



## Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley, District 7

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### CONSENT CALENDAR

December 16, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Letter in Support of the Release of Ronald Dauphin

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt and send a letter to Haitian President René Prével in support of the immediate release and care of Mr. Ronald Dauphin.

#### BACKGROUND:

Ronald Dauphin, a *Lavalas* activist, was arrested by armed paramilitary troops on March 1, 2004 - the day after US officials forced President Aristide into exile. Mr. Dauphin has spent almost five years in jail without having been convicted of any crime. For three years, his case has been stuck in legal limbo, with no progress or active investigation. Dauphin is the last detainee held for the so-called "La Scierie massacre." No one has ever been convicted in connection with the La Scierie incident. Most defendants have had their charges ordered dismissed by courts. Human rights groups and the UN have concluded that the incident never happened as alleged in the courts.

Over the last few years, several civil and human rights organizations have called upon the Haitian government to promptly bring to trial or release political prisoners, with particular emphasis on those being detailed in connection to the La Scierie case.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None

#### CONTACT PERSON:

Councilmember Kriss Worthington, 981-7170

Son Excellence René Préval  
Président de la République d' Haïti  
Palais National  
Port-au-Prince, Haïti

Dear President Rene Preval:

**Ronald Dauphin**, a *Lavalas* activist, was arrested by armed paramilitary troops on March 1, 2004 - the day after US officials forced President Aristide into exile. Mr. Dauphin has spent almost five years in jail without having been convicted of any crime. For three years, his case has been stuck in legal limbo, with no progress or active investigation. Dauphin is the last detainee held for the so-called "La Scierie massacre." No one has ever been convicted in connection with the La Scierie incident. Most defendants have had their charges ordered dismissed by courts. Human rights groups and the UN have concluded that the incident never happened as alleged in the courts.

In August 2006, Amnesty International called on Haiti's government to promptly bring to trial or release all political prisoners, condemning the prolonged detention of *Lavalas* activists as politically motivated. In October 2006, the National Lawyers Guild urged the Haitian government to release the remaining political prisoners, with particular emphasis on the defendants held in the La Scierie case. In May 2008, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) ruled that the State of Haiti had violated the human rights of former Prime Minister Neptune, another defendant in the La Scierie case, by holding him without trial for over two years with no proof he committed a crime. Yet while Neptune was provisionally released, as was another defendant in the case, Amanus Maette, Dauphin remains in prison.

The IACHR has declared conditions in Haiti's overcrowded prisons inhumane. Without adequate food, clean water, sanitation and medical attention, Dauphin's detention amounts to a death sentence, particularly because he is in ill health.

For these reasons, we call for the immediate release of Mr. Dauphin. We urge you to drop all charges and provide immediate medical treatment to Mr. Dauphin for his unjust and illegal detention.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,