

# URGENT ACTION

## ACTIVISTS FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE THREATENED

**Members of GADES, an organization of women human rights defenders in Haiti, have received threats following the recent sentencing of a police officer for the rape of an underage boy. The organization has been supporting the victim and his family throughout the legal process.**

On 25 June a court in Les Cayes, southwestern Haiti, sentenced a police officer found guilty of the rape of a 15-year-old boy in 2013 to 10 years' imprisonment. The feminist human rights organization **GADES** (Groupe d'appui au développement du Sud) has accompanied the victim and his family in their search for justice, providing legal support throughout the process.

Since the judgment was handed down on 25 June, members of GADES have received numerous threats. On 25 June the police officer's lawyer publicly threatened in court GADES and its coordinator, **Samia Salomon**, stating that they would face repercussions if his client was sentenced. According to testimonies received by Amnesty International police needed to intervene to maintain order in the court. Since the judgment was made, at least three members of GADES, including Samia Salomon, have received anonymous threatening telephone calls on their private phones. Similar calls have also been made to GADES offices, stating: "stop doing that work, otherwise you will lose human lives" (*Arrêtez ce travail, sinon vous aurez des pertes en vies humaines*). In response to the threatening phone calls, the organization decided to close their offices between 25 and 30 June. On 2 July while Samia Salomon was on a beach near Port-Salut, three police officers accompanied a justice of the peace (*juges de paix*) to interview her after receiving an anonymous call accusing Samia of carrying drugs in her car. No further investigation was carried out.

GADES lodged complaints with the police and the Office of the Public Prosecutor on 7 and 23 July respectively. The police have only confirmed that one of the phone numbers which made threatening phone calls to GADES members was the same number that anonymously called the justice of the peace. GADES is not aware of any investigation started by the public prosecutor into their complaints and the organization has not received any protection from the authorities.

### **Please write immediately in French or your own language:**

- Expressing concern for the safety of Samia Salomon and other members of GADES and calling on the authorities to provide effective protection to them in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to immediately and independently investigate the accusation of threats and intimidation against members of GADES, to make the results public and to bring those found responsible to justice;
- Reminding them of their duty to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of violence and threats, as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 SEPTEMBER 2014 TO:**

**Minister of Justice and Public Security**

Jean Renel Sanon  
18 avenue Charles Summer  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
Email: [secretariat.mjsp@yahoo.com](mailto:secretariat.mjsp@yahoo.com),  
[jrsanon@mjsp.gouv.ht](mailto:jrsanon@mjsp.gouv.ht)  
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

**General Director of the Haitian Police**

Godson Orélus  
Police Nationale d'Haiti  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
Email: [godore68@hotmail.com](mailto:godore68@hotmail.com)  
Salutation: Monsieur le directeur / Dear Director

**And copies to:**

**GADES**  
Email: [gadesorg@yahoo.fr](mailto:gadesorg@yahoo.fr)

### **Also send copies to:**

Ambassador Paul Altidor, Embassy of Haiti, 2311 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20008  
Telephone: 202 332 4090 | Fax: 202 745 7215 | Email: [amb.washington@diplomatie.ht](mailto:amb.washington@diplomatie.ht)  
Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Groupe d'appui au développement du Sud (GADES) is a women's human rights organization based in the city of Les Cayes in the South Department of Haiti. They present themselves as a "feminist organization" which accompanies women and children victims of violence, provides legal and judicial assistance, carries out awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women, organizes human rights education activities on women's rights, and facilitates workshops with police on women's rights and gender issues.

Several threats and attacks against human rights defenders have recently been reported in Haiti. The Inter-American Commission of Human Rights issued precautionary measures in favor of human rights lawyers Mario Joseph and Patrick Florvilus in October 2012 and November 2013 respectively, and human rights activist Pierre Espérance in June 2014, requesting that the Haitian state adopt any necessary measures to guarantee the life and personal integrity of the lawyers and activists.

On repeated occasions in 2013, members of Kouraj, a LGBTI rights group, have been threatened and intimidated during public demonstrations held in Port-au-Prince, the capital (see UA 186/13, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR36/014/2013/en>). A direct attack against the organization's office also took place in November (see UA 320/13, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR36/021/2013/en>).

On 8 February 2014 human rights defender Daniel Dorsinvil and his wife were killed by a gunman in the residential neighborhood of Canapé Vert, Port-au-Prince. The circumstances and the motives of the killings remain unclear. An investigation was opened and various people are currently held in pre-trial detention. In February Amnesty International called for a thorough investigation into the killing (see <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR36/006/2014/en>).

On 2 April Pierre Espérance, executive director of the National Human Rights Defense Network (Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains, RNDDH), one of Haiti's leading human rights organizations, received a threatening letter at the organization's office. The letter contained a gun bullet and accused Pierre Espérance and the RNDDH of publicizing false reports aiming to destabilize the government. It also mentioned the attack on Pierre Espérance in 1999 when he escaped a shooting by gunmen in Port-au-Prince. The letter concluded that "in 99 we missed you, this time you won't escape it, stop speaking bullshit". For more information, see UA 87/14, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR36/009/2014/en>.

The Haitian women's rights organization Komisyon Fanm Viktim Pou Viktim (KOFAVIV) based in Port-au-Prince has received numerous threats in recent months. Two of their leaders were forced to leave the country because of fears for their safety. Amnesty International has called on the Haitian authorities on numerous occasions to provide protection to the women's human rights defenders, but so far the organization is not aware of any specific steps taken by the authorities (see <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR36/010/2014/en>).

In accordance with the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, authorities in Haiti must fulfil their obligation to protect human rights defenders and to fully investigate attacks against them and bring those responsible to justice. They also have a duty to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of violence or reprisals.

**Name:** Samia Salomon (f) and other members of GADES

**Issues:** Women's rights, Fear for safety, Human rights defenders

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