

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 36/36/91  
Distrib: PG/SC

Date: 20 December 1991

*MEDICAL CONCERN*

@Paul LAROCHE  
HAITI

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for Paul Laroche, a 33-year-old teacher of literacy who required abdominal surgery as a result of beatings while in police custody and who is now reported to be in a very poor state without access to medical attention.

Paul Laroche was arrested by soldiers on the evening of 15 October 1991 in Port-au-Prince and taken to the *Service d'Investigation et de recherches Anti-Gang*. He is reported to have been severely beaten and tortured and on 17 October was taken to the *Hôpital de l'Université d'Etat d'Haïti*. On admission to hospital he is reported to have been bleeding from the right ear and had sub-conjunctival haemorrhages in both eyes. The right side of his face and both buttocks were swollen from beatings and his abdomen was distended due to two intestinal perforations sustained during torture. He underwent surgery at the hospital on the morning of 17 October. Some hours after his surgery soldiers arrived at the hospital and chained him to his bed; they returned to the hospital periodically.

Paul Laroche remained in the State University hospital for 5 weeks and was then transferred to the infirmary of the *Pénitencier National* (National Penitentiary) in Port-au-Prince. Here he was visited recently by a doctor who was part of a delegation from an international human rights body. This doctor was able to examine Paul Laroche and reported that he was in a very poor state and required attention. Because of the beatings he is now deaf in the right ear and has lost some visual capacity in the right eye. He is said to be unable to walk unsupported and has not regained the weight lost after his intestinal resection. He is reported to have constant fevers and there is a fear that this may be related to infection at the site of the operation.

Despite this, he has apparently not been seen by a doctor since his transfer from the State University Hospital; he is reported to be held in the prison infirmary of the *Pénitencier National* handcuffed to his bed and without medical attention.

At present he is held without charge and his lawyer has made several attempts to have him brought before a judge. According to the latest information available to Amnesty International, he was called before a judge on 27 November but did not appear. The army have reportedly stated that the reason for this was that no transport was available to take him to court.

Amnesty International believes that Paul Laroche should be urgently re-admitted to hospital and is calling on the Haitian authorities to provide an urgent undertaking that he will be provided with proper medical care while he remains in detention.

### **Background information**

On 30 September 1991, the democratically-elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown in a military coup. Since the coup, Amnesty International has learned of widespread human rights violations committed by the security forces, including hundreds of extrajudicial executions, beatings and mass arrests without warrant. Many of the victims have been supporters of President Aristide or members of grassroots organizations. (Paul Laroche was a member of the *Association des moniteurs et participants pour l'alphabétisation*, a literacy program in which he was involved as a teacher.) Those arrested have even included children.

Conditions for those held in the *Pénitencier national* are reported to be extremely harsh. Many detainees are reported to be in a poor state as a result of inadequate hygiene and nutrition and a lack of any proper medical care.

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To: Medical professionals  
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Americas  
Date: 20 December 1991

*MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION*

**Paul LAROCHE  
HAITI**

**Keywords**

Theme: torture/lack of medical care

**Summary**

Paul Laroche, a 33-year-old literacy teacher, was severely beaten and tortured following his detention on 15 October and required surgery for intestinal perforations sustained as a result of beatings. He has also suffered some hearing and visual loss and is at present held in detention without access to medical care. There is concern that he is in urgent need of medical attention.

**Recommended Actions**

Appeals are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below. (Please organize some telegrams, telexes or faxes)

- expressing concern for Paul Laroche who underwent intestinal resection as a result of injuries sustained during his ill-treatment at the Service d'Investigation et de recherches Anti-Gang between 15 and 17 October 1991
- noting with concern that following his transfer from hospital to the infirmary of the Pénitentier National he is said to have been without medical attention and is now reported to be suffering from fevers which may be indicative of infection at the site of his operation
- urging that he be immediately transferred to hospital for further investigation
- urging that those responsible for his ill-treatment are brought to justice and urging that Paul Laroche is immediately released from detention if there is no indication that he has committed any criminal offence

**Addresses**

Maître Jean-Jacques HONORAT  
 Premier Ministre, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères  
 Présidence de la République de Haïti  
 Palais National  
 Port-au-Prince  
 Haïti  
 (Prime Minister)

**Telegrams: Premier Ministre Honorat, Port-au-Prince, Haïti**

**Faxes: + 509 22 1147**

Monsieur le Général  
 Raoul CEDRAS  
 Commandant-en-Chef des Forces Armées d'Haïti  
 Rue Geffrard  
 Port-au-Prince  
 Haïti  
 (Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces)

**Telegrams: Commandant-en-Chef des Forces Armées Cedras, Port-au-Prince, Haïti**

**Telephone: +509 22-3935**

**Telexes: 20391 gqfadh**

**Faxes: +509 23-9007**

Monsieur Greger JEAN-LOUIS  
 Ministre de la Santé publique et de la Population  
 Ministère de la Santé publique et de la Population  
 Palais des Ministères  
 Port-au-Prince  
 Haïti

**Telegrams: Ministre de la Santé publique Jean-Louis, Port-au-Prince, Haïti**

**Telephone: +509 22-1248 or 22-1755**

**Telexes: 20321**

**COPIES TO:**

Monsieur le Président  
 Chambre des Députés  
 Assemblée Nationale  
 Port-au-Prince  
 Haïti  
 (President of the Chamber of Deputies)

Maître Eudrice RAYMOND  
 Président du Sénat  
 Assemblée Nationale  
 Port-au-Prince  
 Haïti  
 (President of the Senate)

