



NEWS RELEASE

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

CONTACTER : **Marle Rosy Kesner AUGUSTE DUCÉNA**
PHONE : (509)2940-1222 / 3755-9591 / 3463-4192
Cell : (509) 3782-2897

*The Judiciary Police Investigations related to Trafficking in Firearms and Ammunition:
The RNDDH welcomes the efforts of the Central Directorate of the Judicial Police (DCPJ)*

1. The RNDDH follows with sustained attention the investigations conducted by the Central Directorate of the Judicial Police (DCPJ), relative to the various shipments of weapons and ammunition seized or discovered both in Port-de-Paix, in the department of North-West, in Port-au-Prince in the Department of West.
2. The RNDDH considers the efforts of the DCPJ commendable at a time when the country is gangsterized and - it becomes clear - the illegal trafficking of weapons and ammunition benefits many people. Yet, the Haitian population does not stop counting corpses and obeying the law of armed bandits, each day a little more arrogant in their modus operandi.
3. The RNDDH recalls that from 2018 to the present day, at least sixteen (16) massacres and armed attacks have been documented in several communes of the West Department. The last two (2) perpetrated in La Plaine du Cul-de-sac and Cité Soleil by armed gangs, resulted in the murder of more than five hundred (500) Haitians and the collective rape of at least eighteen (18) Haitian women.
4. Alongside these bloody massacres and armed attacks with high records, the population continues to suffer kidnappings followed by sequestration for ransom, and targeted assassinations. Street chases also cause many casualties and material losses.

5. Today, hundreds of armed gangs are fighting over the national territory. All provincial cities are also gangsterized. And the RNDDH remains convinced that all these acts of harm to lives and property would not have been possible if many people, for the most part, occupying important positions at the State level, were not actively involved in this illegal trafficking of weapons and ammunition, with deadly consequences for Haiti.

6. For the spectacular seizure carried out in Port-de-Paix, the RNDDH recalls that as of July 1, 2022, handguns, chargers, rifles, as well as one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) cartridges intended for long-range assault rifles, distributed in one hundred and fifty-seven (157) crates, were discovered by Port-de-Paix customs officers. These weapons and ammunition were transported from Miss Lili One coming from Florida.

7. On the same day, July 1, 2022, Mr. Fritz Jean RELUS, who was in charge of receiving part of the cargo shipment while transporting his concealment to Port-au-Prince, was arrested.

8. On July 5, 2022, the vessel Miss Lili One was thoroughly searched in the presence of its owner Mr. Jonas GEORGES. At the time of the excavations, Jonas GEORGES, offended, said to anyone who wanted to hear it, to have paid the director of the customs of Port-de-Paix, Mrs. Nadège Rebecca ETIENNE, sufficiently enough, to avoid this kind of confusion. The same day, Jonas GEORGES was arrested for criminal association and illegal trafficking of firearms.

9. The next day, July 6, 2022, the government commissioner at the Court of First Instance of Port-de-Paix, magistrate Michelet VIRGILE, ordered the extraction of the detained Mr. Fritz Jean RELUS and Mr. Jonas GEORGES. He simply released them.

10. According to information received by the RNDDH, their release was obtained following a financial transaction valued at more than two hundred thousand (200,000) US dollars. And, according to people with whom the RNDDH spoke, several members of the judicial system in Port-de-Paix were involved.

11. On July 12, 2022, the government commissioner at the Court of First Instance of Port-de-Paix, magistrate Michelet VIRGILE was arrested. A few hours after his arrest, the RNDDH learned that the dean of the Court of First Instance of Port de Paix, the magistrate Yves-Marie PERICLES, had not received a motion to this effect, without any record of a report from a justice of the peace, was quick to issue his writ of release in habeas corpus, in favor of Commissioner Michelet VIRGILE. The order was forwarded to the place of detention of magistrate Michelet VIRGILE. However, the agents of the National Police of Haiti (PNH) on-site could not follow up, because of the late hour. In the evening, magistrate Michelet VIRGILE was transferred to the offices of the DCPJ, in Tabarre, in the Department of the West.

12. The Department of Justice and Public Safety has also been splashed by this scandal. The RNDDH wants proof of the mandate to bring, the prohibition of departure and the search opinion issued against Maître Fritz AUBOURG, deputy director of judicial affairs for forfeiture, concussion, and association of wrongdoers; and the arrest on July 22, 2022, of Mr. Robinson PIERRE-LOUIS, lawyer of Jonas GEORGES and member of the cabinet of the Minister of Justice and Public Security, Mr. Bertho DORCE, for wrongful conduct, suspicion of corruption, influence peddling and conspiracy. On this point, it should be pointed out that the magistrate Michelet VIRGILE stated that Maître Fritz AUBOURG and Robinson PIERRE-LOUIS did all they could to obtain the release of Fritz Jean RELUS and Jonas GEORGES.

13. Moreover, it should be emphasized that the discovery of weapons and ammunition for the import of which the Episcopal Church of Haiti has been indexed, is not without uproar, given the indexed persons.

14. The RNDDH believes that today, the deterioration of the security situation in Haiti requires that all the light be shed on the illegal trafficking of weapons and ammunition in the country. In this sense, the RNDDH encourages the DCPJ to extend its investigations to financial crimes including money laundering, directly related to this trafficking.

15. However, the RNDDH reminds the DCPJ of its constitutional obligation to conduct all its investigations, while respecting the rights to judicial guarantees and the human dignity of indexed persons.

16. The RNDDH invites the Superior Council of the Judiciary (CSPJ) to deal with the case of firearms and ammunition trafficking in Port-de-Paix since it is reported that many members of the judicial system of this jurisdiction, in this scandal.

17. The RNDDH awaits, alongside the Haitian population in general and the survivors of the massacres perpetrated in deprived neighborhoods in particular, the results of investigations by the judicial police.

Port-au-Prince, July 25, 2022