

URGENT ACTION

DISPLACED PEOPLE FACE ARBITRARY ARREST

Residents of a makeshift camp in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, which is under threat of forced eviction, have been informed by police that several of them are on an arrest list. Amnesty International believes this threat to be linked to ongoing efforts by the alleged landowner to intimidate them into leaving their camp.

Residents at Grace Village camp, in the Carrefour area of metropolitan Port-au-Prince, have been informed by local police that they have a list of people from the camp they plan to arrest. On 15 February residents learned that an arrest warrant had been issued for two residents, one of whom is a camp committee member. On 18 February, residents reported that police came to the camp and arrested another camp committee member. She was released without charge the following day and was never given a reason for her arrest. The police subsequently informed camp residents that they had a list of several people from the camp who would be arrested, including other members of the camp committee. Again, no reasons have been given for the impending arrests.

Those on the list and the two for whom arrest warrants have been issued are said to be in hiding, and are fearful for their safety and that of their families. This harassment appears to be linked to a constant campaign of intimidation against camp residents from the alleged owner of the land on which the camp is situated. Scores of families were forcibly evicted on several occasions during 2012, at times with the participation of police from Carrefour, and the residents live in constant fear of forced eviction and being made homeless. They also face regular harassment from private security guards hired by the landowner, who throw rocks into the camp and shoot firearms into the air.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Expressing concern at reports of arbitrary arrest and intimidation of residents of Grace Village by police in Carrefour and calling on the authorities to carry out a full and impartial investigation into these incidents;
- Calling on them to ensure that residents of Grace Village camp are not evicted without due process, adequate notice and consultation, and that all those affected have access to adequate alternative accommodation;
- Urging them to seek durable solutions to the housing needs of the Grace Village residents and the hundreds of thousands of others still living in dire conditions in makeshift camps.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 APRIL 2013 TO:

President

Michel Joseph Martelly
Palais National
Rue Magny, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Fax: + 1 202-745-7215 (via Haiti
embassy in the USA)
Email :

communications@presidentmartelly.ht

**Salutation: Monsieur le
Président/Dear President**

General Director of the Haitian Police

Godson Orélus
Directeur Général de la PNH
Police Nationale d'Haiti
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Email: godore68@hotmail.com
**Salutation: Monsieur le directeur/Dear
Director**

And copies to:

Minister of Justice and Public Security
Jean Renel Sanon
Ministère de la Justice et de la Sécurité
Publique
19 Avenue Charles Sumner
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Email: jeanrenelsanon@yahoo.com/
secretariat.mjsp@yahoo.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 172/12. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR36/006/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The third anniversary of the devastating earthquake in Haiti was 12 January 2013. This earthquake left more than 200,000 people dead and some 2.3 million homeless. Three years on and more than 300,000 people are estimated to still be living in makeshift camps.

The most recent survey by the International Office for Migration (IOM) indicates that there are currently 576 families living in Grace Village, which amounts to approximately 3,000 people.

At least 30 families were forcibly evicted by camp security from the camp on the night of 28 April 2012, without any due process and without being offered any alternative accommodation. On 11 June 2012, camp security accompanied by police officers destroyed at least 15 tents, which they claimed were unoccupied. However two women, one who was pregnant, and two young boys were sleeping in the tents at the time. Camp residents told Amnesty International delegates in July 2012 that the security guards regularly threaten and beat residents, as well as sexually harass women, and that police officers from Carrefour district support the landowner in terrorising Grace Village residents. Private security guards for the camp and police have both reportedly been involved in threats and harassment against camp residents. According to residents, camp security harass and intimidate residents on a regular basis by shooting firearms into the air and throwing rocks into the camp.

In December 2012, the IOM attempted to build latrines in the camp but was stopped by the alleged landowner. The dire sanitation conditions in the camp and lack of access to potable water puts residents at risk of cholera. The Haitian Ministry of Health has recorded more than 8,000 deaths since the cholera outbreak in October 2010. According to the World Health Organization “[p]rovision of safe water and sanitation is critical in reducing the impact of cholera and other waterborne diseases”.

In February 2013 lawyers representing the camp’s residents filed a request before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for precautionary measures for the residents as they are facing the risk of “imminent forced eviction and accompanying irreparable harm”.

The residents of Grace Village live in basic shelters; they are not given access to potable water and are subject to poor sanitation. However, any relocation process must respect their rights to adequate housing and they must not be subjected to forced evictions.

Name: Grace Village camp residents in Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 172/12 Index: AMR 36/005/2013 Issue Date: 6 March 2013