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Haiti: Opposition Leader Detained

by John Neagle

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On Feb. 6 in Port-au-Prince, police arrested opposition leader Rockefeller Guerre at his home in Delmas suburb, after he and two others called for a 48-hour general strike. In a joint statement on Feb. 3, Guerre, leader of the Democratic Patriots party, and opposition leaders Sylvio Claude and Louis Dejoie called for a strike on Feb. 8-9 which they said "will have the force of a referendum against" Lt. Gen. Prosper Avril. Guerre's wife, Huguette Guerre, told AP that police said "this act was part of round-up, that my husband was not the only one concerned." Independent station Radio Metropole said police confirmed the arrest. The three political leaders said they would boycott Avril's "democratic forum" on Feb. 9 in which government and political leaders are to discuss the powers of an electoral board toward supervising future elections. They say Haiti's constitution already provides for an independently appointed Electoral Council with total control over elections. Conservative politician Hubert de Ronceray and the Autonomous Central of Haitian Workers, the largest union, announced their support for the strike. The union has called two successful strikes in the last three months. Avril came to power in a Sept. 17 coup by rank-and-file soldiers who ousted former ruler Lt. Gen. Henri Namphy. (Basic data from AP, 02/06/89)

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