

Berkeley Ca Gives Hope to Haiti thru Resolution

Written by Robert ID2208

Friday, 16 December 2005 02:55 -

On the eve of the one thousandth day of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and the night of California's twelfth execution in 27 years, a Berkeley Councilmember moved to adjourn early to honor Stanley "Tookie" Williams. The mood was somber but, as Nelson Mandela said, "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." The City Council adopted hopeful measures.

During public comment, Haiti Action Committee members spoke for the "Resolution in Solidarity With the People of Haiti" including David Welsh, in Haiti recently on a human rights delegation; Sister Maureen Duignan, working with Haitian immigrants for decades; and Especianise Loresca, a political refugee. Elections loom. The most popular leaders are imprisoned or exiled. Father Jean-Juste, designated Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience, needs medical care urgently. Human rights abuses escalate, even by U.N. troops.

The City Council adopted the Resolution by unanimous consent. It came via Berkeley's Peace and Justice Commission, whose first and longtime chair, Ann Fagan Ginger, wrote, "...the authorities in question are the illegitimate government established by the coup d'etat against Jean-Bertrand Aristide backed by the U.S.... This coup government -- called the transitional government -- has been using the Haitian National Police (HNP) to carry on constant low intensity warfare....U.N. Peacekeeping forces cannot carry out their proper functions when required by the Security Council to 'support' the transitional government and 'coordinate' with the lawless HNP." She said that representatives of the U.N. Security Council are "not free to follow the law because their governmental and economic systems are dependent on the U.S. governmental, economic, and military systems."

The Resolution quotes the U.N. Charter: "The U.S. is committed not to use 'threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state,...' and is committed to 'settle international disputes by peaceful means.'" Representative Barbara Lee re-introduced "The Haiti Truth Act" to investigate the role of the U.S. government in the coup. She stated, "The people of Haiti remain targets of political violence, torture and in some cases murder, and too often the perpetrators of this violence are the HNP, armed with U.S. weapons free of charge." The Resolution requests Senators Boxer and Feinstein to introduce such legislation. It supports prohibiting arms sales to Haiti, freeing political prisoners, halting killings, and returning the democratically elected President Aristide.

Council members Dona Spring and Kriss Worthington put additional hopeful items on the agenda: to restrict alcohol marketing to teens and support locally produced newspapers, the

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Violence Against Women Act, the Pledge for Racial Equality, and the Immigration Relief for Hurricane Katrina Victims Act. There were also practical agenda items like sidewalk vending, homeless transitional housing, the EcoPass program, a sewer project, lead abatement and zoning.

Please visit Haiti Action Committee web site at <http://www.haitiaction.net>