

Wyclef Jean Campaigns for Peace in Haiti

Written by Westside ID292

Monday, 01 November 2004 02:06 -

Haitian-American hip-hop star Wyclef Jean has launched a campaign to end a wave of violence that has killed nearly 200 people in Haiti over the past two months and called on armed groups to make peace.

The highly regarded hip-hop / rap musician, one of the few people some Haitians believe could facilitate talks to end the violence, paid a surprise visit to the Port-au-Prince slum of Bel-Air on Sunday where he talked to community leaders and met armed groups loyal to ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Earlier, he met with Guy Philippe and Remissainthe Ravix, leaders of the rebels who forced Aristide into exile in February. Jean planned to meet other gangs before he leaves Haiti.

"Violence is not going to solve the problem, peace is the way," Jean, accompanied by popular singer Gracia Delva, told a crowd of Bel-Air residents who clamored for autographs.

Haiti's interim government, installed after Aristide was pushed from power by a bloody rebellion and U.S. pressure, has struggled to contain an uprising in recent weeks. A human rights group says more than 170 people were killed and 240 wounded by gunfire between Sept. 1 and Oct 26.

Jean emerged from his car and ran through the streets with thousands of people behind him shouting, "Wyclef, Wyclef" and singing, "peace we want, peace we demand."

The visit turned into a pro-Aristide demonstration, although Jean said he did not mean to take side in Haiti's political struggle.

"Wyclef is our pride. He will always be welcome among us because he cares about us," said Bel-Air Marc Fenelon, 30, as he kissed a poster of the musician who rose to stardom with the Fugees.

After meeting with Aristide supporters, Jean said he was convinced Haiti's crisis could not be solved without Aristide playing a role.

"Those guys really believe in Jean-Bertrand Aristide. They are not going to stop unless Aristide says the word," Jean said, vowing to meet the ousted Haitian leader in South-Africa to discuss ways of restoring peace in the troubled Caribbean nation.

[Source](#)

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