



Speech

Organization of American States



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THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
ON HAITI AT THE MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
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Mr. Chairman,

Two weeks ago I informed the Council of the disturbing occupation of the premises of the Offices of the OAS in Port au Prince.

Unhappily, I have to report that on December 5 portions of the State University of Haiti in Port au Prince were invaded by armed mobs. The University's Rector, Pierre Marie Paquiot, and Vice Rector Paul Laloux, were attacked and hurt. The Rector had both of his legs broken. More than 20 students were wounded. Considerable damage was done to buildings and equipment.

Many of the attackers were indisputably members of popular organizations associated with Fanmi Lavalas. Once again, on this occasion, the police failed in its duty to serve and protect persons and property

This event was severely and widely condemned by a broad cross-section of Haitian and international organizations and individuals, including the Government of Haiti, its Prime Minister and President Aristide, who has sought medical assistance for the Rector.

The OAS Special Mission vigorously condemned the actions at the University as "violent and unjustified." The Head of the Special Mission and Mission members visited the Rector in the hospital to express the sympathy of the OAS.

December 5 has come to be known as "Black Friday." Its reverberations continue to shake Haiti. Calls for the resignation of President Aristide have spread. Several important members of the government and of Fanmi Lavalas have resigned

Street demonstrations, both for and against the government, have continued since December 5. The Special Mission reports opposition demonstrations have often been forcibly preempted by an inappropriate association between popular organizations that still support the Fanmi Lavalas and some of the police.

These events require urgent action by all concerned to support the rule of law. The primary responsibility for maintenance of security in the country lies with the Government of Haiti. But all Haitians have a responsibility to seek a peaceful and democratic outcome to this crisis. Mob rule must be anathema to all. The member states of the OAS are prepared to help. But the responsibilities of sovereign independence cannot be denied.

This is all the more important in view of the approach of the ceremonies marking the bicentenary of the creation of Haiti, an event of importance not only for that country but also for this hemisphere as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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