

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 400/93 "Disappearance"

12 November 1993

HAITI Elie ZEPHIR, ex-soldier, aged 29

Amnesty International is extremely concerned about the "disappearance" of Elie Zephir, following his reported abduction by *attachés* on 3 November 1993.

According to reports, several *attachés*, believed to be members of the *Front Révolutionnaire pour l'Avancement et le Progrès Haitien* (FRAPH), Revolutionary Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, (a group which is the political mouthpiece of the *attachés*), came to Elie Zephir's home in Port-au-Prince. They reportedly broke down the front door and took him away, in the presence of his mother and sickly father. A neighbour also claimed to have seen Elie Zephir being led away with his hands tied.

When Elie Zephir's mother and brother-in-law went to the *Service d'investigation et de recherches anti-gang*, Anti-gang investigation and research service, and the police station, they were told that Elie Zephir was not there. One officer agreed to make enquiries, but when they later returned to the police station, he told them that their relative "no longer existed". Sources within the military apparently told the family that Elie Zephir had been severely beaten and tortured and that he had been accused of being a *Lavalassien*, a supporter of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The family also heard that Elie Zephir was in a coma at the General Hospital, but his sister was unable to find him either there or at the morgue.

Prior to Elie's abduction, soldiers and *attachés* were reportedly arresting suspected supporters of President Aristide in Port-au-Prince and telling them that they would be "protected" if they joined FRAPH. Those who agreed were apparently immediately arrested while those who refused were later arrested in the middle of the night.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Elie Zephir served in the Haitian army from 1982 to 1988, during which time he was reportedly imprisoned several times for brief periods, accused of supporting democracy. Prior to the 1990 elections which brought President Aristide to power, Elie Zephir served as President of a voter registration bureau, part of the Provisional Electoral Council which organized the election. After the election he and other Aristide supporters apparently met with Aristide at the National Palace, where the latter gave Elie a letter of recommendation to obtain work at the Department of Defence and Interior, which he did. After the coup in September 1991 which ousted President Aristide, Elie Zephir went into hiding for a period of time.

President 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 there has been no indication of any other date being set for his return. General Cédras and Police Chief Michel François are effectively ruling the country. As the date when President Aristide was to have returned drew nearer there was a marked upsurge in human rights violations, including the killings of Aristide supporter Antoine Izméry and Justice Minister Guy Malary. President Aristide's supporters continue to suffer widespread threats and attacks.

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

- expressing concern at the reported abduction on 3 November of Elie Zephir by *attachés*;
- urging that his whereabouts be immediately clarified and that if held in detention, his physical security be guaranteed and that he be promptly brought before a competent court or else released;
- asking that if detained, he is granted access to a lawyer, a doctor and relatives;
- urging that a prompt and impartial investigation into the circumstances of his apparent "disappearance" be carried out, that the findings be made public and that those found responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

1) 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

2) 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

3) Anti-gang investigation and research service:

Monsieur le Capitaine Joanis JACKSON
 Chef du Service d'investigation
 et de recherches anti-gang
 Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telegrams: Chef du Service d'investigation et de recherches anti-gang, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Salutation: Monsieur le Capitaine / Dear Captain

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Newspaper (weekly):

Haiti en Marche

173 N.W. 94 St
Miami , FL33150, USA

Human Rights Organization:

Commission de l'Organisation des Droits Humains et Syndicaux (CODDHUS)
Route de Delmas et Delmas 11
No. 121 bis, 2ème étage
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 24 December 1993.