

**HAITIAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**  
**Willingness, Know-How, Resources**

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**"FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA"**  
**From Charity to Development**



**PEACEKEEPER PEST CONTROL: A HAITIAN FABLE**

***"During a meeting with the press, the head of government reaffirmed the authorities' desire to regain control of all territories, house by house, district by district and city by city." <https://nam-haiti.com/2024/06/27/le-pm-garry-conille-motive-a-reprendre-le-controle-des-territoires-avec-laide-des-kenyans/>***

**I.**

Once upon a time, on another scorching day in Port-au-Prince, the city buzzed but anxiously and insecure. Tap-taps and feral pigs honked, vendors and hungry children hollered, rubber tires burned in the streets, the garbage smelled, and gunshots cracked in the alleys. From a street-front loudspeaker, the national leader announced a grand plan to restore order *"house by house, district by district, and city by city"*. His boast was like a pest-control specialist declaring war on cockroaches, confident of victory.

Mr. Pacot, the proud owner of an apartment building in Port-au-Prince, was also at war with pests. The building had three floors, four apartments per floor, and three rooms per apartment. Altogether, there were eighteen residents. Two goats and several chickens lived in the backyard. The building was more than twenty years old. It had survived the earthquake, but small cracks in the foundation, walls, doors, and window frames made it easy for pests to enter and live inside. Among them were grey rats, brown roaches, chirping crickets, mosquitoes, and sometimes even a few birds and silent snakes. The residents always complained because the rats ate their food, turning the pantries into nightclubs. The crickets ate the crumbs and held concerts in the bedrooms. The mosquitoes bit everyone. The birds perched on the clothes, the snakes slept under the beds, and a rooster staged soliloquies on the third-floor balcony. Finally, Mr. Pacot decided to hire pest control. But in his sweaty frustration, he accidentally dialed a non-local number.

"Peacekeeper Pest Control. What's your problem?" The voice sounded like someone who wore sunglasses even indoors.

Mr. Pacot said, "I have pests in my apartment building. The residents are complaining."

The voice replied, "Okay. Restoring order is our specialty. Where are you?"

Mr. Pacot said, "Downtown Port-au-Prince. Where are you?"

"Nairobi. Just a quick hop across the Atlantic! We'll be there tomorrow. Meet us at the airport."

Mr. Pacot stared at his phone and thought, "Did I just order pest control from Kenya? Oh well, '*Any port in a storm.*'"

## II.

The next day, an airplane arrived in Port-au-Prince with "Peacekeeper Pest Control" painted on the side in big letters. From within came three very large vehicles and several cages on wheels drawn by a truck, also painted "Peacekeeper Pest Control." In the vehicles were ten men in uniforms, and in the cages were three lions, two tigers, one elephant, and a giraffe. Mr. Pacot paid the customs duty and led them to his building. As they traveled, they attracted a crowd that became a parade unique to Haitians.

When they arrived, the Kenyans parked the vehicles and cages nearby and erected several canvas tents and a portable kitchen in the front yard, saying, "We will have dinner and sleep here tonight. Tomorrow we will investigate the building, observe the pests, then control them. Sometimes, it requires several days, perhaps a few weeks, or even months." Mr. Pacot was surprised and thought, "Pest control must be serious business in Nairobi."

One of the men approached Mr. Pacot and said, "I manage the animals. It is time for them to eat." Mr. Pacot noted, "There's some food inside. How much do you need?" The man said, "Eight kilograms of red meat for each lion and tiger, that's forty kilograms total. The elephant requires a hundred fifty kilograms of fruits and vegetables, and for the giraffe, thirty kilograms of leaves and fruits." Mr. Pacot tried to imagine the amount. He said, "That is more food than we have in the whole building. I will have to go to the market." He asked his residents to follow him with all their baskets and buckets. As they began to leave, the animal manager said, "Tomorrow, they will need the same amount again." One of the lions roared approval.

## III.

The next morning, all the residents assembled outside while the pest controllers investigated the building. They looked on every floor, in every apartment, and in every room in each apartment. They saw and mapped the locations of rats, roaches, crickets, mosquitoes, birds, the snake and the rooster. Then, for each type of pest, they determined the best wild animal to use for the job. Then, they went outside and moved the lion cage to the front door of the building.

When they opened the cage, the lion entered the hallway and bounded up the steps, roaring loudly. It found the snake and roared again. The frightened snake was so scared that it quickly slithered down the stairs and out the front door where one of the pest controllers captured it in a large cloth bag. Meanwhile, the lion continued to look for more snakes, roaring loudly in each apartment, breaking dishes and furniture wherever it went. Outside, the residents heard the noise and became afraid of the damage. After a while, the lion found a comfortable sofa and went to sleep. For a few minutes, it was quiet.

Next, the pest controllers brought the elephant cage to the front door of the building. When they opened the cage, the elephant advanced quickly, but everyone saw it was too tall and wide for the entrance. Raising its trunk and calling loudly, the elephant gave a vigorous push and went in, cracking the doorframe and breaking the tiles in the hallway. Then, ascending the stairs, some of them began to splinter and break from the heavy weight of the elephant. Mr. Pacot grabbed the arm of the animal manager and cried, "Look what the elephant is doing!" The manager replied, "In our business if you want to control pests, you must anticipate some broken doorways and stairs."

Soon, the residents outside could hear the heavy footsteps of the elephant in their apartments while it looked for rats to crush under its weight. Word of the elephant's arrival quickly spread among the rats in each room, apartment, and building floor. Soon, dozens of rats began streaming down the stairs and out the front door, where several pest controllers caught them in large cloth bags. Meanwhile, the residents outside could hear the loud cracking of doorways and the breaking of dishes and furniture as the elephant searched for more rats to crush. After a while, the elephant found some cool water in a bathtub on the top floor. Soon, gallons of water began flowing out the windows to the pavement below. The residents imagined it would take days to clean up the mess.

Next came the giraffe to control the hordes of roaches, crickets, mosquitoes, and other flying insects. The pest controllers rolled the giraffe's cage to the building door, opened the cage, and attached several large black-and-white ostrich feathers to the animal's long, flexible neck. The giraffe entered and immediately began vigorously sweeping its neck across the floors, walls, and ceilings of every floor, apartment, and room of the building. As giraffes are usually silent, the residents only heard the constant "whoosh" of the ostrich feathers, accompanied by the occasional sound of remaining dishes and furniture being broken. Outside the building, the pest control peacekeepers stood with nets and flyswatters to capture or kill the fleeing insects. Meanwhile, the giraffe, tired of sweeping, found a dark closet, went in and hid among the shirts and pants.

#### IV.

All day, the peacekeepers released additional animals according to the plan. The pests were either killed or chased outside to be captured. Eventually, all the wild animals were out of their cages and in the apartment building. Some were sleeping, some were eating the residents' food, and others were still nervously crashing around, breaking more dishes and furniture. Despite the peacekeepers' attempts, none of the animals wanted to come downstairs and enter their cages for the night. Mr. Pacot and his residents asked, "Why?" The animal manager answered, "I think they like it here."

And so, it was repeated day and night, day and night. The wild animals replaced the residents in the apartments, and the residents had nowhere to live but outside the building in the animals' cages. The building remained free of pests, but after a while, the cages began attracting rats, roaches, crickets, birds, snakes, and a rooster that occupied the high roof of the cage where the giraffe used to live.

Mr. Pacot hesitated when it came time to pay the peacekeepers for their work. He said, "This has cost me a lot of money, plus tons of meat, fruits, and vegetables for your wild animals. Now they are living like people in my apartments, and we are living like animals in their cages, behind bars and sleeping on straw."

Slowly removing his sunglasses, the leader replied, "I understand, but that was our contract, namely, remove the pests from your building, floor by floor, apartment by apartment, room by room. In Nairobi, we call that success. And by the way, if you want the cages, there will be an extra charge."

#### V.

After being handsomely paid the next morning, the Peacekeeper Pest Control team flew out of Port-au-Prince, leaving behind the animals and cages. That afternoon, a troop of young Boy Scouts, neatly uniformed and full of optimism, strolled past Mr. Pacot's apartment building. They stopped, mouths agape, at the sight before them: wild animals lounging like they owned the place while the actual residents sat outside, looking like guests at their own eviction party.

The scouts, ever resourceful, listened intently to Mr. Pacot's tale of mayhem. After a brief huddle, they emerged with a brilliant two-step plan. Step one: Basic pest control. The scouts dashed off to the market and

triumphantly returned with rat traps, bug spray, rolls of window screen, and enough plaster to seal every crack, hole, and possible rodent entry. Step two: The *plat de resistance* [main course], marshmallows! The scouts built a crackling campfire in the yard, roasting marshmallows to golden perfection. The sweet, sugary scent soon drifted through the air, catching the attention of the wild tenants inside.

One by one, the animals poked their heads out, noses twitching. Unable to resist, they filed out of the building, eager for a snack. The lion, clearly a marshmallow *aficionado*, roared contentedly, nodding his approval as he joined the other beasts.

Seeing their chance, the residents rushed back inside, reclaiming their apartments with victorious glee. Laughter echoed in the hallways as they dusted off furniture and settled in.

From atop the giraffe's cage, the ever-dramatic rooster flapped its wings, swooped up to the third-floor balcony, and began to crow what sounded like the soliloquy from *Hamlet*. The residents sighed, knowing they'd still have to endure their "artistic neighbor" as a price for becoming (almost) pest-free.

**Moral:**

*"Pitit gason toujou gen bon solisyon nan tèt li"* – even the smallest minds can have the best ideas..., except, apparently, for a rooster with delusions of grandeur!

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