

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 36/26/94
Distr: UA/SC

UA 251/94

"Disappearance" / Fear for Safety

29 June 1994

HAITI Janne TOUSSAINT (f), aged 24, political activist
 Members of the Toussaint family

Janne Toussaint has "disappeared" after being abducted from her apartment in Port-au-Prince on 19 June 1994 by eight armed men. According to reports, the men, some in military uniform and some in civilian clothes, took her away in a black car. In spite of inquiries made by family members at detention centres, she has not been seen or heard from since.

Janne Toussaint has been an active opponent of the de facto military government in Haiti since the military coup of September 1991 which ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. She has also been working as a Secretary at a courthouse. Her abduction took place after several interviews given by her husband Levis Toussaint to the radio programme 'Voice of America' were broadcast in Haiti. In the interviews Levis Toussaint, who is a political refugee in the United States, reportedly condemned Haiti's military and called for democracy. Prior to fleeing Haiti, Levis Toussaint had been a radio and newspaper journalist for five years and worked as an administrator in the Ministry of Information of the government of President Aristide. He was arrested in October 1991 in Port-au-Prince and spent one month in jail during which time he was repeatedly beaten. He was eventually released following international pressure. In May 1993 he was granted political asylum in the United States, where he has become a strong voice for the Haitian people. His entire family has reportedly been active against the military in Haiti over the years.

In May 1994 Levis Toussaint began the process of trying to get his wife and children out of Haiti as political refugees. They have also been making their own applications from Haiti. He now fears that the process may have been too slow to save his wife, and fears for the safety of his mother and his two children, aged four and one, who remain in Haiti. Levis Toussaint was reportedly reluctant to apply for asylum for his wife and children at an earlier date for fear that drawing attention to them could put their lives in more danger.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There has recently been a marked upsurge in the number of human rights violations reported in Haiti. Most of the victims appear to have been targeted because of their support for the return of President Aristide. The number of apparent extrajudicial executions during the last few months is reminiscent of September-October 1993 when *attachés* carried out a campaign of intimidation and abuses against President Aristide's followers, aimed at blocking his return, which had been projected for 30 October 1993.

Due to difficulties in monitoring, it is hard to give an accurate figure of the number of people who have "disappeared" in Haiti this year. However, according to a press release of the UN/Organization of American States International Civilian Mission to Haiti, issued on 22 April 1994, by that time there had been 53 reported "disappearances" since the end of January 1994.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters either in French or in your own language, or call by telephone:
- expressing concern at the "disappearance" of Janne Toussaint, following her

reported abduction by members of the army and men in civilian clothes on 19 June 1994;

- urging that her whereabouts be immediately clarified;
- urging that if she has been detained, her physical security be guaranteed and that she be granted access to a lawyer, a doctor and relatives;
- asking that she be charged with a recognisable criminal offence or else released immediately;
- urging that steps be taken to guarantee the safety of all other members of Janne Toussaint's family.

APPEALS TO

1) Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces:

Monsieur le Général Raoul CEDRAS
 Commandant-en-Chef des Forces armées d'Haiti
 Grand Quartier général des Forces armées d'Haiti
 Rue Geffrard
 Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telegrams: Commandant-en-Chef des Armées d'Haiti Cedras, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telephone: + 509 22 3935

Telexes: 20391 gqfadh

Faxes: + 509 23 9007, + 509 23 9407

Salutation: Monsieur le Général / Dear General

2) Chief of National Police:

Monsieur le Lt.Colonel Michel FRANÇOIS
 Chef de la Police Nationale
 Grand Quartier Général de la Police
 Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telegrams: Chef, Police Nationale, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Salutation: Monsieur le Lt. Colonel / Dear Lt. Colonel

3) Army Chief of Staff:

Monsieur le Brigadier Général
 Philippe BIAMBY
 Chef d'Etat-Major Général
 Grand Quartier Général des Forces Armées d'Haiti
 Rue Geffrard
 Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telegrams: Chef d'Etat-Major Général, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telexes: 20391 gqfadh

Salutation: Monsieur le Brigadier Général / Dear Brigadier General

COPIES TO:

Voice of America: 300-330 Independence Avenue SW, Washington DC 20547, USA

Newspaper: Haiti en Marche, 173 N.W. 94 St, Miami, FL 33150, USA

and 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 10 August 1994.