



## Statement on the situation in the Dominican Republic

**Caribbean Labour Solidarity condemns the threat by the Dominican Republic to expel thousands of its citizens of Haitian heritage.**

The Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic made a ruling in September 2013, which retroactively stripped the birthright citizenship from tens of thousands of people whose families have lived in the country for generations. The ruling covers Dominican citizens resident in the Republic since 1929 and their descendants, rendering them not only stateless but unable to attend school or make a living while becoming even more vulnerable to all kinds of hostilities.

Researchers have already noted the impact of the ruling. A recent report by US trade unions concluded that “the deliberate creation of a stateless underclass increases the already formidable risks of exploitation”. It warned that the ruling could worsen poverty among those affected, because without an identity card people are relegated to informal jobs and have little bargaining power in relations with employers.

The last time there was a major governmental crackdown against people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, during the 1937 “Parsley Massacre” by the forces of Dominican state, over 20,000 men, women and children were rounded up, then beaten or hacked to death for just being considered to be Haitian or simply looking as if they were because they were of African heritage.

CLS therefore calls upon governments, international and regional organisations, as well as human rights, and trade union organisations to put all available pressure on the government of the Dominican Republic to reverse this injustice.

**No to ethnic cleansing in the Caribbean.**

### **JUSTICE FOR TIVOLI GARDENS – appeal for support**

It is now five years since the so-called security forces in Jamaica inflicted mayhem on the downtown Kingston community of Tivoli Gardens in late May 2010. Supposedly in search of Christopher (Dudus) Coke for whom an extradition warrant had been served in August 2009, the onslaught resulted in at least 76 deaths (over 200 unofficially), most of which the Public Defender’s report considered to be extrajudicial. It was by far the most serious incident of its kind since the Morant Bay uprising in 1865.

Although it was clear that Coke had fled by the Monday afternoon (24 May), the operation

continued for two more days, searching every dwelling, causing enormous material and emotional damage, personal injury and the detention of several thousand young men, very few of whom were eventually charged, and only a handful of guns discovered. Since that time no responsibility for the massacre has been accepted by those in ultimate command which includes the Prime Minister Bruce Golding, Minister of National Security Dwight Nelson, Chief of Defence Staff Major General Stuart Saunders and Police Commissioner Owen Ellington.

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After years of delay, the Public Defender published his report in April 2013 based on a wide range of evidence. A Commission of Enquiry was recommended which finally began in late November 2014, guided by a Terms of Reference of which only six out of sixteen directly address the brutality unleashed on the citizens.

### Independence doubted

The independence of the three-person Commission panel is doubted by many, partly because they and their three-person support team are being paid over J\$250 million, including over J\$50 million for the chairman. This compares to the compassionate grants (not compensation) paid to the Tivoli residents of just J\$92 million which includes just J\$250,000 for each of the 94 houses ‘completely destroyed’ (a small house cannot be built for less than about J\$4 million). With another 200 houses ‘severely’ damaged and many hundreds injured, the scale of the operation becomes apparent.

### Residents

Residents from Tivoli gave harrowing evidence to the enquiry in November/December 2014. A sample of the abuse can be seen on one of many videos posted on YouTube by Tivoli Committee convenor Lloyd D’Aguilar. This was followed by the appearance of Bruce Golding, Dwight Nelson, Dorothy Lightbourne (Attorney General), Stuart Saunders and Owen Ellington amongst others. All denied any wrong-doing with the notion of ‘command responsibility’ (ie not passing the buck) seemingly having no relevance whatsoever.

In recent weeks the enquiry has been hearing from some of the ground commanders. They have been painting a picture of organised resistance to Coke’s arrest on such a scale that they had no alternative but to effectively declare war including the use of inaccurate mortar-bombs. Problem is, war on some gunmen, or indiscriminate war on a whole community, with only ineffective measures to

avoid ‘collateral damage’? Not only deaths, serious injuries, property damage and unwarranted detention but the abuse of just about every resident - akin to what happens all too often in Jamaica

### Whitewash

Unless the Commission re-acquaints itself with, and properly factors in the evidence given by the Tivoli residents in November/December, their report will be worthless, a white-wash similar to the recent Marikana report (*see page 3*) on the deaths of 34 miners just published in South Africa.



The struggle for justice for the people of Tivoli, and West Kingston, will clearly be a long one, extending well beyond the present enquiry and no doubt requiring the involvement of

international human rights organisations such as the International Criminal Court.

It is not only the May 2010 atrocity which must be addressed. The stark class divide in Jamaica, which has left Tivoli and similar communities in comparative and even absolute poverty, which portrays every inner-city young man as a threat, must also be addressed. Resources must be pumped in regardless of any nay-saying from the IMF and those it represents - and even more, so political commitment. Otherwise the slaughter will re-occur when the privileged, and the state which protects them, feel just a little too vulnerable.

### Funds

The Tivoli Committee, which is participating in the enquiry alongside the Office of the Public Defender and INDECOM, has recently engaged a new attorney. Funds are needed to cover this and other costs especially publicity and public events aimed at sustaining support for the victims of the 2010 Tivoli massacre. Please give what you can through CLS

c/o 29 Myddelton Street, London EC1R 1UA  
cheques made payable to *Caribbean Labour Solidarity* and marked *Tivoli Support Committee* on the reverse.

## Marikana Massacre - Report released at last

**Police gunned down 112 striking platinum miners and killed 34 of them in Marikana, South Africa, in 2012. Now, three years later, the long-awaited report into the massacre has been released - and miners, their families and supporters have condemned it as a whitewash.**

### Who gave orders to kill?

The government set up the Farlam Commission of Inquiry to investigate the massacre. The commission's report takes care to protect key figures in that government.

Cyril Ramaphosa is one of those at the heart of the dispute. In the 1980s he was leader of the mineworkers' union, the NUM, leading strikes against the apartheid regime. By 2012 he was a director of Lonmin, the British-based mining firm that ran the mine at Marikana, and one of the country's second richest businessmen. Now he is South Africa's deputy president.

Ramaphosa, a board member of Lonmin platinum mine where the strike took place, made phone calls that escalated the confrontation; sent emails reportedly calling for action to be taken against "these criminals" (whose crime was to seek a wage increase) and held secret meetings to get the government and police to "act in a more pointed way" to quell the unrest.

Jim Nichol, the lawyer who represented the dead miners' families said "The report spends an extraordinary amount of time exonerating Cyril Ramaphosa. The state colluded with big business and Lonmin to break the strike - and they get away scot free."

### Premeditated Murder

Lonmin officials worked with police to plan their response to the miners' strike in the run-up to the massacre. The firm also provided the cops with helicopters, CCTV, razor wire and other facilities. Police vehicles channelled the miners towards 60 police officers carrying semi-automatic machine guns. A rollout of razor wire blocked their way out."

Ronnie Kasrils, former ANC government minister and a leading activist in the fight against Apartheid, said: "Marikana was far worse than

*the Sharpeville massacre because it was premeditated". "It was premeditated murder ... an absolute ambush," he says. "People would be pleading for their lives, riddled with bullets and these police, who are supposed to be there in the service of our people, do not move a finger to give any assistance."*

For the injured and families of those who died, and those who continue to live in poverty and indignity at Marikana, there was always going to be disappointment with the outcome of the commission, because they were looking for accountability at the highest level. What happened was the opposite. Over a thousand days since the deaths of 34 people no one is being held accountable. There is no justice for a single life lost or family destroyed.

### Testimony

The testimony of one of the surviving miners is worth much more than hundreds of pages of whitewash. In a statement to the commission one miner, Nkosikhona Mjuba, said:

*"The police officers started shooting the mineworkers with long and short firearms. Some mineworkers put their hands [in the air] to show they weren't fighting [or] attacking, but they were shot."*

### 3rd Anniversary

**Demonstration against the Marikana Massacre  
South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, London  
3-5pm, Sunday 16th August 2015**



Picket of South Africa House in solidarity with the Marikana miners

# CLS supports Jeremy Corbyn for Labour Leader

## The July meeting of Caribbean Labour Solidarity heard from supporters of Jeremy Corbyn's bid for leadership of the Labour Party and agreed to support him. Where he stands:

*Britain is not working well for most people. More of the same won't work. We believe the new advances and opportunities of the 21st century can be harnessed to benefit all. Our party must meet this challenge. Change is never successful if it is top down. We will build a new social movement to bring about real change in our country.*

### Values

*Our policies are based on justice, freedom, solidarity and equality for all.*

### Economy

*An economy which works for all, rejects austerity and places wealth and opportunity in the hands of the millions and not simply the millionaires.*

### Politics

*Democratic collective action is needed to secure a better country. Government should not be the property of a closed elite circle.*

### Environment

*Our world is under threat as never before. This means we must act in the long term interest of the planet rather than the short-term interests of corporate profits.*

### International

*Britain needs to redefine its place in the world. We stand up against injustice wherever we find it, looking to build a more peaceful world through dialogue, cooperation and democracy.*



If you're a member of a trade union affiliated to the Labour Party you can sign up to vote for free. Otherwise, you can become a registered Labour supporter for £3 to vote in the leadership election.

More details from the website:  
<http://support.labour.org.uk/>



Protest outside the Dominican Republic Tourist Information Centre in London against the Dominican Republic's threat to make up to 250,000 Dominicans of Haitian ancestry stateless. See CLS statement on this issue on page 1.

### Stop Press

Venezuela has decided to stop buying rice from Guyana amid an escalating border dispute between the two countries. Venezuela has in the past four years purchased about 40% of Guyana's rice production, paying for it with oil that supplies half Guyana's daily needs. **CLS calls upon these two neighbours to settle their differences amicably.**

Caribbean Labour Solidarity meets on the first Sunday in the month at 12 noon at Islington Pensioners Forum  
1A Providence Court, Providence Place,  
London N1 0RN



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See our website at <http://www.cls-uk.org.uk>