

Dear CBC, Haiti is not a “failed state”. Your reporting on Haiti is “failed journalism”

By Grahame Russell, Rights Action, October 5, 2021

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/cbc-reporting-on-haiti-is-failed-journalism>

Reporting recently on the thousands of Haitians forced to flee home and country, and try desperately to enter into the US by land or water, CBC news explains that Haiti is a “failed state”.

That is it. That is all you need to know to understand why so many Haitians are forced to flee violence and corruption, exploitation and desperation, decade after decade.

Takeaway: ‘Wow. That is too bad. What a sad place. I feel so lucky to not live there.’

This is “failed journalism”.

*“If you are not careful,
the press will have you hating the people being repressed
and loving the people doing the repressing.”*

Malcolm X

Haiti is not a “failed state”. The Haitian state and society have long been violently and corruptly exploited by Haitian elites together with certain governments (particularly the US, France and Canada) and other powerful economic actors in the mis-named “international community”.

I believe the CBC, and other mainstream media outlets, are factoring out (censoring) balanced and fair reporting on how numerous policies and actions of these governments and international actors contribute to and help cause the very conditions that force so many to flee into exile, ever and ever again.

Directly partnering with and supporting Haiti’s economic, military and political elites for generations are: the US, France and Canada; the World

Bank, IDB and IMF; and a host of multinational companies and banks from these and other countries.

And when Haitians courageously ousted the reviled, repressive US-backed “Duvalier family” military regime in the late 1980s, and elected their first truly democratic government, what did the Haitian elites do, with support from the US, France and Canada (to a lesser extent)? They orchestrated an illegal ‘regime change’ coup in 1991 to oust the entire elected government. This happened all over again in 2004, with ever more direct participation by Canada, together with the US, France and other international actors.

Regular consumers of CBC news would know little to anything about this.

Haiti is no more a “failed state” than it is a “shithole country”, an expression that landed President Trump on primetime news around the world. While Trump was widely criticized for being denigrating and racist (both true), there was no media reporting about how, in many ways, this is actually how certain wealthy, powerful countries and other powerful economic actors treat many countries and their majority populations around the world – countries like Haiti.

Trump was crudely voicing how global politics, economic and militarism actually work in many places.

**“Shithole Countries”
U.S., Canada & International Community
Helping Produce Forced Migrancy From Honduras & Guatemala**

<https://rightsaction.org/articles/shithole-countries-us-canada-amp-international-community-helping-produce-forced-migrancy-from-honduras-amp-guatemala>

Reporting on “First Nations” issues

It is perhaps helpful to look at this issue of “failed journalism” from a different perspective. Until recently much of the Canadian media has more often than not misreported on so-called “First Nations issues”. While the media would report regularly and movingly on conditions of poverty, addictions, suicides, lack of water, lack of education, lack of just about everything, on certain Indigenous “reservations”, the media would report

little to nothing about the underlying political, economic and racial causal factors.

Takeaway: 'Wow. That is too bad. What sad places those "reservations" must be. I feel so lucky to not live there.'

After formation in 1867, the settler colonialist state of Canada (government, church, private sector) continued with and codified many policies and actions of the invading and expanding European imperialist powers: violent land theft and dispossession characterized and accompanied by systemic racism, religious fanaticism and the attempted destruction of the Indigenous "way of life".

Recently, in my view, mainstream journalism in Canada has turned a corner, of sorts, and is starting to report more consistently and in a more balanced and fair-minded manner on how these historic and on-going policies and actions directly and indirectly cause multiple, inter-generational harms and violences that Indigenous peoples and communities suffer in varying degrees.

It is not that all of this was not happening or known before. The media chose to misreport, or factor out oftentimes completely pertinent and relevant aspects of the story.

The comparative point is that while mainstream media is slowly (ever so slowly, perhaps) shifting towards doing more consistent, balanced and fair journalism related to Indigenous relations and issues inside Canada's borders, this is not so when reporting on many important international affairs and issues where Canadian government and private sector policies, actions and business matters are directly involved.

CBC's reporting on Haiti is blatantly factoring out (censoring) analysis of the policies and actions, the roles and complicities of other governments (like Canada) and global actors in Haiti's desperate situation.

This is not journalism. The media consuming public remain largely ignorant about Canada's harmful and complicit policies and actions in Haiti. The Canadian government, and certain companies and investors, continue to act in harmful ways, with close to no scrutiny or attention, and even less political or legal oversight or accountability.

And the Haitian majority population continues to suffer systemic racism, exploitation, violence and corruption - supported and enabled in multiple ways by the "international community" - decade after decade, generation after generation.

- Grahame Russell has worked with Rights Action (www.rightsaction.org) since 1995.
- For more information about Canada's long history in and related to Haiti, review multiple articles and books by Yves Engler: <https://yvesengler.com/>

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