

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 29/93 Fear of "disappearance"/Death threats

4 February 1993

HAITI: **Corlson (possibly Colson) DORMÉ, journalist, aged 26**
Michael NORTON, journalist
Daniel MORREL, journalist
Michael TARR, journalist
Dominique LEVANTI, journalist

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of the five journalists named above. Corlson Dormé, a radio correspondent for Radio Tropic FM in Port-au-Prince, has apparently been missing since 1 February 1993 after submitting a radio report covering a pro-government demonstration. The four others, who all work in Port-au-Prince, received death threats during the same demonstration. Michael Norton is a correspondent with Associated Press (AP), Daniel Morrel a photographer for AP, Michael Tarr a correspondent for Reuters and Dominique Levanti a correspondent for Agence France Press (AFP), French News Agency.

According to information received by Amnesty International, on the morning of 1 February all five journalists were at the airport in Port-au-Prince to cover the arrival of a United Nations' (UN) delegation. This delegation had come to Haiti to negotiate a solution to the political crisis there. Also at the airport were crowds, reportedly organized by the government, protesting against the UN delegation's arrival. Some of the demonstrators accosted the five journalists and accused them of being biased in favour of the return of democratically elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide who was ousted in a military coup in September 1991.

Later in the day, the journalists were covering a similar demonstration in front of the hotel where the UN delegation was staying and were reportedly verbally abused by some of the demonstrators, who threatened to kill them. The car in which Michael Norton, Daniel Morrel, Michael Tarr and Dominique Levanti were passengers was stopped and jostled, but they were eventually allowed to leave.

Corlson Dormé, who was also present at the afternoon demonstration in front of the hotel, has reportedly not been seen since. Radio appeals from his wife and parents have apparently been unsuccessful and there is growing concern for his safety. Radio Tropic FM reports that Corlson Dormé did submit his report of the demonstration that afternoon. Amnesty International believes that Corlson Dormé may have been abducted by security forces, or those working with them, while covering the demonstration and is concerned that he may "disappear".

Sources in Port-au-Prince believe that these incidents are intended to intimidate all journalists perceived to be sympathetic to the return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

It is believed that Corlson Dormé may have been singled out because he was the only journalist working for a local news station without international links.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 1991. 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. Several of those detained by the authorities remain "disappeared". These abuses have been carried out by uniformed security force agents or, on some occasions, by men in civilian clothes ostensibly linked to them.

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Amnesty International has documented several cases of human rights violations committed against journalists and broadcasters since the coup of September 1991. They include disappearances, arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment and extrajudicial executions (see Haiti: Human rights violations since the coup, AI Index AMR 36/03/92, January 1992 and Haiti: Human rights held to ransom, AI Index AMR 36/41/ 92, August 1992). Another journalist (although he was not originally reported as being one), Jean Emile Estimable, was allegedly arrested and severely beaten on 22 January 1993 in Pont Joux, 3rd section of Marchand Dessalines (See UA 18/93, AMR 36/03/93, 26 January 1993). He was later released.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in French, English or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the possible abduction of Corlson Dormé on 1 February 1993;
- asking for his whereabouts to be made known and that if detained he be charged with a recognizably criminal offence or else immediately released;
- expressing concern at the reported death threats against Michael Norton, Daniel Morrel, Michael Tarr and Dominique Levanti during pro-government demonstrations on 1 February 1993;
- asking that the death threats be investigated and those found responsible brought to justice;
- asking that all necessary steps be taken to guarantee the physical integrity of these five and other journalists and that they be allowed to carry out their duties without fears for their safety.

APPEALS TO

1) Prime Minister:

Marc BAZIN
Premier Ministre
Palais National
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
**Telegrams: Premier Ministre BAZIN,
Port-au-Prince, Haiti**
Faxes: + 509 34 1980, + 509 23 2121

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

**Telegrams: Comandant-en-Chef des Armees
d'Haiti Cedras, Port-au-
Prince, Haiti**

Telephone: + 509 22 3935

Telexes: 20391 gqfadh

Faxes: + 509 23 9007, + 509 23 9407

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

**Salutation: Monsieur le Général /
Dear General**

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

Monsieur le Général Raoul CEDRAS
Commandant-en-Chef des Forces Armées
d'Haïti
Grand Quartier Général des Forces
Armées d'Haïti
Rue Geffrard

3) 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**

4) Minister of the Interior and Defence:

M. le Général Carl Michel NICOLAS
Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la
Défense Nationale
Palais des Ministères
Port-au-Prince
Haiti

**Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interieur
NICOLAS, Port-au-Prince,
Haiti**

Telephone: + 509 22 9198, + 509 22 1090

Telexes: 20515 Dptindn

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

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Haiti en Marche (News weekly)
173 N.W. 94 St
Miami
FL 33150, USA

Radio Tropic (Radio Station)
6 Lalue
Port-au-Prince
Haiti

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 18 March 1993.