

RELEASE IN
PART B6

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, March 20, 2011 2:36 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: WMGR0061: HAITI - Despite organizational problems, a calmer second round bodes well for the completion of the electoral process
Attachments: 2011-03-20_JESC Phase 2 Briefing 1, 08.00am.ppt; 2011-03-20_JESC Phase 3 Briefing 2, 11.00am.ppt; IMG00804-20110320-1109.jpg; IMG00095-20110320-1038.jpg; IMG00012-20110320-1045.jpg; IMG00027-20110320-1039.jpg; 2011-03-20_JESC Phase 2 Briefing 1, 08.00am.ppt; 2011-03-20_JESC Phase 3 Briefing 2, 11.00am.ppt; IMG00804-20110320-1109.jpg; IMG00095-20110320-1038.jpg; IMG00012-20110320-1045.jpg; IMG00027-20110320-1039.jpg

From: Lindwall, David E
Sent: Sunday, March 20, 2011 01:53 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: FW: WMGR0061: HAITI - Despite organizational problems, a calmer second round bodes well for the completion of the electoral process

Cheryl, This is the Canadian Embassy's first cable of the day. Well written. They use some material we sent them from our observation missions in the provinces. David

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Adam.Barratt([redacted] [mailto:Adam.Barratt([redacted])]
Sent: Sunday, March 20, 2011 12:47 PM
To: Lindwall, David E; Kujawinski, Peter I
Subject: FW: WMGR0061: HAITI - Despite organizational problems, a calmer second round bodes well for the completion of the electoral process

The Canadian morning assessment. More general than your sit reps as the audience can be wide in Ottawa and they look for more general trends. For what it's worth.

-Adam

From: Barratt, Adam -PRNCE -GR
Sent: March 20, 2011 12:26 PM
To: Normandin, Henri-Paul -PRNCE -HOM/CDM; Allen, Jon -GNM; 'david.moloney([redacted]) Reeder, Neil -GCD; Golberg, Elissa -IRD; *FGCE; *PRNCE-CBS
Cc:
Subject: WMGR0061: HAITI - Despite organizational problems, a calmer second round bodes well for the completion of the electoral process

Reftel WMGR0054 and WMGR0060 for elections background and security context. GSRP reporting has also been sent C5 throughout the course of the week.

WMGR0061: HAITI - Despite organizational problems, a calmer second round bodes well for the completion of the electoral process

Summary

Four full months after the troubled first round of elections, Haitians headed back to the polls this morning to elect a new President and a new Parliament. These are historic and important elections for Haiti's future stability and development. For the first time in the country's 207 year history, power may be passed from one democratically-elected president to another. For the first time in the country's history, we have a second round to determine who will be the next head of state. And for the first time in the country's history, someone from the opposition is slated to wrest power from the ruling party. Although the process has been chaotic and opaque, these are no small feats in Haiti's young democracy. Should we see a successful conclusion to this long, drawn-out process, either a 70-year-old professor and former first lady or a colourful kompa musician will become the country's next head of state. The choice couldn't be more stark. Given the latest polls and campaign momentum, it is expected that Michel Martelly will defeat Myrlande Manigat. The sudden return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide and rumours he is backing Manigat, however, could give her a badly-needed boost at the ballot box. It is also expected that these elections will dramatically change the face of the Haitian Parliament, with the ruling party INITÉ losing their grip on the lower house and being forced to negotiate with up-and-coming opposition bloc, ALTERNATIV. The major challenges reported from the field thus far, as expected, include delays with the opening of voting centres, the late delivery of voting materials, inaccurate electoral lists and poorly trained elections officials. The situation remained relatively calm throughout the morning with only sporadic incidents of violence, unrest and voter intimidation reported.

PRNCE has deployed 10 elections observation teams in seven of the country's 10 departments (as was done for the first round) to follow the day's events. This report includes information from those Canadian observers as well as American and OAS teams, and UN sources. A second report will be distributed this afternoon and an update on the tabulation process, sent later this evening.

Report

Organisations problems bedevil the elections process once again

3. Despite enhanced measures taken by the Haitian electoral council (CEP) in recent weeks, organisational challenges continue to be an important factor in the second round. The most serious problem has been the late delivery of sensitive elections materials to voting centres in the Ouest department where 40% of the 4.7 million eligible voters reside. 97 voting centres did not receive ballots or, in the case of 40 centres, received ballots for the wrong candidates. MINUSTAH is trying to remedy the problem but the lack of voting materials caused significant delays with the opening of these centres and for tensions to rise in certain parts of Port-au-Prince where Martelly has a strong following. If people begin to believe this is part of wider attempt to disenfranchise their supporters, the situation could become difficult to manage in certain parts of the city. Canadian observation teams are reporting that while most of their voting centres opened late, people are able to vote freely without much incident. The most common problems are disorganization within the centres, people coming to the wrong location to vote, having difficulty finding their names on the electoral list, sloppy application of procedures with respect to inking voters' fingers, and a lack of privacy while voting in cramped areas. These were, however, all problems which were expected to occur and should hopefully not affect the overall credibility of the process.

Voter participation and incidents of fraud

4. Most of the Canadian observation teams are reporting higher voter interest and participation rates than the first round. Voters are predominantly men with women voters expected to participate in larger numbers this afternoon following church. With voter participation estimated at approximately

22% in the first round, anything between 25-30% would be considered a success for the second. To date, few incidents of obvious fraud have been reported with the exception of a case in Jérémie where ballot boxes appeared half-stuffed by 9:30 a.m. The incident has been reported to MINUSTAH elections officials in Port-au-Prince. All of Haiti's principal political actors resort to fraud to win elections and it is not expected that these elections will be any different. Higher than usual levels of fraud are expected at the legislative level as INITÉ attempts to maintain its control over Parliament in the face of stiff competition from opposition parties and without a presidential candidate on the ticket. PRNCE will continue to monitor alleged cases of fraud closely and report them to the proper authorities.

Security situation in the country

5. Thankfully, the security situation in the country has remained relatively calm to date. With the exception of isolated incidents of violence and voter intimidation here and there across the country, there are no major incidents to report. Tensions are mounting in certain areas of the Ouest department, including Cité Soleil and Pacot in Port-au-Prince, where ballots have yet to be delivered and people have been waiting in the sun more than five hours to vote. If the situation is not remedied, these tensions risk becoming more problematic. Yesterday evening, rumours circulated that trucks laden with firearms had been distributed in Cap Haïtien and other urban centres with the intent to disrupt the vote and that a major incident was planned for this afternoon, but there is no confirmation that this is true or will take place. Canadian observation teams are reporting for the most part that the atmosphere at voting centres is calmer than the first round, with fewer problems with political party observers and fewer acts of voter intimidation.

The Aristide Effect

6. The dramatic return of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Friday has not/not had a major impact on these elections. His references to Fanmi Lavalas having been unfairly excluded from the process have not led to a boycott although concern remains regarding the impact this, and the population's concern for their personal safety while voting, may have on voter turnout. Unless Aristide makes a public pronouncement soon, something PRNCE does not expect, his ability to influence the day's events should be limited. Having probably, and accurately from post's view, calculated that his capacity to derail the process was limited, how he will react next week, or following the expected publication of preliminary results on 31 March, will be more important and will be monitored closely. Despite international media reports regarding Aristide being greeted by throngs of jubilant supporters's return, it should be noted that crowds were much smaller than anticipated/feared. This may, in part, be attributable to the early arrival of his aircraft and the fact that many of his supporters were surprised he returned, but it may also reflect a shift in Haitian politics and that Aristide's influence has waned during his seven years in exile and will take time to rebuild.

Post Comments

7. Despite inconsistencies and organizational problems at voting centres, some serious, the second round of Haitian general elections is proceeding significantly more smoothly than the first. Voter interest and participation seems higher. The security situation is calmer with fewer incidents of violence, voter intimidation and voter frustration. In general, the good news seems to be that Haitian citizens are able to exercise their right to vote much more freely than the November debacle. PRNCE will continue to monitor the situation closely and will provide an update at 4:00 p.m. A final report will follow this evening following a Core Group meeting called by the SRSB and once Canadian teams provide feedback on the tabulation process (polls close at 4:00 p.m.).

Drafted/Released: PRNCE/Barratt

Attachments: Briefings from the UN Joint Electoral Support Centre (8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. briefings), and photos (4) from Canadian observation teams

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