
A journalist from an independent radio station has been injured by gunfire in Port-au-Prince: one of his colleagues sees a connection between this attack and recent accusations by officials of the interim government

Port-au-Prince, February 7, 2005 (AHP)- A journalist from *Mégastar*, an independent private radio station, was shot Friday evening in front of the station's studios on Réunion Street in Port-au-Prince.

Raoul Saint-Louis is co-host of the program "Point Final" (Full Stop) broadcast every evening by the station and considered to be very critical of the interim government, focusing on repeated allegations of corruption scandals, misappropriation of funds and waste.

Mr. Saint-Louis was shot in the arm. He was together with several colleagues when men riding in a vehicle began shooting at them.

A collaborator of Mr. Saint-Louis, Jean Myrtho Muraille, saw a connection between this attack and statements by government and police officials accusing Radio *Mégastar* on several occasions over the past few days of giving the poor people of the shantytowns, labeled "chimères", a chance to speak on the radio.

Mr. Muraille said he was shocked that this attack was perpetrated soon after Haitian National Police (PNH) spokesperson Gessy Cameau Coicou criticized the station for offering a microphone to people she called bandits.

"We continue to defend those who are the weakest, we continue to denounce the summary executions in the populist districts, and also to give access to the microphone to the disadvantaged", said Jean Myrtho Muraille, pointing out that the station is placing responsibility for the lives of its journalists and all its employees in the hands of the PNH spokesperson.

For his part, the secretary general of the AJH (Association of Haitian Journalists), Guyler C. Delva, who recently received death threats, considered that this attack was well planned, and is part of a strategy to silence the press.

The AJH official said he was also deeply concerned at these threats and official statements by members of the government such as Justice Minister Bernard Gousse and the PNH spokesperson, who have shown themselves to be hostile, he said, toward media organizations that give a voice to people who criticize the interim government.

This type of behavior only encourages assaults on freedom of the press, said Mr. Delva. He also denounced what he called the disturbing silence of the interim authorities over the the killing of journalist Abdias Jean and the attacks and aggressive behavior directed toward journalists from *Téléguinen* and the daily newspaper *Le Nouvelliste*.

Witnesses agree that Abdias Jean was executed as he was covering a large scale police raid in Village de Dieu, a populist district of the capital.

During a broadcast Saturday on Radio *Mégastar*, several speakers denounced the fact that some pressure groups reputed to be close to the interim government are more comfortable making broad abstract condemnations than criticizing very concrete anti-democratic acts.

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