

Fanmi Lavalas cadres on Saturday, including currently serving members of the National Assembly.

According to Prince Pierre Sonson, the thesis put forward by the interim government to justify the arrests of his former colleagues is without foundation.

He flatly rejected the idea that the arrests were legal because this was a case of "flagrante delicto" (the discovery of a crime at the moment it was being committed) because, he said, these Fanmi Lavalas leaders are accused of being the intellectual authors of the violence committed over the past few days in Port-au-Prince.

Prince Pierre Sonson also stated that the government has no authority to arrest members of Parliament who are currently serving in that body, because as Parliamentarians they are entitled to immunity from such an arrest.

He also found fault with the brutality employed by the authorities given that they could just as well have utilized normal channels if they wished to question the Fanmi Lavalas cadres. The former Senator said he hopes that the government will get its act together as quickly as possible.

Attorney Gérard Gourgues, who has been involved in human rights issues at various points in his professional career, also discussed the illegal nature of the arrest of the Fanmi Lavalas leaders accused by the government of having been caught in the act of committing a crime.

"A situation of flagrante delicto applies exclusively to an act that has just been committed or is in the process of being committed", Mr. Gourgue pointed out, explaining that it was beyond understanding how members of Parliament who had been continuously inside a radio station taking part in a broadcast since 8 o'clock in the morning could possibly be considered to be an example of suspects being caught in the act of committing crimes of violence.

Gérard Gourgue, who is a professor of criminal law, found the interim government's explanation of the rationale behind the arrest of the three men patently absurd.

Interim President Boniface Alexandre had for his part stated that he approves of the decision by the government to imprison the Fanmi Lavalas members of Parliament.

While declaring that he does not wish to interfere on judicial matters, President Boniface Alexandre sought to make the point that the arrest of these three senior officials of the Fanmi Lavalas political organization was carried out in a legal and constitutional manner.

"Everything that the interim government does is legal", he said.

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Armed individuals set fire to the vehicle of one of the attorneys from the law firm of Axène Joseph who was himself arrested Saturday while providing services to his clients

Port-au-Prince, October 5, 2004 (AHP)- A group of armed individuals set fire in Martissant (south of the capital) Tuesday to the vehicle of Boisguéné Rogavil, a lawyer in the firm of Axène Joseph and Associates.

Attorney Boisguéné Rogavil had accompanied Axène Joseph Saturday to Radio Caraïbes after having been called there to provide legal assistance to three Lavalas members of Parliament who were in a difficult situation.

Mr. Axène Joseph was then arrested by the police after close to a dozen pro-government demonstrators called for his arrest, saying he wished to prevent the arrest of Yvon Feuillé, Louis Gérald Gilles and Rudy Hériveaux.

Mr. Rogavil denounced this act of vandalism, pointing out that individuals massed outside Radio Caraïbes had been making threats since Saturday against the lawyers from the firm who had come to the station.

He declared that the people inside the vehicle barely escaped with their lives because the attackers opened fire directly at the vehicle before they set it on fire.

"We lost some important documents", Mr. Rogavil declared.

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