



# National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH)



## The Increasing violence in the West and Artibonite departments: RNDDH denounces the complicity of the CSPN.

August 18, 2023

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### I. Introduction

1. Since the beginning of August 2023, the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) has noted an increase in violence in several areas of the West and Artibonite departments, including Carrefour, Carrefour-Feuilles, Croix-des-Bouquets, Delmas, La Croix Périsse, Savien, Solino, etc., resulting in numerous murders and gunshot wounds.

2. Concerned by this situation, RNDDH wishes to alert public opinion to the lack of action on the part of the Superior Council of the National Police (CSPN), which systematically ignores the many calls for help from the population in distress.

### II. Fueling a climate of tension in the country.

3. Since the beginning of August 2023, gunfire has been heard throughout the West and Artibonite departments, particularly in and around the strongholds of armed gangs.

4. During the same period, many people were murdered. The victims were citizens going about their business, upon whom armed bandits opened fire, maintaining a tense situation in the two (2) departments mentioned. There are numerous examples, most of them reported in the media:

- On August 4, 2023, at Carrefour Peille in the commune of Liancourt, a simultaneous attack by armed gangs Gran Grif and Kokorat San Ras resulted in the murder of at least five (5) people. Several others were wounded by bullets.
- From August 4 to 16, 2023, sporadic armed attacks were recorded in Carrefour-Feuilles. They were carried out by heavily armed bandits belonging to the Team Ascenseur group operating in Grand-Ravine and led by Renel DESTINA alias Ti Lapli. The bandits attacked several Carrefour-Feuilles neighborhoods simultaneously, including Savane Pistache, Saye, Fouchard, Décayette, Anba Figue, Ravin Zonyon, La Montagne, Rue Monseigneur Guilloux, Bò Nènè, etc.,

killing at least fifty-four (54) residents, including two (2) police officers, wounding at least three (3) others and causing thousands of families to flee the area.

- On August 9, 2023, at least three (3) people were murdered in Tabarre.
- On August 14, 2023, armed bandits took control of the Electricity of Haiti (ED'H) substation in Carrefour-Feuilles.
- On August 15, 2023, in Lamentin 54, Carrefour, two (2) police officers were shot and wounded in an armed attack.
- On the night of August 15 to 16, 2023, near Côte-Plage 18, Carrefour, a young man was shot dead.
- On August 16, 2023, armed bandits belonging to the Gran Grif gang operating in Savien, in the Artibonite department, carried out an armed attack against members of the local population. At least three (3) people were killed. They were Peter Fils BARTHELEMY, Sophonic EXANTUS, and Richecader ADRIEN alias Blanc. On the same day, police officers on their way to Croix-Périsse were ambushed. Their vehicle, a PNH pick-up, was set on fire.
- On the afternoon of August 16, 2023, seven (7) people were killed in Delmas. At least five (5) of them were in a pick-up truck in Delmas 33. The other two (2) were killed in the street, one of them in Gérald Bataille. Three (3) of the victims in the van have been identified. They are Jean Widly LUNDI, born July 30, 1994, James Amikel CINE, born May 23, 1988, and the van driver, Roosevelt ALEXIS.
- Throughout the day and into the evening of August 17, 2023, automatic weapons fire was heard in Solino and Bel-Air, raising the specter of another armed attack.

### **III. People murdered in Carrefour-Feuilles from August 4 to 16, 2023.**

5. On August 4, 2023, during an armed attack perpetrated by Grand-Ravine bandits against the population of Carrefour-Feuilles, Agent IV Eddy DERISCA, a member of the 18th promotion of the Haitian National Police (PNH), was shot and killed. He was the father of seven (7) children and was assigned to the traffic division.

6. On August 7, 2023, Jean Rosner SIMEON, aged twenty-six (26) and father of two (2) children, was attempting to return home to Savane Pistache when he was shot and killed by armed bandits. His body was taken away by the bandits.

7. On August 8, 2023, Wisnaïda SMITH, aged twenty-three (23) and mother of a baby boy, was shot in the head at Carrefour-Feuilles, Impasse Beauboeuf. She was taken to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and then transferred to the Hospital of the State University of Haiti (HUEH). She died on August 12, 2023.

8. On August 12, 2023, Pauline MICHEL, aged sixty-seven (67) and mother of three (3) children, was killed at her home in Decayette. Her house went up in smoke with her body inside.

9. From August 13 to 16, 2023, armed attacks intensified in Carrefour-Feuilles. This led survivors and relatives of the victims to take refuge at the Lycée National de Carrefour-Feuilles, Collège Tertullien Guilbaud, Ecole Classique la Pyramide, El Dorado night-club and Gymnasium Vincent. Here are the stories of the events gathered by RNDDH from the victims:

- On August 13, 2023, Jonas ESPERANCE, aged sixty-five (65) and father of three (3) children, was at home in Savane Pistache, zone Do Savann, when he received two (2) projectiles. His body was then burned inside his house.
- On August 13, 2023, twenty-three (23)-year-old Fernando ARISTON was at home in Carrefour-Feuilles, zone Anba Figye, when armed bandits arrived. They murdered him before setting fire to his house, with his body inside.
- On August 13, 2023, Jethro DACILAT, aged thirty-five (35) and father of two (2) daughters, was killed at his home in Savane Pistache. He was shot in the stomach and died. His house was set on fire with his body inside.
- Bovil LAROSE, cousin of Jethro DACILAT, aged thirty-six (36) and father of one (1) little boy, was also in Jethro DACILAT's house when he was shot in the head. He was rushed to the Hospital of the State University of Haiti (HUEH). He died on August 16, 2023
- During the night of August 13 to 14, 2023, Nérilus EXILUS, aged seventy (70) and father of eight (8) children, was killed in his home by armed bandits. His body was set on fire.

- On August 13, 2023, Jubert JULIEN, a sixteen (16)-year-old minor, was at home in Carrefour-Feuilles, zone Bò Nènèl when bandits invaded his neighborhood. Between 1 and 2 p.m., his relatives discovered his corpse, shot through the head in a corridor not far from his house.
- On August 13, 2023, Jean Pierre LAVILETTE, born on July 26, 1936, and father of three (3) children, was killed and his body charred inside his house. For some time, the elderly victim had been unable to get out of bed.
- On August 13, 2023, Vilna LECTOR, aged twenty-seven (27), was at home in Beaubœuf, Savane Pistache when, at around 4 p.m., armed bandits invaded his house. They murdered her and her only son Saison LECTOR, aged two (2). The fire was set to the house, with their bodies inside.
- On August 13, 2023, Léonne MERELUS, aged forty-eight (48) and mother of one (1) child, a vendor at the Savane Pistache market, was shot dead. When family members tried to recover her body, they learned that the armed bandits had also set it on fire.
- On August 13, 2023, Corly METELLUS, aged twenty-two (22), was reported missing. He was last seen running away.
- On August 13, 2023, around 2 p.m., Spéréla JOSEPH, aged seventy (70), mother of four (4) children, was at home in Carrefour-Feuilles, area Bò Nènèl when armed bandits invaded the neighborhood. She was shot in the head as she tried to escape. Speréla JOSEPH was accompanied by her cousin Youlette ALCINEUS, aged 52 and mother of five (5) children. The latter was shot in the chest. The bodies of the victims remained on the road.
- Unaware that Bò Nènè, his area of residence, had fallen into the hands of armed bandits, on the afternoon of August 13, 2023, Jacques DESIR, aged seventy-five (75) and father of six (6) children, was returning from work when he was murdered. He was working as a security guard at a house in Magloire Ambroise.
- On the afternoon of August 13, 2023, five (5) members of the same family were at home in Carrefour-Feuilles, zone Do Savann. They were Jocelyn MOÏSE, aged eighteen (18), Paulone VICTOR aged seventy-five (75), Joceline MOÏSE, aged thirty-five (35) and her two (2) daughters Carline DORIVAL aged fourteen (14),

and Joujou, aged three (3). They were all murdered. Their bodies were set on fire along with the house.

- On August 13, 2023, James PIERRE LOUIS, aged forty-six (46), father of three (3) children, and his son Kenlov PIERRE LOUIS, aged seven (7), were about to flee their home when they were shot dead in front of their house. Their bodies were set on fire.
- On the night of August 13 to 14, 2023, Emmanuel JOSEPH, a seventeen (17)-year-old student in ninth grade, was murdered in Savane Pistache. He was attempting to flee from the hostilities.
- On August 13, 2023, at around 10 p.m., in the locality of Do Savann, Savane Pistache, Beniche JEAN LOUIS, aged forty-five (45), was caught on his way home, in the company of his three (3)-year-old daughter, Roselore JEAN LOUIS. They were trying to escape. They were shot and their bodies set on fire. Their remains were eaten by dogs.
- During the night of August 13 to 14, 2023, Yvrose PHIDELMONT, born on September 10, 1964, and mother of three (3) children, was killed at her home in Carrefour-Feuilles. Her body was charred.
- Since the night of August 13, 2023, five (5) members of the same family living in the Do Savann locality have gone missing. They are Samuel PAUL, aged twenty-one (21), Linda PAUL, aged nineteen (19), Mickenson CHARLES, born on May 14, 2005, Marie Choute PAUL, aged sixty (60) and mother of five (5) children, and Méridier PAUL, aged seventy (70) and father of two (2) children. According to the testimonies of neighbors, the missing persons were killed, and their corpses burned along with their houses. Two (2) neighbors, Ghislaine (as she is known), mother of three (3) children, and Bernadette (as she is known), have also since gone missing. They lived in a house adjacent to that of the five (5) other victims mentioned above.

10. On August 14, 2023, armed attacks on the population of Carrefour-Feuilles continued with almost the same intensity. At least nineteen (19) people were murdered that day.

- On August 14, 2023, Aristène ARISTOR, aged seventy-five (75), was at home in Savane Pistache when armed bandits broke into his house, killed him, and then set fire to it, with his body inside

- On August 14, 2023, Sonson BIEN-AIME, aged twenty-nine (29), was murdered as he fled the Savane Pistache area.
- On August 14, 2023, between 6 and 7 p.m., in Savane Pistache, Beaubœuf area, Yvrose CALIXTE, aged forty-two (42) and mother of three (3), was shot in the stomach as she tried to flee. Her body was left on the road.
- On August 14, 2023, police officer Anescat ELIXION, a member of the 28th PNH promotion, was murdered in Carrefour-Feuilles. He was assigned to the Direction of the Penitentiary Administration DAP/EPINES. His body and vehicle were set on fire.
- On August 14, 2023, Romel FABIEN, thirty-three (33) years old and father of two (2) children, was murdered in Savane Pistache while trying to retrieve some personal belongings from his house.
- On August 14, 2023, Sonson FILS-AIME, aged twenty-three (23) and father of a young child, was killed in Savane Pistache. The victim was murdered as he tried to leave his home to seek refuge elsewhere.
- On August 14, 2023, Cadet FRANÇOIS, a fifty-three (53)-year-old father of four (4) children, was killed. Early the previous morning, he had gone to church in town. He was accompanied by one of his children. Unable to return home, he spent the night of August 13 to 14, 2023 at the Champs de Mars. On August 14, 2023, he went home to retrieve some personal belongings. He was murdered. Cadet FRANÇOIS lived in Do Savann.
- On August 14, 2023, Fritzner HIPPOLYTE, aged 55, father of four (4) children, was shot dead in Savane Pistache. He was trying to flee the area when he was shot.
- On August 14, 2023, Kerby JEAN, aged nineteen (19), was killed. He was trying in vain to escape the fury of armed bandits in Savane Pistache.
- Luckson JEAN, aged twenty-six (26), has been missing since August 14, 2023. He was at home when bandits invaded the area. Since then, his family has had no news of him.

- On August 14, 2023, in Savane Pistache, Johnny MONCHER, aged thirty-one (31), was murdered in the presence of his mother. They were fleeing the area.
- On August 14, 2023, Liçon PIERRE, aged thirty-six (36), father of one (1) daughter, was murdered at his home in Carrefour Feuilles, Morne Marie area. His house was set on fire with his body inside.
- On August 14, 2023, in La Montagne, three (3) members of the same family were killed. Their house was set on fire with their bodies inside. They were Mona Pascal ETIENNE, aged forty-six (46) and mother of three (3) children; Rebecca ETIENNE, aged twelve (12) and Jean ETIENNE, aged around fifty and father of two (2) children.
- On August 14, 2023, Laurendieu SAINT-JEAN, born on September 13, 1945, and his son Sony SAINT-JEAN, born on October 17, 2001, were both murdered as they tried to flee Savane Pistache.
- On the afternoon of August 14, 2023, Maradona PIERRE, born December 10, 2000, was killed by armed bandits in Savane Pistache. He was trying to escape.
- On the evening of August 14, 2023, twenty-eight (28)-year-old Peterson JEROME was trying to escape when he was murdered. He lived in the Rue Bien-aimé area of Carrefour-Feuilles. At first, he was hit by a projectile. Despite his injury, he kept running. He was intercepted by the gunmen, who finished him off with a knife.
- On August 16, 2023, Junior MONDESIR, born on August 12, 1984, and father of four (4) children, was killed in Savane Pistache. According to his relatives, Junior MONDESIR had decided not to abandon his home, arguing that he was a native son of this area.

#### **IV. People injured by gunshots at Carrefour-Feuilles**

11. RNDDH has identified four (4) of the many people who have been wounded by bullets:

- On August 13, 2023, in Carrefour-Feuilles, twenty-five (25)-year-old Evens FILS-AIME was shot in the right hand.

- On August 13, 2023, in Savane Pistache, Carrefour-Feuilles, Work DORVIL, aged twenty-three (23), was shot in the groin. He was taken to the Haitian State University Hospital (HUEH).
- On the night of August 13-14, 2023, Jean Dahenne MEHAËL, born January 21, 2018, was shot in the right leg while at home with her parents. She was transported to Médecins Sans Frontières.
- On August 16, 2023, James MONDESIR, aged thirty-four (34), was shot in the right foot in Savane Pistache while trying to remove the corpse of his brother Junior MONDESIR, who was killed the same day. The victim was admitted to Médecins Sans Frontières.

## **V. Comments and recommendations**

12. In the Artibonite and the West department, the scenario is the same: armed gangs are active to maintain a climate of terror in the country, killing citizens, injuring others, and causing thousands of families to flee, abandoning their homes and everything they own.

13. In the first part of August 2023 alone, at least seventy-three (73) people were murdered, including fifty-four (54) in Carrefour-Feuilles alone.

14. In the two (2) departments, the reactions of the victims and their families are similar: they feel that the police have done nothing to protect them from the fury of the armed gangs. And, in the case of Carrefour-Feuilles in particular, they claim that the PNH officers driving around in the institution's armored vehicles seemed, by their behavior, to have been ordered only to protect the Carrefour-Feuilles sub-police station. Moreover, given the high death toll in Carrefour-Feuilles, RNDDH can affirm that this latest assault by the Grand-Ravine gang is bloodier than any previous one recorded in the area since 2019.

15. RNDDH believes that the de facto government led by Prime Minister Ariel HENRY has been implementing a policy of chaos for several months to justify to the international community the request for foreign military intervention that it has produced, to continue to protect the armed gangs and to retain power.

16. RNDDH points out that the PNH Superior Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, is made up of puppet individuals with no convictions whatsoever, who are content to accept the de facto Prime Minister Ariel HENRY's policy of chaos.



17. RNDDH denounces the complicity of the CSPN and the inertia of the police institution, whose cynicism in the face of an isolated population has left it at the mercy of armed bandits.

18. RNDDH highlights the ease with which PNH Acting Director General Frantz ELBE generally orders officers to bombard the population with tear gas when they demonstrate peacefully to demand protection and assistance from the government. On the other hand, when it comes to helping the many families who have fallen victim to armed attacks perpetrated by armed bandits, Acting Director General Frantz ELBE categorically forbids agents to intervene.

19. Through this unacceptable behavior, the Acting Director General of the police institution, Frantz ELBE, the other members of the PNH high command, and the CSPN, are confusing themselves with the armed bandits by siding with them, to the detriment of the Haitian population.

20. It is because they believe that the violence, they are enduring is orchestrated by armed bandits, with the complicity of state and police authorities, that despite their state of total destitution, the Place Jérémie refugees have refused the hot meals offered by the Economic and Social Assistance Fund (FAES).

21. Faced with the cynicism of the state and police authorities, RNDDH recalls that the rights to life, security, physical and psychological integrity, and private property are fundamental rights enshrined both in the current Haitian Constitution and in the international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Haiti. Their systematic violation by those in power must lead the victimized population to rise and organize to resist the gangsterization of the State and the country.