

PUBLIC

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**Further Information on UA 195/05 (AMR 36/008/2005, 25 July 2005) and follow-up (AMR 36/002/2006, 06 January 2006) Arbitrary arrest/ prisoner of conscience / medical concern**

**HAITI**

**Gérard Jean Juste (m), Catholic priest**

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Gérard Jean Juste, who is reportedly suffering from leukaemia, was granted a provisional release from detention on health grounds on 29 January. The interim government in Haiti apparently granted his release to allow him to seek treatment abroad, as there are no medical facilities in Haiti able to offer treatment for leukaemia. Father Jean Juste has been allowed to travel to Miami, USA, where he will be treated.

Gérard Jean Juste was diagnosed with leukaemia in December 2005 by two US doctors, though doctors at the National Penitentiary Annex in Port-au-Prince where he was detained refuted this diagnosis. His health deteriorated recently after he suffered a bout of pneumonia, which apparently was brought on by the conditions in the prison where he was held.

As Gérard Jean Juste has been granted a conditional release, he is expected to return to Haiti to face charges following his eventual recovery.

Gérard Jean Juste reportedly wrote a letter from prison on 27 January, which stated: "...I am very grateful to Amnesty International and to all of you for helping fight for the human rights of all political prisoners, here in Haiti and across the world. Let's keep the momentum on for justice, peace, love, and sharing to prevail all over the world as God wants it."

Gérard Jean-Juste, a Catholic priest, had been detained since 21 July 2005 following accusations of the kidnapping and murder of journalist Jacques Roche. Those charges were recently dropped, but he now faces charges of possessing illegal weapons and being involved in illegal gang activity. Amnesty International believes he was detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression, as he is an outspoken supporter of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the *Fanmi Lavalas* party. Members of the *Fanmi Lavalas* party had hoped that Father Jean Juste would stand as their presidential candidate in the forthcoming elections, but the Electoral Council rejected his candidacy because he was not able to register it in person whilst he was in prison.

**No further action is required from the UA network at present. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the case of Gérard Jean Juste, and will take further campaigning action as necessary. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.**