

# Human Rights in Haiti:

A 3-lesson unit for high school level students on understanding the present-day situation of human rights in Haiti



“Piti piti zwazo fè nich”.  
Little by little the bird builds its nest.  
(Haitian Proverb)

## Lesson 1: Introduction to Haitian History: A Living Timeline

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### Sources:

<http://dolphin.upenn.edu/~dhsa/history.html>

<http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/america/crbmaps/caribmap.htm>

<http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/america/crbmaps/haiti.htm>

**Grade Level & Subject:** High School

### Further Resources and Readings:

<http://www.webster.edu/~corbtre/haiti/history/history.htm>

Haiti in Focus: a guide to the people, politics and culture by Charles Arthur. Published by Interlink Books, New York / Latin America Bureau, London, January 2002.

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Chalkboard/ Chalk; Basic Country Profile Sheet Handout (for use with all three lessons); Timeline Events Sheet; Introduction to Haitian History Timeline

**Concepts:** World History, Caribbean History

### Objectives:

- To raise student awareness about world history.
- To foster a sense of global awareness.
- Corresponds with NY State Social Studies Standard 2C: to “Analyze historic events from around the world by examining accounts written from different perspectives” and “Distinguish between the past, present, and future by creating multiple-tier timelines that display important events and developments from world history across time and place”.

### Lesson Set-up:

#### *Opening Discussion:*

1. Ask students to share what they know currently about Haiti based on first-hand knowledge, the media or other sources. Students of Haitian descent may be an excellent resource for leading and contributing to the discussion. (5 minutes)
2. Hand out the Basic Country Profile Sheet to each student (or write it on the blackboard if copies are not easily accessible). Review the general measures of the standard of living in Haiti vis-à-vis the standards in the United States. (5 minutes)
3. Introduce the Timeline activity that can be carried out in various ways. Two suggestions are offered below.

**Activity Set-up:** (there are two suggested options for the timeline activity. The facilitator can have students work on arranging the timeline in small groups on the handout provided or have each student represent one event on the timeline and move physically around the room to make a living timeline of Haitian history. Students should draw on prior knowledge of world history to make the best estimations of when each event occurred, and then will receive further information about the chronology of important events in Haitian history).

### **Option 1: The Living Timeline**

1. Using the events in Haitian history described from multiple perspectives provided in the following handout, assign each student or two students an event. (On the timeline events handout below. One copy can be made and cut up to pass out events to each student. Some of the events are written as if from a textbook and others from specific perspectives of actors in history.)
2. Draw a line on the blackboard or in the classroom in an area where students can move around. One end of the line will be marked by the date 1492, and the other end marked with the date 2003.
3. Have each student arrange him or herself along the timeline estimating when in history his or her event took place. Students should negotiate with each other in determining their appropriate place along the timeline. (10-15 minutes)
4. Once the students have assembled themselves, have each student read his or her event out loud and allow for students to discuss and decide whether the events are in chronological order or if certain adjustments need to be made to the order. (10 minutes)
5. Ask students to return to their seats and distribute the Introduction to Haitian History Timeline handout.

### **Option 2: Groupwork on the Timeline**

1. Divide students into small groups and ask each group to draw on a blank sheet of paper a line that begins with 1492 and ends with 2003. Conversely, each group can be given a sheet of poster-size paper to draw a bigger line with the same dates on each end.
2. Distribute a copy of all the events from multiple perspectives to each group and have them begin to order the events chronologically based on their best estimates drawing on prior knowledge of world history. (15 minutes)
3. After each group has finished, have them come together and share their responses, coming to a group consensus about the order of events. (10 minutes)
4. Once they have completed and reached a consensus, distribute the Introduction to Haitian History Timeline handout and have the students check their assembled timeline with the historical one.

### **Closing Discussion (for both possible activities):**

1. Discuss the activity and what students learned about Haitian history that they may not have previously known. (10 minutes)

### **Homework possibilities:**

- Ask students to look for references in the media to Haiti (TV, newspapers, magazines, radio, etc...) and bring them in for the next class.
- Ask students to do internet or library research on Haitian history and bring in a one-page summary of what they find.

# BASIC COUNTRY PROFILE SHEET: HAITI



## Haiti

**Population:** 7.5 million

**Official Languages:** Haitian Creole, French

**Ethnic Groups:** black (95%); mixed race & white (5%)

**Geographic Area:** 27,750 sq. Km (about the size of the state of Maryland)

**Life Expectancy:** 52 years

**Literacy Rate:** 53%

**Gross Domestic Product per capita (average income per year):** US\$1,700

**Unemployment:** 70%

## The United States

**Population:** 290.3 million

**Official Language:** English

**Ethnic Groups:** White (69%); African-American (11%); Latino/a (11%); Asian/Pacific Islander (3%), Native American (1%).

**Geographic Area:** 9,629,091 sq km

**Life Expectancy:** 77 years

**Literacy Rate:** 97%

**Gross Domestic Product per capita (average income per year):** US\$37,600

**Unemployment:** 5.8%

**Sources of information:** <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ha.html>,  
<http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/naamerica/crbmaps/caribmap.htm>  
[http://www.bcdcog.com/publications/census\\_data\\_gen\\_pop\\_housing\\_data/us.PDF](http://www.bcdcog.com/publications/census_data_gen_pop_housing_data/us.PDF)

## Introduction to Haitian History Timeline

Sources: adapted from [http://www.haiti.org/general\\_information/keyhisdates.htm](http://www.haiti.org/general_information/keyhisdates.htm)

**1492:** Christopher Columbus lands and claims the island of Hispaniola (present day Haiti and the Dominican Republic) for Spain. The Spanish build the New World's first settlement at *La Navidad* on Haiti's north coast.

**1531:** The Tainos numbered anywhere from 100,000 to 4 million prior to Columbus' arrival, but with exposure to smallpox brought and the exploitative work demanded of them, the population in 1531 was 600.

**1697:** Spanish control over the colony ends with the Treaty of Ryswick, which divided the island into French-controlled St. Domingue and Spanish Santo Domingo.

**1700-1800:** For over 100 years the colony of St. Domingue (known as the Pearl of the Antilles) was France's most important overseas territory, which supplied it with sugar, rum, coffee and cotton. At the height of slavery, some 500,000 people mainly of western African origin, were enslaved by the French.

**1791-1803:** A slave rebellion is launched by the Jamaican-born Boukman leading to a protracted 13-year war of liberation against St. Domingue's colonists and later, Napoleon's army. The slave armies were commanded by General Toussaint L'Ouverture who was eventually exiled to France where he died.

**1804:** The hemisphere's second Republic is declared on January 1, 1804 by General Jean-Jacques Dessalines. Haiti, or *Ayiti* in Creole, is the name given to the land by the former Taino-Arawak peoples, meaning "mountainous country."

**1807-20:** Civil war racks the country, which divides into a northern and southern kingdom. Jean-Pierre Boyer reunifies the country and becomes President of the entire republic in 1820.

**1821:** President Boyer occupies Santo Domingo following its declaration of independence from Spain, abolishing slavery throughout the island. The entire island was controlled by Haiti until 1844 when the Dominican Republic won its independence from Haiti.

**1838:** France recognizes Haitian independence in exchange for a financial payment of 150 million *francs*. Most nations including the United States shunned Haiti for almost forty years, fearful that its example could stir unrest there and in other slaveholding countries.

**1862:** The United States finally grants Haiti diplomatic recognition sending renowned anti-slavery advocate and former slave Frederick Douglass as its first Consular Minister.

**1915-34:** President Woodrow Wilson orders the U.S. Marines to occupy Haiti and establish control over customs-houses and port authorities after substantial civil unrest.

**1934:** The U.S. withdraws from Haiti leaving the Haitian Armed Forces in place throughout the country.

**1937:** Thousands of Haitians living near the border of the Dominican Republic are massacred by Dominican soldiers under the orders of President General Trujillo.

**1957:** After several attempts to move forward democratically ultimately fail, military-controlled elections lead to victory for Dr. François Duvalier, who in 1964 declares himself Presi-

dent-for-Life and forms the infamous paramilitary *Tonton Makout*. The corrupt Duvalier dictatorship marks one of the saddest chapters in Haitian history with tens of thousands killed or exiled.

**1971:** "Papa-Doc" Duvalier dies in office after naming his 19 year-old son Jean-Claude as his successor.

**1976:** Widespread protests against repression of the nation's press take place. Haitian people demand that their human rights be respected by the authoritarian government.

**1970s-1980s:** "Baby-Doc" Duvalier exploits inter-national assistance and seeks to attract investment leading to the establishment of textile-based assembly industries. Attempts by workers and political parties to organize are quickly and regularly crushed.

**1980:** Hundreds of human rights workers, journalists and lawyers are arrested and exiled from the country.

**1983:** Pope John Paul II visits Haiti and declares publicly that, "Things must change here."

**1985:** Massive anti-Government demonstrations continue to take place around the country. Four schoolchildren are shot dead by soldiers, an event which unifies popular protest against the régime.

**1986:** Widespread protests against "Baby Doc" lead the U.S. to arrange for Duvalier and his family to be exiled to France. An Army General heads a new National Governing Council.

**1990:** In a campaign marred by occasional violence and death, democratic elections finally take place on December 16, 1990. Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a parish priest, well known throughout the country for his support of the poor, is elected President with 67.5% of the popular vote.

**1991:** In September President Aristide addresses the UN General Assembly. Haitian military leaders overthrow his government three days after his speech. Over 1,000 people are killed in the first days of the coup.

**1991-1994:** The military government is reported to be committing torture, assassination and rape against supporters of exiled president Aristide in Haiti. Thousands of people try to flee the repression by any way possible often risking their lives on dangerous boats. to get to safer places.

**1994:** In September, U.S. President Clinton declares that all diplomatic initiatives were exhausted and sends U.S. troops to Haiti after the coup leaders agree to step down and leave the country. On October 15th, President Aristide and his Government-in-exile return to Haiti.

**1996:** President Préval is inaugurated in February.

**2001:** President Aristide is re-elected for a second term since in the Haitian Constitution, no president can be in power for two terms in a row.

**2001-2003:** International lending agencies that provide funding for development projects like health and education, pull out their aid to Haiti based on what they call the 'political crisis' resulting in the impoverishment and death of many people based on their inability to access clean water and health services for treatable diseases.

## Events from Different Perspectives

*(These events can be cut out and assigned to each student for the living timeline, or cut out and assembled on a poster-size sheet for the groupwork activity.)*

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From overhearing the planters talk detailing events in France, Toussaint L'Ouverture learned that French revolutionaries had successfully promoted their ideas of equality and freedom among the people. He also saw that most slaves died young from overwork or terrible forms of punishment. He joined with other slaves in planning a strategy for a rebellion.

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“I believe we must act now. Nearly 200 years ago, the Haitian people rose up out of slavery and declared their independence. Unfortunately, the promise of liberty was quickly snuffed out. And ever since, Haiti has known more suffering and repression than freedom. In our time, as democracy has spread throughout our hemisphere, Haiti has been left behind. Then, just four years ago, the Haitian people held the first free and fair elections since their independence. They elected a parliament and a new president, Father Jean Bertrand Aristide, a Catholic priest who received almost 70 percent of the vote. But eight months later, Haitian dreams of democracy became a nightmare of bloodshed. Now the United States must protect our interests -- to stop the brutal atrocities that threaten tens of thousands of Haitians, to secure our borders and to preserve stability and promote democracy in our hemisphere.” —President Bill Clinton

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“The large black population of Haiti was of African origin. Stolen from their native land, they were transplanted in the island to become beasts of burden. The slave-trade was then at its height. Nations and individuals who stood at the head of the civilized world, and prided themselves in the name of Christian, were not ashamed to traffic in the bodies and souls of their fellow-men. Three hundred vessels, employed every year in that detestable traffic, spread robbery, conflagration, and carnage over the coasts and the lands of Africa”. —Author, John Beard

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“The Taino leader Anacaona succeeded her husband and was much loved by her people. However, the Spanish were threatened by this popularity and the power that went with it. Despite Anacaona's instructions to the people to be fully cooperative and hospitable, and despite her own friendly welcome, the Spanish began a slaughter, burned the village and took Anacaona prisoner”.

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François Duvalier called himself Papa Doc, invoking the paternalism and authority that surround the Haitian presidency. He immediately began consolidating power, first removing all military personnel opposed to him and, in the same year as the Cuban revolution, he formed his own personal militia, the infamous Tonton Macoutes, composed mainly of peasants from Haiti's rural regions. But even before the formation of the Tonton Macoutes, Duvalier had begun a reign of terror that lasted 14 years, claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people, including his political opponents, and brutalized countless others.

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“What happened was that in order to get military roads built cheaply and quickly, the [U.S.] military authorities, revived the legal but obsolete Haitian practise of forced labor for road-work. At first when the construction was near home there was little or no trouble, but when work came to be at a distance, unwilling workers were impressed, often very unfairly. They were sometimes manacled like slaves, compelled to work for weeks with little or no pay and inadequate food and shot down if they attempted to escape.” — Author Emily G. Balch

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“This is a large and level island, with trees extremely flourishing, and streams of water; there is a large lake in the middle of the island, but no mountains: the whole is completely covered with verdure and delightful to behold. The natives are an inoffensive people”.

—excerpt from Christopher Columbus’ journal

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The treaty of Ryswick was signed giving the French the western one-third of the island of Hispaniola, to that point governed by the Spanish. The Treaty also settled several other disputes between France, England, Spain, and the Netherlands. It ended the War of the Grand Alliance.

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"Baby-Doc" Duvalier exploited international assistance and seeks to attract investment leading to the establishment of textile-based assembly industries. Attempts by workers and political parties to organize are quickly and regularly crushed. Hundreds of human rights workers, journalists and lawyers are arrested and exiled from the country.

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In just vindication of Haiti, I can speak of her, not only words of admiration, but words of gratitude as well. She has grandly served the cause of universal human liberty. We should not forget that the freedom you and I enjoy today; that the freedom that eight hundred thousand colored people enjoy in the British West Indies; the freedom that has come to the colored race the world over, is largely due to the brave stand taken by the black sons, of Haiti ninety years ago. When they struck for freedom, they builded better than they knew. Their swords were not drawn and could not be drawn simply for themselves alone. They were linked and interlinked with their race, and striking for their freedom, they struck for the freedom of every black man in the world.” —Frederick Douglass, lecture on Haiti at the World’s Fair

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“Mounting political violence in the context of anticipated elections and a notable increase in killings by police marked a year that began with President René Prével’s abrupt dismissal of parliament and unilateral naming of a new prime minister and cabinet. Increasing political intolerance was apparent in several violent protests by supporters of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide, as well as armed attacks on political figures and a leading human rights activist”. — Human Rights Watch World Report

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In the north, the river that separates the two countries is so shallow that in it women wash clothes and children play. Tragedy, not geography, forms the real border. Its name, as any Dominican or Haitian can tell you, is the same as that of the deceptively calm northern river: The Massacre. During just a few weeks in October, Dominican soldiers killed 30,000 Haitians along the border because the victims’ skin was dark, even though Dominicans were just a few shades lighter. The events still divide the Dominican Republic and Haiti so deeply that there may as well be an ocean not only around them but between them.

--Author Michelle Wucker

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“I chose to go barefoot, as my mother had always done on her visits to the Massacre River, the river separating Haiti from the Spanish-speaking country that she never allowed me to name because I had been born the night that [Trujillo] had ordered the massacre of all Haitians living there. ...From the Haitian side of the river she could still see the soldiers chopping up her mother’s body and throwing it into the river along with many others.”

— excerpt from Krik? Krak! By Edwidge Danticat

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The French set up a lucrative sugar plantation system in Saint-Domingue run with the labor of hundreds of thousands enslaved African people who were brutally bought, sold and exploited in the colony of Saint-Domingue. Traders took empty ships to West Africa, where they would kidnap, buy or trade individuals, to then transport to the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America, trading goods from each location along the way.

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“The embargo on the loans allocated for health, education, roads and clean water from the IDB has persisted, despite the fact that seven legislators whose seats were contested have stepped down and the Government of Haiti has agreed to push forward legislative elections. These policies demonstrate that the US government's underlying motive of the embargo is not to improve the human rights situation in Haiti, but rather to achieve their implied objective of changing the current democratically elected government.” –Human Rights Activist Loune Viaud

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France recognizes Haitian independence in exchange for a financial payment of 150 million *francs*. Most nations including the United States shunned Haiti for almost forty years, fearful that its example could stir unrest there and in other slaveholding countries.

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“The Haitian dictator Jean Claude Duvalier, better known as Baby Doc Duvalier, built Fort Dimanche as a headquarters for his notoriously ruthless civilian militia, the Macoutes. They used to bring dissenters there for re-education. Locals say several hundred tortured souls now wander the halls of Fort Dimanche.”

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“I am honored to salute you in the name of the Haitian people who will celebrate their independence bicentennial in two years. Those two hundred years of independence are the symbol of an historical transition towards a lasting development. Although we are rich in human, cultural and historic values, our economic index remains part of the 48 poorest countries whose national gross product equals the assets of the three richest men in the world”.

--Speech by President Jean Bertrand-Aristide

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“Boyer and all of Haiti lived on the edge, dreading and fearing the return of the French, their colonial rule and slavery. Boyer wanted to get the French threat off Haiti's back forever and to formally join the company of nations of the world. He sued for recognition from France. After many years of on and off again negotiations, Boyer finally agreed to an outrageous French proposal. Haiti would pay: 150 million francs within 5 years. Actually by the time it came down to this point in the negotiations Haiti had little choice. This "offer" was given with 14 French warships in Port-au-Prince harbor, supported by nearly 500 guns. It was clear to Boyer that were he not to concede to this "indemnity" that France would immediately re-open hostilities. There was no realistic way for him to defend against this force. He signed on July 11, 1825 and France recognized the existence of Haiti”.

– author Bob Corbett

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“Today was our first real day at sea. Everyone was vomiting with each small rocking of the boat. The faces around me are showing their first charcoal layer of sunburn. ‘Now we will never be mistaken for Cubans,’ one man said. Even though some of the Cubans are black too. The man said he was once on a boat with a group of Cubans. When the Coast Guard came for them, they the Cubans to Miami and sent him back to Haiti”.

– from Krik? Krak! By Edwidge Danticat

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## Lesson 2: Human Rights Abuses in Haiti Today

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**Sources:**

*[http://www.transafricaforum.org/reports/Haiti\\_may1final\\_bin.pdf](http://www.transafricaforum.org/reports/Haiti_may1final_bin.pdf)*

**Grade Level & Subject:** High School

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Chalkboard/ Chalk, Handout “Human Rights 101”, handouts of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Report on Haiti

**Concepts:** Human Rights, World Affairs

**Objectives:**

1. To raise student awareness about human rights abuses.
2. To allow students to engage with international standards for the protection of human rights.
3. Corresponds with NY State Standard SS 2C: “Analyze how the values of a nation and international organizations affect the guarantee of human rights and make provisions for human needs.”

**Set-up:**

1. Opening Discussion: Ask students what they know about human rights. What are human rights? Who protects human rights? What do they include? (5 minutes) Pass out “Human Rights 101” handout.
2. Divide students into groups of 4-5.
3. Have students read the background of the situation of health and human rights in Haiti. (5 minutes)
4. Using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have students identify what basic rights are being violated in present-day Haiti according to the report they have just read. (10-15 minutes)
5. Ask each group to prepare a summary of the human rights abuses occurring in Haiti to share with the entire classroom (which can role-play as the United Nations General Assembly). (10 minutes)
6. Have each group prepare recommendations of how the international community, other nations, the Haitian government and local community groups might be able to work together to combat some of the problems mentioned in the report.
7. Have a representative from each group report back to the entire class. (15 minutes)

# Human Rights 101

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## What are Human Rights?

- Everyone has human rights, regardless of their sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, economic status or sexual orientation.
- Human Rights are a “standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations” (from the Universal Declaration of Rights).
- The document that outlines fundamental human rights is called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was written by the United Nations in 1948 and has almost universal acceptance from nations and human rights activists worldwide.
- Human rights are a goal that the entire international community has agreed to work towards. Since 1948, many other treaties, conventions and documents have been written, debated, signed and ratified (entered into law) by countries such as the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Conventions Against Torture (CAT) and the Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- Human rights are broadly divided into the following subgroups:
  - *Civil rights:* freedom of speech, the right to be free from discrimination, the right to not be arbitrarily arrested and the right to a fair trial
  - *Political rights:* the right to vote, the right to participate in the government
  - *Economic rights:* the right to work, the right to fair pay, the right to join a union
  - *Social rights:* the right to healthcare, the right to education, the right to housing
  - *Cultural rights:* the right to practice your culture, the right to benefit from technology
- These human rights are linked since, for example, one cannot attend school easily if s/he has no food to eat or no place to live.
- All the categories of human rights are equally important and work together to form the basic human rights guarantees that every person is entitled to.

## Who Protects Human Rights?

- It is the duty of each nation to ensure that the human rights of the people residing in that country are respected.
- The United Nations has a Human Rights Commission that monitors whether nations are fulfilling the duties to protect the rights of those residing in a respective country, and make recommendations, reports and condemnations about different countries.
- Governments work together with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), organizations that come together in order to promote the rights of individuals and groups of people, but are not affiliated with any government. They hold activities such as trainings, legal consultations, community education, and health services, to promote knowledge of human rights.
- Particularly when governments cannot meet their obligations to ensure all the human rights of all their people, NGOs play an important role in building the government’s capacity to respond to human rights thereby guaranteeing that people have access to services such as health and education, and mobilizing people to stand up for their rights.
- There are several NGOs working at the international, national and local levels.

Excerpts from the TransAfrica Forum May 2003 Report Entitled:  
**“Withheld International Aid: The U.S. Weapon of Mass Disruption”**

*available at [http://www.transafricaforum.org/reports/Haiti\\_may/final\\_bin.doc](http://www.transafricaforum.org/reports/Haiti_may/final_bin.doc)*

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), formed to assist in the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean, has approved \$500 million in loans to Haiti for health care, education, sanitation and potable water, and road rehabilitation. But the United States and the international community are blocking the release of the funds. The purpose of the trip was to examine, first-hand, the impact of the failure of the United States and the international community to release the sorely needed foreign aid to this small impoverished nation.

Haitians suffer dismal health and education systems, a battered infrastructure, inferior sanitation, abysmal drainage and water systems, and sporadic electricity. Unemployment is high, and employment options are minimal. The life of the average Haitian is a precarious one.

Haiti is home to just over 8 million people – 95% of whom are of African descent. In Haiti, education levels are exceedingly low. A mere 51% of school-aged children are actually enrolled in school and more than 50% of the population is considered illiterate.

Employment and other income-generating opportunities are minimal. About 75% of the Haitian population lives in abject poverty. The annual per capita income is below \$250, and the minimum wage is less than \$1.00 per day. Nearly two-thirds of the population is unemployed. Facing ever greater declines in income, Haitians are faced with increasingly unpalatable choices. For example, many rural based families send one or more children, usually their daughters, to live with and work for families in the city.

Health care facilities lack adequate staff and equipment. And with few exceptions, centers that do exist are dirty, dilapidated, and poorly equipped. Haiti has the highest percentage of adults living with HIV/AIDS in the western hemisphere, and an alarming 12,000 Haitian children are living with HIV/AIDS. Thousands of Haitian children with HIV positive parents have been left orphaned.

Haitian doctors reveal that the maternal mortality rate is 513/100,000, and 1,000/100,000 in Port-au-Prince. In the neighboring Dominican Republic, the maternal mortality rate is 230/100,000, and 95/100,000 in nearby Jamaica.

The infant mortality rate in Haiti is an astounding 114/1,000, compared with 42/1,000 in the Dominican Republic and 17/1,000 in Jamaica. A number of the diseases and illnesses that cause deaths are preventable and treatable. The health care system is simply unable to cope with the demand for treatment.

Many of these national problems could be addressed if the United States would allow the IDB to release the \$500 million in approved loans to Haiti.

The United States and other international donors suspended the loans and insist that Haiti correct what they see as irregularities in the May 21, 2000 parliamentary elections before they agree to release the funds. In addition to demanding that elections be reheld, the United States and international donors are also insisting upon improvement of respect for basic human rights, the initiation of economic development, legal and judicial reforms, and the elimination of drug trafficking.

The \$500 million in approved loans from the IDB could help to address years of neglect and budget erosion. Refusal to do so represents steely indifference to the desperately poor.

# Regular English Version of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

*"Regular English" Version, By Little House Alternative Schools, Dorchester, Massachusetts*

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**Adopted and proclaimed by The United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.**

**Article 1:** All human beings are born free and equal. You are worth the same, and have the same rights as anyone else. You are born with the ability to think and to know right from wrong, and should act toward others in a spirit of friendliness.

**Article 2:** Everyone should have all the rights and freedoms in this statement, no matter what race, sex, or color he or she may be. It shouldn't matter where you were born, what language you speak, what religion you are, what political opinions you have, or whether you're rich or poor. Everyone should have all of the rights in this statement.

**Article 3:** Everyone has the right to live, to be free, and to feel safe.

**Article 4:** No one should be held in slavery for any reason. The buying and selling of human beings should be prevented at all times.

**Article 5:** No one shall be put through torture, or any other treatment or punishment that is cruel, or makes him or her feel less than human.

**Article 6:** Everyone has the right to be accepted everywhere as a person, according to law.

**Article 7:** You have the right to be treated equally by the law, and to have the same protection under the law as anyone else. Everyone should have protection from being treated in ways that go against this document, and from having anyone cause others to go against the rights in this document.

**Article 8:** If your rights under the law are violated, you should have the right to fair and skillful judges who will see that justice is done.

**Article 9:** No one shall be arrested, held in jail, or thrown and kept out of her or his own country for no good reason.

**Article 10:** You have the same right as anyone else to a fair and public hearing by courts that will be open-minded and free to make their own decisions if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason.

**Article 11:**

1) If you are blamed for a crime, you have the right to be thought of as innocent until you are proven guilty, according to the law, in a fair and public trial where

you have the basic things you need to defend yourself.

2) No one shall be punished for anything that was not illegal when it happened. Nor can anyone be given a greater punishment than the one that applied when the crime was committed.

**Article 12:** No one has the right to invade your privacy, home, or mail, or attack your honesty and self-respect for no good reason. Everyone has the right to have the law protect him or her against all such meddling or attacks.

**Article 13:**

1) Within any country you have the right to go and live where you want.

2) You have the right to leave any country, including your own, and return to it when you want.

**Article 14:**

1) Everyone has the right to seek shelter from harassment in another country.

2) This right does not apply in cases where the person has done something against the law that has nothing to do with politics, or when she or he has done something that is against what the United Nations is all about.

**Article 15:**

1) You have a right to a country where you're from.

2) No one should be able to take you away from, or stop you from changing your country for no good reason.

**Article 16:**

1) Grown men and women have the right to marry and start a family, without anyone trying to stop them or make it hard because of their race, country, or religion. Both partners have equal rights in getting married, during the marriage, and if and when they decide to end it.

2) A marriage shall take place only with the agreement of the couple.

3) The family is the basic part of society, and should be protected by it.

**Article 17:**

1) Everyone has the right to have belongings that they can keep alone, or share with other people.

2) No one has the right to take your things away from you for no good reason.

**Article 18:** You have the right to believe the things you want to believe, to have ideas about right and wrong, and to believe in any religion you want. This includes the right to change your religion if you want, and to practice it without anybody interfering.

**Article 19:** You have the right to tell people how you feel about things without being told that you have to keep quiet. You have the right to read the newspaper or listen to the radio without someone trying to stop you, no matter where you live. Finally, you have the right to print your opinions in a newspaper or magazine, and send them anywhere without having someone try to stop you.

**Article 20:**

1) You have the right to gather peacefully with people, and to be with anyone you want.

2) No one can force you to join or belong to any group.

**Article 21:**

1) You have the right to be part of your government by being in it, or choosing the people who are in fair elections.

2) Everyone has the right to serve her or his country in some way.

3) The first job of any government is to do what its people want it to do. This means you have the right to have elections every so often, where each person's vote counts the same, and where everyone's vote is his or her own business.

**Article 22:** Everyone, as a person on this planet, has the right to have her or his basic needs met, and should have whatever it takes to live with pride, and become the person he or she wants to be. Every country or group of countries should do everything they possibly can to make this happen.

**Article 23:**

1) You have the right to work and to choose your job, to have fair and safe working conditions, and to be protected against not having work.

2) You have the right to the same pay as anyone else who does the same work, without anyone playing favorites.

3) You have the right to decent pay so that you and your family can get by with pride. That means that if you don't get paid enough to do that, you should get other kinds of help.

4) You have the right to form or be part of a union that will serve and protect your interests.

**Article 24:** Everyone has the right to rest and relaxation, which includes limiting the number of hours he or she has to work, and allowing for holidays with pay once in a while.

**Article 25:** You have the right to have what you need to live a decent life, including food, clothes, a home, and medical care for you and your family. You have the right to get help from society if you're sick or unable to work, if you're older or a widow, or if you're in any other kind of situation that keeps you from working through no fault of your own.

**Article 26:**

1) Everyone has the right to an education. It should be free of charge, and should be required for all, at least in the early years. Later education for jobs and college has to be there for anyone who wants it and is able to do it.

2) The idea of education is to help people become the best they can be. It should teach them to respect and understand each other, and to be kind to everyone, no matter who they are or where they are from. Education should help to promote the activities of the United Nations in an effort to create a peaceful world.

**Article 27:**

1) You have the right to join in and be part of the world of art, music, and books. You have the right to enjoy the arts, and to share in the advantages that come from new discoveries in the sciences.

2) You have the right to get the credit and any profit that comes from something that you have written, made, or discovered.

**Article 28:** Everyone has the right to the kind of world where their rights and freedoms, such as the ones in this statement, are respected and made to happen.

**Article 29:**

1) You have a responsibility to the place you live and the people around you -- we all do. Only by watching out for each other can we each become our individual best.

2) In order to be free, there have to be laws and limits that respect everyone's rights, meet our sense of right and wrong, and keep the peace in a world where we all play an active part.

3) Nobody should use her or his freedom to go against what the United Nations is all about.

**Article 30:** There is nothing in this statement that says that anybody has the right to do anything that would weaken or take away these rights.

## Lesson 3: A Profile of Hope: The Cange Model and Human Rights

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**Grade Level & Subject:** High School

**Further Resources and Readings:**

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Chalkboard/ Chalk; Handout on Loune Viaud, the Cange Model and other optional handouts on the work of Loune Viaud and Zanmi Lasante

**Concepts:** Human Rights, Community Organizing, World Affairs

**Objectives:**

1. To introduce students to how individuals are acting at the local level to defend human rights.
2. To discuss community action and development.
3. Corresponds with NY State Social Studies Standard 2C: to “Analyze the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, and religious practices and activities.”

**Lesson Set-up:**

**Opening Activity (10 minutes): Opinion Continuum**

1. Write on one side of the blackboard “agree” and on the other “disagree”.
2. Have students stand up and read the following statements, indicating that students should move to the side of the room that corresponds to their opinion on the statement. Students who are undecided can remain in the middle. After each question, ask one student from the agree and one from the disagree side to explain why s/he chose her/his position. If all the students choose one position, the facilitator can choose to take the opposing viewpoint to generate discussion. The suggested statements are the following:
  - Individuals can make a positive difference in their communities.
  - There is nothing we can do to help poor countries like Haiti.
  - Social movements need a strong leader like Martin Luther King Jr. to be successful.
  - U.S. involvement in other countries is always beneficial.

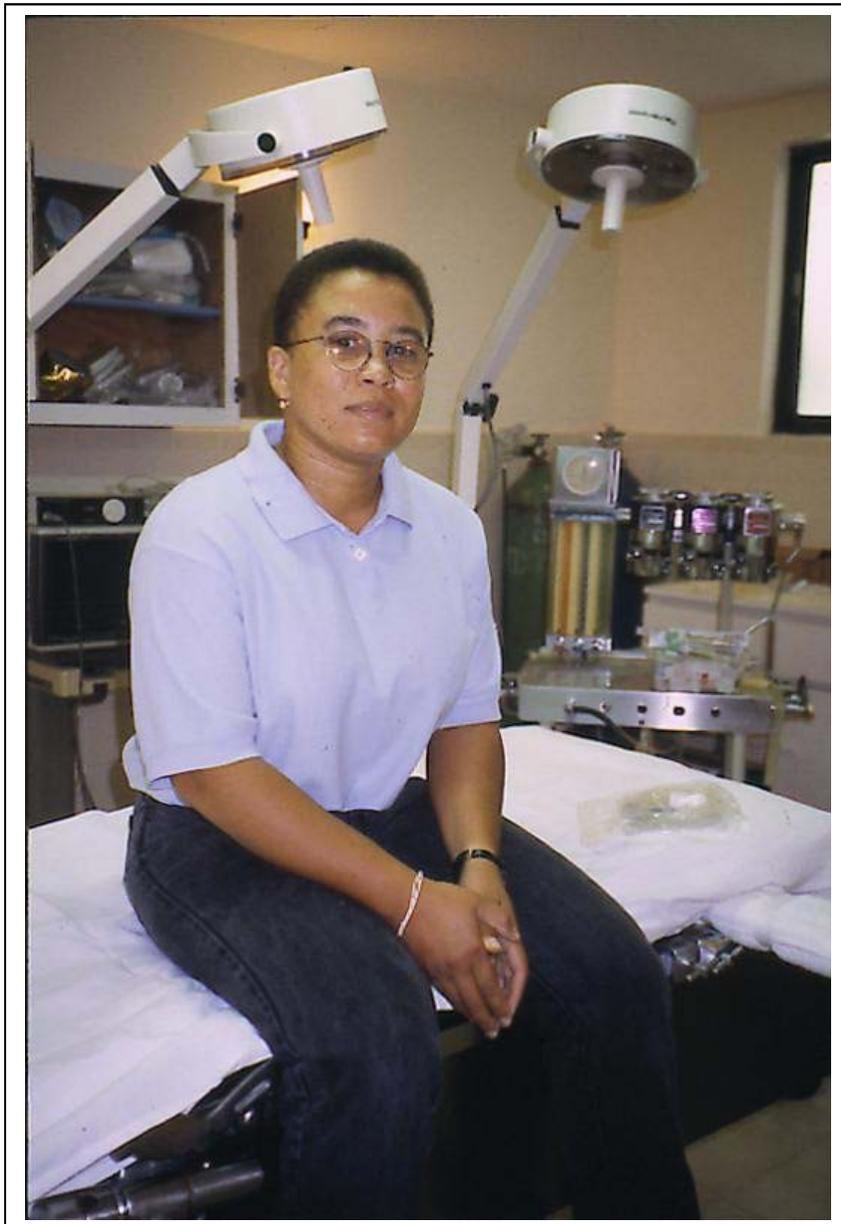
**Activity:**

1. Distribute the profile sheet of Loune Viaud and the Cange Model to each student and have them read it.
2. Divide the class into four groups.
3. Each group should thoroughly read the Cange Model, and use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from Lesson 2, and the Basic Country Profile Sheet from Lesson 1 to develop a summary of what human rights and problems are being addressed through the Zanmi Lasante’s work. (20-25 minutes) Students should discuss the following questions:
  - a. What can individuals and communities do to bring about change?
  - b. How is Zanmi Lasante working to build respect for human rights?

- c. How is Zanmi Lasante working with the government to help them respond to the right to health of all Haitians?
  - d. How is health as a human right related to the enjoyment of other human rights such as economic, civil, and political rights?
  - e. In the Cange Declaration, it is said, “It would be wise for you who are in authority to do this work quickly, before more of us who are poor die.” What is the relationship between poverty and human rights?
  - f. Given that human rights are the responsibility of a national government of any given country, how is the work of individuals like Loune Viaud and NGOs like Zanmi Lasante related to the promotion and protection of human rights?
4. Each group should present a 2-minute summary of their responses and select one group member to report back to the entire class. (10 minutes)

## Loune Viaud

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Viaud, 36, director of strategic planning and operations at the Zanmi Lasante medical complex in Cange, Haiti, has helped the Cambridge-based Partners in Health provide free health care for hundreds of thousands of people in the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere.

The health care program recently received international attention for its success in providing combinations of antiretroviral medicines to a few hundred AIDS patients in a poor, isolated setting - a feat that could have large implications in fighting the disease globally. But that is just a small part of its work, which includes outreach clinics, specialized tuberculosis care, a women's clinic, and a center for children - basically creating an entire health infrastructure where none had existed.

"Loune Viaud's effort to combat HIV/AIDS represents human rights leadership at its most important level," said Lynn Walker Huntley, the executive vice president of the Southern Education Foundation and one of the five judges who chose Viaud for the RFK award. "The

right to live is the baseline. The lack of support for basic health care provision and other services to meet the ravages caused by the HIV/AIDS crisis is the cruelest violation possible of this fundamental right."

*Source: <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/1120-04.htm>*

## The Cange Declaration (excerpt)

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*This declaration was written by the patients of Zanmi Lasante, the clinic that Loune Viaud helps run to bring treatment to the village of Cange. Patients have diseases ranging from Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, malaria, among others.*

We, the patients of "Partners in Health" [Zanmi Lasante] in Cange, have a declaration we would like to put before all of you. It is we who are sick; it is therefore we who take the responsibility to declare our suffering, our misery, and our pain, as well as our hope. We hear many poignant statements about our circumstances, but we feel compelled to say something more categorical and more resounding than what we have heard.

We, the patients of Partners in Health, are fortunate to receive medication and health care even if we do not have money. Many of our health problems have been resolved with the medications. Given how bad off we used to be, we have greatly benefited. But while we feel fortunate to receive the medications, we feel sad for others who don't receive the same treatment we do.

In addition to our health problems, we have other tribulations. Even while preoccupied with being sick, we still have the problem of paying for housing. We have trouble finding employment. We remain concerned about sending our children to school, and every day we face the distressful reality that we cannot find the means to support them. Not being able to feed our children is the greatest challenge faced by mothers and fathers all over the nation of Haiti. We have learned that such calamities occur in other countries as well. As we reflect on all these tragedies we must ask: is not every human being a person?

Yes, all human beings are people. It is we, the afflicted, who are speaking. We have come together in Cange to expose the difficulties facing the sick. We also have some ideas in our knapsacks that we would like to share with you who are in authority, to see what you can do to resolve the health problems of the poor. When we the sick, who are living with AIDS, speak on the subject of "Health and Human Rights," we are aware of two rights that ought to be indivisible, inalienable. Those who are sick should have the right to health care. We who are already infected believe in prevention too. But prevention will not cure those who are already sick. We need treatment when we are sick, but for the poor there are no clinics, no doctors, no nurses, no health care.

The right to health is the right to life. Everyone has a right to live. That means if we were not living in misery but in poverty, we would not be in this predicament today. Having no resources is a great problem for poor people, especially for women and those with small children. This is what in our abject Haitian reality is recognized as "the very struggle for life which inherently destroys life"; that is, as we scrape for life, we encounter death. If everyone had a right to food, education, health--the way it ought to be--we would not be in such dire straits today. It is imperative that we resolve the problems of poor or no roads, water, and electricity so that everyone may live like a human being.

Why are they destroying us so? Is it because we are the poorest that they do not take our survival into consideration? Is it because we are the poorest that we are marginalized, that they do not care about us? We have a message for the people who are here and for those who are able to hear our plea. We are seeking your solidarity. The battle we are engaged in-- to find adequate care for those with AIDS, tuberculosis, and other illnesses-- is the same as the combat that has been waged by other victimized people over time so everyone can live as a human being.

It would be wise for you who are in authority to do this work quickly, before more of us who are poor die. We have a message for all those who are concerned about us and who care about our health: we would like to thank you for the heavy load you carry with us.

We also have a message for the big shots — for those from other countries as well as from Haiti, and from big organizations like the World Bank and US AID. We ask you to take consciousness of all that we continually endure. We too are human beings, we too are people. We entreat you to put aside your egotism and selfishness, and to stop wasting critical funds by buying big cars, constructing big buildings, and amassing huge salaries. We are indeed poor, but just because we are poor does not automatically mean we are also stupid! It is our ardent wish that this message not be put aside or relegated to the files as just another paper document. As Haitian popular wisdom asserts, "As long as the head is not cut off, the hope of wearing a hat remains."

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## Profile of Loune Viaud

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*Profile by Jennifer Margulis*

Loune Viaud describes herself as a “woman of few words.” Soft-spoken and unassuming as she is, Viaud is a human rights dynamo who has helped change our perception of human rights. On the eve of Haiti’s celebration of being the first state free from slavery in the Western hemisphere, Viaud, too, has a reason to celebrate. One of the directors of an astonishingly successful hospital in Haiti’s Central Plateau—a place where scenic beauty has done little to mask the famine, destitution, AIDS pandemic, and lack of potable water that Haitians struggle with every day—Viaud and her co-workers have brought roads, electricity, clean water, schools, and a disease-free life to thousands of Haitian women and men who come from miles away for treatment.

There is a reason Viaud’s colleagues call her “the quiet giant.” As the Director of Strategic Planning and Operations and the Drug Procurement Officer for the Hôpital Bon Sauveur in Cange, Haiti, Viaud has successfully procured drug treatment for thousands of poor people while at the same time educating them about their basic human rights. Indeed, Viaud has remained unwavering in her conviction that health is a fundamental right for all people and that the best way to treat the sick is by empowering them to fight for good health care as well as treating their illnesses.

According to one of Viaud’s closest colleagues, Dr. Paul Farmer, until 15 years ago Cange was not on any map of Haiti. Farmer, who is the co-founder of Partners in Health (*Zanmi Lasante* in Creole), a doctor, medical anthropologist, and Professor at Harvard University, explains that the village was nothing more than a squatter settlement populated by displaced farmers. Their homes along the Artibonite River were flooded in the 1950s when a United States contracting firm built a hydroelectric dam along the river to provide power to Port-au-Prince, the country’s capital city. Homeless, these farmers could barely eke a living out of the Plateau’s rocky hills. Illness and death were rampant.

But in a country where health statistics are devastatingly bad and where there seemed to be no room for hope, a miracle—brought about by hard work, grassroots organizing, and tremendous energy—happened. In 1987 a group of peasants assembled and fought for their right to health care, a right assured by Haiti’s Constitution (though it is absent from America’s). Despite the opinion of some of Farmer’s professors (and the people he refers to as the “so-called experts”) at Harvard Medical School that people this poor should start on a small scale and work their way up through road building, clean water treatment, and small dispensaries, the peasants themselves insisted that they needed one thing: a hospital. Viaud and her colleagues took them seriously and listened closely. “Everybody thought we were crazy,” remembers Farmer, then a young graduate student working towards a joint degree in medicine and Anthropology at Harvard, “but we found a way to make it happen.”

Unfortunately, paying attention to the needs of the poor is risky business in Haiti. Viaud quickly found that her human rights work on behalf of others put her own life at risk. When anonymous phone calls predicting her death escalated in 1991, Viaud had to flee her homeland. This was a crisis point in her life. She was being hunted because of her involvement in an orphanage and a youth project run by a local priest who had the favor of the people but not of the government officials: Jean-Bertrand Aristide. She had to leave so precipitously—on a bus bound for Haiti’s sister country the Dominican Republic (the two nations share the island of Hispaniola)—that she did not have time to get a passport for her four-week-old daughter Maureen.

Despite the insecurity, Viaud was able to continue her human rights work by joining Partners in Health in Boston, where she and her family settled. She helped shape the vision of his fledgling nonprofit organization, Partners in Health, and together she, Farmer, and their colleagues set about figuring out how to fulfill the request of the peasants of Cange for a hospital. Indeed, their subsequent fifteen-year collaboration, along with the work of dozens of Haitians and several generous donors, has revitalized Haiti’s Central Plateau. The drive to Cange is a case in point. Originally planned to accommodate 80 people a day, between 200 and 300 Haitians are able to benefit from the free treatment every day. Once a slum, Cange is now a thriving village of people who are both healthy and empowered.

## Loune Viaud, RFK Human Rights Laureate

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### Ms. Loune Viaud, “Partners in Health” Director, Haiti -- 2002 Robert F. Kennedy Laureate

Washington, D.C. – Loune Viaud, the Director of Strategic Planning and Operations at the Zanmi Lasante (Partners in Health) socio-medical complex in Cange, Haiti was selected as the 2002 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Laureate. Viaud strongly advocates, and demonstrates through her work, that access to health care is a fundamental human right.

Situated on the Central Plateau in rural Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Zanmi Lasante offers free health care to the hundreds of thousands of people living in the region. Last year alone 56,000 people came to the clinic for medical help. In 2002 more than 100,000 people will be treated there.

Zanmi Lasante addresses the overall needs of the community surrounding it. It has special clinics for HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, a clinic for women, a special center for children and an operating theatre. The complex also develops educational projects on HIV/AIDS, sanitation and human rights.

“Loune is a heroic leader on the cutting edge of human rights. She has done extraordinary work in the field of health and human rights and has shown the connections between all aspects of the human rights struggle,” explained John Shattuck, former Undersecretary of State and CEO of the John F. Kennedy Library, and one of five 2002 RFK Laureate judges.

Though built in an under-developed region Zanmi Lasante’s treatment program shows that difficult to treat diseases can be addressed in rural areas. This complex does more than treat diseases, it also empowers people to understand their rights. In 2001 Viaud was instrumental in developing a patients’ Bill of Rights with a group of 60 HIV positive patients. The patients view their health care as a basic human right, not charity.

"Loune Viaud’s effort to combat HIV/AIDS represents human rights leadership at its most important level. The right to live is the baseline. The lack of support for basic health care provision and other services to meet the ravages caused by the HIV/AIDS crisis is the cruelest violation possible of this fundamental right, " stated Lynn Walker Huntley, the Executive Vice President of the Southern Education Foundation and another 2002 RFK Memorial judge who chose Viaud.

Viaud’s work attacks the symptoms of a greater and more persistent human rights violation, namely the right to healthcare. Article 19 of the Haitian constitution states that the government of Haiti is obliged to provide basic health care to its citizens. The government has stated that it would develop health facilities, following Zanmi Lasante’s model, in other parts of the country if it had the resources. To fulfill this obligation the government has applied for a number of loans. One of these loans, from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has technically been agreed upon, and the Parliament of Haiti has ratified it, but no money has been disbursed.

The RFK Memorial and Viaud believe that the United States government, and other governments in the region are violating the rights of the Haitian people by not facilitating the rapid disbursement of these loans.

Haiti is not alone in recognizing health care as a fundamental human right. More than 130 countries around the world recognize this right as does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Viaud as a strong advocate of this right is currently helping the Boston based Partners in Health ([www.pih.org](http://www.pih.org)) to develop strategies for approaching health crises in the United States, Peru, and Russia.

Viaud has a long history of fighting injustice. In the 80s under the second Duvalier regime she advocated for democratic rights. When she was forced to flee the country she organized her fellow refugees to safeguard their rights while waiting for asylum. Today she works tirelessly to change not only the conditions of the poor, sick and forgotten but the structures that allow people to become poor, sick and forgotten. The RFK Memorial will be working with Loune Viaud for years to come.

“For the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial to choose me, a humble footsoldier in the struggle for health and human rights, as the recipient of this prestigious award means more than I can say. For I am a Haitian, and the majority of Haitian *people* have always stood for equality. From 1791, when we fought against slavery to become the world's first independent republic born of a slave revolt, until 1990, when we again declared as a people our belief in social and economic rights as a human rights platform, the Haitians have struggled against long odds. Two hundred years of struggle, much of it in isolation even from those who profess a belief in human rights. Thank you for reminding us that we are never, in fact, really alone,” stated Ms Loune Viaud on learning that she had been selected.

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