

**20 March 2007**

**UA 71/07**      **Fear for safety/Death threats**

**HAITI**            **Robenson Robin'n Casseus (m), aged 36**  
**His family**

Radio journalist Robenson Casseus has been receiving anonymous telephone death threats since 6 March, after he refused to change his broadcasting to favour an opposition political party. He has been attacked and beaten, and his house has burned down in an apparent arson attack. He and his family are in serious danger.

Robenson Casseus is a journalist at Radio Nouvelle Génération (Radio New Generation) in the capital, Port-au-Prince. He is also a member of the Haitian NGO *SOS Journalistes*, which works to protect journalists and promote freedom of expression.

His wife answered the most recent threatening phone call, on the morning of 19 March, from a man who told her the entire family would be killed.

Robenson Casseus's house, where he lived with his wife and six-month-old daughter, was burned down on 8 March. The family had gone to live elsewhere, for their own safety, the previous day. All their possessions were destroyed in the fire, and since then they have been in hiding.

As he was walking home on 24 February at about 8.30pm Robenson Casseus was attacked by a group of six people in hoods, five men and one woman, who took him to an area of waste ground in central Port-au-Prince and beat him with an iron bar and a pistol. They told him that he "would disappear that night". His attackers took his equipment, including a digital camera and a video camera, and identity papers. He managed to escape and sought refuge in a nearby radio station. The next morning, he went to a police station to report the attack and then to hospital. During the attack he had managed to remove the hood of one of his attackers. He was able to identify the man, who is now in police custody but is reportedly to be released on 20 March.

Robenson Casseus believes these attacks and threats are in response to his refusal to make favourable broadcasts on behalf of a candidate of the political party *Rassemblement des Citoyens Patriotiques* (Assembly of Patriotic Citizens, RCP). Before he was attacked, people claiming to be RCP supporters had approached him at least four times to try to coerce him into broadcasting RCP propaganda and criticising rival parties' candidates.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Robenson Casseus was shot eight times in July 2006 when he was kidnapped, something that has been frequent in Haiti since 2005. Two bullets remain lodged in his back, causing him breathing problems. He had been kidnapped at gunpoint by four men as he was walking in central Port-au-Prince. He was blindfolded and taken away, and the kidnappers tried to negotiate a ransom with his family. When his family did not agree to their demands they drove him to the St-Martin district of the capital, threw him out and shot him in the back, head and chest and left him for dead. He spent two-and-a-half months in hospital.

Six Haitian journalists have been murdered since April 2000, and no one has been brought to justice. The last to be murdered was photojournalist Jean-Remy Badio, who was shot dead in the Port-au-Prince neighbourhood of Martissant on 19 January, apparently in relation for his reporting on gang violence in the area. No one has been arrested in connection with his murder.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French or your own language:**

- expressing your concern for the safety of Robenson Casseus, who has been assaulted, and his family, who have received death threats and had their house burned down;
- calling on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into these threats and attacks, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to provide Robenson Casseus and his family with adequate protection and to guarantee their safety.

**APPEALS TO:**

President

Monsieur René Garcia Préval  
Président de la République d'Haïti,  
Palais National, Champ de Mars, Port-au-Prince, HAITI (W.I.)

**Fax: +509 228 2244**

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

Minister of Justice and Public Security

Monsieur René Magloire  
Ministre de la Justice et de la Sécurité Publique, 19 Avenue Charles Sumner, Port-au-Prince, HAITI (W.I.)

**Fax: +509 245 0474**

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

General Director of the Haiti National Police

Mario Andresol  
Directeur Général de la Police Nationale d'Haïti  
Grand Quartier Générale la Police, 12 rue Oscar Pacot, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (W.I.)

**Fax: +509 245 7374**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Directeur Général/Dear Mr. Andresol**

**COPIES TO:**

SOS Journalistes  
76 Route du Canapé Vert (en face de l'hôpital)  
Port-au-Prince  
Haïti  
**Email: sosjournalisteshaiti@hotmail.com**

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 1 May 2007.

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