

**Haiti's jailed former prime minister hospitalized, ends hunger strike**

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456 words

11 March 2005

04:21 pm

Associated Press Newswires

English

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PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) - **Haiti's jailed former prime minister** has been hospitalized and treated for dehydration after fasting for almost three weeks to protest his incarceration, U.N. officials said Friday.

Yvon Neptune ended his 19-day hunger strike after being transferred to a U.N.-run hospital in the capital of Port-au-Prince on Thursday night, said U.N. mission spokesman Damian Onses-Cardona.

U.N. doctor Carlos Bedjan said Neptune, 58, ate fruit and cheese and was in stable condition. The former prime minister lost about 10 kilograms (22 pounds) during the fast but is responding well to treatment, including hydration and vitamins, Bedjan said.

Neptune, who had been jailed at the National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince for eight months, is one of dozens of former officials jailed without charge since ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled Haiti amid an uprising last year.

The U.S.-backed interim government accuses Neptune of orchestrating the killing of Aristide opponents in the western town of St. Marc during the rebellion, allegations he denies. His transfer to the hospital comes amid mounting international pressure for his release.

Former Interior Minister Jocelerme Privert had started a hunger strike with Neptune, but Onses-Cardona said he had no information on his condition. Privert is also jailed without charge and denies involvement in the St. Marc killings.

Neptune, who last week refused a government request to go the hospital after suffering bouts of weakness, agreed to go Thursday after speaking with interim officials and his family, Onses-Cardona said.

"This decision was taken because of Yvon Neptune's deteriorating general health," Onses-Cardona said. "He agreed to come."

U.N. officials didn't allow journalists to see Neptune, who is being guarded by two unarmed Haitian police officers and a U.N. civilian police officer.

He and Privert began refusing meals after voluntarily returning to prison following a Feb. 19 armed attack that freed almost 500 inmates. Officials say the two didn't try to escape. They were led away by guards and later agreed to return to prison under U.N. custody.

The U.N. Security Council urged the interim government Wednesday to speed up the cases of prisoners held without charge and "ensure due process for all citizens."

Four U.S. senators -- Sen. Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, Tom Harkin of Iowa and Vermont Senators James Jeffords and Patrick Leahy -- urged interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue in a letter Wednesday to release or

charge Neptune.

U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters of California visited Neptune last week, calling on Latortue to release him and "all political prisoners."

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