

PUBLIC

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20 October 2004

Further Information on UA 149/04 (AMR 36/033/2004, 20 April 2004) Fear for safety/death threats

HAITI **Rénan Hédouville (m), Secretary-General of the Comité des Avocats pour le Respect des Libertés Individuelles (CARLI), Lawyers' Committee for the Respect of Individual Liberties**
Marie Nadia Charles (f), Executive Director
Morisseau Jean Rony (m), Lawyer
Other members of CARLI
Carline Séide (f)

New name: Mario Joseph (m), lawyer

Lawyers Rénan Hédouville and Mario Joseph, who have worked on behalf of people who suffered human rights abuses at the hands of the army while Haiti was under military rule, have been receiving numerous anonymous telephone death threats. Amnesty International believes both men's lives are in danger. M. Hédouville has reported the threats repeatedly to the media and the authorities, but nothing has been done to protect him.

Rénan Hédouville is Secretary-General of the *Comité des Avocats pour le Respect des Libertés Individuelles* (CARLI), Lawyers' Committee for the Respect of Individual Liberties. He has been told that he will be killed unless he stops his work of defending human rights and accusing former army officers of human rights violations. He and other CARLI members are being targeted in an attempt to hinder their human rights work.

CARLI is an active human rights organization that documents and investigates human rights violations via a telephone "hotline". In August 2004 it protested publicly after a jury acquitted former paramilitary leader Louis Jodel-Chamblain and senior ex-military police officer Jackson Joanis of the September 1993 murder of pro-democracy activist Antoine Izméry. Izméry had been a prominent supporter of former president Aristide.

Mario Joseph is representing prominent supporters of ex-president Aristide's *Famille Lavalas* party, who have recently been imprisoned without charge. He has received numerous death threats because of this. As a lawyer working for the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI), International Lawyers Office, he defended and assisted victims of human rights abuses committed under the military government of 1991 to 1994, notably parents of victims of the April 1994 Raboteau massacre, a joint military and paramilitary operation attack on a shanty town where support for Aristide was strong, in which an estimated 20 people were killed.

There is no further news of Carline Séide, the young woman whose case was taken up by CARLI after she was gang-raped by seven men in November 2003. One of the attackers was alleged to have been a policeman. He was later arrested, but escaped from jail. Men who claimed to be sent by him had harassed and threatened Carline, who went into hiding, and members of CARLI.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the first democratically elected president of Haiti, was overthrown in a 1991 coup by former military leaders. Thousands of his supporters were murdered over the three years of military rule that ended with US military intervention in 1994, that restored Aristide to power. He was re-elected in 2000.

In February 2004, after months of unrest and demonstrations, conflict broke out in the country's fourth largest town, Gonaïves, when armed opponents of the government and former soldiers led by Louis Jodel-Chamblain attacked police stations and courthouses, forcing the police and local authorities to flee. The

conflict spread throughout the country and Aristide left the country in disputed circumstances. A transitional government was formed in early March, but the atmosphere of lawlessness that followed Aristide's departure remains.

Despite the presence of United Nations forces, a large number of armed groups are active throughout the country, including former military forces and militias loyal to former President Aristide. Heavily armed remnants of the Haitian Army, disbanded by Aristide, are now allegedly patrolling the streets of the capital, Port-au-Prince, saying they intend to "secure" the city.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Rénan Hédouville, other members of the *Comité des Avocats pour le Respect des Libertés Individuelles* and Mario Joseph;
- urging the authorities to publicly declare their recognition of the important role of human rights defenders and to remind all Haitians that efforts to curb or hinder their work will not be tolerated;
- expressing grave concern that it is increasingly difficult for CARLI and lawyers defending human rights to carry out their legitimate work on behalf of victims of human rights violations due to threats and harassment;
- urging the Haitian government to adhere to its obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, as laid out in the UN Declarations of Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution of the Organisation of American States (OAS).

APPEALS TO: (It can be very difficult to send faxes to Haiti. Please keep trying)

Director General of the Haitian National Police

M. Léon Charles

Directeur Général de la Police Nationale d'Haiti

Grand Quartier Général de la Police

12 rue Oscar Pacot

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

Fax: +509 245 7374 (if someone answers, say "La ligne de fax s'il vous plaît")

Salutation: Monsieur le Directeur

Minister of Justice and Public Security

Monsieur Bernard Gousse

Ministre de la Justice et de la Sécurité Publique

Ministère de la Justice

19 Avenue Charles Sumner

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

Fax: +509 245 0474 (if someone answers, say "La ligne de fax s'il vous plaît")

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Haiti accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 December 2004.