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## **Haiti: Amnesty International condemns attacks**

*Amnesty International today expressed concern about the armed attack on the National Palace in Port-au-Prince in the early hours of yesterday morning which left at least five people, including two civilian bystanders, dead. The organization also condemned a series of reprisal attacks by government supporters on opposition parties and journalists.*

*During the attack on the National Palace, two police officers were apparently killed and several others wounded. At least one of the assailants was killed, and several others were said to have been arrested, while police spokespeople said that many more had escaped.*

*Despite President Jean Bertrand Aristide's public calls yesterday afternoon for peaceful popular mobilization, the attack was followed by numerous acts of targeted violence at the hands of armed government supporters.*

*These included the killing of two members of the opposition MOCHRENA party in Gonaives, and the burning down of the headquarters of Convergence Démocratique, the main opposition umbrella group, and KONAKOM, another opposition party, in Port-au-Prince. Crowds also burned the private residences of opposition figures in Port au Prince, in Cap Haitien and elsewhere in the country. Opposition members and their families reportedly went into hiding. According to various sources, police either were not present or did not intervene during these activities.*

Many reporters and radio stations were also targeted yesterday. Several, including a Métropole correspondent in Gonaives, were attacked in the street by pro-government crowds. Radio stations Signal FM and Caraibes FM were surrounded and threatened by crowds, and the latter had windows broken and vehicles damaged on their premises. Other stations such as Métropole, Vision 2000 and Kiskeya curtailed coverage after receiving telephone threats.

"The government of Haiti has an obligation to protect all of its citizens, and must act decisively to end reprisal attacks," Amnesty International said, urging President Aristide to continue calling on his supporters to exercise restraint and for the security forces to act within the rule of law and respect human rights in their efforts to restore public order.

"The Haitian National Police, the judiciary and all other authorities must act on the President's message by fully investigating all acts of violence, in the National Palace and elsewhere, and by making every effort to bring those responsible to justice," the organization added.

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