

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 338/91 (AMR 36/12/91, 11 October and follow-up AMR 36/13/91 (16 October) - Legal Concern

22 October 1991

HAITI

Manno CHARLEMAGNE

Amnesty International is concerned at the reported rearrest without a warrant on Friday 18 October 1991 of Manno Charlemagne, a well-known singer in Haiti.

Manno Charlemagne had previously been arrested on 11 October without a warrant and accused of being a "criminal"; of "possession of arms without the necessary permit"; and of "incitement to violence". He was subsequently released by order of the Tribunal Civil (Civil Court) of Pap, Port-au-Prince, after they declared his arrest illegal.

According to eyewitness testimony, Manno Charlemagne upon his release, was just coming out from the Pénitencier National (National Penitentiary) when a group of soldiers dressed in civilian clothes approached him. They said they had an order for his arrest, but when challenged to produce the written warrant, they refused to do so and threatened him with their weapons. Manno Charlemagne was then forced into a waiting vehicle and taken to an unknown destination. He is believed to be held in the National Penitentiary, but there is no confirmation of his whereabouts. However, relatives later reported that the food they took to the Penitencier National for Manno Charlemagne was accepted by prison personnel. Amnesty International is concerned at the illegal arrest of Manno Charlemagne and is concerned for his 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. 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 Manno Charlemagne;
- asking that his whereabouts be confirmed and that if detained his physical integrity be guaranteed;
- asking that if detained, he be brought before the appropriate judicial authorities, and charged with a recognizably criminal offence or released.

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

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Monsieur le Général Raoul Cedras

Monsieur le Général

Commandant-en-Chef des Forces Armées

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Monsieur le Commandant

Monsieur le Commandant

Pénitentier National

Rue de Centre

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

Telegrams: Commandant Penitentier National, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Telephone: + 509 22 1739 or 22 1730

COPIES TO:

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

Maître Eudrice RAYMOND
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Assemblée Nationale
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

Haïti Progrès
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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.