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HAITIAN COLONEL AND MEMBER OF THE HIGH COMMAND ORDERED TO PAY \$4.3 MILLION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

(Miami, Florida, February 23, 2007). A federal jury in Miami found Colonel Carl Dorélien, a former member of the Haitian Military's High Command, liable for torture, extrajudicial killing, arbitrary detention and crimes against humanity suffered by plaintiffs Lexiuste Cajuste, Marie Jeanne Jean and her two young children. Colonel Dorélien was ordered to pay a total of \$4.3 million to the plaintiffs in compensatory and punitive damages.

Lexiuste Cajuste was arbitrarily detained and severely tortured by Haitian military forces under Dorelien's command because of his role as a union organizer and pro-democracy activist. Miraculously, he survived the beatings but, fourteen years after the ordeal, still suffers severe physical disabilities relating to his torture. Upon learning of the jury's verdict in his favor Cajuste stated, "Today I have finally found justice, but I am only one person amongst an entire population who suffered abuses. My wish is to see that all the people of Haiti receive justice." Cajuste went on to say, "Although today's judgment was rendered against Colonel Dorélien, I see this as a judgment against the entire armed forces of Haiti under the military dictatorship. This is a wonderful day for justice for me and my family and for the Haitian people."

Marie Jeanne Jean lost her husband Michel Pierre during the massacre by the Haitian military against the citizens of the Raboteau neighborhood in the seaside city of Gonaives. Raboteau was known for being a stronghold of pro-democracy activism. The Raboteau massacre was one of the worst atrocities committed against the civilian population in Haiti while Dorélien was part of the High Command. She brought this suit on behalf of herself and her two minor children. "Today is a proud and happy day. This judgment is not just for me and my family, but for all of the many victims of the Raboteau Massacre. It is in their name that I am here in Miami today," said Marie Jean about the jury's verdict.

Colonel Dorélien was a member of the High Command of the Haitian Armed Forces during the military dictatorship in Haiti from 1991 to 1994. Dorélien's presence in the U.S. became widely known after he won \$3.2 million in the Florida state lottery in 1997. Dorélien, along with many other members of the Haitian military, fled to the U.S. where they lived with impunity. This case represents the first time that a U.S. jury has held a former member of the Haitian military responsible for the widespread human rights abuses that were committed by the military against the civilian population.

Matt Eisenbrandt, CJA Legal Director and member of the trial team said, “It is an honor to represent Marie Jean and Lexiuste Cajuste, their courage is an inspiration. Justice has been served.”

The plaintiffs are represented by the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) and Holland & Knight. CJA is a San Francisco-based human rights organization that works to end impunity by bringing to justice perpetrators of human rights abuses, especially those who live in or visit the United States. www.cja.org. Holland & Knight is among the world's 15 largest law firms, providing representation in litigation, business, real estate and governmental law. www.hklaw.com.

For more information and background on the case, please visit www.cja.org.