

Elections in Haiti pose Post-Electoral Crisis

By: Clément Doleac, Research Fellow at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, with contribution from Ms. Sabrina Hervé, invited contributor

Synopsis

Yet again, meaningful democracy in Haiti has been eluded in favor of short-term stability.¹ Although a new date for elections was decided last January, no conditions close to being fair and democratic have been met. After months of electoral processes were thought as lacking transparency, it is clear that recent elections were found to be highly dubious and fraudulent that would not bring stability to the country. Quite to the contrary, conditions were created to fuel a justified and widespread rejection of an existing corrupt political system.

Disgracefully, international observers including mainstream newspapers and the Organization of American States (OAS) have welcomed sham elections despite widespread irregularities abetted by outgoing President Michel Martelly's authoritarian behavior. Weeks before the scheduled runoff on December 27, this scheme would all but guarantee a long-term post-electoral crisis.

Up to now, this warped political strategy has been successful for Martelly. He was initially elected to be president on March 10, 2011, only after Haiti's most popular political party, Fanmi Lavalas, founded by former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, had been barred from the election, thanks in large part to the U.S. State Department and the OAS.² Because of those and other outside forces he still leads the game. Apparently aiming to impose the electoral agenda, Martelly himself chose the electoral authorities in the form of the Provisional Electoral Council (*Conseil Électoral Provisoire*, or CEP). He will control Parliament, and the candidate he hand-picked to succeed him, Jovenel Moïse of the Parti Haitien Tèt Kale (PHTK), who is likely to win the runoff on December 27. Needless to say, democracy remains in jeopardy.³

¹ DOLEAC Clément, "Dictatorship and Human Rights in Haiti," in Council on hemispheric Affairs, on November 17, 2014. Consulted on <http://www.coha.org/human-rights-in-haiti/> on December 7, 2015 ; DOLEAC Clément, « Elections on Hold in haiti : Stability versus Democracy » in *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, on December 8, 2014. See more on <http://www.coha.org/elections-on-hold-in-haiti-stability-versus-democracy/>, Consulted on 11/23/2015.

² DOLEAC Clément, « Elections on Hold in haiti : Stability versus Democracy » in Council on Hemispheric Affairs, on December 8, 2014. See more on <http://www.coha.org/elections-on-hold-in-haiti-stability-versus-democracy/>, Consulted on 11/23/2015. ; Ricardo Seitenfus, a special representative for the OAS in Haiti, states that a secret 'core group' of foreign dignitaries sought to force the president of Haiti out of office in a clean-cut coup. He stressed that this core group also "engineered an intervention in Haiti's presidential elections that year that ensured that the governing party's candidate would not proceed to a runoff." See the interview of Mr. Seitenfus in *Dissent Magazine*, with information cited again by CEPR here: http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/haitis-doctored-elections-seen-from-the-inside-an-interview-with-ricardo-seitenfus and here <http://www.cepr.net/index.php/press-releases/press-releases/oas-insider-reveals-details-of-illegal-foreign-intervention-against-haitian-democracy>

³ Ibid.

A chain of events announcing flawed elections

This is no surprise. The decrees regulating the electoral process and creating the makeup of the CEP were both mainly drafted and chosen by the executive power represented by President Martelly, after he first dissolved Parliament due to the fact that two thirds of the Senate seats and the chamber of deputies were vacant after elections were not held, meaning that congress couldn't function.⁴

This took place after President Martelly blocked several attempts made by the opposition-controlled Parliament to pass its own electoral regulations, and after he failed to agree with Parliament on the composition of the CEP (three members from the Senate, three from the Chamber of Deputies, and from the executive branch) as constitutionally required.⁵ Martelly depicted Parliament as unwilling to move on new elections in order to preserve its own power—a criticism that most likely does not lack truth in a country in which the chequered landscape is politically fragmented with little coherent ideology. As reported by the International Crisis Group in February 2013 the lack of “ideolog[ical] ... clarity leaves citizens unable ... to choose between clearly defined platforms” in this fragmented political landscape.⁶ “Over 100 parties and groups have [each] produced the 5,000 signatures required for registration,” according to the report.⁷ To some extent this diffusion of political input masks the fact that actual power rests in the hands of only a few well-positioned party leaders. As it stands, Haitian political parties fail at the most basic tasks, failing to articulate institutionalized policies and or effectively reach out to citizens. In such a context, President Martelly has had little difficulty becoming the dominant political actor.

Amid this institutional blockage, on January 7, 2015, he began meeting with members of Parliament to try to reach a deal on the Electoral Law and the composition of the CEP. Negotiations continued for more than a week, and as reported by *Al Jazeera* at the time, “just hours before the country marked the fifth anniversary of the earthquake that left some 300,000 people dead ... the president and some of the opposition politicians reached a long-term agreement [requiring elections to be decided] before the end of 2015 for two-thirds of the Senate and [House of] Deputies, as well as for president.”⁸ This new agreement, which contained nothing groundbreaking, was part of an already long list of agreements

⁴ The 1987 Constitution mandated that transitional elections be administered by a provisional council (*Conseil Electoral Provisoire*) until a permanent electoral council (*Conseil Electoral Permanent*) could be established. 28 years later, Haiti has still not transitioned to that permanent election council. ; DOLEAC Clément, « Elections on Hold in haiti : Stability versus Democracy » in *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, on December 8, 2014. See more on <http://www.coha.org/elections-on-hold-in-haiti-stability-versus-democracy/>, Consulted on 11/23/2015. ; “Un décret électoral en guise de loi électorale, le CEP s’y met...” in *Le Nouvelliste*, on February 5, 2015. Consulted on <http://lenouvelliste.com/lenouvelliste/article/141245/Un-decret-electoral-en-guise-de-loi-electorale-le-CEP-sy-met> on December 7, 2015. ; “Haiti - Elections : The 9 members of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP)” on *Haiti Libri*, on January 22, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.haitilibre.com/en/news-13001-haiti-elections-the-9-members-of-the-provisional-electoral-council-cep.html> on December 7, 2015

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ International Crisis Group, “Governing Haiti: Time for National Consensus”, *Crisis Group Latin America and Caribbean Report No.46*, 4 February 2013.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ CHARLES Jacqueline, “U.S. wants to avoid one-man rule in Haiti” in *Miami Herald*, on January 8, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article5650584.html> on January 12, 2015. ; AL JAZEERA, “Haiti political crisis persists despite deal » in *Al-Jazeera*, on January 12, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2015/01/haiti-rival-leaders-seek-last-minute-deal-201511203231758694.html> on January 12, 2015



arrived at mostly to give the news media something to cover and which was guaranteed to lead to the current post-electoral crisis and deepen Haiti's long-lasting political stalemate.⁹

The main opposition party in Haiti, *Fanmi Lavalas*, which for highly questionable reasons was not able to run in the 2011 elections, was not even part of the talks.¹⁰ This new agreement was a weak and ineffective compromise which allowed the executive branch to choose the composition of the CEP, the procedures, and dates to be followed in the next elections, despite this being the province of Parliament.¹¹ The agreement of January 11, 2015, was signed by 24 political parties of which 21 had no elected representatives in Parliament, illustrating its lack of legitimacy: The executive branch, through its decrees, decided the elections' timetable and the CEP's composition, as well as the financing of the election by foreign actors.¹² The president has been, for close to a year, governing alone, without Parliament, through decree.¹³

In a last-ditch attempt to legislate and subsequently legalize these agreements, Parliament tried to reach a voting quorum on January 11, 2015, but in effect, no deal could be reached and so it became considered as a dysfunctional body, with an insufficient number of members in both chambers.¹⁴ Only 10 senators were still legally elected, leaving the Senate with only one-third of its maximum composition.¹⁵ A year ago, Sandra Honoré, the head of the UN Mission to Stabilize Haiti (MINUSTAH), explained what had caused a group of six senators to unite and block the electoral law: “Despite the executive branch’s repeated public statements in favor of holding the elections as soon as possible ... [it] had intentionally delayed the process to ensure that Parliament would become non-functional.”¹⁶

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Haiti – Politic : « The El Rancho agreement, a crisis within the crisis... » on *Haiti Libre*, on March 31, 2014. Consulted on <http://www.haitilibre.com/en/news-10832-haiti-politic-the-el-rancho-agreement-a-crisis-within-the-crisis.html> on January 12, 2015. ; « Haiti Reaches Political Agreement For ‘Consensus’ Government » in *TeleSur*, on December 30, 2014. Consulted on <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Haiti-Reaches-Political-Agreement-For-Consensus-Government-20141230-0009.html> on January 12, 2015. ; JOHNSTON Jake, WEISBROT Mark, “Haiti’s Fatally Flawed Election” in *Center for Economy and Policy Research (CEPR)*, January 2011. Consulted on <http://www.cepr.net/index.php/publications/reports/haitis-fatally-flawed-election>, on December 04, 2014.

¹² Reuters, “Haiti’s parliament dissolved after last-ditch negotiations to avert crisis fail” in *The Guardian.*, on January 13, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/13/haiti-parliament-dissolved-michel-martelly-crisis> on January 14, 2015.

¹³ A detailed timeline and history of the electoral law, from a legal perspective can be find here: <http://www.ijdh.org/2015/01/topics/politics-democracy/ensuring-fair-elections-in-haiti-legal-analysis-of-recent-developments/> ; DOLEAC Clément, “The U.S. Government Supports a Haitian Return to a One-man-rule Regime” in *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, January 14, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.coha.org/the-u-s-government-supports-a-haitian-return-to-a-one-man-rule-regime/> on December 7, 2015.

¹⁴ Haiti – Politique : « C’est fini, le rideau est tombé sur le Parlement... », *Haiti Libre*, on January 13, 2015. Consulted on January 13, 2015, on <http://www.haitilibre.com/article-12934-haiti-politique-c-est-fini-le-rideau-est-tombe-sur-le-parlement.html>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), “U.N. and U.S. Blame Haiti’s Opposition for Delayed Elections, Ignore History”, in *CEPR*, on September 16, 2014. Consulted on <http://www.cepr.net/index.php/blogs/relief-and-reconstruction-watch/un-and-us-blame-haitis-opposition-for-delayed-elections-ignore-history> on November 24, 2014.



Parliament was therefore dissolved and a *de facto* prime minister, Paul Evans, took office although his appointment was not ratified by the remaining legislators as constitutionally required.¹⁷ Understandably, therefore, most of the political parties and the opposition forces were skeptical about the CEP's independence and the state of democracy in their country.

The October 25 election: lack of transparency and frauds led to even more doubtful results

After a year of a doomed political process, the imposition by the executive branch of a new electoral law and the composition of the CEP, as well as several days of a questionable review by the CEP of the ballots cast on October 25, the results of the first round of the presidential election were announced on November 5.¹⁸ It is important that this fraudulent series of events has had the seal of approval of the Core Group, which is comprised of the ambassadors of Brazil, Canada, the European Union, France, Spain, and the United States, and the Special Representative of the OAS.

As reported by the *Center for Economic and Policy Research* (CEPR), the results prescribed a presidential runoff between the Parti Haitien Tèt Kale (PHTK)'s Jovenel Moïse and LAPEH's Jude Celestin, which will be held on December 27. (LaPeh spells "peace" in creole.) Moïse, hand-picked by President Martelly to succeed him, supposedly came in first with close to 33 percent of the vote; Celestin, an important opposition figure whom the OAS kicked out of the runoff during the 2011 presidential elections, had slightly more than 25 percent of the vote.¹⁹ (Jean-Charles Moises came in third with 14 percent of the vote, and *Fanmi Lavalas'* Maryse Narcisse was next with 7 percent.)²⁰

This electoral process has lacked transparency; many ballots have been discarded and some of the tally sheets (*procès verbaux*) have not been found by the CEP since October 25, amounting to around 2.2 percent: this amount is considerably lower than the 18 percent of last August's elections; however, in Sud-est, the department in which Celestin had the higher proportion of recorded votes, around 10 percent of the tally sheets were not received.²¹

¹⁷Reuters, "Haiti's parliament dissolved after last-ditch negotiations to avert crisis fail" in *The Guardian*., on January 13, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/13/haiti-parliament-dissolved-michel-martelly-crisis> on January 14, 2015. The Prime Minister has been nominated at the end of December, and the parliament technically dissolve on January 12th, 2015, which made impossible the nomination.

¹⁸CHARLES Jacqueline, « Haiti elections officials refuse vote verification » in *Miami Herald*, on November 17, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article45281061.html> on November 23, 2015. ; « An Analysis of the October 25 Preliminary Results" in *Haiti, relief and reconstruction Watch* on November 16, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.cepr.net/blogs/haiti-relief-and-reconstruction-watch/an-analysis-of-the-october-25-preliminary-results> on November 23, 2015. ; DOLEAC Clément, "The U.S. government support a Haitian return to a One-man-rule regime" in *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, January 14, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.coha.org/the-u-s-government-supports-a-haitian-return-to-a-one-man-rule-regime/> on November 23, 2015.

¹⁹DOLEAC Clément, "The U.S. government support a Haitian return to a One-man-rule regime" in *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, January 14, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.coha.org/the-u-s-government-supports-a-haitian-return-to-a-one-man-rule-regime/> on November 23, 2015.

²⁰« An Analysis of the October 25 Preliminary Results" in *Haiti, relief and reconstruction Watch* on November 16, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.cepr.net/blogs/haiti-relief-and-reconstruction-watch/an-analysis-of-the-october-25-preliminary-results> on November 23, 2015.

²¹ Ibid.



CEPR stated that the CEP also excluded from the presidential vote totals about 490 tally sheets amounting to 3.6 percent of the total, due to fraud, tampering or clerical errors.²² Intriguingly, the two departments where PHTK's Moïse received the most support were also those who had recorded the highest number of excluded tally sheets: Nord Est (9.8 percent) and Nord Ouest (6.4 percent).²³ The CEPR said it was difficult to know where the biggest problems were in the October 25 vote because the CEP provided no breakdown of reasons the tally sheets were excluded.

For months the CEP had flooded political parties with passes, authorizing their delegates to sit inside the voting areas to ensure the impartiality of the electoral process. Those monitors, called “*mandataires*,” traditionally have been too few, but this time the CEP printed around 1 million passes, according to CEP president Pierre Louis Opont.²⁴ These monitors are allowed to vote wherever they are, unlike normal voters, who have to be doubled-checked with their identification cards and the list at their polling center (the one closest to their place of residence).²⁵ The ridiculousness of this flood of monitors is more obvious when compared to the number of voters: electoral observers estimated a 25 to 30 percent turnout, which means that around 1.5 million voters went to vote, for nearly 1 million monitors to process, so more than half of the votes could have come from monitors. As noted by the CEPR, the situation led to many irregularities.²⁶

Then there is the matter of the 54 candidates receiving more than 13,000 passes (240 per candidate), allowing them to be present in every voting booth in the country even though many of the candidates did not have the capacity or the money to actually use them. “The result,” the CEPR said, “was that parties sold them to the highest bidder in the days leading up to the vote. Local observers said passes were going for as much as \$30 each. By Sunday [the October 25 voting day], they were going for as little as a few dollars.”²⁷ This lack of resources was likely related to the late release of a subsidy amounting to 500 million gourdes (about \$8.9 million USD) to more than 120 political entities, local, legislative, and presidential elections, provided for by the Electoral Decree as well as the faulty manner in which the money was distributed.²⁸

As reported by the sole member of the CEP who refused to sign the preliminary results, Jaccéus Joseph, the Tabulation Center could “have done more to address the allegations of electoral fraud, including checking the voter registration lists against the ballots cast in the Oct. 25 first round of the presidential and legislative runoff vote.”²⁹ He told the *Miami Herald* he “asked the director of the

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ CEPR, « Presidential Elections in Haiti: The Most Votes Money Can Buy », on *Haiti Relief and Reconstruction Watch*, on November 3, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.cepr.net/blogs/haiti-relief-and-reconstruction-watch/presidential-elections-in-haiti-the-most-votes-money-can-buy> on November 23, 2015.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ “Haiti Elections MONEY - How the 500 Million Gourdes will be Distributed” in *Belpolitik*, July 23, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.belpolitik.com/blog/haiti-elections-money-distribution-500-million-gourdes.html> on December 9, 2015.

²⁹ « CEP holdout breaks silence as election protests grow in Haiti » in *Miami Herald*, on November 12, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article44461698.html> on November 23, 2015.



Tabulation Center did he have enough time to thoroughly verify if there was fraud,” and the director answered he “didn’t have enough time for that.”³⁰

“There is a deficit of credibility in the electoral process,” according to Joseph, who says “the CEP should not wait until it’s too late to make a gesture of transparency so that people could have trust in the process.”³¹

The political future of Haiti is already locked

Even though there will be a runoff between the two top vote-getting presidential candidates, the future of Haiti's political scene is pretty much settled. The partial legislative and local election in August received much less coverage than the preliminary presidential election, but has already given an immense advantage to pro-Martelly political parties in the future Parliament.

In the Chamber of Deputies, the pro-Martelly parties gained 45 seats of a total of 93, and control nearly 21 candidates going for a second round. This means that the pro-Martelly coalition will probably control more than 47 seats, a majority of seats in the Chamber.³² In the Senate, this control is less important, but it could become overwhelming. The pro-Martelly coalition already controls six out of 14 Senate seats and could gain up to nine seats in the second round, .³³ Pro-Martelly parties could win up to twelve of the 20 senate seats, if the results are considered definitive.³⁴ Ten of the 30 senators have still two years to go before having to leave the Senate, and their seats are currently held by Inite, with four, OPL with three, Steven Benoît's Alternative with two and Fanmi Lavalas with one.³⁵

In the local elections, President Martelly political party, the PHTK also won 30 mayoral races, and the capital Port-au-Prince, out of 140 municipalities.³⁶

With such a control of Parliament, the pro-Martelly political parties and candidates could become the big winners of those flawed elections.³⁷

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² « An Analysis of the October 25 Preliminary Results” in *Haiti, relief and reconstruction Watch* on November 16, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.cepr.net/blogs/haiti-relief-and-reconstruction-watch/an-analysis-of-the-october-25-preliminary-results> on November 23, 2015. ; Many results are still not definitive, as many candidates have been demanding a re-examination of the results, and are intending legislative procedure against the results.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “Haiti’s ruling party wins big in municipal elections: results” in *Jamaica Observer*, on Tuesday, November 17, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Haiti-s-ruling-party-wins-big-in-municipal-elections--results> on December 7, 2015.

³⁷ « An Analysis of the October 25 Preliminary Results” in *Haiti, relief and reconstruction Watch* on November 16, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.cepr.net/blogs/haiti-relief-and-reconstruction-watch/an-analysis-of-the-october-25-preliminary-results> on November 23, 2015. ; Following graphics are also coming from this CEPR article.



Elections in Haiti pose Post-Electoral Crisis
By Clément Doleac

Chamber of deputies: results

Party	Deputy	2nd Round	MAX
P.H.T.K	26	11	37
VERITE	15	7	22
KID	9	3	12
OPL	7	7	14
AAA	5	2	7
FANMI LAVALAS	5	3	8
BOUCLIER	4	3	7
INITE PATRIYOTIK	4	3	7
LAPEH	4	0	4
FUSION	3	1	4
MOSANO	2	0	2
RENMEN AYITI	2	2	4
CONSORTIUM	1	2	3
KONTRAPEPLA	1	0	1
KP	1	0	1
M.A.S	1	0	1
MONHA	1	0	1
PALMIS	1	0	1
PITIT DESSALINES	1	3	4
APLA	0	2	2
CANAAN	0	1	1
KONA	0	1	1
PLATFÒM LEVE KANPE	0	1	1
PONT	0	1	1

Senate: results

Political Party	Senate Seats	2nd Round
KID	3	0
VERITE	3	1
P.H.T.K	2	4
AAA	1	0
FANMI LAVALAS	1	0
PONT	1	0
LIDE	1	0
OPL	1	0
PITIT DESSALINES	1	0
BOUCLIER	0	4
LAPEH	0	1
CONSORTIUM	0	1
INITE PATRIYOTIK	0	1

Source: "An Analysis of the October 25 Preliminary Results" in Haiti, relief and reconstruction Watch on November 16, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.cepr.net/blogs/haiti-relief-and-reconstruction-watch/an-analysis-of-the-october-25-preliminary-results> on November 23, 2015"



Rejection of the results

Most of the main candidates in the preliminary presidential elections, except Jovenel Moïse (President Martelly's favorite to succeed him), have rejected the preliminary election results, even Jude Celestin, who qualified for the runoff.³⁸ They have denounced massive frauds, backing up their assessment with tenacious facts. They say the preliminary elections were marked by ballot stuffing and by evidence that political party monitors could vote multiple times, and also because of the way the CEP managed the ballots and the counting.

On November 16, a group of nine candidates in the October 24 preliminary presidential election met with the CEP and proposed a review of the voting by an independent vote verification commission, a proposal Haiti's prime minister, Evans Paul, had supported three days before.³⁹ The CEP rejected the possibility.⁴⁰

As the *Miami Herald* reported on November 17, Attorney Samuel Madistin, a presidential candidate speaking for the group that proposed a review of the vote by an independent verification commission, believes that a runoff is impossible in the current situation in the face of massive electoral fraud. "Street mobilizations will continue and they will be re-enforced," Madistin declared. "We are headed into an adversarial situation where no one can predict what will happen."⁴¹

The challenge is now for the opposition to stay united, boycott the election, and create a strong social movement against the elections' results. As highlighted by Robert Fatton, a Haiti political expert at the University of Virginia, "If the opposition remains resolute and united, then the timetable is endangered and both the government and the international community will have to adjust to the new reality. But this new reality will be utterly chaotic."⁴²

For now, *Fanmi Lavalas* as well as other political parties and activists are taking to the streets in massive and long-lasting protests that will continue to occupy the political and the media agenda in Haiti, probably until December 27. Violence has resulted from the public unrest. On November 18, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Pétionville in response to the call for independent assessment of the results by eight presidential candidates (Groupe des 8). Police forcibly dispersed protestors, and two presidential candidates were injured.⁴³

³⁸CHARLES Jacqueline, « Haiti elections officials refuse vote verification » in *Miami Herald*, on November 17, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article45281061.html> on November 23, 2015.

³⁹Ibid ; CHARLES Jacqueline, "Haiti's prime minister meets diaspora, supports vote verification" in *Miami Herald*, on November 14, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article44897373.html> on November 23, 2015.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "Haïti-Élections : La police disperse violemment une manifestation de l'opposition » in *AlterPresse*, on November 18, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.alterpresse.org/spip.php?article19223#.Vk8uWLeRSM8> on November 23, 2015.



“There is no easy way out of this crisis,” Fatton said, “but it is likely that once again the international community will compel the actors into accepting a runoff.”⁴⁴ The day after the October 26 preliminary presidential election the OAS urged “all actors in the electoral process to act responsibly in the coming days,” celebrating the “higher turnout than during the August 9 elections, a positive tendency.”⁴⁵ The leader of the electoral Observation Mission of the OAS, Celso Amorim, former foreign and defense minister of Brazil said the OAS Mission “witnessed a significant improvement yesterday from the August 9th elections.”⁴⁶

Those declarations and endorsements could not be further from reality nor more in complete contradiction to the feelings and the lived experience of Haitian citizens.⁴⁷ As ABC News reported on November 19, “A poll by an independent research group has found deep public suspicion of the first round of the presidential election in Haiti. ... In the election exit poll, 82 percent of voters agreed with the statement, ‘As far as I can see, this election is fair, there is no fraud.’ But in the follow-up, the conclusion was almost the opposite, with nearly 90 percent saying they disagreed with the statement.”

Even if the international community and the Core Group accepted the elections, independent observers did not, confirming the suspicions of presidential candidates and Haitian citizenship. According to the Miami Herald, the National Lawyers Guild and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers delegation, for example, point to “mounting evidence showing a clear pattern of systemic fraud, voter confusion and intimidation, and in some areas disenfranchisement.”⁴⁸

Pierre Esperance, the head of one of the largest human rights networks in Haiti, who had access to the Tabulation Center the day of the vote said that “In 97 percent to 98 percent, there is massive fraud and gross irregularities,” as reported by the Miami Herald. He added “there are some cases of irregularities that show a lack of training but there are irregularities that are so grave, it tells you ‘This is something that was planned.’”⁴⁹ In its December 3, 2015 issue, *The New Yorker* called these elections a sad “deja vu” of former flawed elections, but this time with President Martelly as the chief of the corrupted system.⁵⁰

It is true that voter participation has improved, but having more citizens voting in a fraudulent and corrupted process is not working for democracy and fair elections, but rather against it. Fair elections

⁴⁴ CHARLES Jacqueline, « Haiti elections officials refuse vote verification » in *Miami Herald*, on November 17, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article45281061.html> on November 23, 2015.

⁴⁵ “OAS Electoral Observation Mission to Haiti Recognizes Efforts of Authorities in General Elections” in Organization of American States, on October 26, 2015. Consulted on https://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-322/15 on November 23, 2015.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ FOX Ben, “Many in Haiti Suspect Fraud in Recent Election, Poll Finds” in *ABC News*, on November 19, 2015. Consulted on <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/haiti-suspect-fraud-recent-election-poll-finds-35295507> on November 23, 2015.

⁴⁸ CHARLES Jacqueline, “U.S. observers: Haiti’s presidential elections deeply flawed” in *Miami Herald*, on November 24, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article46196945.html> on December 7, 2015.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ DANTICAT Edwige, “Sweet Micky and the Sad Déjà Vu of Haiti’s Presidential Elections” in *The New Yorker*, on December 3, 2015. Consulted on <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/sweet-micky-and-the-sad-deja-vu-of-haitis-presidential-elections> on December 7, 2015.



Elections in Haiti pose Post-Electoral Crisis
By Clément Doleac

have not been held in Haiti for at least a decade now, and we may be witnessing another electoral coup.⁵¹ How long will this situation last?

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⁵¹“Thousands Gather in Haiti’s Capital to Protest Alleged Electoral Coup” in *Atlantic Black Star*, on November 12, 2015. Consulted on <https://atlantablackstar.com/2015/11/12/thousands-gather-haiti-protest-haitis-electoral-coup/> on December 7, 2015. LEMOINE Maurice, “Latin American coups upgraded,” in *Le Monde Diplo*, on August 2014. Consulted on <http://mondediplo.com/2014/08/06coups> on March 3, 2015.

