

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 36/21/94
Distr: UA/SC

UA 166/94 Extrajudicial execution/Fear for safety/
Ill-treatment

27 April 1994

HAITIAMio Métayer

"Charlo"

"Ti Claude"

and other residents of Raboteau, Gonaïves, in the northern department of
Artibonite

Amnesty International fears for the safety of all the residents of the shanty-town of Raboteau, after the latest in a series of attacks against them by the Haitian military.

The latest attack began on 18 April. Soldiers arrived in Raboteau after small barricades of burning tires were erected on street corners. Local sources claim the barriers were built by the military and their supporters to justify their presence in the community. On arrival, the soldiers reportedly went directly to the home of Amio Métayer, a well-known local militant. When they didn't find him, they burnt his house to the ground, ransacked other homes and beat fleeing villagers.

The soldiers then detained Amio Métayer's father Ludovic and his sister Alourdes. The two were taken to the military post with another youth, identified only as "Charlo", who was reportedly beaten. Ludovic and Alourdes Métayer were forced to listen as soldiers in a nearby room beat the 17-year-old brother of Alourdes, Balaguer Métayer. The latter has been in detention since 20 November 1993 and remains in prison in Gonaïves (see background). "Charlo", Ludovic and Alourdes were reportedly released on 19 April.

The army attack began again on 22-23 April. Soldiers accompanied by members of the *Front pour l'Avancement et le Progrès Haïtien (FRAPH)*, a paramilitary front group for the army, surrounded Raboteau at about 5am on 22 April, and began firing their guns into the air. Residents fled toward the beach to try and escape in small boats, but the soldiers and FRAPH members allegedly chased them, shooting at their backs and legs. It is claimed that another group of soldiers and armed men fired on the villagers from the water. This group also targeted fishermen in boats and Raboteau residents who had been sleeping in small canoes for protection against army attacks.

An accurate death toll has been difficult to establish. Firstly, the military have reportedly burned the bodies of some of the casualties or dumped others into the sea, and secondly, many of Raboteau's residents have now fled into the surrounding mountains. However, several sources say some 20 died, while others suggest the figure may be as many as 50. The only person currently named as having been killed in the attack is "Ti Claude", a well-known local militant. According to an army spokesperson, the deaths occurred in a gun battle between the military and "terrorists" loyal to President Aristide.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the coup which overthrew President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in September 1991, the residents of Raboteau - strong supporters of President Aristide - have been subjected to a series of beatings, arbitrary detentions and armed attacks by the military, often acting in conjunction with so-called *attachés* (armed auxiliaries to the security forces). Amio Métayer, a well-known local leader and his family have been frequent targets of these attacks. He has

himself been arrested and beaten several times. On other occasions, military and *attachés*, unable to locate Amio Métayer, have attacked other residents of Raboteau, including children as young as two years old (see UA 19/94, AMR 36/04/94, 21 January 1994). Alourdes Métayer was previously arrested with her brother Balaguer and other Gonaïves youths in November 1993. She was pregnant at the time, and was severely beaten in her abdomen. All except Balaguer have reportedly now been released (see UA 417/93, AMR 36/35/93, 26 November 1993 and follow-ups: AMR 36/03/94, 21 January 1994; AMR 36/11/94, 8 March; AMR 36/19/94, 19 April).

This latest attack on Raboteau has occurred in the context of other military raids in northern Haiti where, as in Raboteau, the army claims supporters of President Aristide have formed an armed guerrilla force. In the course of these attacks women have reportedly been raped, and a local priest forced to go into hiding after accusations that he was linked to the "pro-Aristide guerrilla forces".

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters either in French or in your own language, or call by telephone:

- expressing deep concern at reports of the latest in a series of attacks against residents of Raboteau, carried out by members of the military and FRAPH, on 18 April and 22-23 April, which may have resulted in as many as 50 dead;
- calling for immediate steps to be taken to ensure the safety of all the residents of Raboteau;
- calling for an immediate inquiry into these abuses, for its findings (including the actual death toll) to be made public, and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice;
- pointing out that reports of the death toll in this latest attack have led to serious international concern, and that failure to investigate the killings and to prevent further attacks can only increase international fears that the authorities continue to condone abuses and turn a blind eye to calls for an improvement in the human rights situation.

APPEALS TO

1. Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces:

Monsieur le Générale Raoul CEDRAS
 Commandant-en-Chef des Forces Armées d'Haiti
 Grand Quartier Général des Forces Armées d'Haiti
 Rue Geffrard, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telegrams: Commandant-en-Chef des Armées d'Haiti Cedras, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telephone: + 509 22 3935

Telexes: 20391 gqfadh

Faxes: + 509 23 9007, + 509 23 9407

Salutation: Monsieur le Général / Dear General

2. Gonaïves Military Barracks:

Colonel Bellony Groshomme
 Caserne Toussaint Louverture
 Gonaïves, HAITI

Telegrams: Colonel Groshomme, Caserne Toussaint Louverture, Gonaïves, Haiti

Salutation: Monsieur le Colonel / Dear Colonel

3. Commander of the Military district of Gonaïves:

Capitaine Castera Senafils
 Commandant du Sous-District Militaire

Caserne Toussaint Louverture
Gonaïves, HAITI

Telegrams: Capitaine Senafils, Caserne Toussaint Louverture, Gonaives, Haiti

Salutation: Monsieur le Capitaine / Dear Captain

4. Judicial Authority in Gonaïves:

Maître Roland Paphius

Commissaire du Gouvernement

Parquet du Tribunal Civil

Rue Louverture, Gonaïves, HAITI

Telegrams: Commissaire Paphius, Parquet de Tribunal Civil, Gonaives, Haiti

Salutation: Monsieur le Commissaire / Dear Sir

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights Organizations:

Commission Justice et Paix

56, Ruelle Piquant, BP 1572

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Newspaper:

Artibonite Journal

Gonaïves

Département de l'Artibonite, 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 8 June 1994.