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NOTE VERBALE DATED 29 AUGUST 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF HAITI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
SECURITY COUNCIL

The Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations presents his compliments to the President of the Security Council, and has the honour to inform him as follows.

On the evening of Sunday, 28 August 1994, Father Jean-Marie Vincent, a member of the Community of Priests at Montfortrain, was murdered at the entrance to the residence of the Congregation at Turgeau, Port-au-Prince. According to eyewitnesses, he was killed by several volleys from automatic weapons fired by armed men who were keeping watch opposite the entrance. Father Vincent was 49 years old.

Ordained in 1971, he was Executive Director of Cap Haïtien Diocese up until September 1991. A highly respected religious figure, he founded a very well regarded literacy programme and, until his murder, was head of the Haitian Foundation for Economic Development. Father Jean-Marie Vincent was a very close friend and colleague of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Twice in the past, he escaped assassination attempts: in 1986 when he was attacked by landowners at Jean-Rabel where he was working with peasants in the context of an agrarian reform programme, and in 1987 at Freycineau (90 kilometres north of Port-au-Prince), where he, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide and two other priests fell into an ambush.

The summary execution of Father Jean-Marie Vincent is the most recent in a campaign carried on by the military and their allies since the bloody coup d'état of 30 September 1991, which has claimed more than 5,000 victims. The aim is to silence the voices which continue to take a position in favour of democracy.

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide has strongly condemned the assassination of Father Jean-Marie Vincent, and has made the following statement:

"Jean-Marie Vincent dedicated his life to the people of our nation. He was a champion of democracy, self-determination and participation. The nation's will to attain democracy and justice forms part of the heritage left by him, Antoine Izmerly, Guy Malary and all the others who have fallen. Their tragic deaths will not halt this important objective. Nor will they impede the nation's march towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis.

"The nation pays tribute to its heroes. May the long suffering of the people of Haiti and their peaceful resistance to repression and violence constitute their tribute to the struggle for democracy in the Americas."

The Permanent Representative of Haiti would appreciate it if the text of this note could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council under the item entitled "The question concerning Haiti".

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