists Enter Dominican Republic in Search of Political Asylum" (18 Feb 2003).

Cala, Andrés. Associated Press. "Dominican Government Grants Temporary Residence to Eleven Men Wanted in Haiti" (24 Oct 2001) - Nexis.

Charles, Eugenia. Quixote Center, e-mail communication (15 & 18 Apr 2002).

Cody, Edward. WASHINGTON POST. "Haiti Torn by Hope and Hatred As Aristide Returns to Power" (2 Feb 2001), p. A1.

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). ATTACKS ON THE PRESS IN 2002 (New York: CPJ, 2003), p. 142.

Daniel, Trenton. MIAMI HERALD. "Tough Rebel Both Feared and Loved" (20 Feb 2004).

GUARDIAN (UK). "Looting and Chaos after Rebels Raid Haitian City" (7 Feb 2004).

Human Rights Watch (HRW). HAITI: RECYCLED SOLDIERS AND PARAMILITARIES ON THE MARCH (New York: 27 Feb 2004). URL: hrw.org/english/docs/2004/02/27/haiti7677.htm [Accessed 1 Mar 2004].

Inspection Générale de la Police d'Haïti. RAPPORT DE L'INSPECTEUR GÉNÉRAL EN CHEF DE LA POLICE NATIONALE d'HAÏTI (9 Nov 1998).

LOS ANGELES TIMES. "Crowds Throng City Seized by Haiti Rebels" (7 Feb 2004).

Lynch, Marika. MIAMI HERALD. "Haitian escapes charges" (16 May 2003).

MIAMI HERALD. "Police Defend Action after Five Die in Raid" (4 Oct 2003).

MIAMI HERALD. "Jailed Man's Supporters Burn Haitian Customs House" (9 Jul 2002).

MIAMI HERALD. "International Roundup" (29 Dec 2001), p. 6A.

MIAMI HERALD. "Ex-Soldier Confesses Role in Haiti Coup Bid" (21 Dec 2001).

National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR); Human Rights Watch (HRW). THE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD OF THE HAITIAN NATIONAL POLICE (New York: Jan 1997), p. 12-13, 29-30.

NEW YORK TIMES. "Haitian Escapee Ends Call for Aristide's Ouster" (10 Aug 2002).

Norton, Michael. MIAMI HERALD. "Cannibal Army Leader Gunned Down" (24 Sep 2003).

Norton, Michael. Associated Press. "Prosecutor Flees Haiti, Saying He Feared for Life" (18 Mar 2003).

Norton, Michael. Associated Press. "Haiti Protesters Take Over City," (6 Aug 2002).

Norton, Michael, MIAMI HERALD. "Police Defeat Coup Attempt in Haiti: Aristide Backers Attack Opposition" (18 Dec 2001).

ORLANDO SENTINEL. "Coup Suspect Still Held" (30 Dec 2001), p. A22.

Ottey, Michael A.W. MIAMI HERALD. "Rebels Await a New Attack" (9 Feb 2004).

Ottey, Michael A.W. MIAMI HERALD. "Rebels Attack Cops Sent to Gonaives" (8 Feb 2004).

Ottey, Michael A.W. MIAMI HERALD. "Thousands Cheer Takeover, Protesting 'Aristide Must Go!'" (7 Feb 2004).

Platform of Haitian Human Rights Organizations (POHDH). National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR), Committee of Lawyers for Respect and Individual Liberty (CARLI). REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN HAITI FOLLOWING THE EVENTS OF JULY 28, 2001 (Port-au-Prince, Haiti: NCHR, August 2001), p. 2-3, 6

Quixote Center. HAITI REPORT (Washington, DC: 17 Aug 2001), citing Agence Haïti-Press (8 Aug 2001).

Regan, Jane, MIAMI HERALD. "Riot Police Patrol the Streets in Third Day of Protests" 26 Sep 2003).

Reuters. "Haiti Is Calm After Failure of Assault" (19 Dec 2001).

NEW YORK TIMES. "Attacks Raise Fears in Haiti Of Uprising By Ex-Soldiers" (18 Aug 2001), p. A13.

San Martin, Nancy. MIAMI HERALD. "Dominican Police Looking for Haitian Coup-Plot Suspect" (27 Dec 2001).

San Martin, Nancy. MIAMI HERALD. "Alleged Gunman in Haiti Linked to Police Academy Attack" (20 Dec 2001).

San Martin, Nancy. MIAMI HERALD. "Haiti Opposition Leaders in Hiding After Palace Attack" (19 Dec 2001).

WASHINGTON POST. "Police in Haiti's Second City Retreat into Station" (19 Feb 2004), p. A15.

Williams, Carol J. LOS ANGELES TIMES. "Haitian Rebel Leader's Agenda Is as Murky as His Past" (29 Feb 2004).

Williams, Carol J. LOS ANGELES TIMES. "Aristide's Populist Appeal Dwindles in Haiti" (29 Nov 2003).

Wilson, Scott. WASHINGTON POST. "Aristide Supporters Halt Protest," (13 Feb 2004), p. A20.

Wilson, Scott. WASHINGTON POST. "Armed Attacks Increase Pressure on Haitian Leader; Groups Extend Reach into Provincial Areas" (18 Nov 2003), p. A13.

Last Modified 09/09/2004