

# HaitiInformationProject (HIP)

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[HIP](#) — An official with ousted president Jean Bertrand Aristide's Lavalas political movement was released this morning after being held for three days by unknown captors. [Dr. Maryse Narcisse](#) was taken at gunpoint on Saturday from in front of her home and was the second high-profile figure of the Lavalas movement abducted in the past three months. [Mr. Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine](#) was last seen on the evening of August 12 after meeting with a US human rights delegation visiting Haiti. He was abducted following his announcement of his intention to file as a Lavalas candidate in the next round of parliamentary elections in Haiti. He has not been heard from since.

Haiti's largest political movement and party known as Lavalas has endured much since the ousting of president Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Feb. 29, 2004. While the Bush administration claimed that Aristide was forced out by a popular revolt, tens of thousands of Lavalas supporters took to Haiti's streets at every possible occasion to condemn his ouster. [Demonstrators were gunned down in cold blood by Haitian SWAT teams](#) as marauding cops working with the former brutal military terrorized neighborhoods. By the end of 2005 thousands of Lavalas supporters were dead, in jail or forced into exile.

Among those forced to seek exile were two guiding lights of the Lavalas movement, Dr. Maryse Narcisse and Mr. Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine. Dr. Narcisse holds an impressive resume as an advocate for healthcare and human rights for

Haiti's poor majority. Following the brutal military coup against Aristide in 1991, she courageously assembled a team of community-based providers in one of Haiti's largest regions and assisted them in developing HIV/AIDS prevention interventions. Dr. Narcisse was also the national coordinator of the Expanded Immunization Program (EPI), director for Education and Development of Human Resources, and General Director for the Ministry of Health during Aristide's last administration. In her capacity as General Director for the Ministry of Health, she oversaw the development and implementation of national health policies. In her role as Minister-Counselor at the Permanent Mission of Haiti to the UN, the focus of her work was on social affairs including education, health, gender issues and human rights.

Mr. Pierre-Antoine holds an equally impressive resume as a human rights advocate. He is the Co-Founder and National Coordinator of September 30th Foundation (FTS). The foundation is one of Haiti's largest human rights organizations, created after the 1991 coup in order to advocate for Haitian victims of political violence and secure reparations for them. Under Mr. Pierre-Antoine's leadership FTS coordinated a campaign with a photo exhibition, which toured Haiti's nine geographical departments and gathered over 150,000 names on a petition calling for Constitutional amendment to outlaw the Haitian Army. He is a psychologist, a long-time grassroots community organizer, and an activist who advocates for street kids and families with domestic problems. He is also the former General Coordinator of the National Office on Migration, that received Haitian migrants who were deported from abroad and helped them rehabilitate in Haitian communities.

Dr. Narcisse and Mr. Pierre-Antoine returned to Haiti from exile after the election of Rene Preval to Haiti's presidency in Feb. 2007. Dr. Narcisse took several trips to meet with Aristide in South Africa and acted as his official spokesperson in Haiti. She also serves on a five-member Executive Committee for Fanmi Lavalas and was appointed the director of the Aristide Foundation for Democracy. Mr. Pierre-Antoine began advocating for victims rights and reparations for crimes committed by the Haitian police after Aristide's ouster. He also helped to organize and lead several large demonstrations demanding Aristide's return from exile, freedom of Lavalas political prisoners and an end to what he saw as the foreign military occupation of his country. Mr. Pierre-Antoine was no fan of the role played by the United Nations following Aristide's ouster and protested the massacres their troops are accused by the community of committing on July 5, 2005 and December 22, 2006 in Cite Soleil.

Besides their obvious connections to the Lavalas movement, Dr. Narcisse and Mr. Pierre-Antoine recently had another thing in common. Before their abductions, they were both working with other Lavalas leaders to plan for a Lavalas National Convention to be held on December 16 in Port au Prince. The date commemorates the 17-year anniversary of Aristide's first election to Haiti's presidency in Dec.1990. The precursor to this event, an assembly of Baz Popile or popular bases held on Oct. 13 in Cap Haitien, drew over 10,000 people

representing over 300 community-based groups. The majority of the Baz Popile is comprised of Lavalas affiliated and/or sympathetic individuals and organizations.

While Dr. Narcisse' case may give the appearance of a kidnapping for ransom, the case of Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine points to something altogether different for many in Lavalas. It was nearly two weeks before a ransom demand was made for Mr. Pierre-Antoine and communications between the family and his abductors was abruptly ended. This is considered highly unusual given that the objective of most kidnappers is to get paid and this can only be achieved through continued contact and negotiation. To many in the Lavalas movement it gives the distinct appearance that the ransom demand was merely a cover for a more insidious purpose.

Criticism has also been raised about the apparent inaction of international human rights organizations like Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) to Mr. Pierre-Antoine's abduction and disappearance. While AI released an Urgent Action bulletin Oct. 24 for two threatened Haitian human rights workers in Savanette, they along with HRW have remained conspicuously silent about the case of Mr. Pierre-Antoine. Concerning AI's silence, a former member of their U.S. national board Mike Levy commented, "I am disappointed that AI has failed to respond to Mr. Pierre-Antoine's abduction. AI is clearly aware of his high profile as one of Haiti's leading human rights activists and that he has received threats in the past in connection with his work. Unless his family specifically thought it might endanger his life, they should have called immediate attention to this." To date, not a single international human rights organization has commented on Mr. Pierre-Antoine's disappearance.

Rumors have been circulating that Dr. Narcisse was released unharmed after a ransom demand had been met. An official with the Lavalas party and close to the investigation following her abduction responded, "It would be irresponsible of me to comment on that. Let's just say that Dr. Narcisse was released unharmed to her family and we thank everyone who helped. Now let's work to draw attention to the case of Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine and his safe return."

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The Haiti Information Project (HIP) is a non-profit alternative news service providing coverage and analysis of breaking developments in Haiti.

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