

## HAITI

### ISSUE

In accordance with the adoption of Resolution 1987/13 of the UN Human Rights Commission, the expert report will be examined in the 46th session. On the basis of this report, the members of the Commission will either extend the mandate of the expert for one year, or discontinue the study.

### BACKGROUND

Since the advent of the military government led by General Prosper Avril, the human rights situation has improved somewhat. Actions have been taken that would indicate a sensitivity on the part of the regime to world public opinion and an attentiveness to human rights. A permanent electoral council has been formed and an election timetable promulgated, actions indicative of a desire to restore to the populace the full use of its civil and political freedoms.

However, the promise held forth by these initial gestures has not been fulfilled. In recent weeks, disturbing incidents in which members of the Haitian armed forces were most likely involved have shown their disregard for the international human rights conventions, despite the official government line. As for political rights, the election timetable is already somewhat behind schedule, and reports of a rift in the permanent electoral council have lent credence to the fear that the return effort has gone into a tailspin, and the announced popular consultations will be postponed indefinitely.

Given the chronic instability of Haiti and the climate of insecurity that presently prevails there, the Canadian government has in recent weeks taken exceptional measures to ensure that deportations of Haitians illegally residing in Canada occur only after it is certain that the repatriated individuals are not endangered.

### THE CANADIAN POSITION

After the massacre of September 11, 1988 at the St-Jean-Bosco Church, the Canadian government announced that it would unilaterally suspend government-to-government discussions on the planning of future bilateral projects. This decision does not affect the poorest groups in Haiti, which continue to receive Canadian aid through the multilateral and non-governmental organizations. Moreover, the Canadian government has informed the Haitian government that the planning process will not be resumed until concrete progress is seen in the fundamental areas of human rights, and until there is a return to the democratic processes.