

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 36/002/2008

11 January 2008

UA 10/08 Fear for safety/ death threats

HAITI **Frantzco Joseph (m), aged 24, president of Grand Ravine Community Council for Human Rights, (Conseil Communautaire de Droits Humains de Grand Ravine – CCDH-GR)**  
**His wife and children**  
Yveson Piton (m), aged 25, supporter of the CCDH-GR and employee at the Grand Ravine secondary school  
His wife and daughter

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Frantzco Joseph, president of the Grand Ravine Community Council for Human Rights (*Conseil Communautaire de Droits Humains de Grand Ravine – CCDH-GR*), has been threatened and intimidated by armed individuals. Yveson Piton, supporter of the Grand Ravine Community Council for Human Rights has also been intimidated. Their lives may be in danger.

On 22 December 2007, Frantzco Joseph was threatened by armed members of a gang operating in Grand Ravine, in the south of the capital Port-au-Prince. Frantzco Joseph says that he received threatening phone calls from the gang leader, who told Frantzco that "it is now an open war" between them. Frantzco Joseph told Amnesty International that prior to the threatening phone calls, his cousin was beaten by the gang members to send Frantzco Joseph a warning. Frantzco Joseph and his family have left the area in fear for their safety.

This follows the refusal of Frantzco Joseph, who is also the local representative of the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (*Commission nationale sur le désarmement, le démantèlement et la réintégration*, CNDDR), other members of the CCDH-GR and the community to turn a blind eye to the crimes allegedly committed by the members of the armed gang. Members of the gang were temporarily barred from Grand Ravine. Earlier on, testimony from the CCDH-GR led to the arrest of four members of the same gang for their alleged implication in the rape of women and girls in Grand Ravine and the extortion of money from local people. One of the alleged perpetrators has since been released by the authorities. Witnesses reported that on 5 January, the gang leader returned to the community and went to Frantzco Joseph's house looking for him, but he had already moved to a safe location.

Yveson Piton, a supporter of the CCDH-GR, has also been threatened and intimidated by armed members of the same gang. On 21 December, around 4am, he was attacked in his house by armed men. He managed to escape his attackers but his wife was beaten by the gang members. On 22 December, he received death threats by phone, when the caller said that Yveson Piton and Frantzco Joseph "would not see the day of 24 December". He fled the area with his wife and his daughter. He has been forced to stay away from his job at Grand Ravine's secondary school as a result of the threats.

Frantzco Joseph has been the president of the CCDH-GR since September 2006, when Bruner Esterne, the previous CCDH-GR president, was killed by members of an armed gang (see UA 259/06 AMR 36/013/2006, 28 September 2006).

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Grand Ravine Community Council for Human Rights was created in August 2006 on the initiative of the Association of University Graduates Motivated for a Haiti with Rights (*Association des Universitaires Motivés pour un Haïti de Droit - AUMOHD*). The CCDH-GR was set up with the help of survivors and families of victims of the 20 August 2005 killings that took place during a football match in the neighbouring community

of Martissant. AUMOHD has been leading different initiatives on conflict resolution and disarmament with the involvement of the local population and grassroots organizations.

Bruner Esterne, the former coordinator of the CCDH-GR and eyewitness to these killings, was shot dead by three unknown individuals on 21 September 2006. His killers have yet to be brought to justice.

The National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration was established by the government in September 2006. The commission is mandated to ensure the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the various armed gangs operating across the country.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Frantzco Joseph, Yveson Piton, their families and other members of the Grand Ravine Community Council for Human Rights;
- urging the authorities to provide Frantzco Joseph, Yveson Piton, their families and other members of the Grand Ravine Community Council for Human Rights with adequate protection and to guarantee their safety according to their wishes;
- calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the threats received by Frantzco Joseph, and the intimidation of Yveson Piton, to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

**APPEALS TO:**

President

Monsieur René García Préval

Président de la République d'Haïti, Palais National, Champ de Mars, Port-au-Prince, HAITI (W.I.)

**Fax: +509 228 2772**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Président/Dear President Préval**

Minister of Justice and Public Security

Monsieur René Magloire

Ministre de la Justice et de la Sécurité Publique, 19 Avenue Charles Sumner, Port-au-Prince, HAITI (W.I.)

**Fax: +509 245 0474 (please keep trying and ask for the fax line "la ligne de fax s'il-vous-plaît")**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/Dear Minister**

General Director of the Haiti National Police

Mario Andresol

Directeur Général de la Police Nationale d'Haïti

Grand Quartier Général de la Police, 12 rue Oscar Pacot, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (W.I.)

**Fax: +509 245 7374**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Directeur Général/Dear Mr Andresol**

Head of Human Rights Section- MINUSTAH & Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Thierry Fagart

Human Rights Section, MINUSTAH, 385, Ave. John Brown, Bourdon, B.P. 557, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (W.I.)

**Fax: +509 244 9366/ 9367**

**COPIES TO:**

Human rights organization

AUMOHD, Association des Universitaires Motivés pour un Haïti de Droit

(Association of University Graduates Motivated for a Haiti with Rights)

c/o Frantzco Joseph and CCDH-GR, 4, Delmas 47, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (W.I.)

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 22 February 2008.