

AFL 1992

419921

KNV
REV = 0 "Deferred Decision"
DNT = 2

HAITI

BACKGROUND

On September 30, 1991, the democratically elected president of Haiti, Father Jean Bertrand Aristide, was overthrown in a military coup. Since that time, Haitians have suffered at the hands of an illegitimate government which has completely restricted all basic rights and freedoms. Worker rights, including freedom of association and freedom of assembly, have not been spared the ruthless control of the military. Union leaders are in hiding, several union members have been arrested and beaten, and they are afraid to meet in groups of more than two or three persons. Therefore, the AFL-CIO requests the immediate suspension of GSP benefits to Haiti on the grounds of gross violation of worker rights especially since there is (currently a trade embargo)

FVA

According to a January 1992 Amnesty International report, over 1,500 Haitians have been killed and over 200,000 people have been forced into hiding or exile since the September 30 coup. The military and police have targeted supporters of President Aristide including union leaders, church leaders, members of grassroots organizations and political parties.

Deaths 1500
Imprisoned
Missing

Two AFL-CIO representatives traveled to Haiti from January 16 to February 4 to investigate the situation and meet with Haitian trade unionists. They returned in March to offer assistance to the trade unionists and monitor the persistent violations of human rights. Trade union leaders have reported widespread repression and violence by the military. Many leaders have gone into hiding and closed their offices. Union leaders can only meet with express written permission from the military. Some union leaders have decided to accept the military's conditions despite the fact that it represents no real freedom of association.

CASES

The following cases of human rights violations involving trade unionists are based on interviews with several trade unionists.

Case 1

On October 20, 1991 Joseph Manucy Pierre, Secretary of Information for the Autonomous Organization of Haitian Workers (CATH), was arrested by military officers at his union offices. Following swift international outcry from the AFL-CIO, ORIT and ICFTU, the military released him and

Jail 1

Trat 4 C9
Beat 2
Jul 4

The Electrical Workers' Union has been a particular target of the military; it's members have been harassed, threatened, fired and in one case assassinated. Jean Delince Josma, a member of the Electrical Workers' Union (FESTREDH), was killed in October, reportedly by the military. On December 14, 1991, two leaders of FESTREDH, Abel Pointdujour and Evans Fortuné, were arrested while trying to negotiate payment for electrical workers who had been dismissed after the coup. They were later released. The Secretary General of the union went into hiding after discovering his name on a list of trade union and grassroots organization leaders being sought by the military. A jeep owned by the union and used to help union leaders maintain contact with members in the countryside, was destroyed by the military.

C10
Jul 6
~~Beat 2~~
~~Beat 5~~

In January, two more leaders of FESTREDH were arrested and brutalized by the army. Delamain Ambroise and Raynald Garnier were picked up by unidentified police and later beaten while in custody. They were then released but fired from their jobs. On April 1, several executive board members and two shop stewards, Patrice Cantave and Jonas Desinor, were severely beaten by soldiers. Since September, the entire executive committee of FESTREDH has been fired for union activities (Attachment V).

Several = 10

C11
Jul 8
Beat 7
C12
Trat 5

Agricultural unions have also been the target of military threats and harassment. On May 5, the president of CLAM, an agricultural union affiliated to OGITH, Jacques Joseph, and his wife were arrested and severely beaten. They were accused of conducting a demonstration in support of the return of President Aristide. They were later released.

In early May, Daniel Pierre, president of OGITH-affiliated UTDL, an agricultural union in Boukan Michel, was detained by the section chief, Yvon Verdieu. Pierre was threatened and told not to conduct any union meetings without the presence of the section chief.

C13
Jul 9
Beat 8

On May 5, Thermilien Pierre, a member of a peasant organization affiliated to OGITH, was arrested and beaten because he was heard shouting, "Yes, to the embargo!"

C14
Trat 6

The Association of Farm Workers of Artibonite, affiliated to the Federation of Haitian Workers (FTH), was warned not to conduct any meetings until further orders from the police. Fearing for their safety, the union leaders have not met.