

Ecumenical Center for Human Rights
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URGENT STATEMENT FROM THE ECUMENICAL CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Ecumenical Center for Human Rights would like to draw your attention to the tragic situation that has been enfolding in Haiti since the night of September 29, until today, Wednesday, October 2.

We ask that you promptly mobilize your resources, your friends, your governments, organizations, associations, political parties, and committees in order to create "a solidarity chain" to come to the aid of the Haitian people.

1. Since Sunday, September 29, the soldiers of the Haitian army are randomly firing at civilians, not only in the streets, but also in ally-ways and courtyards of the slums. These methods are employed to prevent people from joining together or from erecting barricades like the ones built during the coup of January 6, 1991. Yesterday, Tuesday October 1, the soldiers fired at the parents of victims inside the General Hospital. Also, two people were killed on the sidewalk of the French Embassy.

The number of victims has risen; above all it is difficult to evacuate the wounded and to deliver all the dead to the morgues. The number of deaths has risen to more than 200 and the number of wounded is three to four times this number. The General Hospital is in urgent need of serum and antibiotics. You can address your protest letters to:

General Raoul Cédras
Quartier Général
Port-au-Prince, HAITI, fax: (509)

Emergency aid can be addressed to the Haitian Red Cross, Port-au-Prince or the General Hospital, Port-au-Prince.

2. Soldiers have shot and thrown grenades at the

Haitian radio stations which are a vital mode of communication in Haiti. This dangerous situation prevents journalists from working at their offices. Out of 15 stations, only two were working on Tuesday, September 30. Several journalists have disappeared.

3. Parliament officials, political heads, military personnel and the President's cabinet members are being hunted down. Their homes have been attacked. The majority of them have been in hiding since Sunday night, which makes it difficult and risky to convene for meetings and appointments.

4. The Ecumenical Center for Human Rights ask that you promptly alert people, nationally and internationally, through any possible means, of the public opinion that demands the immediate return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to his position.

This is the only way we can ensure a democratic future for Haiti and for its surrounding countries. This is the only way to ensure the respect for the wishes of the Haitian people who elected Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide as President, on December 16, 1990, by a landslide of 70% of the votes.

Only his reinstatement can guarantee constitutional legality and the right to vote for the Haitian people. And it is only the President's return that can ensure the end to street massacres and to implement a fair judicial system, where the kind of tragedy that Sylvio Claude experienced could be avoided. (Claude, who was president of the Christian Democratic Party, was one of the coup's first victims.

Under these circumstances, where a disarmed people are taken hostage at the gunpoint of soldiers', the right of the international community to intervene and to come to the aid of the Haitian people is more urgent than ever.

Methods of employing international solidarity can bring about the reinstatement of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, elected for five years according to the terms of the Constitution of March, 29, 1987, which is the only way to prevent the catastrophe of a civil war.

Jean-Claude Bajeux