

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Please bring this action to the attention of the person responsible for outreach work in your section (journalist/media groups)

EXTRA 34/92

Death Threats

25 March 1992

HAITI: Guy TELVA, (radio journalist)

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Guy Telva, a journalist for the Voice of America radio after a series of recent death threats against him.

According to the testimony of Guy Telva, armed men in plain clothes, believed to be members of the security forces, went to the district of Delmas in Port-au-Prince, where he lives, at the end of February 1992, and asked neighbours where he lived.

The neighbours refused to say anything and the armed men left. In the week of 9 March, armed men again came to the Delmas district looking for Guy Telva, and again neighbours refused to give them any information. Guy Telva is presently in hiding, unable to return to his home.

He also reported that since December 1991, he has been receiving telephone calls saying that if he does not stop broadcasting he will be "crushed". Guy Telva is a reporter for the Voice of America, a radio station which transmits in Créole from the United States, and is one of the few local journalists still reporting on the current situation in Haiti since the coup in September 1991. He believes the threats may be linked to the reports he is attempting to file outside the country regarding the lack of press freedom and cases of human rights violations in Haiti. These include the case of Jean-Mario Paul, a journalist with Radio Antilles International, in Petit-Goâve, who was arrested in Port-au-Prince on 9 November 1991, and reportedly very badly beaten (see UA 393/91, AMR 36/26/91, 19 November 1991 and follow-up AMR 36/08/92, 17 February 1992). In early March 1992, Guy Telva together with a foreign journalist attempted to visit Jean-Mario Paul, who is reported to be seriously ill in prison in Petit-Goâve, and was refused admission by the sergeant in charge, who reportedly verbally abused him.

The threats against Guy Telva occurred shortly after his involvement in publicizing the case of Jean-Claude Museau, a teacher who died under torture in armed forces' custody. Jean-Claude Museau, who was arrested on 30 December 1991 and accused of sticking up posters of President Aristide, died in hospital on 8 January 1992, two days after he was released, reportedly as a result of beatings he received in custody. (See Haiti: The Human Rights Tragedy - Human rights violations since the coup, AI Index: AMR 36/03/92).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In a coup on the night of 29 to 30 September, troops overthrew the democratically elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had taken office in Haiti on 7 February 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.

These abuses have been carried out by uniformed agents of the security forces, or on some occasions, by men in civilian clothes believed to be associated with them.

Since the beginning of the coup in Haiti in September 1990, the news media have been persistently attacked by the security forces. Despite public assurances that freedom of expression would be guaranteed, Amnesty International has learned of numerous incidents of journalists and others working in the Haitian news media being singled out as targets for human rights violations, including extrajudicial execution, arbitrary arrest and ill-treatment. (See Haiti: The Human Rights Tragedy - Human rights violations since the coup)

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes: - Please note that all mail to Haiti appears to have been temporarily suspended. Please do not send any letters. Electricity supplies are also limited so if you do not succeed in sending your fax or telex, do please keep trying.

- expressing concern at the threats made against radio journalist Guy Telva;
- asking that the threats against him be immediately and impartially investigated and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- asking that urgent measures be taken to guarantee the safety of Guy Telva.

APPEALS TO

1) President:
Son Excellence
Maître Joseph C. NERETTE
Président de la République d'Haïti
Palais National
Port-au-Prince, Haïti
Telegrams: President Nerette, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Telexes: 20068 palais or
20551 specexec
Faxes: + 509 23 2121
Salutation: Monsieur le Président /
Dear President

2) Prime Minister:
Maître Jean-Jacques HONORAT
Premier Ministre
Présidence de la République d'Haïti
Palais National
Port-au-Prince, Haïti
Telegrams: Premier Ministre Honorat,
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Faxes: + 509 22 1147
Salutation: Monsieur le Premier
Ministre /
Dear Prime Minister

3) 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
Port-au-Prince, Haïti
Telegrams: Comandant-en-Chef des
Forces Armees Cedras,
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Telexes: 20391 GQFADH
Faxes: + 509 23 9007, + 509 23 9407
Salutation: Monsieur le Général /
Dear General

4) Minister of Justice:
Monsieur Antoine LECONTE
Ministère de la Justice
Cité de l'Exposition
Port-au-Prince, Haïti
Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice
Leconte, Port-au-Prince,
Haiti
Telexes: 20166 Justice
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre /
Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Newspaper:
Haiti-en-Marche

173 N.W. 94 St
Miami

FL 33150, USA

Voice of America
300 Independence Avenue SW
Washington DC 20547
USA

and to diplomatic representatives of Haiti in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 May 1992.