



In 1803, our ancestors declared Haiti free and independent; they adopted the flag of freedom—blue and red with the inscription: In Union is strength! For the heroes of the war of the Haitian independence, "In Union lays our Strength," reflected the unification of blacks and mulattos against the slave owners as a strategic tool in order to obtain our freedom and independence.

These valiant black slaves, although tired from the painful yoke of slavery, quickly understood that if "Divide and Conquer" succeeded so well for the slave owners, it became imperative for the revolted slaves to unite, blacks and mulattos, poor and rich in order to win the battle for independence. "Union is Strength" enabled them to win the fight against slavery—as Haiti became the first black independent republic in the world.

Tribute to Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who after two hundred years of independence, no one has been able to match his vision of cohesion for the daughters and sons of Haiti, irrespective of their social status or clan. He envisioned a Haiti fair for all. After two hundred years of structural ills, we have no choice but to educate our people to the concept of the Haitian nation, citizenship and patriotism.

*The Dessalinienne*—written by the famous Justin Lhérisson—contains exactly the words we needed to trigger national awareness that is necessary for a better Haiti. One which respects the right of its people, a strong and fair justice system, and an economy linked to the needs of the poor for inclusion, ensuring their economic security for a Haiti free, happy, and prosperous in the 21st century, capable of sprinting feverishly towards a modern economy capable of taking care of its citizens.

For the country and for our fathers, train our sons, train our daughters. Free, strong and prosperous, we are our brothers' and sisters' keeper. Train our sons, train our daughters for the country and for our father's legacy. Train, train, train our sons, for the country and for our fathers legacy.

Being Haitian, free Negroes on Haitian soil are sacred rights bequeathed to us by our parents. Under no circumstances should we put these privileges to compromise, because our ancestor's souls will revolt in their graves.

Helping Haitians find and understand the country's history and its legacy are key issues for the renewal of the Haitian nation. Very often, the intelligentsia believe that to be a patriot or a nationalist coincide with the notion of hatred for other people in order to promote your own ideals, however, the notion that we're promoting today on May 18, 2008 has nothing to do with this definition of patriotism or nationalism.

Haitian Priorities Project

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The concept for us is to put the interest of our country Haiti above personal interests in order to achieve a Haiti as it was meant to be based on its history. Our ancestors did not have so many opportunities that are offered to us today in the era of globalization, our responsibility is to advocate and promote our ideals in order to enhance the understanding and shed light on our struggle. Having for a compass—freedom and human rights as sacred instruments for the renewal of the country and our environment.

At the dawn of the celebration of the Centennial of our independence, a mental giant like Lhérisson was able to highlight our duty as citizens in the national anthem for us to analyze or think about our duty towards our motherland. But our disbelief and lack of vision we have stopped us from having a common vision for our people, which resulted in a U.S. invasion. That is the result of our lack of vision and cohesiveness: the return of France on the Haitian political scene by demanding and collecting a ransom from Haiti for over a hundred years, the American occupation, the occupation of the United Nations and its members from the third world that we had helped gain their own independence. The Préval government has the responsibility to declare its national plan for regaining our sovereignty specifying the date of departure for Minustha from our territory.

Haitian Priorities Project calls upon all Haitians and the French government, to think about the possibility for France to prove that it is really an ally for its former colony, which despite its setbacks and calamities, still remains an example of bravery and endurance.

The annual budget of Haiti stood at 77.6 billion gourdes/38.56gdes, or about \$2,012,448,133.00. If we capitalize the amount of the ransom of independence that France forced the Haitian government to pay, we end up with a sum of \$21,685,136,000.00 capitalized for fiscal year end 2003. If you take this value divided by the current annual budget of Haiti ( $\$21,685,136,000.00 / \$2,012,448,133.00$ ), we get a value equal to the total financing of the program of René Préval's government for a period of 11 years.

The most important step that France could make would be to demonstrate its humanitarianism and its respect for human rights and settle the debt that France owed to Haiti, accepted by former President Jacques Chirac and the French parliament. While celebrating the creation of the Haitian flag, it would be a great gesture on the part of the French Government to repay all of this unjustified ransom collected by the French Government, which would allow the Haitian government to equip the country with the infrastructure needed, in addition, this will allow the Haitian government from reaching out to the rest of the world in order to complete its annual budget for at least a period of 11 years. This would certainly bring economic stability in the country; a prerequisite condition for revitalizing the economy and sustainable development for the reconstruction of the Haitian society.

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On this day while we celebrate the creation of the Haitian flag, let us unite friends of Haiti, let's re-light the torch of bravery which motivated the warriors for the independence of Haiti and give value to their slogan "Union is Strength"

Haitian Priorities Project calls upon all Haitians and friends of Haiti to unite in order to demand from France the handing over of the ransom of independence extorted from Haiti. More than ever, we need the support of 8.5 million Haitians to demonstrate to France and the world that we are united in a single voice fighting for Restitution of over 23 billion dollars and the time has come for France to return to Haiti this ransom collected unfairly.

Haitian Priorities Project wishes everyone a joyful celebration of the Haitian flag. Remember: "Union is Strength"

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/restitutionpourhaiti/>

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