

**From:** [Joe Garcia \(Mercury\)](#)  
**To:** [Ancrum, Nancy](#)  
**Subject:** Washington Post Editorial: Haiti's 'descent into hell' will only accelerate without proper elections  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 3:55:00 PM

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Nancy,

I thought you might find the Washington Post's editorial interesting.

Joe

[Opinion: Haiti's 'descent into hell' will only accelerate without proper elections](#)

Opinion by the Editorial Board  
June 13, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. EDT

THIS SPRING, the Catholic Church in Haiti warned that the country is in the throes of a "descent into hell." Any suspicion that the church's analysis was tinged with hyperbole has been dispelled by events since then. And without much more concerted help and pressure from Washington and other influential parties, the spiral of suffering and dysfunction in Haiti, the Western hemisphere's poorest nation, will surely accelerate.

Elections are no guarantee of democracy, let alone good governance, but one thing is indisputable: Without them, Haiti has no chance. For the past four years the country has been governed by Jovenel Moïse, an inept autocrat who has neutered parliament and independent institutions while presiding over, and likely abetting, a tableau of urban gang violence, murder, kidnapping, extortion and intimidation that has made life intolerable for millions. On top of that, a deadly new wave of covid-19 has lately swept the country, whose already rickety public health system is overwhelmed. Virtually no one has been vaccinated against the virus.

No scenario for improving Haiti's prospects — not for good governance, nor for transitioning to order from chaos in the streets — is plausible without elections that would produce new and legitimate leadership. Mr. Moïse has paid lip service to going forward with balloting this fall, for parliament and a successor president. He has devoted far more attention to pushing a referendum, already twice postponed, to redraw the country's constitution, a probably illegal undertaking that has only intensified already riotous domestic political discord.

A delegation from the Organization of American States has been in Haiti last week, pressing Mr. Moïse and opposition parties to move forward with elections. That message is all the more critical given specious suggestions that, in place of an actual vote, the country could make do in the meantime with some ill-defined transitional government upon the completion of Mr. Moïse's term next February. The last time Haiti tried that, in 2016, what was meant to be a 120-day provisional administration dragged on for a year — deepening instability and confusion about the country's future.

Much of the current anarchy is directly attributable to Mr. Moïse, who has contrived to establish

what amounts to one-man misrule. In the absence of legislative elections, he has allowed Haiti's parliament to wither into nothingness, while installing his own toadies as mayors to replace elected ones across the country. In a country of 11 million people, no legislation can be passed, because so few lawmakers remain. If Haitians do not go to the polls this fall, the terms of every single one of the few remaining elected officials will expire in February. That is a recipe for pandemonium.

There is now a real prospect of full-blown anarchy, and resulting waves of boat people fleeing to safer shores. The United States, France, the United Nations, the OAS and other influential parties must act before that happens. Mr. Moïse must go, and be replaced in free and fair elections. They will certainly not set everything right in Haiti, but without them you can bet things will get worse.

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