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NEWS RELEASE

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**Raid, Unlawful Arrests and Arbitrary Detention: RNDDH
demands immediate release of Political Prisoners**

1. Having learned of the arrest of several people including a magistrate of the Court of Cassation and a general inspector of the National Police of Haiti (PNH), the National Network for the Defense of Human Rights (RNDDH) went on February 7, 2021 to the Central Directorate of the Judicial Police (DCPJ) where he met with the victims in question.

2. Thus, the RNDDH learned that on the night of February 6 to 7, 2021, around 2:30 in the morning, the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, Maître Rockfeller VINCENT, the Director General a.i. of the National Police of Haiti (PNH), Léon CHARLES, the head of the General Security Unit of the National Palace (USGPN) the police commissioner Dimitri HERARD, the government commissioner at the Court of First Instance of the Croix-des-Bouquets, Maître Elder GUILLAUME, a justice of the peace, all accompanied by several USGPN officers, went to the Residence Petit Bois in Tabarre to arrest the following persons:

- Yvickel DABRESIL, judge at the Court of Cassation of the Republic
- Renard DABRESIL, thirty-two (32) years old, cousin of magistrate Yvickel DABRESIL. He himself is the bailiff-audience at the Court of Appeal of Port-au-Prince, for several years
- Romain DABRESIL, thirty-five (35) years old, cousin of magistrate Yvickel DABRESIL
- Roosevelt CINÉUS, thirty-three (33) years old, cousin of magistrate Yvickel DABRESIL
- Marie Louise GAUTHIER, Inspector General of the National Police of Haiti (PNH)
- Steven HERARD, thirty-four (34) years old, Agent III of the PNH. For eight (8) years, he ensures the safety of Magistrate Yvickel DABRESIL
- Nacius FLEURANT, thirty-six (36) years old, PNH Agent II
- Dachelin ST FORD, twenty-five (25) years old, PNH Agent I
- Robenson JEAN, twenty-nine (29) years old, HNP Officer I
- Marie Antoinette GAUTHIER, Physician

- Louis BUTEAU, Agronomist
- Claude VEILLARD, seventy-five (75) years old, Sociologist
- Bertis LOUBET, fifty-eight (58) years old
- Wesner DANTES, age forty-five (45)
- Fritnet SAINT CYRE, forty (40) years old, driver of magistrate Yvickel DABRESIL
- Wany Yves, forty-four (44) years old, employee of Residence Petit Bois
- Hija Djennicka PHILIPPE, 21 years old
- Chantale SAINTIME, age thirty-seven (37).

3. A total of eighteen (18) individuals were arrested. They are accused of plotting against the security of the State and of threatening the life of Jovenel MOÏSE.

4. Confirming much of the information conveyed by the media and social networks, the victims told the RNDDH that USGPN agents knocked at the gate and the staff in charge of this task opened to them, despite the daylight saving time. The officers went to the door of Justice Ivickel DABRESIL and ordered him to open. However, before he had time to rise, they threw tear gas tubes inside the magistrate's chamber, in an obvious attempt to asphyxiate him.

5. Subsequently, the magistrate was shot by a USGPN officer, thrown to the ground and struck repeatedly. While beating him, this agent blamed him for his position that the constitutional mandate of the now former President Jovenel MOÏSE ended on February 7, 2021, and for plotting against him.

6. All persons found at the scene were forced to lie down on the floor. They were beaten and trampled, especially when the agents asked them where the magistrates Louis Pressoir JEAN PIERRE and Mecène JEAN LOUIS lived, two (2) other Judges of the Court of Cassation.

7. It should also be noted that four (4) firearms were present. These are two (2) M-4 rifles, one 9 millimeter and one Taurus. All these legal weapons were in the possession of the officers assigned to the security of the personalities who were on the scene. It is therefore to their great surprise that they saw the USGPN agents throw at the magistrate Yvickel DABRESIL a set of firearms, suggesting that they were in their possession.

8. Around 8:30 am, the Central Directorate of the Judicial Police (DCPJ) replaced the USGPN agents. And, around noon, the eighteen (18) persons mentioned above were all taken to the DCPJ, where they have been kept ever since.

9. They spent the day without eating or drinking. And no consideration was given to their health.

10. The RNDDH condemns the intrusion at 2:30 in the morning of Mes Rockefeller VINCENT, Elder GUILLAUME, of the director general a.i. of the PNH Léon CHARLES and of the police commissioner Dimitri HERARD, in a private residence in order to make the arrest of people who slept, on the pretext that they were plotting against former President Jovenel MOÏSE. This intrusion carried out without a search warrant from an investigating judge, therefore constitutes a home invasion and violates Article 24-3 of the Haitian Constitution which states that "... d) Except in the case of flagrante delicto, no arrest on warrant, no search may take place between six (6) hours of the day and six (6) hours of the morning"

11. The RNDDH recalls that the USGPN cannot operate in the field, being a specialized force of the PNH, assigned to:

- National Palace Security
- Security of the private residences of presidents and former presidents
- Escorting presidential convoys.

12. The RNDDH also points out to the attention of the Minister of Justice and Public Security that, according to Article 184-1 of the Haitian Constitution, a judge of the Court of Cassation is liable only before the High Court of Justice. So, his readiness to say otherwise is simply unacceptable.

13. In addition, no illegal weapons were in the possession of those arrested. They were in a private residence and did not engage in any subversive activity. They were thus made political prisoners by Mes Rockefeller VINCENT, Elder GUILLAUME, Léon CHARLES and Dimitri HERARD, who wanted to show their zeal towards former President Jovenel MOÏSE.

14. The RNDDH condemns the illegal arrest and arbitrary detention of these political prisoners and demands their immediate, unconditional release.

15. The RNDDH takes this opportunity to remind the public of the danger posed by these practices of inquisition and home invasion. It therefore invites it to mobilize to protect the democratic gains, enshrined in the Haitian Constitution and guaranteeing the freedoms of assembly, association and opinion.

Port-au-Prince, February 8, 2021