

**HAITI**  
**(1995–2000)**

**THE BLACK BOOK**  
**ON**  
**INSECURITY**

**PROSPER AVRIL**

*Haiti (1995 - 2000): The Black Book on Insecurity*

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**“As a gift of God, human life is sacred. It deserves respect. Nobody has the right to destroy it or to use it as he pleases”.**  
*(Conférence Episcopale d’Haïti – Présence de l’Eglise en Haïti, p. 321.)*

## Books by Prosper Avril

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PORTRAITS OF VICTIMS .....	ix
FOREWORD .....	xiii
INTRODUCTION .....	xix
CHAPTER I .....	27
THE YEARS OF AMBIGUOUS LEADERSHIP .....	27
A. The <i>Coup d'État</i> .....	28
B. Oppression After the <i>Coup d'État</i> .....	31
C. The <i>Uphold Democracy</i> Operation .....	36
D. The Promises of a Return .....	39
CHAPTER II .....	47
UNFORTUNATE POLITICAL CHOICES .....	47
A. The Dismantling of the Army .....	49
B. The Policy of Intolerance .....	56
C. Control over Law Enforcement .....	62
1. Control over Justice .....	63
2. Control over the Police Force .....	65

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D. Control over the Electoral System . . . . .	68
CHAPTER III . . . . .	75
CATALYSTS OF INSECURITY . . . . .	75
A. The Ineffectiveness of Public Services . . . . .	76
B. The Reign of Impunity . . . . .	89
C. Spectacular Unsolved Crimes . . . . .	95
1. Mireille Bertin (March 28, 1995). . . . .	96
2. Michel Gonzalès (May 22, 1995) . . . . .	101
3. Max Mayard (October 3, 1995) . . . . .	103
4. Hubert Feuillé (November 7, 1995) . . . . .	105
5. Antoine Leroy (August 20, 1996) . . . . .	108
6. Micheline Coulanges (December 22, 1997) . . . . .	110
7. Jean Pierre-Louis (August 3, 1998) . . . . .	114
8. Jimmy Lalanne (February 27, 1999) . . . . .	115
9. Yvon Toussaint (March 1, 1999) . . . . .	117
10. Roland Décatrel (August 31, 1999) . . . . .	119
11. Jean Dominique (April 3, 2000) . . . . .	120
12. Ary Bordes (May 6, 2000) . . . . .	123
D. The Laissez-Faire Attitude of the UN Forces . . . . .	129

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CHAPTER IV .....	159
THE TOLL .....	159
Section 1 – 1995 .....	162
Section 2 – 1996 .....	170
Section 3 – 1997 .....	178
Section 4 – 1998 .....	187
Section 5 – 1999 .....	195
Section 6 – 2000 .....	206
Section 7 – Summary and Prospects .....	224
CHAPTER V .....	249
PROPOSALS FOR SOLUTIONS .....	249
A. National Reconciliation .....	250
B. Independence of the Judicial and Electoral Institutions .....	259
1. Reform of the Judicial System .....	259
a) A new concept for the Judiciary .....	265
b) A New Role for the Attorney’s Office .	266
c) The Judiciary’s Independence .....	266
d) Respecting the Law within the Prisons .	268

2. The Independence of the Electoral Council . . .	271
C. Strengthening the Public Force . . . . .	276
D. Public Investment and Job Creation . . . . .	283
CONCLUSION . . . . .	289
APPENDIXES . . . . .	295
1- The victims for the year 1995 . . . . .	297
2- The victims for the year 1996 . . . . .	306
3- The victims for the year 1997 . . . . .	309
4- The victims for the year 1998 . . . . .	312
5- The victims for the year 1999 . . . . .	316
6- The victims for the year 2000 . . . . .	322
Appendix 7- Summary . . . . .	327
Appendix 8 - Alphabetical list of identified victims . .	328
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	345
INDEX . . . . .	351



## PORTRAITS OF VICTIMS

After page 146

1. Mrs. Mireille Durocher Bertin, lawyer, founder of a political party, journalist, professor at the State University, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on March 28, 1995.
2. M. Michel Gonzalès, businessman, Manager of Haiti Air Cargo, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on May 22, 1995.
3. General Max Mayard, Officer of the Haitian Army (FAD'H), former Assistant-Commandant of the Army, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on October 3, 1995.
4. M. Hubert Feuillé, deputy of the legislative body, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on November 7, 1995.
5. Reverend. Antoine Leroy, Pastor and staff member of a political party, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on August 20, 1996.
6. Mrs. Micheline Lemaire Coulanges, Business woman, Entrepreneur, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on

December 22, 1997.

7. M. Jean Pierre-Louis, Catholic Priest, parish priest of Mont-Carmel Church at Bizoton, Port-au-Prince, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on August 3, 1998.
8. M. Jimmy Lalanne, Physician, assassinated by gunfire in his office, in broad daylight, on February 27, 1999.
9. M. Yvon Toussaint, Physician and Senator at the Haitian Parliament, staff member of a political party, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999.
- 10.M. Roland Décatrel, businessman and entrepreneur, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on August 31, 1999.
- 11.M. Jean L. Dominique, agronomist, journalist, owner and manager of Radio Haiti Inter, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on April 3, 2000.
- 12.M. Ary Bordes, Physician, former Minister for Public Health, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on May 6, 2000.

After page 234

1. Journalist Jean L. Dominique with the author (July 1989).
2. Miss Christine Jeune, Police Officer at the Haitian National Police (PNH), assassinated by gunfire in obscure conditions on March 19, 1995.

3. Boris Pautensky, a 6 year-old child kidnapped at his school on May 28, 1996.
4. Mrs. Erla Jean-François, Mayor of the City of Chansolme (North-West), assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on May 30, 1996.
5. M. Joseph Rony C. Charles, director at PROMOBANK in Cap-Haitian, assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on August 5, 1996.
6. M. Louis Emilio Passe, former deputy of the Haitian Legislative body, assassinated by gunfire on October 16, 1997.
7. M. Roger Cazeau, retired colonel of the Haitian Army (FAD'H), former Commandant of the Haitian Air Force, assassinated by gunfire on June 14, 1999.
8. Sister Marie Géralde Robert, nun, Manager of a Health Center at Côtes-de-Fer (Southwest), assassinated by gunfire on November 17, 1999.
9. Colonel Jean Lamy, Councelor to the Haitian National Police (PNH), assassinated by gunfire on October 8, 1999.
10. Brother Hurbon Bernardin, of the Christian Institution's Brothers, assassinated at Vallée de Jacmel on November 30, 1999.
11. Mrs. Carmen Boisvert Alexandre, 74 years old, a scholar, tortured and assassinated at her home on July 25, 2000.
12. M. Patrice Gousse, young Manager and Entrepreneur,

assassinated by gunfire in broad daylight on September 17, 2000.

13.M. Jean-Rood Guerrier, Engineer, former deputy at the Haitian Legislative body, assassinated by gunfire on December 20, 2000.

14.Colonel Jean Lamy, Counselor at the Haitian National Police, assassinated y gunfire on October 8, 1999.

## FOREWORD

In civilized societies, the phenomenon of insecurity can appear in several forms. Various forms in which it can occur come readily to mind: social insecurity, unpredictable road conditions, unreliable food supplies, etc. The insecurity that concerns us in this book is that which arises from the violent behavior of people towards other people, violence that attacks a person's life, property, physical integrity and inheritance.

The members of any human society will certainly often suffer from the misdeeds and deviant behavior of some within their community. In such cases, the penal systems that operate within the society will intervene to correct the misdeeds and to maintain the confidence of the public in the reliability of their system of protection against the actions of criminals and gangsters.

However, when there is an excessive escalation of violence—homicide, voluntary aggravated assault, invasion, burglary and other violent acts—then insecurity becomes entrenched and life is characterized by a permanent feeling of fear, anguish and concern that invades the human soul and disturbs the daily routine. This situation becomes alarming in more ways than one, for when the sensitivity of the population to violence grows, and when the brakes that are intended to

restrain the violent behavior are not firmly applied or are slow to operate, then insecurity is transformed into a social and political phenomenon.

This, unfortunately, is the situation in which the Haitian people have been struggling for too long already: living in a latent state of insecurity—that is, with a permanent lack of security.

What is security?

Security is the “trustful and quiet state of mind of someone who believes that he is protected from danger” (*Larousse*), or “the situation of someone who feels himself protected from danger, who is reassured” (*Petit Robert*).

Reading these simple definitions, it is easy to understand the great importance that is attached to the notion of safety in the life of a person or a nation. It is impossible for a person to develop, socialize freely, travel, work, sleep, or relax without this legitimate feeling of being protected from danger. Moreover, since any nation is made up of free men and women, the very existence of the State is threatened when a climate of insecurity persists at its core, destroying the trustful and peaceful spirit of the citizens who comprise its population.

This opinion is well expressed by the French political theorist Sébastien Roché, who writes:

Security is a collective good by excellence. The State has constituted its power on its capacity to guarantee it. Therein lies the foundation of its legitimacy. (*Sociologie*

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*Politique de l'Insécurité* [*Political Sociology of Insecurity*], p. 228).

Over the last six years, Haiti has lost a considerable number of its sons and daughters, who were pointlessly mown down by blind violence. Intellectuals, teachers, engineers, doctors, priests, pastors, members of religious orders, business people, police officers, soldiers, ordinary citizens, politicians, artisans, workers, peasants, school children, infants, young and old men and women, journalists, bankers, and others whom we still do not know—all have fallen, killed by the specter of violent death that now haunts all the corners and recesses of Haiti, a country where it was formerly so good to live.

In addressing this problem, what is so exasperating is the veil of the anonymity that often covers this delinquency, this criminal activity in Haiti. Most of the time, no personal or social relation appears to bind or oppose the aggressor and the victim; these crimes thus seem to be blind and pointless.

Considering the paramount importance of the notion of safety for any human being, and in view of the increasing seriousness and extent of criminal activity throughout the country and the consequent threat to its institutions and its integrity, we thought that it was imperative for every Haitian to understand the many aspects of the plague constituted by insecurity, in order to be able to fight it effectively and preserve the country from catastrophe. We believe that it is essential to place before the national conscience a collection of documents and facts concerning the phenomenon—a “white paper”, although in the

circumstances we should rather call it a “black paper”—so that at a glance every Haitian can evaluate the situation, determine the problem and help to solve it.

To achieve this task, we have made extensive use of opinions expressed by Haitian intellectuals and thinkers on the subject, and information provided by the Haitian press—data that is freely accessible to everyone—in order to reflect as closely as possible the true everyday life of the nation.

By providing the reader with a compilation of facts and data on events that occurred during the period referred to, and by proposing solutions to the thorny problem of insecurity in Haiti, the author of *Haiti (1995–2000) – The Black Book on Insecurity* has a noble goal in mind. His intention is to make a contribution to the reconstruction of the Haitian nation by attempting to inspire influential leaders and responsible governments with a resolve capable of motivating them to work together to find, as quickly as possible, effective ways of working towards the eradication of this “evil that spreads terror” among Haitian families.

We trust that this work of research, analysis, compilation and proposal of solutions will not be a “shot into the air”. May it succeed in stirring all the daughters and sons of Haiti, whether eminent intellectuals or humble citizens, to stop, once and for all, this train of death that mindlessly destroys everything in its way: lives, promises, hopes and dreams. May Haiti, the Pearl of the Antilles, be released from the specter of insecurity and



regain its former good reputation, and may the Haitian people soon find again the once-famous smile that they lost a long time ago.

Prosper Avril



## INTRODUCTION

**F**ebruary 7, 1986! A date that heralded great changes for Haiti! Efforts towards correcting the drifting of the past! On this day—February 7, 1986—the Haitian people celebrated the advent of a new era characterized by freedom of expression, freedom of political choice and respect for individual freedom, within a secure State guaranteeing peaceful streets and homes. This public peace was essential to the great and much desired economic revival, which would eventually receive the support of the international community. Thus, after the collapse of the Duvalier regime, the Haitian people expected an improvement in the conditions and quality of their life.

What is the result now at the end of the year 2000, fourteen years after the emergence of this hope?

After 1986, Haiti experienced a series of frustrating twists and turns in the achievement of a transition to a stable and democratic government. Several transitory governments followed one after another at the helm of the State without being able to end the transition period and establish a legitimate government. Drowned in the tumult of popular claims exacerbated by the action of political leaders acting in the shade; overcome by a misinformation campaign that succeeded in

discrediting all the heads of State after Duvalier; destroyed or weakened by destabilizing actions, *coups d'état* and attempts at *coup d'état*: the various governments prior to 1990 failed in their efforts to establish in Haiti the tranquil climate necessary to launch the country on a path to genuine democracy.

Hope reappeared after the elections of December 1990, when candidate Jean-Bertrand Aristide, profiting from popular favor, became the legitimate president of Haiti. Relieved, everyone thought that the country was finally going to enjoy a respite. This was far from the case as genocide was committed before the inauguration of the elected president, in reaction to the insane venture of Dr. Roger Lafontant who tried vainly to seize the presidential Palace on the night of January 6–7, 1991.

The euphoria of the December 16, 1990 victory then melted to mass hysteria on the morning of January 7, 1991, when the army quashed the Lafontant *coup d'état*. Partisans of the president-elect, benefiting greatly from the action of the Haitian Army (FAD'H), occupied the streets. That day, they lynched or “necklaced” a large number of compatriots under the approving or tolerating eyes of the military, who feared appearing favorable towards the condemnable initiative of the usurper Lafontant. This carnage was thus perpetrated with total impunity. Haitians could even watch fanatics publicly exhibiting incinerated limbs of their victims on state television.

From that day on, the division of the country into two distinct camps was reinforced. The slogan “*Makout pa ladan*” (“Macoutes, stay outside”), current since the fall of M. Jean-

Claude Duvalier, was reinstated with greater force, the term “Macoute” signifying all those who had had relations with the Duvalier governments, whether from near or afar.

Thereafter, a Manichæan cleavage of Haitian society into “good” and “bad” poisoned the political atmosphere of the country at the national level. Directed by the Constitution itself, which for ten years refused them access to elected office, the former partisans of the Duvalier regime were publicly vindicated on the least pretext. Once installed, the new and legitimate government was not going to embarrass itself by unscrupulously and wrongfully accusing them of crimes or plots at random.

In fact, after 1986, it was impossible to establish a stable and secure environment in Haiti. Although it occurred in unfavorable circumstances, a unique opportunity to create a tranquil political and social climate in the country arose in 1994, on the occasion of the second landing of US troops in Haiti, which was solicited—with contempt for any nationalist feeling—by President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in order to regain power.

A success without a fight, this military operation—undertaken in Haiti on September 19, 1994 and dubbed *Uphold Democracy*—was to carry out a precise mission comprising three quite distinct parts: (1) to force the departure of the regime founded by the military after the overthrow of President Aristide in 1991, (2) to restore Jean-Bertrand Aristide to his position and (3) to create a secure and stable environment in Haiti.

While the Haitians had the shame of this occupation to

expunge, they expected at least to profit from the welcome aftermath of having a safe country, ready to be launched on the path of modernization and of accelerated and durable development, thanks to the restoration of peace, to the investments of foreign entrepreneurs and the Haitian private sector, and also to the massive assistance promised by the international community.

Unfortunately, in the year 2000—six years after the execution of the *Uphold Democracy* operation—political stability and the promised social peace have not materialized. Nowadays, the country is still deprived of the vital institutions essential to the correct functioning of a democracy—a legitimate parliament, undisputed city halls, a constitutional electoral council, an independent legal system, and so on—and in this environment, the Haitian people live in a latent state of insecurity.

Safety, this “trustful and quiet state of mind of someone who believes he is or feels himself protected from danger”, is no longer within the reach of the Haitians. Read a description of the situation, composed as an inventory at the beginning of the new millennium, by Jean L. Prophète:

Be alert! Be very prudent! Do not go out in the evening. Do not ride in a taxi. Do not trust immigration officers. If they ask you for your address, give them a false one. Especially do not display your money. Go out with only the minimum necessary. Leave at your home your passport, your credit cards, all your important papers as well as your precious jewels. Distrust all human contact of which you are not absolutely sure. Fear all tinted-glass vehicles, devious pedestrians and especially suspicious motorcyclists. Be always on

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your guard, continually vigilant, continually attentive. Avoid as much as possible the downtown area. Avoid the road of Carrefour, overcrowded, cluttered, and stressful, like a pagan Calvary. To go into the countryside, travel during the day. It is highly recommended to travel in convoy. It is severely forbidden to go alone at night. (*Inventaire de Fin de Siècle* [*Inventory of the End of the Century*], p.19).

This opinion reflects the current perception of life in Haiti. To go to work, to manage a business, to use the national highways, to visit the markets or supermarkets, to go to the bank, to the movies, to surprise parties or to walk at moonlight in the capital or in the province constitutes a risk in Haiti today! Moreover, this report is not the fruit of an overly fertile imagination. In the first month of the period covered by this study—January 1995, four months after the execution of *Uphold Democracy*—the daily newspaper *Le Nouvelliste* also drew attention to the malady:

A very poorly restrained wind of violence is blowing over the capital and some cities of the province. As proof, there has not been a day without someone, somewhere, being a victim of the prevailing climate of insecurity. And so, acts are committed day and night by gangsters, by assassins, by robbers armed with firearms or knives; fear and worry perspire on the face of every individual among the population. (*Le Nouvelliste*, January 30, 1995, p. 1.)

Today, it is distressing to note that in spite of all the efforts and sacrifices that have been endorsed by the Haitian people, and notwithstanding the billion dollars invested in Haiti by the United States under the heading of assistance to this country, all the surveys, investigations and research projects indicate that the

quality of the life in Haiti was better before 1986.

What happened? Why could Haiti not regain domestic peace after its return to constitutional order as restored by the *Uphold Democracy* operation in 1994? Why has the insecurity, especially political, that has prevailed during the three years of the *coup d'état*, far from disappearing, rather invaded every sector of national life and spread throughout the entire country? What is the extent of the damage? Can the Haitians, by themselves, hope to reverse the situation?

To answer these questions, we shall attempt to examine in depth the phenomenon of insecurity in Haiti between 1995 and 2000. We shall provide an overview of the quality of the country's leadership, beginning from the rupture of the democratic process by the 1991 *coup d'état*. We shall analyze the political choices made by government authorities after the return to constitutional order in 1994. Then we shall clarify the factors that favored the development of insecurity in Haiti. Finally, following the publication of a non-exhaustive list of those who suffered violent deaths during each year of the period 1995–2000, we shall share with the reader some ideas that we propose as our modest contribution to the eradication of this evil.

We sincerely hope that after the publication of this book, a step will have been made towards pricking the conscience of all Haitians and their partners in the international community regarding the phenomenon of insecurity in Haiti, so that finally,



in safety, peace and order, the country can look forward to harmonious and enduring development, bearing in mind the compelling image of the dreams of the martyred people of Haiti.