

AHP News- April 7, 2004 - English translation (Unofficial)

Amnesty international denounces serious violations of human rights committed in Haiti since the departure of Aristide

Port-au-Prince, April 7, 2004 -(AHP)- Amnesty International, the international human rights organization, presented a report of its findings Wednesday in a news briefing at the conclusion of a 15 day research mission in Haiti regarding the human rights situation in the country.

The members of the Amnesty International delegation indicated that they had conducted more than 50 interviews in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area through which a profound sense of insecurity and fear was expressed despite the presence of the multinational force.

The human rights organization's representative to the United Nations, Yvonne Terlingen, emphasized that Amnesty International has received reports of cases of summary executions and abductions of supporters of Fanmi Lavalas.

Ms. Terlingen stated that the situation is even more complex today because of the increase in the number of political actors. The armed bands remain far more numerous than they were prior to the sudden departure of Aristide on February 29.

At the news conference, Amnesty International also denounced the Latortue government for its aggressive hunt for individuals close to Lavalas on accusations of presumed involvement in cases of human rights violations, while other individuals already convicted of crimes who escaped from prison or who have taken refuge abroad are walking the streets with complete impunity and in plain sight of the Latortue government.

Yvonne Terlingen stated that the interim government should issue a strong public statement committing itself to fighting impunity. Individuals responsible for human rights violations should be brought to justice regardless of their political affiliation, she emphasized.

The human rights organization also stressed the government's need to disarm all armed groups in order to provide security for all Haitians.

Several domestic as well as international sectors have recently expressed astonishment at statements by the interim prime minister hailing the Anti-Aristide rebels in Gonaïves as "freedom fighters".

During the research mission, Amnesty International met with provisional President Boniface Alexandre, Justice Minister Bernard Gousse and police director general Léonce Charles regarding Haiti's urgent need of a justice system and police that are impartial, so as to guarantee respect for individual liberties.

Amnesty International was highly critical of the Multinational Interim Force, which the organization said has

made no serious effort together with the Haitian police to disarm the armed gangs.

Amnesty deplored the fact that promises to that effect made by France and the United States have thus far not been fulfilled.

The Amnesty International delegation said it had also visited the National Penitentiary where more than 40 people are detained, a majority of whom are members of Fanmi Lavalas, including the former interior minister of the Aristide government, Jocelerme Privert, who was arrested in the middle of the night on Monday. They are being held under the protection of the multinational force, Amnesty said.

According to the organization, officials of the U.S. Embassy in Haiti were not in a position to provide any details on accusations against these detainees.

Amnesty International asked the U.S. government to clarify these arrests.

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CARLI denounces summary executions perpetrated in March 2004 as well as the double standard of the Latortue government in the area of justice

Port-au-Prince, April 7, 2004 -(AHP)- The Committee of Lawyers for the respect of Individual Liberties (CARLI) published a report this Wednesday on its "Hot Line" program for the month of March 2004.

In the report, the Haitian human rights organization describes several cases of human rights violations and telephone appeals received from several victims.

CARLI Secretary General Renan Hédouville said that during the month of March several cases of summary execution were documented, notably that of five young men murdered by police officers stationed at the Cafeteria precinct station.

The victims were members of the Fanmi Lavalas political organization.

CARLI also described the killing of four individuals including one journalist on March 7 during a demonstration by the opposition political Platform to celebrate the departure of President Aristide.

In addition, Renan Hédouville denounced the policy of double standards practiced by the Latortue government.

"It is inconceivable that individuals indicted by the judiciary as well as convicted prisoners who have escaped from detention facilities continue to benefit from the laxness of the judicial system", asserted Mr. Hédouville. He wondered whether the struggle for human rights and the establishment of the rule of law in Haiti is over.

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The ALLAH party rejects the agreement on the transition process that was signed between the Latortue government, the Democratic Convergence and the group of 184

Port-au-Prince, April 7, 2004 -(AHP)- The Party for the Liberation and the Advancement of Haiti (ALLAH)

rejected the document on the transition process Wednesday that was agreed between the Latortue government and the Democratic Convergence along with the Group of 184.

ALLAH leader Reynold Georges said that this agreement is not binding on political parties that are not part of the 184 coalition and the Convergence.

Mr. Georges considers that this strategy of exclusion proves that the current government is preparing to organize official elections without the participation of the population.

He appealed to the government of Mr. Latortue to immediately cease implementation of this document. Otherwise, he declared his intention to lead a legal battle to force the government to do so, because in his view the agreement is only binding upon one political sector.

Another party official, the attorney Alexandre Paul, proposed that presidential elections be held this coming May.

According to Mr. Paul, it is possible to hold elections this year if the Latortue government does not intend, he said, to continue to violate the Constitution of 1987.

Alexandre Paul said he believes that it is necessary to organize elections rapidly in Haiti in order to put the country on a constitutional track.

AHP April 7, 2004 12:10 PM

Operation December 15, 2002 criticizes the agreement on the transition process reached between the Latortue government, the Democratic Convergence and the Group of 184

Port-au-Prince, April 7, 2004 -(AHP)- Operation December 15, 2002, spoke out Wednesday against the accord reached by the Latortue government with the Democratic Convergence and the Group of 184.

During a news conference, a spokesperson for Operation December 15, 2002, Vanel Durandis, said he would like to see a genuine political agreement that takes into account the country's current political and socio-economic reality.

This is the only means, he said, that can lead to a successful political transition.

The leader of the December 15 Operation deplored that "the consensual agreement" was signed only by the government, a few political parties, and a fraction of the country's civil society organizations.

"This document is far from being a political agreement, or even a consensual agreement", asserted Mr. Durandis, adding that it was conceived in the spirit of keeping at a distance some of the political groupings that belonged to the "Democratic Platform", which in his view was a true example of unity.

Those who worked out the language of the document and those who signed it are demonstrating an absence of global vision regarding the transition process, Mr. Durandis remarked. He pointed out that a political accord is nothing but a means to return to constitutional order.

For his part, Turneb Delpé advocated for what he called a formal debate on the question of the armed forces.

According to him, it is an institution provided for under the Constitution, and it should be reconstituted as part of the political transition.

He said he was shocked to find that the government is keeping a low profile on this issue while at the beginning, former general Hérard Abraham, who is now the interim Minister of the Interior, had made it one of his priorities.

Turneb Delpé also commented that he opposes what he called the occupation of the country by foreign troops.

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The U.S. Ambassador to Haiti states that the April 6 agreement will facilitate the holding of good elections in the country

Port-au-Prince, April 7, 2004 -(AHP)- U.S. Ambassador to Haiti James Foley stated Tuesday that the accord on the transition process reached between the Latortue government and elements of the ex-opposition coalition will facilitate the holding of good elections in the country.

Mr. Foley asked the other parties including the Fanmi Lavalas Political organization to sign the document because the next elections will be open to all parties.

The U.S. ambassador also welcomed the fact that the political parties came to an agreement, he said, to hold these elections in 2005.

These elections constitute an element of stability and confidence for the country, he observed.

Mr. Foley promised technical and financial support from his government toward the organization of the elections.

AHP April 7, 2004 2:50 PM

Soldiers of the multinational force free a police officer arrested by the rebels in Gonaïves

Gonaïves, April 7, 2004 -(AHP)- The soldiers of the multinational force deployed in Gonaïves intervened Tuesday in the populist community of Raboteau to free a police officer arrested by the former rebels of Gonaïves.

The members of the international force also said they were looking for Ti Will, one of the leaders of the Front, following the discovery of a vehicle belonging to the group that was filled with illegal weapons.

Another leader of the Front, Butteur Matayer, refuted the accusations against Ti Will, saying that Ti Will had intervened to obtain the release of the police officer who was in the custody of the population.

The French soldiers also seized more than ten illegal weapons through this operation.

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201st anniversary of the death of Toussaint Louverture: the members of the Latortue government place a

spray of flowers at the feet of his statue on the Champ de Mars

Port-au-Prince, April 7, 2004 -(AHP)- This April 7th marks the 201st anniversary of the death, under circumstances which remain confused, of the precursor of Haiti's independence, Toussaint Louverture, at Fort de Joux in France.

On this occasion, the interim prime minister, Gérard Latortue, accompanied by his minister of justice, Bernard Gousse, placed a spray of flowers at the feet of Toussaint Louverture's statue at the Square of Heroes on the Champ de Mars.

For his part, historian Rony Durand presented Toussaint Louverture as a living example from whom rising generations should draw inspiration for the creation of new horizons for Haiti.

Mr. Durand considered that despite the presence today of a foreign military force in Haiti, the Louverturian methodology is the path to follow in order to arrive at a new social contract that rallies the various social sectors of Haiti.

Toussaint Louverture died in France after having been deported from Saint-Domingue.

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Electricity rationing becomes increasingly drastic: the EDH only has 8 to 10 megawatts supplied by Péligre

Port-au-Prince, April 7, 2004 -(AHP)- Electricity rationing has become much more drastic in the Haitian capital over the past four weeks.

Neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince are receiving an average of only two to three hours of electricity per day, for the most part during the night.

Even the areas designated as priority zones are today going through the bitter experience of prolonged blackout.

This situation arises from the fact that the motors of various power stations in Port-au-Prince are no longer operating because of a lack of diesel or fuel oil, two weeks after the eruption of a scandal that was quickly smothered regarding possible in an order for fuel.

The EDH (Electricity of Haiti) disposes of no more than eight to ten megawatts per day supplied lately by the Péligre power station, which has a capacity of 54 megawatts.

According to sources close to the interim government, the director general of the electric company, who has yet to be officially appointed, could be provided with resources that would enable him to do a satisfactory job of operating the public utility.

The EDH needs approximately 125 megawatts to supply the region from Port-au-Prince to Léogâne with electricity on a 24 hour basis.

In addition, the employees of EDH, who were threatening to officially begin a strike over unpaid salaries have decided to suspend their action.

The lower-echelon employees reportedly received payment of wages Wednesday covering two of the four weeks pay owed to them.

The directors and heads of departments might receive their pay envelopes this Thursday.

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