

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Threats/Intimidation

29 September 1992

HAITI:

Monsignor Willy ROMULUS, bishop of Jérémie
Father Alfred DORESEANT, religious official

Amnesty International is concerned at reports of recent death threats and other instances of intimidation by members of the security forces against Mgr. Willy Romulus, bishop of Jérémie, in the Grande-Anse department.

On 24 September 1992 at about 1am, an armed forces sergeant and at least seven other heavily armed men wearing civilian clothes reportedly went to the presbytery of Nôtre Dame de la Merci church in the Irois parish, where Mgr. Romulus was staying that night, shouting and pounding at the door. When other clergymen answered the door, the armed men reportedly demanded to see the bishop and said: "*Nous voulons l'avoir et nous l'aurons. C'est fini.*"

(We want to get him and we will. This is the end). The priests apparently tried without success to calm the men down. An armed soldier, who was apparently passing by, reportedly intervened in defence of the priests and managed to thwart their assault. The sergeant and the armed men subsequently left but reportedly swore to come back.

On 23 September 1992 Father Alfred Doreseant, another priest from Jérémie, was reportedly beaten by members of the armed forces in front of the same church. The men accused him of carrying leaflets in support of ousted president Jean Bertrand Aristide.

Mgr. Willy Romulus has reported being the subject of intimidation for some time. On 19 December 1991 his name appeared on a death list of over one hundred names which was broadcasted by a clandestine Haitian radio station controlled by the disbanded Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale (VSN), National Security Volunteers, known as the "tonton macoute". During the broadcast the speaker called for the assassination of all those on the list (see UA 455/91, AMR 36/38/91, 19 December 1991). While returning from a trip abroad, on 20 September 1992, he was briefly detained at a military roadblock on the outskirts of Jérémie, where he was verbally insulted by members of the security forces who were on duty and all his baggage searched. A similar incident occurred on 22 September 1992 at the same roadblock. On 23 September 1992, he was harassed at another roadblock near Anse d'Hainault, in the Grand-Anse department, apparently by the same sergeant who came to the presbytery on the morning of 24 September 1992.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Priests in Haiti have been at the forefront of documenting human rights abuses over the years and members of the Catholic clergy, particularly those involved in popular organizations, have been among those hit by the repression that followed the September 1991 coup. At least 16 priests and three nuns have been detained for short periods of time, while many more have been subjected to threats and harassment by the security forces.

Several priests have told an Amnesty International delegation visiting Haiti that they were under heavy surveillance and that church meetings have been forbidden by the authorities. Others reported receiving death threats.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters either in french or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the reported death threats and other instances of intimidation against Mgr. Willy Romulus;
- expressing concern at the reported beating of Father Alfred Doreseant;
- asking that these incidents be investigated and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take all necessary steps to guarantee the safety of Mgr. Willy Romulus and Father Alfred Doreseant.

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APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister:

Marc BAZIN

Premier Ministre

Palais National

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telegrams: Premier Ministre BAZIN, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Faxes: + 509 34 1980, + 509 23 2121

Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Minister / Dear Prime Minister

Minister of the Interior and Defence:

M. le Général Carl Michel NICOLAS

Ministre de l'Intérieur

et de la Défense Nationale

Palais des Ministères

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interieur NICOLAS, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telephone: + 509 22 9198, + 509 22 1090

Telexes: 20515 Dptindn

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

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, Haiti

Telegrams: Comandant-en-Chef des Armees d'Haiti Cedras, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telephone: + 509 22 3935

Telexes: 20391 qqfadh

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Salutation: Monsieur le Général / Dear General

Commander of the Grande-Anse Military Department

Monsieur le Lieutenant-Colonel

Bélonny GROSHOMME

Commandant du Département militaire

de la Grande-Anse

Casernes FAD'H de Jérémie

Jérémie, Département de la Grande-Anse

Haiti

Telegrams: Commandant du Département militaire de la Grand-Anse Groshomme, Département de la Grande-Anse, Haiti

Salutation: Monsieur le Lieutenant-Colonel/ Dear Commander

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Haïti en Marche (News weekly),
173 N.W. 94 St,
Miami, FL 33150, USA

Son Eminence,
Monseigneur Willy ROMULUS,
Evêque de Jérémie,
Evêché de Jérémie,
Brouette, Jérémie,
Département de la Grande-Anse, Haiti

Conférence Episcopale d'Haïti
Angle rues Pignant et Lamarre
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 10 November 1992.