

URGENT ACTION

ANTI-LGBTI MARCH THREATENS MORE VIOLENCE

After a march on 19 July against homosexuality gathered thousands of people in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, religious groups are now calling for a second march in Jacmel, in the south-east of the country on Sunday 28 July.

Thousands of people demonstrated against homosexuality and same-sex marriage in Haiti in the capital, Port-au-Prince, on 19 July, following a public call on 26 June from the Haitian Coalition of Religious and Moral Organizations (Coalition haïtienne des organisations religieuses et morales).

Activists of the Haitian NGO *Kouraj* "working for the rights of LGBTI people" in the country have told Amnesty International that since 19 July they have received reports that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (LGBTI), or people perceived as LGBTI, were harassed and attacked during and after the march. They were told of a house in central Port-au-Prince which was looted and the residents, believed to be gay men, forced to flee. According to Kouraj activists, since Friday's march many LGBTI Haitians living in Port-au-Prince have left the city for the countryside in fear for their safety.

National and international media reported that demonstrators on the 19 July march killed two men who were gay, or perceived to be gay, in central Port-au-Prince. However, representatives of the Haitian police denied these deaths, and claimed they had protected two men perceived to be gay and who had been attacked by demonstrators. The Haitian government in a public statement on 21 July firmly condemned the violence which took place during the march and called on the police to investigate the allegations of violence. Ahead of the new march called for Sunday 28 July in Jacmel, LGBTI Haitians, or those perceived to be LGBTI, are still at risk of violence. Members of the LGBTI community in Haiti fear for their safety.

Please write immediately in Haitian Creole, French or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations of homophobic violence during the march on 19 July, including the reports of killing of two people, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Welcoming the government's public stance, and reminding them that although everyone has the right to free speech and freedom to demonstrate, these rights must be exercised peacefully;
- Urging the authorities to take immediate steps to fully provide appropriate protection for LGBTI people, or those who might be perceived as LGBTI, around the march planned for 28 July in Jacmel;
- Reminding them that human rights defenders have a right to carry out their activities without any unfair restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 JULY 2013 TO:

General Director of the Haitian Police

Godson Orélus
 Directeur Général de la PNH
 Police Nationale d'Haïti
 Port-au-Prince, Haïti
 Email: godore68@hotmail.com

Salutation: Monsieur le directeur/

Dear Director

Minister of Justice and Public security

Jean Renel Sanon
 Ministre de la Justice et de la Sécurité
 publique
 18, avenue Charles Sumner
 Port-au-Prince, Haïti
 Email: secretariat.mjsp@yahoo.com

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

And copies to:

NGO
 Kouraj:
 info@kouraj.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 186/13. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR36/014/2013/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kouraj (Haitian creole for “courage”) formed in 2009 as *Amis-Amis* (“Friends-Friends”) and became *Kouraj* in December 2011. They are activists “working for the promotion of the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people” in Haiti (known in Haitian Creole as persons M for *Masisi*, *Madivin*, *Makomer* or *Mix*) and aim to raise public awareness of the situation of discrimination and stigma towards their community. Activists of *Kouraj* told Amnesty International how the situation of LGBTI people has worsened since the 12 January 2010 earthquake, especially with the substantial arrival of religious groups from North America, many of whom have accused homosexuality in Haiti of being one of the reasons for the earthquake and the source of the country’s problems.

Following the 2010 earthquake, 2.3 million Haitians were left homeless with no alternative but to make their own shelters wherever they could. According to *Kouraj* LGBTI people or those perceived as being LGBTI were often victims of discrimination in the displacement camps and many had to flee for even more precarious living conditions.

Following the call on 26 June for the march of 19 July, *Kouraj* activists have been receiving threats via phone, Facebook, and at their office in Port-au-Prince. They decided to close it because of the threats. Charlot Jeudy, president of *Kouraj*, has been targeted in some of the threats. One of the leaflets left at *Kouraj*’s premises stated “If Charlot doesn’t shut his mouth, we’ll shut it for him” (“*si Charlot ne ferme pas sa gueule, on va lui fermer*” [sic]).

Demonstrators led by religious leaders protested on 19 July against the adoption of any legislation authorizing same-sex marriage in Haiti, although there is no such project in the country. During the march the correspondent of Radio France Internationale (RFI) reported having been verbally assaulted by demonstrators while covering the event.

Name: Charlot Jeudy (m) and activists of *Kouraj*
Gender m/f: boh

Further information on UA: 186/13 Index: AMR 36/015/2013 Issue Date: 26 July 2013

