

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal Concern/Fear of Torture

22 October 1991

HAITI:

Lutèce MARIUS plus 10 others

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Amnesty International is concerned at the arrest without warrant of Lutèce Marius, and approximately 10 other peasants in Bocozele, Artibonite department at 5am on 21 October 1991 by members of the armed forces. All were reportedly taken to St. Marc Prison and there is concern that they may be tortured while in custody.

Lutèce Marius and the others arrested are all members of the Groupe de défense des Planteurs de l'Artibonite (Planters' Defence Group of Artibonite), a peasant land reform pressure group. They are also supporters of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide who was ousted in a military coup in Haiti in September 1991. According to several peasants who managed to flee the area and avoid arrest, soldiers entered the house of Lutèce Marius and the homes of the 10 others and took them away without a warrant. Approximately two weeks ago Lutèce Marius was detained and subsequently released. Other peasant groups as well as grassroots organizations who were supporters of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide have reportedly been the object of harassment over the past few weeks.

The offices of the Mouvement Paysan de Papaye (MPP), Papaye Peasant Movement were in the past few days attacked and ransacked by soldiers. The MPP has been a long-term target of human rights violations by the armed forces under previous military regimes in Haiti.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Troops overthrew the democratically elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who took office in Haiti on 7 February 1991, in a coup d'Etat on Monday 30 September. Since then Amnesty International has learned of widespread human rights violations committed by the security forces, including a large number of extrajudicial executions, beatings and mass arrests without warrant. According to information received by Amnesty International, members of the armed forces have deliberately shot large numbers of civilians in different sectors of Port-au-Prince, resulting in hundreds of dead and wounded. Many of the victims included supporters of President Aristide who were demonstrating against the coup d'Etat.

Reports of extrajudicial executions include the killing on Monday 30 September of Radio Caraïbe Director, Jacques Caraïbe after a group of soldiers arrived at his home, severely beat him in the presence of his family, and took him away to an unknown destination. His dead body was later found. (see Haiti: Human Rights Violations in the Aftermath of the Coup d'Etat, October 1991, AI Index: AMR 36/09/91). Amnesty International also learned of the arrest of Senatus and Fritzner Nosther, both supporters of President Aristide, who were arrested and taken to the Thiotte military barracks in Jacmel, south-east department. There were reports that both men were being tortured (See UA 342/91, AI Index: AMR 36/14/91 of 16 October 1991).

Joseph Nerette, a supreme court judge, was sworn in as Haiti's provisional president on 9 October 1991. Jean-Jacques Honorat, the former President of

the Centre Haitien des Droits et Libertés (CHADEL), The Haitian Center for Human Rights, was ratified by the Chamber of Deputies as Prime Minister of Haiti on 14 October 1991.

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters and telephone calls:**

- expressing concern at the arrest without warrant of Lutèce Marius and the 10 others arrested with him;
- asking that they be brought before the appropriate judicial authorities, and charged with a recognizably criminal offence or released;
- asking that their physical integrity be guaranteed while in detention.

**APPEALS TO**

Son Excellence

**Monsieur le Président**

Président Joseph Nerette  
Président de la République d'Haïti  
Palais National  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

**Telegrams: President Nerette, Port-au-Prince, Haiti**

**Telexes: 20068 PALAIS , or 20551 SPECEXEC**

**Faxes: + 509 23 2121**

Maître Jean-Jacques Honorat

**Monsieur le Premier Ministre**

Premier Ministre et  
Ministre des Affaires Etrangères  
Présidence de la République d'Haïti  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

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

**Faxes: + 509 34 1980**

Monsieur le Général Raoul Cedras  
Commandant-en-Chef des Forces  
Armées d'Haïti

**Monsieur le Général**

Grand Quartier Général des  
Forces Armées d'Haïti  
Rue Geffrard  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

**Telephone: + 509 22 3935**

**Telexes: 20391 GQFADH**

**Faxes: + 509 23 9007**

Monsieur le Capitaine J.M. Lubin

**Monsieur le Capitaine**

Commandant du District  
Militaire de St. Marc  
St. Marc  
Département de l'Artibonite, Haïti

**Telegrams: Commandant St Marc District Militair, St Marc, Haiti**

**COPIES TO:**

Monsieur le Président de la Chambre des Députés  
Assemblée Nationale  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Maître Eudrice Raymond | <u>Haïti en Marche</u> |
| Président du Sénat     | 173 N.W. 94 St.        |
| Assemblée Nationale    | Miami                  |
| Port-au-Prince, Haïti  | Fl 33150, USA          |

and to diplomatic representatives of Haiti in your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 December 1991.