

URGENT ACTION

DEATH THREAT TO HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER IN HAITI

A human rights lawyer in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, has been threatened and intimidated since 15 April, when two men were arrested and beaten. One died in custody. The lawyer is now representing the cases of both men.

Human rights lawyer **Patrice Florvilus**, who is executive director of the NGO Defenders of the Oppressed (Défenseurs des Opprimés – DOP) has, in the last few days, received credible information that his life is in serious danger. This is in relation to his legal representation of the family of **Méris Civil** who was arrested on 15 April, brutally beaten and died in police custody. Patrice Florvilus also represents **Darlin Lexima**, who was arrested alongside Méris Civil and beaten but released without charge.

Patrice Florvilus car was followed by the same police vehicle on 15, 17 and 19 April. On 11 May at 6pm Darlin Lexima was stopped on the street in the municipality of Delmas by two men who identified themselves as police officers. He was warned not to speak publicly about his own beating in April, or the death of Méris Civil. On 7 May, DOP had held a press conference on the killing of Méris Civil. In the last few days Patrice Florvilus has received reliable inside information that his life is now in serious danger.

Méris Civil and Darlin Lexima were arrested in the early hours of 15 April for participating in a demonstration by residents of the displacement camp where they both lived. Please see UA 98/13 for details.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Patrice Florvilus and Darlin Lexima and their families and calling on the authorities to provide effective protection to them according to their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to immediately and independently investigate the accusation of threats and intimidation against them, as well as into the death of Méris Civil in police custody and prosecute those found responsible;
- Reminding the authorities of their duty to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals, as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 03 JULY 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 – keep trying)
Email:
communications@presidentmartelly.ht

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

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:

Ministry of Justice and Public Security
Ministre de la Justice et de la Sécurité
Publique
Jean Renel Sanon
18 avenue Charles Summer
Port-au-Prince, Haïti
Email: 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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

DEATH THREAT TO HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER IN HAITI

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At 2am on 15 April a group of men on motorcycles set fire to seven tents in Acra et Adoquin Delmas 33 displacement camp, in an attempt to set the camp alight. A number of residents went to the local police station at Delmas 33, less than 100 metres from the camp, to ask for police assistance. The police told them, however, that they did not have the resources to respond. Some residents later blocked the street between the police station and the camp, to protest against the arson attack and the police's indifference. According to eyewitnesses, police from Delmas 33 police station arrested two of the protestors and beat one of whom, Méris Civil so brutally that he died of his injuries in police custody. The other arrested man, Darlin Lexima, was released without charge the next afternoon, and told Amnesty International delegates that he had been beaten in police custody. Eyewitnesses, including Darlin Lexima have stated that Méris Civil was already dead before he was taken to hospital later in the morning of 15 April.

Two days before the arson attack, a man claiming to own part of the land where the camp is sited came with a Justice of the Peace and around five police officers. The man told residents of the camp, which is in the Port-au-Prince municipality of Delmas, that they had to leave and he would use "any means necessary" to have them removed.

Défenseurs des Opprimés (Defenders of the Oppressed – DOP) is an NGO which provides legal advice and representation to people who have suffered human rights violations. Since the January 2010 earthquake, DOP has represented people living in displacement camps who are under threat of forced eviction.

The 12 January 2010 earthquake in Haiti left more than 200,000 people dead and some 2.3 million homeless, who had no alternative but to make their own shelters wherever they could. Three years on, an estimated 320,000 people are still living in makeshift camps, nearly a quarter of whom are under threat of forced eviction. Arson attacks on displacement camps is an increasingly common tactic used to force families to vacate the land they are living on. In the early hours of 16 February, Acra 1 camp in the municipality of Pétiion-Ville was destroyed in an arson attack carried out by a group of armed men, forcing several hundred families to flee and leaving them homeless.

Name: Patrice Florvilus, Darlin Lexima, Méris Civil
Gender m/f: all m

UA: 136/13 Index: AMR 36/013/2013 Issue Date: 22 May 2013