



NEWS RELEASE

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

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Earthquake of August 14, 2021: RNDDH calls for compliance with humanitarian accountability rules

1. On August 14, 2021, around 8:30 am, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake on the Richter scale hit three (3) departments on the country's southern coast, namely, the Nippes, the South and the Grand'Anse.
2. Human and material losses are enormous. According to a partial report submitted on August 15, 2021 by the National Emergency Operations Centre (COUN), at least one thousand three hundred (1,300) people were killed and nearly six thousand (6,000) others injured. Hundreds of buildings have collapsed. Others are cracked. Commercial enterprises, private houses, schools, churches, hotels have been completely destroyed or severely damaged. In several areas, landslides have been recorded, burying people and livestock.
3. The population of the above-mentioned areas has taken to the streets and public squares in order to protect themselves against possible future collapses. The excavations to find wounded and/or dead bodies were organized quickly by the relatives of the victims assisted spontaneously for the most part, by members of the population. These are still continuing today, even with Tropical Storm Grace already hitting Haiti.
4. The National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) and its regional structures of Nippes, South and Grand'Anse affected by the earthquake, make it their duty to share with the public, a partial assessment of the situation on the ground.

A. Situation in the Department of Nippes

5. The Nippes Department has eleven (11) municipalities. Six (6) of them are those of Petit-Trou de Nippes - located eight (8) kilometers (km) from the epicentre of the earthquake - of Baradères, L'Azile, Plaisance du Sud, Fonds-des-Nègres and the island of Grand Boucan, are severely affected by the earthquake. Some communal sections and localities have been totally destroyed. Such is the case for example of Lièvre, located

in Petit-Trou de Nippes. Moreover, while Miragoâne, Paillant and Petite-Rivière de Nippes are less affected by the earthquake, Anse-à-Veau and Arnaud, have been relatively seriously affected.

6. The Hospital of Saint Teresa in Miragoâne, the Hospital of Paillant, the Hospital of L'Azile and the Health Center of Baradères, deprived of everything before August 14, 2021, have a lot of trouble coping with the emergency caused by the earthquake.

7. A number of landslides have been recorded, including on the road to Anse-à-Veau. Consequently, part of the department is only accessible by motorcycle and sea.

8. An escape attempt was recorded at the Civil Prison of Anse-à-Veau. In addition, some cells having collapsed, the prison authorities were forced to move two hundred and twenty (220) prisoners to the police stations of Fond-des-Nègres, Petite-Rivière des Nippes, Miragoâne and Petit-Goâve, for their safety.

B. Situation in the South Department

9. The Department of the South has eighteen (18) communes. Eight (8) of them, namely those of Les Cayes including the city center, Camp-Perrin, Torbeck, Maniche, Saint Louis du Sud, Cavaillon, English and Aquin were severely affected.

10. Several buildings collapsed. Hotel Basilica, Petits Pas Hôtel, Le Manguier, Caïmite Hôtel, La Détente Hôtel and Abaca Bay - which welcomed guests due in particular to the patronal celebrations of 14 and 15 of August 2021 in several of the communes of the department - collapsed. Churches including the Sacred Heart Church of Les Cayes, the Immaculate Church of the Anglais as well as schools were destroyed or damaged.

11. At the Immaculate Hospital of Les Cayes, all the wounded are received on the court. However, because of the lack of health infrastructure, human and material resources, they do not receive the necessary care. The premises hosting the Health Center Petit Pont, still in the city of Les Cayes, is cracked. The damaged Camp-Perrin Health Center is dysfunctional. It has a single doctor who was not present during the earthquake. The Hôpital de Bonnes Fins, in Cavaillon, whose premises are damaged, is not working at full capacity.

12. The distribution ducts of the National Directorate of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DINEPA) in the city of Les Cayes, were severely damaged, as a result, some areas were flooded with water.

13. The premises of the police station of Aquin and the court of first instance of Les Cayes are damaged. The walls of the civil prison of Les Cayes have partially collapsed. As several cells were cracked, prison officials had to move many prisoners.

C. Situation in the department of Grand'Anse

14. The department of Grand'Anse has fourteen (14) communes. At least six (6) of them, namely those of Jérémie, especially the city center, Roseaux, Beaumont, Pestel, Corail and Bonbon are severely affected. Some communal sections and localities such as those of La Ravine à Charles located at Pestel, Petite Plaine located at Bonbon, Fond Cochon, located at Roseaux and Latibolière, dependent on Jérémie, are completely destroyed.

15. Several buildings, including Saint Louis de Jérémie Catholic Church, schools have been destroyed or

damaged.

16. The Saint Antoine de Jérémie Hospital and the health centers, which had no facilities before August 14, 2021, are unable to cope with the emergency caused by the earthquake. The patients who were hospitalized there, were transported to the court. The newly admitted are also installed there but, they receive no care.

17. On the evening of August 14, 2021, an escape was recorded at the Jérémie Civil Prison. The prison doors and windows were destroyed by the detainees who were trying to escape. The departmental director of Grand'Anse, the divisional commissioner Paul MÉNARD who was on the scene to help the officers of the Directorate of the Penitentiary Administration (DAP) was injured. A minor was raped. At least two (2) detainees, Jeanmil LUCIEN and Gamaël JOSEPH escaped. A fire attempt with start of execution was also recorded.

D. Organization of Victim Assistance

18. More than forty-eight (48) hours after the earthquake, and despite the fact that the state of emergency has been declared, the central state has difficulty organizing assistance to the victims. They are completely on their own. Some are already starting to make personal efforts to find tents to shelter from the weather and provide for their daily needs. Hospitals and health centers are sorely short of human and material resources and the injured are desperately waiting for the care they deserve. This is total chaos.

19. This scenario is painfully reminiscent of the earthquakes of January 12, 2010 and October 6, 2018, which respectively struck some communes of the West, South-East and Nippes on the one hand, and some communes of the North-West and Artibonite on the other. Although the particularly deadly earthquake of 12 January 2010 had caused the death of three hundred thousand (300,000) people, on October 6, 2018, at least fifteen (15) people were killed and three hundred (300) others were injured.

20. Each time, the wounded population has had to face enormous needs, particularly in terms of basic needs kits, health care for the wounded, clearing of buildings to help the survivors under the rubble and psychological assistance. Each time, the authorities' infancy proved that they are totally unable to manage the emergency.

21. Today, the situation does not seem different. In addition, with the threat of Tropical Storm Grace, the population of the Nippes, South and Grand'Anse, already at a high risk, is at great risk. People who find themselves in public squares and on the streets are at the mercy of the unleashed elements. Consequently, they cannot wait indefinitely for the aid promised by the Haitian state to which they are entitled.

22. The RNDDH and its structures of Nippes, South and Grand'Anse take the opportunity to remind the de facto authorities that the emergency situation in the three (3) above mentioned departments do not take away from their obligation to respect the rights of victims and the rules of accountability for humanitarian interventions. In this sense, the aid must be distributed to the victims according to their needs, the approaches must be rights-based and the distributions must not affect the psychological integrity and dignity of the victims. Accountability mechanisms for rescued persons must be established and complaint reception cells established, For possible cases of human rights violations, including cases of sexual bargaining - often recorded during natural disasters - must be known to all.

23. In addition, the safety of persons in public spaces is an unwavering obligation. For this, these spaces

must be illuminated at night, and the agents of the PNH must organize regular patrols, with the aim of avoiding the commission of criminal acts against the victims who find themselves there.

24. The RNDDH and its Nippes structures, of the South and Grand'Anse urge state officials to avoid the mistakes of 2010 that led to flagrant cases of human rights violations and those of 2018 where the population had been completely abandoned to the point of fending for itself to recover.

25. Finally, the RNDDH and its regional structures in Nippes, South and Grand'Anse express their sympathies to the survivors of the earthquake and to the many victim families and invite the authorities to show seriousness and diligence in the process to organization the disaster relief.

Port-au-Prince, August 16, 2021