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Haiti: The Mochrena party; socio-economic groups and geographic areas of Haiti that support it; the part of the country its elected members represent; political activities and organizational structure; treatment of its members by the Préval government (1998 - 2008)

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The Mochrena Party

The Christian Movement for a New Haiti (Mouvement chrétien pour une nouvelle Haïti), known as Mochrena (or Mochrenha), was founded in 1998 (France 15 Oct. 2005, 27; *Le Matin* 22 Nov. 2007). Several sources name Luc Mésadiéu as the party's leader (ibid.; France 15 Oct. 2005, 27; US 23 Oct. 2008; *PHW 2008* 2008, 546; *Europa 2008* 2008, 2129), and some of the same sources also indicate that Gilbert Léger is a co-leader (ibid.; France 15 Oct. 2005, 27; *PHW 2008* 2008, 546).

Mochrena supporters

France's Refugee Appeals Board (Commission des recours des réfugiés, CRR) describes Mochrena as a right-leaning Protestant party that was part of the Democratic Convergence (Convergence démocratique), an informal coalition of diverse opposition parties (France 15 Oct. 2005, 24-25; Haiti Democracy Project 30 Sept. 2005) of the left and the right (ibid.). According to the CRR, members of the Democratic Convergence became the target of political violence in 2001 (France 15 Oct. 2005, 24-25). *Political Handbook of the World 2008* describes Mochrena as a "center-right" party founded by evangelical Protestant churches with the support of evangelical Protestant churches in the United States (US) (*PHW 2008* 2008, 546).

Mochrena draws the bulk of its support from the department of Artibonite in western Haiti (Haiti Democracy Project 21 Nov. 2008), where it won approximately 13 percent of the vote in the presidential election held in February 2006 (CEP 20 Feb. 2006a). In correspondence dated 21 November 2008, the Executive Director of Haiti Democracy Project indicated that Mochrena's greatest support comes specifically from Gonaïves (Haiti Democracy Project 21 Nov. 2008), the capital city of Artibonite (*Europa 2008* 2008, 2123), where its leader, Luc Mésadiéu, received approximately 40 percent of voter support in the February 2006 presidential elections (CEP 20 Feb. 2006b). Haiti Democracy Project is a Washington-based independent research group with a board of former US ambassadors, members of the Haitian-American community and policy analysts; the organization is dedicated to promoting "effective, accountable government in Haiti and U.S. policies toward this end" (Haiti Democracy Project 6 July 2003).

Elected Members

In the Haitian elections held in 2006, Mochrena won three seats in the Chamber of Deputies (Chambre des députés) (*Europa 2008* 2008, 2128; US 23 Oct. 2008; IPU 10 Oct. 2008). According to Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (Conseil électoral provisoire, CEP), Mochrena candidates placed first in the second round of elections in the following electoral districts: Gonaïves in the department of Artibonite (CEP 26 Apr. 2006), Gros-Morne, also in Artibonite, and Camp-Perrin/Maniche in the Sud department (CEP 12 Dec. 2006).

As of November 2008, Mochrena does not hold any seats in the Senate (Sénat) (IPU 3 Nov. 2008; US 23 Oct. 2008; Haiti Democracy Project 21 Nov. 2008). Information on which part of the country its elected members come from could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Political activities and organizational structure

According to a freelance journalist (FRIDE n.d.) writing for Radio Caraïbes in 2008, Mochrena was one of several political parties that demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Jacques-Édouard Alexis (Radio Caraïbes 13 Apr. 2008), reportedly a close ally of President Préval (*LA Times* 13 Apr. 2008). Alexis was dismissed by a vote of 16 out of 27 senators (ibid.; Radio Caraïbes 13 Apr. 2008).

Further information on the political activities and organizational structure of Mochrena could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate, but the following information may be of interest.

According to a November 2007 article in the Haitian newspaper *Le Matin*, a split in the party developed in September 2007 between a faction loyal to the leader of the party, Luc Mésadiou, and another faction that supports former senator, Amos André, who is party coordinator general, and Pastor Jackson Noël (*Le Matin* 22 Nov. 2007). In an open letter mentioned in the article, the faction represented by Amos André and Jackson Noël referred to Mésadiou as [translation] "fundamentalist" and accused him of abuse of power (ibid.). A document dated 31 December 2007 and produced by Haiti Democracy Project states that the faction led by Mésadiou is threatened with [translation] "implosion." Both factions have demanded that the other leader disassociate his name from that of the party (*Le Matin* 22 Nov. 2007). Further or corroborating information on this split within the Mochrena party could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Treatment of its members by the Préval government

The Executive Director of Haiti Democracy Project reported to the Research Directorate that political gangs deployed by Préval and his party posed an "undefined but increasing" threat to members of other parties, including Mochrena; however, he stressed that this does not mean that all members of opposition parties are in "imminent physical danger" (21 Nov. 2008). He indicated that such gangs have been involved in politically motivated kidnappings in Port-au-Prince and that Haiti Democracy Project has also received "credible reports" of "similar gang activity" carried out against the political opposition in the city of Cap-Haïtien (Haiti Democracy Project 21 Nov. 2008). Further or corroborating information on the treatment of Mochrena members by the Préval government could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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