

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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14 November 1991

HAITI

Virginie SENATUS(f)

Loby GRATIA

Raynand PIERRE

and others

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Amnesty International is concerned at the arrest of Virginie Sénatus who is responsible for the section féminine (women's section) of the Centre Lafontant Joseph de Promotion des Droits Humains (Lafontant Joseph Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights). She was arrested during a student gathering at the Université d'Etat d'Haïti (Haiti State University) in Port-au-Prince on 12 November 1991. Amnesty International is also concerned for the safety of Loby Gratia, Head of Publications, Raynand Pierre, the Executive Director and other members of the Centre who are reportedly being sought by members of the armed forces in Haiti.

Virginie Sénatus was reportedly arrested on 12 November 1991, when troops violently broke up a meeting in the Science Faculty of the university in Port-au-Prince, organized by the Fédération Nationale des Etudiants Haitiens (FENEH), National Federation of University Students. Over 100 students were also arrested and beaten. She was reportedly taken to the Service d'investigation et de recherches anti-gang (Anti-gang investigation and research service), where she was reportedly beaten. It is believed that she may have been transferred to the Pénitencier National (National Penitentiary), but relatives have so far been unable to ascertain her whereabouts. She is reportedly also suffering from typhoid fever. Amnesty International is concerned for the health and safety of Virginie Sénatus.

On the evening of 12 November, armed civilians and uniformed members of the armed forces went to the home of Loby Gratia, the Head of Publications of the Joseph Lafontant Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights, enquiring about his whereabouts and the whereabouts of Raynand Pierre, the Executive Director as well as other members of the Centre. According to his wife, who answered the door, the men had a list of people they were looking for. When they were unable to locate the people on their list they left, only to return the following morning, 13 November. Raynand Pierre reported to Amnesty International that he had been warned by friends last week not to go out on the street too frequently.

The Centre Lafontant Joseph for the Promotion of Human Rights has been very active in denouncing the wide ranging human rights violations that have occurred in Haiti since the military coup d'Etat. Raynand Pierre, Loby Gratia and other members of the Centre Lafontant Joseph are presently in hiding and Amnesty International is concerned for their safety.

**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. Many of the victims included supporters of President Aristide and members and leaders of grassroots organizations.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest and reported beating of Virginie Sénatus;
- asking that her legal situation be clarified and whereabouts be made known;
- asking also that her physical safety be guaranteed and that she be given adequate medical treatment in detention;

- expressing concern at the incidents in which armed civilians and Haitian security forces went to look for the leaders and members of the Lafontant Joseph Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights;
- asking for guarantees for the physical integrity of the leadership and membership of the Lafontant Joseph Centre for Human Rights.

**APPEALS TO**

1) Prime Minister:

Maître Jean-Jacques HONORAT  
Premier Ministre, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères  
Présidence de la République de Haïti  
Palais National, Port-au-Prince, Haïti

**Monsieur le Premier Ministre  
Dear Prime Minister**

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

**Faxes: + 509 22 1147**

2) Minister of Interior and Defence:

M. le Colonel Gracia JEAN  
Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Défense Nationale  
Palais des Ministères  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

**Monsieur le Ministre  
Dear Minister**

**Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interieur Jean, Port-au-Prince, Haiti**

**Telephone: + 509 22 9198 or 22 1090**

**Telexes: 20515 Dptindn**

3) Commander of the Centre Military Department:

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

**Monsieur le Général  
Dear General**

**Telegrams: Comandant-en-Chef des Forces Armees Cedras, Port-au-Prince, Haiti**

**Telephone: + 509 22 3935**

**Telexes: 20391 GQFADH**

**Faxes: + 509 23 9007 or + 509 23 9407**

4) Minister of Justice:

Monsieur Antoine LECONT  
Ministère de la Justice  
Cité de l'Exposition  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

**Monsieur le Ministre  
Dear Minister**

**Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice Leconte, Port-au-Prince, Haiti**

**Telephone: + 509 45 0474 or 45 1626**

**Telexes: 20166 Justice**

5) Anti-gang investigation and research service:

Monsieur le Chef  
Service d'investigation et de recherches anti-gang  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

**Monsieur le Chef  
Dear Sir**

**COPIES TO:**

Chamber of Deputies:  
Monsieur le Président  
Chambre des Députés  
Assemblée National  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

Maître Eudrice RAYMOND  
Président du Sénat  
Assemblée Nationale  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

President of the Senate:

Monsieur le Commandant  
Pénitencier National  
Rue du Centre  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

Haiti en Marche (newspaper)

173 N.W. 94 St

Miami

FL 33150, USA

and to diplomatic representatives of Haïti in your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 December 1991.