

AHP April 7, 2005 2:20 PM

Human rights continue to be violated in Haiti, according to a UN human rights expert

Port-au-Prince, April 7, 2005 (AHP)- UN independent human rights expert Louis Joinet declared Thursday that human rights continue to be violated in Haiti, over a year after President Jean Bertrand Aristide's hasty departure.

Louis Joinet ended this Thursday a mission of investigation in Haiti on the respect of human rights and on the accusations made by the NCHR (Haiti's branch) according to which a presumed massacre was reportedly perpetrated at La Scierie shortly before President Aristide's hasty departure.

Mr. Joinet declared that during meetings with provisional President Boniface Alexandre and other leaders, he had mentioned the continuation of serious human rights violations throughout the country, the persistence of murders, summary executions, reprisals, rapes, pillages, destructions and fires.

Louis Joinet, who visited the National Penitentiary, declared there are several cases of extended detention. According to him, on the 1007 people who have been imprisoned for several months, only 7 of them were condemned, and at the Pétion-Ville prison, 87 prisoners and other political personalities still haven't been heard by their natural judge.

" Even though the violations are in all social classes, poor populations of shantytowns where gangs operate, women and children are the most vulnerable victims ", Louis Joinet underlined.

The independent expert said he also met in St-Marc members of RAMICOS, an organization close to the former opposition accused in many crimes and declared that he was not able to meet the parents of the 50 persons who were allegedly killed according to the NCHR on the occasion of the presumed massacre at La Scierie.

Executive Secretary of the human rights NGO Pierre Espérance had declared that dogs had eaten the bodies of all those people.

Louis Joinet also pointed out that any political figure who is in extended custody and who hasn't been heard by his or her natural judge can become a political prisoner no matter what the accusations against him or her are.

Regarding a possible trial for political prisoner Yvon Neptune, Louis Joinet declared that he doesn't see how the former Lavalas leader could show up in St-Marc, given the context of global insecurity that hits the country. Louis Joinet reminded that one must not mistake the State's responsibility and an individual's criminal responsibility in the La Scierie case.

"When a government does not make that distinction in a constitutional state, its action can possibly rebound on it tomorrow », the independent expert warned, calling the authorities in place to be very careful.

Several residents of Saint-Marc declared many times these last few months that the movement started against former Prime Minister Neptune can be compared to political persecutions since there was no massacre at La Scierie.

AHP April 7, 2005 11:10 AM

**Requiem mass in the memory of Pope Jean Paul II: humanity will forever remember him,
according to the apostolic nuncio**

Port-au-Prince, April 7, 2005 (AHP)- A mass was celebrated this Thursday at the Port-au-Prince Cathedral , in the memory of Pope Jean Paul II, who died last Saturday.

In his homely, Apostolic Nuncio Mgr. Mario Giordana declared that Jean Paul II was an extraordinary pope who will be forever remembered by humanity for his teachings notably of love, kindness, freedom, peace and justice. According to Mario Giordana, these are exceptional values that all people on earth should practice in their daily lives.

During his visit in Haiti on March 9, 1983, the pope had said: things must change here.

He had called to a redistribution of wealth, to more justice and humanity in order to stop some privileges from being only for a small category of people.

AHP April 7, 2005 12:15 PM
