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Haiti: International day of solidarity with the Haitian people

Numerous Haitian non-governmental organizations will be mobilizing today to draw attention to the Haitian people's struggle for respect of their fundamental human rights. The organizations will be also calling on the international community to support their pledge.

In solidarity, Amnesty International repeats its call for an end to all abuses of human rights in Haiti, and urges the international community to help the country's institutions re-establish a climate in which the human rights of all Haitians can flourish.

"The threats to human rights in Haiti, whether from police who use brutality in repressing demonstrations or from political activists who use violence against their perceived opponents, are the most serious that we have seen since the 1994 return to democratic order," Amnesty International said.

"Moreover, we are extremely worried at the potential for a downward spiral into increasingly widespread and acute political violence that would place fundamental rights even further in jeopardy," The organization stressed.

Recent events indicate that the institutions most responsible for protecting rights, the judiciary and the police force, find it ever more difficult to act with independence and impartiality. Recently Daméus Clamé Ocnam, a junior prosecutor from the Port-au-Prince courts, announced from exile that he had fled Haiti to avoid being forced to issue arrest warrants for opposition leaders.

Similarly, while the Organisation of American States mission to Haiti congratulated the Haitian National Police for effective crowd control during demonstrations over the past weekend, reports from subsequent demonstrations indicate that violence between activists of opposing sides continues to produce victims among ordinary Haitians.

Meanwhile, freedom of expression continues to be undermined: on Wednesday, armed men attacked the installation housing a number of radio antennas outside Port-au-Prince, forcing seven private radio stations, as well as government-affiliated radio and television stations, off the air.

"On this day of international solidarity, Amnesty International appeals to all Haitian and international actors to place concern for the human rights of all Haitians above all else, and work together to find a solution to the current political impasse," Amnesty International concluded.

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