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Suspected assassins of Haitian President Moïse trained by U.S., linked to pro-coup oligarchy

written by Dan Cohen

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As the investigation into Moïse's murder unfolds, the U.S. is laying the groundwork to deploy troops into Haiti for the fourth time in 106 years, at the request of a figure it has spent decades grooming.



Suspects in the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse are shown to the media at the Port-au-Prince Police Department, along with the weapons and equipment allegedly used in the attack.

Port-au-Prince, Haiti — As shock grips the Caribbean island nation of Haiti following the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, the Haitian government has carried out a campaign to arrest suspects it alleges are responsible for the murder.

Haitian Director of National Police Leon Charles announced at a press conference that the assassination squad that killed Moïse is comprised of 28 foreigners, including two Haitian-Americans and 26 Colombian nationals. Fifteen of those Colombians have been detained while three were killed in a gun battle and eight remain fugitives. Colombian Defense Minister Diego Molano has admitted that some of the Colombians are retired military personnel. Among them are at least one highly decorated soldier who received training from the United States and another who has

been implicated in the murder of Colombian civilians.

Ties to oligarchs

The Haitian-Americans have been identified as James Solages, 35, and Joseph Vincent, 55. Solages lives in Fort Lauderdale where he is the CEO of EJS Maintenance & Repair and runs a nonprofit group, the [website](#) of which has since been scrubbed of information. Prior to relocating to Florida, he lived in the southern Haitian coastal city of Jacmel.

[According](#) to *The Washington Post*, Solages' Facebook profile, which has since been removed, listed him as the chief commander of bodyguards for the Canadian Embassy in Haiti. The Canadian Embassy [confirmed](#) that Solages previously worked as a security guard. While in Florida, Solages was an "avid and vocal supporter of former President Michel Martelly," the founder of Moïse's Haitian Baldheaded Party (PHTK), according to Tony Jean-Thénor, leader of the Veye Yo popular organization in Miami, founded by the late Father Gérard Jean-Juste.

The *Haitian Times* [reported](#) Solages also used to work as a security guard for both Reginald Boulos and Dimitri Vorbe, two prominent members of Haiti's tiny bourgeoisie. Although initially friendly to him, they both became bitter opponents of Moïse. Boulos was also a prominent supporter of previous coups in 1991 and 2004 against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The Boulos family is one of the wealthiest in Haiti and owns a pharmaceutical company that, in 1996, was responsible for [poisoning](#) scores of children with its tainted fever medicine, some fatally. Since the July 6-8, 2018 national uprising against the IMF-dictated hike of fuel prices, Boulos has attempted to recast himself as a popular and progressive figure (after one of his stores was burned and looted), heading a political party called the Third Way Movement (MTV).

Vorbe is the executive director and vice president of Société Générale d'Énergie SA, one of the largest private energy companies in Haiti which had a sweet-heart deal providing power to the energy grid that Moïse sought to renegotiate after the collapse of the PetroCaribe program, under which Venezuela provided Haiti with cheap oil and credit from 2008 to 2018.

Many believe Boulos is the intellectual author and financial backer of Moïse's murder.

"Solage's employment by Boulos and centrality to the operation appears to confirm the growing popular consensus in Haiti that this controversial merchant-turned-politician was the principal backer of Moïse's assassination," explained journalist Kim Ives, continuing:

A lot of factors have been pointing to his involvement: The arrival of the mercenaries in nine brand new Nissan Patrol vehicles without license plates suggests that they were vehicles coming from the Nissan dealership owned by Reginald Boulos. The Haitian people have already concluded that Boulos was behind the assassination and have dechoukéed [uprooted] the dealership, Automeca, that he owned."

Colombian assassin trained by the U.S.

While the Haitian-Americans reportedly served as translators, the muscle of the assassination squad came from Colombia, the U.S.'s top regional ally, which serves as a platform for destabilization and regime change plots in the region, from Venezuela to Ecuador - and now apparently Haiti.

The most prominent member of the hit squad is Manuel Antonio Grosso Guarín, a 41-year-old former special operations commando who retired from the military as a member of the Simón Bolívar No. 1 infantry battalion on December 31, 2019.

According to the Colombian newspaper *La Semana*, Grosso “had several special combat courses, had been a member of the special forces and anti-guerrilla squads, and was known for being a skilled paratrooper who flew through the air without fear.”

In 2013, Grosso was assigned to the Urban Anti-Terrorist Special Force group, a secretive elite military [detachment](#) dedicated to counter-terrorism operations and carrying out kidnappings and assassinations (euphemistically known as ‘high value target acquisition and elimination’). This branch of the military is also tasked with providing security to VIP figures from the Colombian president to U.S. presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush.

“He was one of the most prepared,” a source remarked to *La Semana*.

Among Grosso’s preparations was special command [instruction](#) from the United States military, which supplies training and weapons to the Colombia military, one of the most repressive armed forces in the region and one that works to secure international corporate interests and drug trafficking routes.

“How many false positives (*see the following paragraph*), how many social leaders, how many signers of the peace accord, will be on this man?” left-wing Colombian Senator Gustavo Bolívar commented on Twitter.

Cuántos falsos positivos, cuántos líderes sociales, cuántos firmantes del Acuerdo de Paz tendrá este hombre encima? #VerguenzaMundial
pic.twitter.com/y6RMjULFtd

— Gustavo Bolívar (@GustavoBolivar) [July 9, 2021](#)

Grosso was joined by Francisco Eladio Uribe Ochoa, who had retired from the

Colombian Army in 2019, [according](#) to the Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo*. Eladio Uribe's wife told the newspaper that he had been investigated for participation in the execution of civilians — a practice known as “false positives,” in which the Colombian military lured at least 6,402 civilians, murdered them, and dressed them in guerrilla fatigues in order to inflate their kill numbers. This gruesome practice helped military commanders reach lofty kill-count quotas set by the United States and was incentivized with bonus pay and vacation time for soldiers who carried out the killings.

Though Eladio Uribe's wife said that he had been exonerated, his name has appeared in a file of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, a court formed out of the 2016 peace accord, which has investigated several thousand cases of false positives that the Colombian government had not previously admitted. Eladio Uribe is one of two soldiers accused in the 2008 murder of Luis Carlos Cárdenas in the village of Chorros Blancos in Antioquia region.

Other alleged members of the hit squad alleged to have killed Moïse include:

- [Duberney Capador Giraldo](#), a retired Deputy First Sergeant (killed in a gun battle in Haiti)
- Alejandro Giraldo Zapata
- John Jairo Ramírez Gómez
- Víctor Albeiro Piñera

Of the 28 total people who allegedly participated in the assassination, four of the Colombians arrived in Haiti on June 6, 2021. Grosso arrived in the Dominican city of Punta Cana and crossed the land border into Haiti two days later. Photos show him and other suspects at popular tourist sites in the Dominican Republic.

Unanswered questions and a growing consensus

Questions also remain about why Moïse's security team failed to protect him, and if any of its members were complicit in the murder. Dimitri Herard, the head of the General Security Unit of the National Palace, is under investigation by the United States government for arms trafficking, [according](#) to the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR). While there is no evidence (but many rumors) linking him to the murder, "Herard is one of the individuals most responsible for the safety of the president."

While the Haitian government has identified what appear to be Moïse's assassins, there is still no hard evidence — just circumstantial — linking them to Boulos and possibly even Vorbe. Nonetheless, "there is a growing consensus that Reginald Boulous, for whom an arrest warrant [was] issued last week, paid for the mercenaries," according to Ives. "It appears to be becoming more and more evident that the sector of the Haitian bourgeois, with whom Jovenel Moïse was at war, are intimately linked to his assassination."

As the investigation into Moïse's murder unfolds, the U.S. appears to be preparing the groundwork to deploy troops to Haiti at the request of a figure whom it has spent decades grooming. According to *The New York Times*, Claude Joseph, who is in a struggle against Dr. Ariel Henry to head the Haitian state in the wake of Moïse's assassination, requested the U.S. send military forces to guard key infrastructure, including the port, airport, and gasoline reserves. White House Spokeswoman Jen Psaki announced that the U.S. would reinforce U.S. personnel in Haiti with FBI and DHS deployments.

https://twitter.com/madanboukman/status/1411684545687138309?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1411684545687138309%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_c10&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mintpressnews.com%2Fhaiti-suspected-moise-assassins-trained-by-us%2F277898%2F

Joseph is an asset of the United States and its regime-change arm, the National

Endowment For Democracy. Wikileaks cables [revealed](#) that he first came to prominence in 2003 as the leader of a NED-spawned student front called GRAFNEH in the lead up to the coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He also founded another NED-funded anti-Aristide group Initiative Citoyenne (Citizens' Initiative). He is reported by Haitian radio stations to have been, with prominent Haitian ex-Deputy Gary Bodeau, one of the principal assailants who severely beat the late Father Gérard Jean-Juste in a Pétionville church in 2005.

Jean-Juste, perhaps the most prominent supporter and surrogate of the then exiled-in-South-Africa President Aristide, had been falsely accused of involvement in the killing of his own cousin, Jacques Roche, a writer.

"Essentially, we have a U.S. puppet asking his puppeteer to invade Haiti for the fourth time in just over a century," Ives concluded. "But both the region and, above all, the Haitian people are sick and tired of U.S. military interventions, which are largely responsible for the nation's current debilitated, critical state both economically and politically. Much of the most oppressed neighborhoods are now heavily armed and have already announced a revolution against the likes of Boulos, so the U.S.-led invaders of 2021 are likely to face a resistance similar to that which emerged against the U.S. Marines in 1915 and UN 'peace-keepers' in 2004, only more ferocious."

Dan Cohen is the Washington DC correspondent for *Behind The Headlines*. He has produced widely distributed video reports and print dispatches from across Israel-Palestine. He tweets at [@DanCohen3000](#).

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