

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

19 April 2013

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Haiti: The Assembly of Progressive National Democrats (Rassemblement des démocrates nationaux progressistes, RDNP); political activities and organizational structure; regions of the country that its elected members represent; the socio-economic groups and geographic areas of Haiti that support it; treatment of its members by the authorities (2009-April 2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview

The Assembly of Progressive National Democrats (Rassemblement des démocrates nationaux progressistes, RDNP) is a Haitian political party formed during the 1970s (*PHW* 2012, 600; Europa n.d.a). According to the *Political Handbook of the World 2012* (*PHW*), the RDNP was founded by Leslie Manigat (*PHW* 2012, 600). Leslie Manigat was elected as the president of the country in 1988, but was ousted in a coup a few months later (*ibid.*; *Time* 15 Nov. 2010; IPU n.d.). In 2006, he came in second place during the presidential elections (*PHW* 2012, 600; *Time* 15 Nov. 2010).

The secretary general of the party is Mirlande Manigat (*PHW* 2012, 600; Europa n.d.a). She is Leslie Manigat's wife (*PHW* 2012, 596; Europa n.d.b; IPU n.d.). Mirlande Manigat was a candidate in the 2010 presidential elections (*PHW* 2012, 600; IPU n.d.). She received the largest percentage of votes during the first round and finished second against Michel Martelly during the second and last round in March 2011 (*PHW* 2012, 600; IPU n.d.).

Europa World Online describes the RDNP as a centre party (n.d.). The *Political Handbook of the World 2012* indicates that in 1986, Leslie Manigat called for solidarity between the "centrist" parties (*PHW* 2012, 600). In addition, that same publication states that Mirlande Manigat "campaign[ed] on a centre-right platform" during the 2010 presidential elections (*ibid.*). However, in a *Time* magazine article about the party, Mirlande Manigat described the RDNP as a "center-left, 'capitalist with a human face'" (*Time* 15 Nov. 2010). No information on the political activities and the organizational structure of the RDNP could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of the Response.

2. Party Support

The RDNP won four seats in the Chamber of Deputies in the 2006 legislative elections (*PHW* 2012, 600; IPU n.d.). The four RDNP deputies elected during these elections represented the constituencies of Anse-Rouge, Léogane, Baie de Henne/Bombardopolis and Jérémie (Haiti n.d.c).

Legislative elections were held in two rounds, in November 2010 and in March 2011 (*PHW* 2012, 603; IPU n.d.; Europa n.d.b). The RDNP obtained no seat in the Chamber of Deputies in these elections (Haiti n.d.a). The RDNP also has no seat in the Senate (Haiti n.d.b).

According to the *Political Handbook*, Mirlande Manigat received support from a large part of the political elite as well as from several parliamentarians in the 2010 presidential campaign (*PHW* 2012, 598, 601). The Inter-Parliamentary Union also points out that Mirlande Manigat was backed by the Collective Movement for Haitian Renewal, which is described as a [English version of IPU] "group of influential parliamentarians" (IPU n.d.).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Director of the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), an American NGO that devotes itself to human rights, justice and democratization in Haiti, stated that the RDNP's base is "urban, educated elites" (IJDH 8 Apr. 2012). Corroborating information could not be found among the

sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Treatment of RDNP Members by the Authorities

Limited information on the treatment of party members by the authorities could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In March 2011, two people who were putting up posters for the presidential campaign of Mirlande Manigat were arrested, beaten and killed by officers of the Haitian National Police (US 24 May 2012, 2; RNDDH 20 June 2011). According to the National Human Rights Defence Network (Réseau national de défense des droits humains, RNDDH), a Haitian NGO, a third individual who was also putting up posters was also arrested (ibid.). According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011* published by the US Department of State, seven police officers from the riot unit were placed in detention pending an investigation into the matter, and five of them were charged (US 24 May 2012, 2).

In January 2013, a meeting of opposition party members was disrupted in Arcahaie [city in the western department] (*Le Nouvelliste* 7 Jan. 2013; Radio Vision 2000 6 Jan. 2013; Radio Kiskeya 5 Jan. 2013). The attackers presented themselves as supporters of the party in power but the chair denied any involvement (ibid.; Radio Vision 2000 6 Jan. 2013). According to the Haitian daily *Le Nouvelliste*, one individual was injured (*Le Nouvelliste* 7 Jan. 2013), while according to Radio Kiskeya in Haiti, two were injured (Radio Kiskeya 5 Jan. 2013). Mirlande Manigat was present (ibid.; Radio Vision 2000 6 Jan. 2013), and according to *Le Nouvelliste*, her presence was one of the reasons for the disturbance (*Le Nouvelliste* 7 Jan. 2013). She reported the lack of protection and response from the local security forces that did not intervene, but did note that one police chief linked directly to Port-au-Prince had ordered a motorized response brigade to assist the participants (ibid.).

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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