

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for Safety

15 December 1993

HAITI

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the six above named Haitian asylum seekers who were reportedly arrested on 14 December 1993.

According to reports, some 111 Haitian asylum seekers were forcibly returned to Haiti by the United States Coast Guard on that day, after attempting to flee the country by boat. On disembarking at Port-au-Prince the six people listed above were arrested and taken into police custody. Amnesty International understands that some of the remaining refugees have obtained interview dates at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), but the organization has no further details on this point.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since May 1992, when the US government began a policy of forcibly returning all Haitian asylum-seekers, thousands of Haitians have been intercepted by the US Coast Guard and returned to Haiti. The only option presently available to Haitians seeking asylum in the USA is the in-country processing (ICP) system, under which the International Organization for Migration (IOM) handles cases on behalf of the United States authorities. However, they risk drawing attention to themselves by going to the office where applications are processed and may have to wait months for an interview date. In the past Amnesty International has received reports of arrested asylum-seekers being tortured or ill-treated whilst held in detention in Haiti.

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was due to return to power on 30 October 1993, according to the 3 July 1993 agreement signed by him and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Raoul Cédras. However, this did not happen and no other date has been set for his return. General Cédras and Police Chief Michel François are effectively ruling the country. Widespread threats and attacks against President Aristide's supporters continue to afflict the country.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the six asylum-seekers named above;
- asking that they be immediately released or brought promptly before a competent court;
- urging that while held in detention, they be humanely treated and granted access to a lawyer, doctor and relatives.

#### APPEALS TO:

Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces:

Monsieur le Générale 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**

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**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

PACOT  
Rue Wilson 2, No 17  
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 26th January 1994.