

PUBLIC

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Death threats/Harassment

20 April 2004

HAITI

**Marie Nadia Charles (f), Executive Director**  
**Renan Hédouville (m), Secretary-General**  
**Morisseau Jean Rony (m), Lawyer**  
**Other members of the *Comité des Avocats pour le Respect des Libertés Individuelles*, Committee of Lawyers for Individual Respect and Liberties, (CARLI)**  
**Carline Séide (f)**

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of those named above following death threats and acts of intimidation against them. Members of the Committee of Lawyers for Individual Respect and Liberties, *Comité des Avocats pour le Respect des Libertés Individuelles* (CARLI) are particularly being targeted in an attempt to hinder their human rights work.

CARLI has taken up the case of a young woman called Carline Séide, who was gang raped by seven men in November 2003. One of the alleged attackers was a policeman who was later arrested together with another man. Both, however, escaped from prison during a jailbreak on 29 February 2004 and since then, men claiming to be sent by the policeman have gone to Carline Séide's home on several occasions and threatened both her and members of CARLI. Carline Séide has been warned that she will be made to pay for implicating the policeman and is currently in hiding.

Members of CARLI have also been threatened directly. At about 10.00 am, on 24 March, a substitute judge (*juge suppléant*) at the Peace Tribunal (*tribunal de paix*) in Delmas, Port-au-Prince arrived at CARLI's offices, accompanied by several men. He reportedly threatened to kill the CARLI staff who were there at the time, in particular Marie Nadia Charles the Executive Director, and lawyer Morisseau Jean Rony.

According to CARLI, the Judge's threat stems from the fact he was named on a monthly list of human rights violators, published in February 2004. The list is based on information gathered from a Hot Line number which those who have experienced human rights abuses are encouraged to call.

CARLI had included the Judge on the list, for his alleged responsibility in the arbitrary arrests of five people, including human rights defender Kettelie Julien on 6 February 2004.

An Amnesty International delegation, which visited Haiti between 25 March and 8 April 2004, was told by members of CARLI that they were receiving threatening phone calls on almost a daily basis and that their Secretary-General, Renan Hédouville, was specifically being mentioned.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since the departure of President Aristide at the end of February, Haiti has continued to be gripped by a serious civil conflict, with a lack of rule of law and little respect for human rights. The interim government has swiftly moved to arrest high-ranking members of former President Aristide's Lavalas Family party and Government suspected of acts of political violence or corruption. However, it has failed to act against a number of known perpetrators of grave human rights violations, some of whom have been the leaders of the uprising that led to President Aristide demise.

Amnesty International continues to be deeply concerned for the security of the civilian population. Despite the presence of the US-led Multinational Interim Force (MIF), a large number of armed groups continue to be active throughout the country, including both former "rebel" forces, groups or persons associated with them and militias loyal to former President Aristide. Many of these groups currently control territory and are acting as "*de facto*" authorities in the areas they control. There have been increasing reports of abuses being committed by them.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of members of the Committee of Lawyers for Individual Respect and Liberties, *Comité des Avocats pour le Respect des Libertés Individuelles* (CARLI) and Carline Séide;
- urging the authorities to fully investigate the rape of Carline Séide, the threats received by her and the members of CARLI, ensuring that those responsible are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to publicly declare their recognition of the important role of human rights defenders and to remind all Haitians that efforts to curb or hinder their work will not be tolerated;
- expressing grave concern that it is increasingly difficult for CARLI to carry out its legitimate work on behalf of victims of human rights violations due to threats and harassment;
- urging the Haitian government to adhere to its obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, as laid out in the UN Declarations of Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution of the Organisation of American States (OAS).

**APPEALS TO: Please note that if you have difficulties in sending faxes, please send by airmail.**

Director General of the Haitian National Police

M. Léon Charles

Directeur Général de la Police Nationale d'Haiti,

Grand Quartier Général de la Police

12 rue Oscar Pacot

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

**Telegram: Directeur Général de la Police Nationale d'Haïti, Port-au-Prince, Haïti**

**Fax: +509 245 7374 (if someone answers, say "La ligne de fax s'il vous plaît")**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Directeur**

Minister of Justice and Public Security

Monsieur Bernard Gousse

Ministre de la Justice et de la Sécurité Publique

Ministère de la Justice

19 Avenue Charles Sumner

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

**Telegram: Ministre de la Justice et de la Sécurité Publique, Port-au-Prince, Haïti**

**Fax: +509 245 0474 (if someone answers, say "La ligne de fax s'il vous plaît")**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre**

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 June 2004.