

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Haiti: Three years later, instigators of Jean Dominique killing still unidentified**

On the third anniversary of the killing of journalist and activist Jean Dominique and radio station guard Jean Claude Louissaint, Amnesty International reiterates its call for full and impartial investigations into their case, leading to full justice.

“For justice to be served, the whole truth must be uncovered,” the organisation said. “The indictment issued by Judge Bernard Saint Vil on 21 March is an important step – but in addition to the people believed to be the actual killers, those responsible for promoting and planning the murders must be brought to trial. Anything else is less than full justice.”

Jean Dominique and Jean Claude Louissaint were gunned down by unidentified attackers outside Jean Dominique’s radio station, *Radio Haïti Inter*, on 3 April 2000. The attack on this most well-known and outspoken journalist, a survivor of decades of past dictatorships, had massive ramifications.

“The killing of Jean Dominique marked the beginning of a steep decline in the respect for human rights in Haiti,” Amnesty International said. “Since his death, threats and attacks on journalists, human rights defenders and justice officials have become commonplace, while the justice system itself has become increasingly politicised. The police is increasingly perceived as partisan, while illegal armed groups commit growing numbers of human rights abuses with impunity.”

“Full and impartial justice in this one high-profile case would go a long way towards reversing these dangerous trends in Haiti,” the organisation added. “However, the authorities appear unwilling to confront these issues. Instead they are offering Haitians half-measures; this case matters too much for that.”

### **Background**

The three-year investigation into the killings has been beset by violence and threats. One suspect was lynched, and another reportedly died in disputed circumstances. Several previous investigating judges resigned after receiving threats; one, Claudy Gassant, fled Haiti due to security concerns after the president failed to renew his mandate to investigate the case. In 2001 Gassant issued an earlier indictment naming a number of suspects, including an influential Haitian senator, not included in the final document.

Jean Dominique's widow, Michèle Montas, has been pushing tirelessly for justice in his case. Her life has been repeatedly threatened, and on Christmas Day 2002, she survived an attack in which her bodyguard, Maxime Séïde, was killed. On 22 February, she and her staff were forced to close *Radio Haiti Inter* indefinitely due to ongoing threats.

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