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NEWS RELEASE

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

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**Systematic repression of freedom of movement and expression / Illegal and arbitrary arrests:
RNDDH warns President Jovenel Moïse and his team.**

1. The National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) is very worried about the climate of terror that President Jovenel MOÏSE and his team have started to install in the country.
2. This climate of terror is characterized by illegal and arbitrary arrests and the violent and systematic repression of all protest movements. However, the vast majority of them are peaceful movements organized to denounce insecurity, the kidnapping, the general living conditions of the population and demand the departure of the President of the Republic Jovenel MOÏSE whose mandate expires on February 7, 2021.
3. The most recent events in the country attracted the attention of the RNDDH:
4. On January 17, 2021, the Union of the National Police of Haiti (SPNH-17) organized a peaceful march to demand better working conditions for the agents of the PNH and denounce the insecurity of which are also victims' members of the police institution. The march was to end in front of the premises of the Directorate General of the National Police of Haiti where a message was to be delivered.
5. Before arriving at the Carrefour Rita towards Avenue Gérard Téodart, the march was brutally dispersed. Indeed, agents of the Intervention Corps for the Maintenance of Order (CIMO), boarded several vehicles of the PNH and accompanied by the new head of the CIMO, Chief Commissioner Vladimir CHÉRUBIN, - boarded a vehicle of Toyota brand, of white, registration number 1-00301, recently returned to this post - and the departmental director of the West, the divisional commissioner Paul MENARD, shot in profusion tear gas tubes and lethal bullets in the direction of the demonstrators.

1

6. On January 19, 2021, during a peaceful sit-in held in front of the official residence of the Prime Minister, Joseph JOUTHE, President of the Superior Council of the National Police (CSPN) to denounce the recurrence of kidnapping cases perpetrated in the indifference and inertia of the police institution, police mobilized in large numbers, used tear gas and rubber bullets against the demonstrators-Yet all they did was chant messages demanding respect for their rights to safety and life.

7. On January 20, 2021, an anti-government march was held in Port-au-Prince. At the crossroads of the Airport - nicknamed Kafou Rezistans - demonstrators were gathering to begin the march when police officers, stationed in the vicinity, began to throw tear gas tubes at them. Then, they used rubber bullets and lethal bullets against the crowd who, naively, had believed that these policemen would secure the path of the march.

8. That day, a journalist from the online media ALTV, Alvarez DESTINÉ was slapped by a police officer assigned to the Intervention Corps for the Maintenance of Order (CIMO). He was filming agents who were beating up other journalists and trying to repel the latter as they waited for the demonstrators who had to go in front of the premises of the American Embassy.

9. In addition, at least eight (8) others were injured, five (5) journalists were covering the march. Here is the information gathered about them:

- Betty Clerger, a merchant, was shot in the left foot. She was taken to the Bernard Mevs Hospital and is still waiting for surgery to extract the bullet;
- Edouardo Ilenna EDOUARD, Radio Résistance journalist;
- Pierre Daniel LAMATINIÈRE journalist of the online media Impartial Info, was hit in the left eye with one (1) rubber bullet. He was taken to the Bernard Mevs Hospital;
- Reginald REMY, a journalist with Radio-Télévision Caraïbes FM, received three (3) rubber bullets in his left arm;
- Capital FM journalist Jean Wilner SÉVÈRE received one (1) tube of tear gas on his left foot;
- Radio Antilles journalist Mackenson SÉVÈRE was taken to Bernard Mevs Hospital before being transferred to OFATMA Hospital.
- Jeanty MANIS, teacher, suffered from three (3) rubber balls on his right arm;
- Saintfort as known.



10. Also as part of the repression of the demonstration of January 20, 2021, several people were arrested by the police and led to the police station of Delmas 33. Some of them were released the same day. The others were referred to the Delmas Peace Tribunal on January 21, 2021 and were also released.

11. On January 21, 2021, early in the morning, the Government Commissioner Jean Ernst MUSCADIN, having learned that an anti-government demonstration was planned in Miragoâne, unrecognizable in his vest he told a media outlet that he would not allow troublemakers to disrupt his jurisdiction. He and the police began searching vehicles and questioning their occupants. According to the answers provided, the latter were either allowed to enter the commune of Miragoâne or invited to leave where they came from.

12. However, the event was still possible. At the end of it, the former Senator Nènèl CASSY and eleven (11) political activists were arrested and kept in sight at the police station of Miragoâne. It was only following the outcry caused by these arrests that the former Senator and nine (9) of the other people who had been arrested were released.

13. The RNDDH recalls that Magistrate Jean Ernst MUSCADIN was installed as Government Commissioner on January 31, 2020. The day after his installation, several lawyers registered with the Bar of the Order of Lawyers of Miragoâne had opposed his choice, because they consider him to be incompetent and unfit to hold such a position. And indeed, from his appointment to the present day, he has done nothing to redress the situation of justice in this area. The RNDDH wants as to proof the fact that since its accession to the post, no direct quotation to the correctional has been made by the Prosecutor's Office which it directs and, the rate of illegal and arbitrary preventive detention has not stopped increasing in the jurisdiction.

14. The magistrate Jean Ernst MUSCADIN is also accused of being an arbitrary and arrogant individual who never misses the opportunity to claim to have been sent by the national palace to pacify the jurisdiction of Miragoâne. Therefore, he receives orders only from the president himself, Jovenel MOÏSE. Moreover, the poster at the door of his office - The Government Commissioner is a Military in plain clothes - announces his conception of the position he occupies.



15. Here is an example proving the arbitrary nature of the interventions of the magistrate Jean Ernst MUSCADIN: On January 14, 2021, having noticed that the lady Limose NOËL, from Petite Rivière de Nippes, was selling fuel per gallon, The magistrate Jean Ernst MUSCADIN first shouted at her and then physically attacked her with a lot of violence and walked on her after he had propelled her to the ground. Subsequently, the magistrate Jean Ernst MUSCADIN made the arrest of Limose NOËL. He put her in custody at the police station in Petite Rivière de Nippes where she was forced to spend the night. The next day, he himself released the victim.

16. At the same time, at least ten (10) demonstrators on their way to the January 21, 2021 march in Miragoâne were arrested at Borne Soldat and then taken to the police station in Petit Goâve. They were in a public transport vehicle. They were:

- Piterson AGENOR
- Piterson ALVENOR
- Emmanuel ANTENOR
- Lycetson AZOR
- Jimmy BEAUCEJOUR
- Faudlin CÉTOUTE
- Jeanty MANIS
- Jean Felix NEWTON
- Jameson PATRICE
- Steeve TABUTO

17. Justice of the Peace Winny Fred NOËLSAINT went to the Police Station of Petit-Goâve to hear those arrested. And since no police report had been prepared, the justice of the peace withdrew.

18. It was not until about eighteen (18) hours, that Justice of the Peace Jean-Robert NOËL came to the police station at the insistence of the relatives of the victims, interviewed them before proceeding with their release.

19. At Carrefour, on January 21, 2021, students from several schools demonstrated to denounce the kidnapping of schoolchildren. They were dispersed by agents of the Departmental Unit for the Maintenance of Order (UDMO) who made excessive use of tear gas. In addition, at least two (2) students were arrested and beaten by PNH officers.

20. In Port-au-Prince, on the evening of January 21, 2021, political activist Enold FLORESTAL was quietly driving his vehicle when arrived at John Brown Avenue, agents of the General Security Unit of the National Palace (USGPN) stopped him, ordered him to get out of the vehicle and lie down on the ground before stopping him. Enold FLORESTAL was taken to the police station of Port au Prince where he was kept until twenty-one (21) hours.

21. The recent events in Port-au-Prince, Miragoâne, Petit-Goâve and Carrefour constitute flagrant violations of the freedom of expression, movement and individual freedoms of the Haitian people.

22. The RNDDH is concerned that these cases of human rights violations have intensified in the wake of the threatening statements of President Jovenel MOÏSE who affirmed on January 19, 2021, on the occasion of the inauguration of a water reservoir, that his National Intelligence Agency (ANI), enabled, already allows it to collect information about citizens who participate and/or finance anti-government movements, because, he said, what was possible in previous years, will no longer be possible in 2021.

23. Therefore, the RNDDH considers it its duty to remind President Jovenel MOÏSE and his team, that they are going down the wrong path: that of repression and political persecution. The Haitian people, very attached to the democratic gains that they were able to enjoy themselves until becoming president of the country, will not accept this return to dictatorship. The uttering of threats, the adoption of various

repressive decrees, the politicization of the security forces to subdue the protest movements, will not allow him to stay or renew himself in power.

24. The RNDDH takes the opportunity to emphasize to the attention of the officers of the PNH that they are required to strictly and rigorously respect the code of ethics during police interventions. They must at all times remember their duty to protect and serve. Thus, during the demonstrations, they are called to facilitate peaceful gatherings and to secure the lives and property of all citizens, without distinction.

25. And, having suffered for many years from its politicization by men in power, the PNH would gain to show its professionalism and to put itself effectively at the service of the Haitian population.

Port-au-Prince, January 22, 2021