

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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*Please bring to the attention of the person responsible for work on children/youth in your section.*

UA 219/92

Threats/Intimidation

1 July 1992

HAITI

Staff and children at the orphanage "Lafanmi Selavi"

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Amnesty International is concerned at the continuing intimidation and attacks reported against the orphanage for street boys "Lafanmi Selavi" in Port-au-Prince.

On 13 June at around 4:00am several shots from automatic weapons were reportedly fired in the area near the orphanage. Later, at around 5:00am, a bomb allegedly caused a fire that caused severe material damage to the premises of the "Lafanmi Selavi" orphanage. Fortunately no victims were reported.

On 17 June at about 0:30am several unidentified people were reportedly detected around the building of the orphanage. They were apparently inspecting the orphanage buildings with electric torches. These people left when the alarm system went off but fired several shots in the air before leaving.

On 19 June an anonymous telephone call reportedly warned a worker of the orphanage that "the fire which burnt your premises is only the beginning. It will be worse from now on" ("*Le feu qui a brûlé la maison, ce n'était qu'un début. Cela va être pire maintenant*"). A few days later, on the night of 22 to 23 June, four unidentified men wearing civilian clothes and apparently carrying heavy weapons reportedly went to the garden of the house next to the orphanage. According to information received by Amnesty International these men were also inspecting the orphanage's building with electric torches. They then left the house and, once in the street, fired several shots in the air causing panic among the people inside the orphanage building, and left after throwing a large number of stones at its gates.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The orphanage "Lafanmi Selavi" was founded by deposed president Jean Bertrand Aristide in 1986 and since the *coup d'Etat* of September 1991 has been the target of numerous violent episodes involving the security forces. On 1 October 1991 17-year-old Jacques Séus Jean Gilles was reportedly killed and five other people wounded in an attack carried out by the security forces against the orphanage. On 20 May 1992 the security forces again reportedly carried out a search in the premises and two days later several shots were apparently fired from a passing car against the orphanage.

Troops violently overthrew the democratically elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who took office in Haiti on 7 February 1991, in a coup on the night of 29 to 30 September. Since then Amnesty International has learned of widespread human rights violations committed by the security forces, including a large number of extrajudicial executions, torture and ill-treatment and mass arrests

without warrant. These abuses have been carried out by uniformed security force agents or, on some occasions, by men in civilian clothes ostensibly linked to them.

Children were not spared the violence that followed the coup. They were among the hundreds of victims of extrajudicial execution, arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment.

(See Haiti: The Human Rights Tragedy - Human rights violations since the coup, AI Index: AMR 36/03/92 of January 1992)

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at the latest series of reported attacks, threats and intimidation against the orphanage "Lafanmi Selavi";
- asking for an investigation into these incidents and that those found to be responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that immediate steps be taken to guarantee the safety of staff and children of "Lafanmi Selavi".

**APPEALS TO:**

1. Prime Minister:  
Monsieur Marc BAZIN  
Premier Ministre  
Palais National  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

**Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Minister/  
Dear Prime Minister**

**Telegrams: Premier Ministre BAZIN, Port-au-Prince, Haiti**  
**Faxes: + 509 34 1980**

2. Minister of the Interior and Defence:  
M. le Général Carl Michel NICOLAS  
Ministre de l'Intérieur  
et de la Défense Nationale

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre /  
Dear Minister**

Palais des Ministères  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

**Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interior NICOLAS, Port-au-Prince, Haiti**  
**Telephone: + 509 22 9198, + 509 22 1090**  
**Telexes: 20515 Dptindn**

3. Minister of Justice  
Maître Moïse SENATUS  
Ministre de la Justice  
Ministère de la Justice  
Cité de l'Exposition  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre**

**Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice SENATUS, Port-au-Prince, Haiti**  
**Telephone: +509 45 0474, +509 45 1626**  
**Telexes: 20166 Justice**

4. 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

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

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

5. Anti-gang investigation and research service:

**Salutation: Monsieur le**

Monsieur le Commandant

**Commandant/**

Chef du Service d'investigation  
et de recherches anti-gang

**Dear Commandant**

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telegrams: Commandant Chef du Service d'investigation et de recherches anti-gang,  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Haiti en Marche (Newspaper)

173 N.W. 94 St

Miami

FL 33150, USA

Centre "Lafanmi Selavi"

27bis rue Camille Léon

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

and to diplomatic representatives of Haiti in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your Section Office, if sending appeals after 12 August 1992.