

# EL OBSERVADOR

## Prison Fire Kills 133 in Dominican Republic

(AP) - Rival gangs fighting for control of a provincial Dominican Republic prison set pillows and sheets ablaze Monday, starting a fire that killed at least 133 people after rescuers were thwarted by a jammed entrance, officials said.

Only 26 inmates were rescued from the public jail in Higüey, 75 miles northeast of the capital on the island's eastern tip, said National Police Chief Manuel de Jesus Perez Sanchez.

Four inmates suffered bullet wounds, but he had no details.

Guards could not rescue prisoners from the blazing cell block because the entrance was jammed, National Police spokesman Gen. Simon Diaz said. He did not know why the entrance was jammed.

By late Monday morning, rescuers had pulled 133 bodies from the cell block, Perez Sanchez said.

Higüey fire chief Nestor Vera said, "Most of the prisoners we're



Two prisoners show relief for having survived a fire at a jail in Higüey, Dominican Republic on Monday. (AP photo)

seeing are dead or badly wounded." He said bodies were "piled up on top of each other."

The dead included two inmates from Puerto Rico, he said.

Army helicopters were ferrying the wounded to hospitals in the

capital, Santo Domingo, he said. Gen. Ramon de la Cruz Martinez, the national director of prisons.

The toll of dead and injured was 159, although officials said earlier there were 148 prisoners in the jail. Dominican Republic jails are notori-

ous for being overcrowded, as the U.S. State Department reported last week.

The Dominican Republic's 35 prisons were built to hold 9,000 prisoners but last year held more than 13,500, the State Department said in its annual report on human rights.

"Some prisons were totally out of the authorities' control and were, in effect, operated by armed inmates," the department said.

The violence began Sunday night when one inmate shot and wounded a member of a rival gang, and dozens of prisoners began fighting over which gang would control the prisoners, de la Cruz Martinez said. The gang that controls the prison sells food, cigarettes and drugs to the other prisoners.

The fight was broken up by guards, but at about 12:30 a.m. many prisoners began rioting, setting fire to pillows and sheets in their cells, Diaz said.



## Latin American Art Featured

"Eight Views of Latin America," will be featured at Onda Arte Latina and Cross Currents Gallery at 2215 N.E. Alberta St. through March 29.

The exhibit will feature photographs from Cheryle Easter, Larry Easter, Michael Feely, Bruce Hall,

Susan Lynch, Gustavo Rapoport, Bryan Wolf and Richard Wolfson. The show includes works from Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

For more information, call 503-493-1909 or visit [www.ondagallery.com](http://www.ondagallery.com).

## Latin America Plagued With Deadly Prison Riots

(AP) - Deadly prison riots have plagued several countries in Latin America, where criminals are crowded into under-equipped prisons with poorly trained guards. Here are some recent examples of prison riots in Latin America:

- Feb. 8: Gangs battle in a Peruvian prison, leaving five inmates dead. The prison is designed for 1,800 inmates but holds more than 7,000.

- Jan. 21: Prisoners seize control of a prison colony in central Brazil, killing two inmates and holding

three guards hostage for 12 hours.

Aug. 18: Rival inmates at a Salvadoran prison fight with knives and sticks, killing at least 31 people. Prison officials say more than 3,000 prisoners are being held in a facility meant for 800.

- May 2004: A three-day uprising at a prison in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, leaves 30 inmates dead - some beheaded and dismembered. It is Brazil's bloodiest prison riot since 1992, when 111 inmates died at the now-closed Carindiru prison.

- May 17, 2004: At least 103 of 186 prisoners in a cell block set

aside for gang members are killed in a prison riot in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Officials blame it on a short circuit. Gangs allege that rival inmates threw gasoline into the cells and set them ablaze as officials stood by.

- April 5, 2003: Prisoners battle gang members at the El Porvenir prison farm in northern Honduras, leaving 69 people dead. Officials initially blame inmates, but a government report says guards committed most of the slayings. The prison is built for 150 inmates but holds 550.

- September 2002: Prisoners at La Vega in the Dominican Republic set fire to mattresses, starting a blaze that kills 30 inmates. The prison is built for 50 but holds about 400 men in nine cells. Dominican prisons at the time were built to hold up to 7,000 inmates but had a population of some 16,500.

- Dec. 15, 2001: Rioting inmates start a fire that sweeps through a prison in Paraguay's Ciudad del Este, killing at least 25 people. It apparently is touched off when a jailer shoots a prisoner who attacked him in an escape bid.

## Spanish-speaking Workers Wanted

(AP) - The Home Depot Inc., the nation's largest home improvement store chain, is launching a partnership with four national Hispanic organizations to recruit more Spanish-speaking employees - a strategy that proponents say can help retailers find talented workers and boost sales at the same time.

Industry observers say the move - like the company's previous hiring partnerships with senior citizen and military groups - will help Atlanta-based Home Depot tap into a valuable customer niche. By 2008, the company says, Hispanics are expected to have roughly \$1 trillion in annual purchasing power.

## RELIGION

### Service Honors War Victims

Local African American pastor Rev. Dr. LeRoy Haynes Jr. and Congressman Earl Blumenauer will speak at an interfaith memorial service will honor those who have died during the war in Iraq.

"Arlington Northwest: The Cost of Security" will be held on Sunday, March 20 at 2 p.m. at the First Congregational United Church of Christ at 1137 SW Broadway.

Those in attendance will be given the opportunity to honor and grieve the lives that have been lost in Iraq. A temporary memorial will be set up with a list of names. For more information, to volunteer or to donate, call 503-650-4447.

### Micah Stampley to Debut Album



Gospel recording artist Micah Stampley is set to debut "The Songbook of Micah" on March 29, featuring his first single "War Cry," a call for Christian "soldiers" to go out into the

world and seek their ministry and mission.

The album has songs of exploration and redemption, worship and wholeness, the artist said.

Stampley recently shared the stage with CeCe Winans, Ricky Skaggs, Michael W. Smith and Mercy Me at a Nashville fund-raiser called "An Evening for Restoration: Music City Comes Together for Tsunami Relief."

## Gospel Singer Ends Absence

After releasing five chart-topping albums, glorious gospel singer LaShun Pace was silenced by grief and illness. After four years, she's back with the triumphant album "It's My Time." Her first single from the work, "For My Good," was number one on the Christian Singles chart for a total of ten weeks, remaining at number one for two consecutive weeks.

Pace's latest release primarily was a healing tool for the musician, as in the last ten years, she has endured serious health problems, the breakup of her marriage and the death of her oldest daughter. The album is made up for tears and prayer, and includes the voice of Pace's 11-year-old daughter for the



LaShun Pace

song "Through Her Eyes." It's through her faith and her music that she has been able to overcome these hardships.

### ALBINA MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE



Delta Sigma Theta

The Portland Chapter Links, Inc

### Healing Worship Celebration

Join us in our war against HIV/AIDS,

Albina Ministerial Alliance (AMA) has broken the silence on HIV/AIDS in the African American communities by educating Christian churches in the North and Northeast community and fighting against the spread of HIV/AIDS. AMA invites community members, pastors, ministers and missionaries to the annual local observance of the national Balm in Gilead's Black Church Week of Prayer.

Please join us in our war against HIV/AIDS with **Keynote Speaker, Rev. George Merriweather, Northeast Community Fellowship Foursquare Church**

**Friday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Allen Temple C.M.E. Church**  
**4236 NE Eighth Ave.**  
**Portland, Oregon**

Contact: Dr. LeRoy Haynes, (503) 287-0261 or Bishop Grace Osborne (503) 281-5850

## Lane College Concert Choir

From Jackson, Tennessee

(One of the 100 Historical African-American Colleges) Performs In Concert



**When**  
Wednesday  
March 23, 2005  
7:00 pm

**Where**  
Maranatha Church  
4222 NE 12th Avenue  
Portland OR

**Cost:** Free Will Offering

**Sponsored By:** Allen Temple CME Church

**Co-Sponsored By:**  
Albina Ministerial Alliance (AMA)

For more information, please contact Allen Temple CME Church at (503) 287-0261

### Graceful Performance

"Portraits of Grace," a performance made up of more than 250 people, including multiple choirs and a 30-piece orchestra will take place March 16 through March 19 at 7:30 p.m. each night at Beaverton Christian Church, 13600 S.W. Allen Blvd.

Childcare will be provided for children under five. Tickets are free. For more information, call 503-646-2151.

### LEGAL NOTICES



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