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A professor who is a member of Fanmi Lavalas denounces the continuation of abuses against party supporters in the north of the country

Port-au-Prince, March 22, 2004 -(AHP)- Lorgeat Claude, a young professor who belongs to Fanmi Lavalas, criticized Monday the physical abuses he suffered at the hands of members of the Army of the North, who abducted him, he said, during the night of March 12.

In an interview with AHP, Lorgeat Claude explained that these men, who were hooded and wearing camouflage clothing, had fired rounds of machine-gun fire at his home in Barrière Boutelle, at the entrance to the city of Cap-Haitien, before kidnapping him and taking him to a torture center set up in a customs hall in the city.

He stated that his abductors were angry about his political affiliation and accused him of possessing illegal weapons.

Lorgeat Claude said he was released several hours after his abduction and denied that he possessed any illegal weapons. "No weapon was found on me at the time of my abduction", he added.

Lorgeat Claude has been in hiding since he was released. He said he was severely beaten, especially on the face and the hip. He said he still suffers from the blows he received.

Mr. Claude also explained that due to this campaign of repression, many residents of Cap-Haitien are starting to leave the city to take refuge elsewhere in order to escape the fury of the armed men.

They say they fear for their security despite the deployment in the region of French military forces who are co-habiting, they say, with the men of the army of the north, who they say remain very active on the ground.

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Thirteen firearms are handed over leaders of the armed front of the opposition in Gonaïves

Port-au-Prince, March 22, 2004 -(AHP)- A leader of the armed front of the opposition in Gonaïves, Butteur Métayer, handed over 13 firearms Saturday to the new police authorities under a disarmament program launched in the country since the departure of Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

This hand over of weapons took place on the occasion of the visit on Saturday of the newly-designated prime minister at the city of independence. He was accompanied by the minister of the interior, Hérard Abraham, and the minister of justice, Mr. Bernard Gousse.

When questioned about the quantity of weapons possessed by the front for its effort to overthrow President Aristide, Butteur Métayer declared that they have no more than 45 weapons for all their men deployed in Port-de-Paix, Cap-Haitien and Gonaïves.

Butteur Métayer said he is ready to hand over the other weapons whenever they are collected.