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Haiti: The Raboteau trial - a chance to strike back against impunity

The trial of those who stand accused of involvement in the Raboteau massacre could mark a pivotal moment in the struggle against impunity in Haiti, Amnesty International said today.

"This trial is a crucial step towards addressing human rights violations committed under the military dictatorship" the organization continued. "The Haitian authorities should make full use of this opportunity."

Amnesty International urges the Haitian government to ensure that the Raboteau trial adheres to international standards of effective remedy for victims of human rights violations and fair trial by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal.

The organization recognizes and commends efforts made by the Haitian government over the past few years to bring those responsible for the massacre to trial. The Raboteau trial is taking place in the wake of the Carrefour-Feuilles trial, at which police officers were tried and convicted for human rights violations for the first time since the foundation of the Haitian National Police five years ago.

Background

Raboteau is a heavily-populated shanty town along the coast at Gonaïves, a city in the Artibonite department. Throughout the period of the de facto military government, it was particularly targeted for repression by the army and paramilitary because of its activist past and the strong support of its inhabitants for ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. As a result of a joint military and paramilitary operation in

April 1994, an estimated 20 people lost their lives on 24 April 1994 after they were surrounded and attacked. Homes were sacked and burned and men, women and children beaten.

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