

National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH)

- *Massacres and armed attacks*
- *Absence of state authorities*
- *Lack of access to basic services*
- *Massive human rights violations*

Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air : areas plagued by recurring armed violence and a population destroyed but forgotten

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Summary

1. From July to November 2023, the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) conducted a survey of three hundred (300) citizens living in the neighborhoods of Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air, on gun violence and its consequences on the population.

2. While the activities of armed gangs are recorded throughout the West department, while armed bandits are establishing their hold in other geographical departments of the country, and while state authorities continue to turn a blind eye to the crimes perpetrated by the latter, the results of this survey demonstrate that the consequences of widespread insecurity are enormous for the Haitian population. More specifically, the survey conducted by RNDDH reveals and/or confirms, among other things, that:

- Armed violence is a daily reality for Haitian citizens;
- The fact that the population is subjected to frequent episodes of violence has serious psychological consequences. According to many respondents, they feel they are losing their minds and going mad;
- Behind the hegemonic character of armed gang struggles, interests are numerous and vary from one war to another, even between similar protagonists;
- Armed gangsters are generally well known in the neighborhoods where they operate. They are often accompanied by minors;
- In the targeted communities, the population lives differently in times of peace and in times of war, even if in either case they are always under the thumb of armed bandits;
- Women and girls are always at risk, whether or not there is war in their community. They are victims of rape, gang rape and other criminal acts, but are unable to lodge complaints against their attackers;
- The chronic absence of state structures in neighborhoods plagued by armed violence is deemed unacceptable by citizens, who find it difficult to do without state authorities, even if they are generally of little use to them;
- The denial of citizens' fundamental rights and the absence of basic social services make populations exposed to extreme poverty even more vulnerable.

3. The data used to reach the above conclusions were collected from the populations of Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air. However, they describe the lives of all citizens living in all areas now plagued by recurrent armed violence and officially declared "lost territories" by the state authorities.

4. In addition to the precise data gathered through the survey, the interviews also revealed that general living conditions in the neighborhoods are inhuman and totally unacceptable.

5. Finally, it should be emphasized that since 2018, life has drastically changed with the successive episodes of violence in the country, the creation and strengthening of armed gang coalitions, the collusion between these armed gangs and the political and judicial authorities, as well as the acceptance of armed gangs as a new component of social and political life in Haiti.

6. Today, RNDDH can affirm that life in neighborhoods plagued by armed violence can be summed up as violence of all kinds, including sexual violence, the absence of state authorities, citizens' lack of access to basic services, an unhealthy and dangerous environment characterized by mountains of garbage, and massive human rights violations.

7. Faced with this complex situation, the respondents to the RNDDH survey themselves made the following recommendations: Put an end to the protection of armed bandits; Dismantle the armed gangs operating in Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air and regain control of these areas; Arrest, try and condemn all armed bandits who are putting the Haitian population into mourning; Provide psychological assistance to the victimized populations of Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air; Ensure the temporary and secure relocation and reception of victims of insecurity; Clean up the Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air neighborhoods; Promote adequate security conditions for the reopening of schools and vocational training establishments to enable schoolchildren. Establish reliable and functional drinking water and electricity distribution networks; Promote adequate safety conditions to enable the populations of Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air to have access to functional health facilities.

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1. For several years now, the Haitian population's rights to life, security, physical and psychological integrity, freedom of movement and private property have been violated. These systematic and massive violations take the form, among other things, of massacres and armed attacks, the immediate consequences of which are the reconfiguration of territorial space and the acceptance of the reign of armed bandits as the rule.

2. The National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) has monitored a number of these violent sequences, and several related reports have been published. Today, however, RNDDH feels it is important to focus on the lives of people living in neighborhoods plagued by recurrent armed violence, which has prompted the organization to carry out a survey in three (3) different areas, namely Bel-Air, Carrefour Feuilles and Cité Soleil.

3. This report presents the results of this survey.

a) Background

4. On November 13 and 14, 2018, a state-sponsored massacre was perpetrated in La Saline, a poor neighborhood in Haiti's capital. This first of a series of massacres would punctuate life in and around Port-au-Prince. From then until 2023, at least twenty-five (25) major episodes of violence - due to the high number of people killed, the number of women and girls' gang-raped, and the amount of property destroyed by armed bandits - are recorded in the country.

5. While at first glance these sequences of violence seem like simple hegemonic struggles, a closer look reveals the links between armed bandits and political figures and members of the private business sector. In fact, between 2018 and 2023, the successive state

authorities at the head of the country developed relationships with armed bandits based on synallagmatic protection, the former needing to maintain themselves in power by any means necessary, the latter needing to enjoy the immunity that only the state can provide, to indulge in their exactions. And it is usually the armed bandits themselves who denounce members of the private business sector with whom they are in regular communication.

6. It is because of their links with the political authorities and the private business sector that these armed bandits become more arrogant in their modus operandi every day. They don't hide when perpetrating their reprehensible acts, recording rapes and murders, and circulating video footage on social networks, despoiling land, squatting in houses, expanding their territory and continually attacking the civilian population, left to fend for themselves.

7. The surviving victims and relatives of victims of the above-mentioned episodes of violence are, on the contrary, regularly driven to flee the sites of conflict and take refuge elsewhere, where they are often pursued in order to be attacked again.

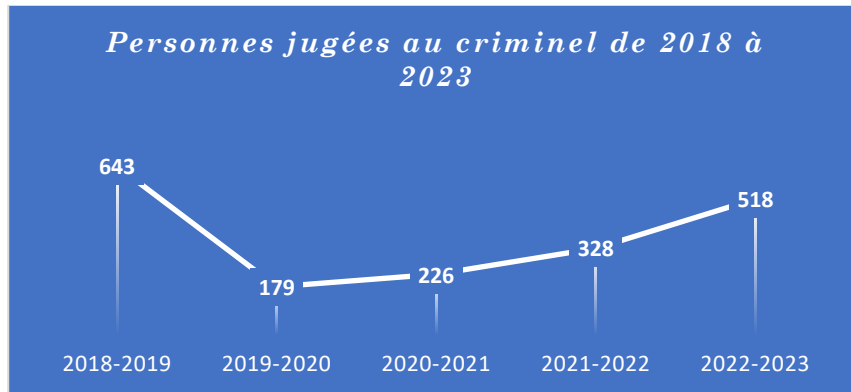
8. Two (2) large coalitions of armed gangs have emerged: the G-9 an Fanmi et Alye led by Jimmy CHERIZIER alias Barbecue and the G-Pèp led by Gabriel JEAN PIERRE alias Ti Gabriel or Gabo. The former was launched in 2020 and openly supported by the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and the National Commission for Disarmament, Dismantlement and Reintegration (CNDDR), who at the time presented this new coalition as a good thing, with the armed bandits promising not to attack each other. The G-Pèp coalition, which already existed, was not officially presented to the general public.

9. The armed gangs belonging to one coalition, or the other are very powerful, and engage in all kinds of armed violence. Indeed, in 2023, the year in which RNDDH carried out this survey, acts of violence against life and property were regularly recorded throughout the country, particularly in the departments of West and Artibonite. On average, thirty (30) victims of human rights violations were recorded every day, with peaks reaching unimaginable heights on weekends.

10. For its part, the Haitian justice system, totally uninvolved, has failed to provide an appropriate response to the phenomenon of armed gangs. As a result, the many crimes committed during massacres and armed attacks remain unpunished, despite the public outcry and the complaints lodged by surviving victims and their families. The criminal trials held over the last five (5) judicial years, in the country's eighteen (18) courts of first instance, amply prove this:

Judicial years	Persons tried	Persons sentenced	Persons released	Persons without verdict
2018-2019	643	412	231	-
2019-2020	179	91	88	-
2020-2021	226	91	48 (..)	87
2021-2022	328	194	67 (-67)	67
2022-2023	518	297	221	-
Total	1894	1085	655	154

Table I



11. Finally, it should be pointed out that while it has been noted that since 2021, more and more of the capital's residential neighborhoods have been targeted by armed bandits, underprivileged neighborhoods remain the preferred targets of armed bandits. For example, the three (3) areas chosen by RNDDH for the survey, namely Bel-Air, Carrefour Feuilles and Cité Soleil, present similarities: since 2019, they have been continuously prey to armed violence, they are located in the West department and are home to a high percentage of disadvantaged people.

b) Survey presentation and methodology

12. From July to November 2023, RNDDH conducted a specific survey in three (3) distinct areas of the West department, namely Cité Soleil, a commune of the West department, and two (2) neighborhoods juxtaposed to this commune: Bel-Air and Carrefour Feuilles.

13. This survey finds its justification in one of the axes of RNDDH's three-year strategic plan 2023-2025, which consists in making the multiplication of advocacy actions for the respect of the fundamental rights to life and security of the populations of disadvantaged neighborhoods, a priority. Its aim is to encourage the Haitian state to protect the population of underprivileged neighborhoods, particularly women and girls, who are often subjected to sexual and physical abuse.

14. The importance of such an approach is based on the thesis that, outside sequences of violence, the populations of targeted areas can go about their business normally. Armed violence therefore has serious consequences for the living space of surviving victims and their families.

15. As part of this study, RNDDH first examined the documentation relating to the three (3) target communities, and then drew up a form relating to the specific data sought. This form was completed by the interviewers on the basis of the answers provided by the respondents.

16. This second part of the research was carried out in two (2) separate stages: First, RNDDH visited the neighborhoods targeted by its survey. During this visit, photos were taken, and initial contact was made with some of the victims who agreed to take part in the survey. In a second phase, three hundred (300) people who lived or still live in the targeted

areas, at a rate of one hundred (100) people per area, were invited to come to the RNDDH offices to answer the questionnaire previously drawn up.

17. The survey form prepared by RNDDH's technical team and used in this study is divided into six (6) main sections covering:

- a) Respondent's history of armed violence
- b) History of armed violence in the target area
- c) State presence in the target communities
- d) General living conditions in the target communities
- e) Social life in target communities
- f) Economic life in target communities

18. A total of two hundred and twenty-five (225) women, mostly heads of households, and seventy-five (75) men were questioned. These three hundred (300) respondents were then invited to share their comments and recommendations for improving life in their respective communities.

19. For this survey, RNDDH mobilized eight (8) people, including six (6) permanent members of its technical staff, namely three (3) women and three (3) men, and two (2) field collaborators. Seven (7) of these were responsible for carrying out the survey activities and field visits, and one (1) for supervising the implementation of the activities in question.

c) Survey limits

20. The planned number of field visits was not carried out. RNDDH had to cut them short. In addition, the focus groups should have been held in the communities, but due to the security situation and tension in these three (3) zones, which continued to deteriorate throughout the survey, RNDDH had to change its strategy and suggest that respondents come to its premises.

21. While initial contact had been established between RNDDH and certain residents who had, at the time of the field visits, expressed their willingness to take part in the survey, those who withdrew were subsequently replaced by residents registered in the RNDDH database. This partial change of strategy was also decided both because of the security situation in the target areas and to avoid the second category of respondents being directed by the first.

22. Only adults were questioned in this survey. Unfortunately, due to the complexity of some of the questions on the form, teenagers did not take part in the interviews, even though they suffer as much as adults from armed violence, which leaves them with serious after-effects.

A. **PART ONE**

- I. Brief presentation of target areas
- II. Presentation of respondents
- III. Respondents' history of violence
- IV. History of areas targeted by violence

A. PART ONE

23. The first part of this report describes the areas targeted by the survey, namely Bel-Air, Carrefour-Feuilles and Cité Soleil, introduces the respondents and focuses on the history of violence as experienced both in the areas in question and by the respondents themselves.

I. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TARGET AREAS

a) Presentation of Carrefour-Feuilles

24. Carrefour-Feuilles is a neighborhood in the south of Port-au-Prince, adjacent to Morne l'Hôpital. The neighborhood, like many others in the Port-au-Prince commune, was hard hit by the earthquake of January 12, 2010. In the aftermath, construction became even more anarchic and the push towards Morne l'Hôpital increased.

25. In Carrefour-Feuilles, on rue Monseigneur Guilloux, you'll find the Hôpital Sanatorium de Port-au-Prince, specializing in the treatment of tuberculosis patients.

26. From 2019 to 2023, Carrefour-Feuilles experienced several sequences of armed violence. Here are a few examples investigated by RNDDH:

- On April 24, 2019, during an armed attack, nine (9) people were murdered, and eleven (11) others left wounded.
- From November 10 to 30, 2022, in the Savane Pistache locality, three (3) people were murdered, two (2) women raped, and several dozen houses and vehicles were set on fire by the attackers.
- From August 4 to September 12, 2023, at least one hundred and four (104) people were murdered, two (2) women gang-raped, fourteen (14) people shot and wounded, and thirty-five (35) houses were looted and then set on fire, destroyed, or squatted.

b) Cité Soleil presentation

27. Located in the Port-au-Prince district, Cité Soleil¹ is one of the twenty (20) communes making up the West department. The commune is divided into two (2) communal sections: Varreux 1 and Varreux 2, covering a total area of 21.8 square kilometers. These two (2) communal sections make up the thirty-four (34) former districts of the town, which, due to its new configuration, have now been reduced to twenty-nine (29).

28. In May 2015, the population of Cité Soleil was estimated by the Haitian Institute of Statistics and Informatics (IHSI) at two hundred and sixty-five thousand seventy-two (265,072) inhabitants.

¹ Report on the events in Cité Soleil on October 16, 2015, RNDDH, Rap/A15/No09, November 20, 2015

29. Administratively, Cité Soleil is home to one (1) Peace Court, a Town Hall, one (1) Civil Registry Office and six (6) police stations: the Boulevard des Amériques police station, also known as Route 9, the Duvivier sub-police station, the Sierra 2 sub-police station and the sub-police station located between Soleil 17 and 19.

30. Cité Soleil also has two (2) police stations located in Carrefour-Drouillard and not far from Gonaïves Station.

31. Politically, Cité Soleil was elevated to the rank of commune on May 13, 2002, and has since become a municipality, with a seat in the House of Representatives.

32. Long before 2019, Cité Soleil was plagued by armed violence. The population of this commune is continually subjected to violence by armed gangs who see, in the geographical layout of their stronghold, an opportunity to hide but also, an opportunity to make a lot of money due to the economic and political interests of the area. From 2019 to 2023, Cité Soleil experienced several episodes of violence. RNDDH has worked on some of them:

- In March 2019, an armed attack led to the murder of seven (7) people;
- Between June 1 and July 28, 2020, armed attacks in Cité Soleil resulted in the murder or disappearance of one hundred and fifty-nine (159) people. Eighteen (18) women were gang-raped;
- From January to May 2021, fifty-one (51) people were murdered or reported missing. Fifteen (15) others were wounded by bullets. One woman was gang raped.
- From July 7 to 17, 2022, more than three hundred (300) people were murdered, more than fifty-five (55) women gang-raped and at least twenty-two (22) people wounded by bullets or stabbing. In addition, two hundred and ten (210) houses were first destroyed by heavy machinery belonging to the National Center of Equipment (CNE) and the Ministry of Public Works Transport and Communication, then set on fire by members of G-9 an Fanmi e Alye.

c) Presentation of Bel-Air

33. Bel-Air is one of the sixteen (16) hills surrounding the commune of Port-au-Prince. It is divided into twenty-four (24) blocks and five hundred and nine (509) corridors over which armed gang leaders reign. Its population is estimated at over thirty-two thousand (32,000), according to a census carried out in 2007 by Kiskeya University and the Viva Rio organization.

34. Administratively, the Bel-Air district is under the jurisdiction of the Port-au-Prince North Section Peace Court, which also houses the offices of the Civil Registry. The district is served by the Port-au-Prince police station and the base of the Brigade of Operation and Departmental Intervention (BOID), both (2) housed in the former Civil Prison of the National Fort, where women and minors from the Port-au-Prince jurisdiction who were in conflict with the law were formerly incarcerated.

35. In terms of tourism, the ruins of Port-au-Prince Cathedral and the parish church of Notre Dame du Perpétuel Secours, located in Bel-Air, are important sites.

36. Bel-Air is home to the Rue des Remparts market and is not far from the Tête Bœuf and Hyppolite markets. The latter is also known as Marché en fer.

37. Bel-Air has a tumultuous history with violence. From 2019 to 2023, numerous armed attacks were recorded here, as well as massacres that caused enormous human and material losses. Here are a few episodes of violence that RNDDH investigated:

- From November 4 to 8, 2019, twenty-four (24) people were killed and five (5) injured. Twenty-eight (28) houses were set on fire.
- On August 28, 2020, thirty-six (36) people were killed and twelve (12) injured.
- From March 31 to May 15, 2021, forty-five (45) people were murdered and twenty-four (24) injured.
- From February 27 to March 5, 2023, one hundred and forty-eight (148) people were murdered or went missing. Hundreds of homes were set on fire. This was by far the most virulent episode of violence ever recorded in Bel-Air.

II. PRESENTATION OF RESPONDENTS

38. As mentioned above, RNDDH interviewed three hundred (300) people for this survey, one hundred (100) per area. Of the respondents, two hundred and twenty-five (225), representing 75% of the total number, were women and seventy-five (75), representing 25% of the respondents, were men.

39. The age distribution of respondents shows that:

- Eighty-eight (88) or 29% are aged between eighteen (18) and thirty (30);
- Eighty-eight (88) or 29% are aged between thirty-one (31) and forty (40);
- Sixty-four (64) or 21% are between forty-one (41) and fifty (50) years old.
- Forty-one (41) or 14% are over fifty (50).

40. Nineteen (19) or 6% of respondents were unable to provide proof of age.

41. When asked whether or not they were parents, two hundred and thirty-three (233) respondents (78%) said they had offspring, compared with forty-five (45) (15%) who had no children. Twenty-two (22) respondents (7%) did not answer the question.

42. For the two hundred and thirty-three (233) respondents who said they were fathers and mothers:

- One hundred and fifty-nine (159) or 53% have between one (1) and three (3) children;
- Fifty-eight (58) or 19% of respondents have between four (4) and six (6) children;
- Eleven (11) or 4% of respondents have between seven (7) and nine (9) children;
- One (1) respondent has twelve (12) children;
- Two (2) respondents were each parent of only one (1) child. They lost them during the incidents of violence. One (1) respondent had two (2) children. He lost one (1) in an armed attack;
- Four (4) respondents who said they had children did not provide information on their number.

43. When asked how long they had lived in the target areas, respondents provided the following information:

- Forty-nine (49) or 16% had lived in the three (3) zones targeted by the survey since birth.
- Eighty-eight (88) or 29% have lived there for at least five (5) years and at most ten (10) years.
- One hundred and twelve (112) or 37% of respondents have lived there for at least eleven (11) years and at most twenty (20) years.
- Forty-three (43) or 14% have lived there for more than twenty (20) years.

44. Eight (8) representing 3% of respondents did not provide any specific information on the question.

III. RESPONDENTS' HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

45. Generally speaking, respondents have a history of violence. Two hundred and seventy-six (276) of them, or 92%, told RNDDH that they had already suffered acts of violence at the hands of armed bandits, compared with twenty-four (24), or 8%, who had never been victims.

46. On attacks suffered by respondents :

- Ninety-seven (97) respondents, representing 32%, had their parents or relatives murdered;
- Seventy-eight (78) women representing 26% had been raped. Among them, six (6) also had to witness the murder of their relatives before or after being raped, four (4) had their homes burnt down after being raped and four (4) others had also been beaten;
- Forty-seven (47) respondents (16%) had their homes burnt down;
- Thirty-one (31) respondents, representing 10%, said they had been beaten;
- Fifteen (15) respondents (5%) were shot;
- Eight (8) respondents (3%) claimed to have had their businesses destroyed.

47. When asked about the identity of their attackers, one hundred and seventy-two (172) respondents, representing 57%, said they knew their attackers, compared with one hundred and twenty-eight (128), representing 43%, who did not.

48. Of the respondents who did not know their aggressors, one hundred and twenty-one (121), or 40%, could at least provide information on the groups to which their aggressors belonged.

49. In addition, interviews revealed that one hundred and sixty-six (166) respondents (55%) had been attacked by armed bandits operating in their immediate vicinity.

50. In addition, two hundred and forty-one (241) respondents, representing 80%, said they knew people who had been victims of violence during armed clashes in their respective zones, against forty-eight (48) others, representing 16%, who said they knew no one who had suffered any kind of violence. Eleven (11) respondents (3%) did not answer the question.

IV. HISTORY OF AREAS TARGETED BY VIOLENCE

a) Focus on the protagonists according to respondents

51. Two hundred and ninety-six (296) respondents, representing 98% of the total, stated that wars and clashes between armed bandits usually take place in their community, while four (4) said the opposite. Two (2) of these four (4) respondents were from Carrefour-Feuilles, one (1) from Bel-Air and the other from Cité Soleil. They explained, however, that although their neighborhood had never been directly attacked by armed bandits, this had not prevented them from being victims of banditry.

52. The survey with those who consider that there has never been any violence in their community stopped at this question, the following ones being directly linked to gang activities in the targeted areas.

53. When asked to identify the protagonists, two hundred and five (205) respondents (69%) felt that the armed attacks or massacres recorded in their community took place between groups of armed bandits fighting each other. Forty-one (41) respondents, or 14%, believed that the clashes were between armed bandits and police resisting the bandits' assaults.

54. For forty-three (43) respondents (15%), these are armed bandits who systematically attack the population.

55. Seven (7) respondents, representing 2%, said they could not make any statements about the groups fighting each other.

56. It should be emphasized that respondents welcome the fact that police officers repel armed bandits, even if they are often police officers protecting their home area without the support or assistance of the institution to which they belong.

b) Focus on the relationship between armed bandits and target areas

57. Two hundred and fifty-two (252) respondents, representing 85%, felt that the areas targeted by this survey were controlled by armed bandits, compared with thirty-eight (38),

or 13%, who felt that, despite massacres and armed attacks, their area of residence was not controlled by armed bandits. Six (6) respondents did not give a clear answer to this question.

58. One hundred and eighty-four (184) respondents, 62% of them, said they knew which bandits controlled their area of residence, while another one hundred and five (105), 35% of them, said the opposite. Seven (7) did not answer this question.

59. Two hundred and twenty-four (224) respondents, representing 76% of them, said they were used to seeing minors among the armed individuals controlling their community, against seventy-two (72) others, or 24%, who said they had never seen any.

60. Two hundred and sixty-two (262) respondents, representing 89%, believed that in times of peace, people can go about their business, against twenty-eight (28), or 9%, who believed the opposite. Six (6) respondents did not answer this question.

61. For two hundred and one (201) respondents, representing 68% of them, even in times of peace, women and girls are frequently raped by the armed bandits who control their neighborhood, compared with ninety-five (95) or 32% of respondents who said that in times of peace, rapes are not frequent in their neighborhood.

62. However, two hundred and seventy-eight (278) respondents (94%) felt that victims of rape, even in times of peace, cannot easily press charges against their attackers, while only eighteen (18) respondents (6%) felt the opposite.

c) Focus on recent clashes in target areas

63. For all those questioned in this survey, the most recent clashes date back to 2023, during which assassinations and murders were recorded. At least, this is what two hundred and eighty-seven (287) respondents (97%) said, against two (2) who said the opposite. Seven (7) did not answer this question.

64. Two hundred and eighty-seven (287) or 97% of respondents also stated that gunshot and/or stab wounds had been recorded, against two (2) who stated the opposite. Seven (7) did not answer the question.

65. Two hundred and thirteen (213) respondents (72%) said that cases of rape against women and girls had been recorded during the recent bloody events in their community, compared with eighty-three (83) (28%) who said the opposite.

66. Questioned about the situation in their neighborhood at the time of the RNDDH survey:

- One hundred and eighty-two (182) others (61%) felt that war was still brewing in their area because of the perpetual threat of armed attacks and also because the situation was generally tense and often characterized by automatic weapons fire;

- One hundred and fourteen (114) respondents, representing 39%, said that activities were timidly resuming either after the zone had recorded a massacre or after the protagonists had announced that they had made peace.

67. Sixty-four (64) of the one hundred and eighty-six (186) respondents, taking as an example the fact that their community has been emptied of its population, consider the situation to be catastrophic. They don't see how a return to normalcy can be envisaged.

d) Nature and justification of violence according to respondents

68. When asked about the nature of the violence they suffer, respondents said they were exposed to ransom, armed robbery, murder and kidnapping. Women and girls are also exposed to rape and gang rape. Respondents also stated that during massacres and armed attacks, they are used as human shields by one or other of the protagonists.

69. In an attempt to justify the armed attacks and massacres recorded in their communities:

- One hundred and seventy-five (175) respondents, 59%, believe that armed bandits fight each other for control of the territory. Some of them clearly mentioned coveted territories such as the Wharf de Jérémie, the Nan Brooklyn market and the sand mines;
- Seventy-seven (77) respondents (26%) felt that these were battles between armed bandits, the reasons for which were not always known;
- Eighteen (18) respondents (6%) believe that bandits fight each other for money or revenge. Often, when money is sent to them by members of government or the private business sector, it is rarely shared equally between armed gangs operating in the same area, leading to armed attacks. Examples abound:
 - Wars often break out when "Père Tòm" sends money to armed gangs;
 - In one of the armed attacks recorded, Renel DESTINA, alias Ti Lapli, attacked the population of Savane Pistache in revenge for police officers who, he claimed, accepted the money from the kidnapping while killing his soldiers;
 - In another armed attack, Iscard ANDRICE wanted to avenge his mother who, he claimed, had been killed by Gabriel JEAN PIERRE alias Ti Gabriel or Gabo.
- Twenty (20) respondents, representing 7%, stated that massacres and armed attacks are justified by the absence of the government in areas plagued by violence, and by the lack of youth activities, which facilitates the recruitment of minors and young adults.
- Six (6) respondents were unable to answer this question.

B. PART TWO

- I. Government involvement in respondent communities
- II. Health, education, and access to basic services in target areas
- III. Economic activities of people living in target areas
- IV. Comments and recommendations

B. PART TWO

70. This second part of the document is devoted to the presence of state institutions in the communities where the respondents live, and to access to health care and education. It also presents an analysis of the economic life of the respondents, before comments and recommendations are formulated.

I. PRESENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN RESPONDENTS' COMMUNITIES

a) Police presence in target areas

71. One hundred and sixty-three (163) respondents (55%) stated that they had at least one (1) police station in their area, compared with one hundred and thirty-three (133) (45%) who stated the opposite.

72. One hundred and sixty-three (163) of these respondents, one hundred and thirty-one (131), stated that only one (1) police station served their community, against thirty-two (32) who stated that they had between two (2) and four (4) police stations.

73. In addition, one hundred and ninety-nine (119) others felt that police station personnel were unable to reach their place of work every day, compared with forty-four (44) others who said they were. And, when asked why they believe that police personnel cannot access police stations:

- Fifty-three (53) respondents said it was because armed bandits control their community and the police stations located there;
- Forty-one (41) believe that police officers have abandoned police stations, hence the reason for their dysfunction;
- Twenty-five (25) others stated that it was because the armed bandits had set fire to the police stations that the policemen were not accessing them.

b) Presence of the Registry office in target areas

74. Two hundred and fifty (250) respondents, representing 84% of them, stated that there was no civil registry office in their area to register births or any other civil status documents. Thirty-eight (38) others, or 13% of respondents, said their community had a civil registry office. The remaining eight (8), or 3%, did not answer the question. Five (5) of the latter categories said they didn't know what a registry office was for.

75. Twenty-four (24) of the respondents whose areas of residence have a registry office said that the staff assigned to it cannot get to their workspace every day, while eleven (11) said the opposite. Three (3) other respondents were unable to answer the question.

c) Presence of the Justice of the Peace in target areas

76. When asked about the presence and operation of the Justice of the Peace courts in their community, 194 respondents (66%) stated that there was no Justice of the Peace court adjacent to their community, while 102 respondents (34%) stated the opposite.

77. For those in whose areas a court is located, ninety-four (94) stated that staff can generally only get to or from their workstations when the security situation permits, and when armed gangs are not clashing. Eight (8) respondents felt that staff managed to get to court regularly.

d) Presence of local and municipal authorities in target areas

78. Two hundred and thirty-seven (237) respondents, representing 80%, stated that there were no local authorities in their area, while fifty-seven (57) others, or 19%, stated the opposite. Two (2) did not answer the question.

79. For those who answered in the affirmative, only twenty-four (24) felt that local authorities were able to get to their workplaces, compared with thirty-three (33) who felt the opposite.

80. Asked about the general working conditions of local authorities:

- Sixteen (16) respondents said that the constant wars in their community had caused CASEC and ASEC members to flee;
- Fifteen (15) others stated that town halls function regularly, but are far from the sites of tension and armed violence;
- Five (5) respondents stated that the offices and/or houses of local authorities had been burnt down by armed bandits.

81. It should also be pointed out that thirteen (13) respondents also mentioned that CASEC members frequently visited them, but that this has changed since their deaths.

82. When asked about the importance of these authorities in the communities concerned by this survey, one hundred and twenty-three (123) respondents, representing 42% of them, believed that the presence of these state bodies was of no use to the community. This is evidenced by the fact that these institutions do nothing to harmonize community life.

83. Moreover, in most cases, these local authorities come from other areas. They are not necessarily concerned by the situation of insecurity prevailing in their community of assignment. Finally, they also argued that if these local authorities had done their job, the state of the community would not have deteriorated to such an extent: the areas are littered with garbage, bandits control the areas and hold residents to ransom most of the time.

84. Another 173 respondents (58%) felt that the presence of one or other state authority was still very important. They stated that, although they could not defend them against the activities of armed gangs, they could give them advice, repel armed bandits when they could, clean up the areas where the respondents lived and, when possible, provide assistance to the respondents during their forced displacement.

II. HEALTH, EDUCATION AND BASIC SERVICES IN TARGET AREAS

85. Asked about availability and access to health care:

- Two hundred and thirty-five (235) respondents (79%) said that there was at least one hospital or health center in their community, compared with fifty-eight (58) (20%) who said there was none. Three (3) did not answer the question.
- For those who answered in the affirmative, one hundred and thirty-four (134) stated that health centers are functional and accessible to citizens, as opposed to one hundred and one (101) who claimed that doors are generally closed or have been dislodged.

86. Asked where victims of community violence go when they need health care:

One hundred and six (106) respondents, representing 36%, said that victims generally go to the community health center or hospital when it is available and in working order;

- One hundred and forty-one (141) respondents (47%) said that victims are obliged to go to a health facility outside their area of residence;
- Thirty-seven (37) respondents (13%) assured us that the injured go to a midwife or nurse in the area, when available;
- Twelve (12) respondents (4%) felt that there was nowhere to go for treatment during massacres and armed attacks, notably because the bandits in general were scouring the targeted areas.

87. Two hundred and seventy-one (271) respondents, representing 92%, stated that there was at least one high school or national school in their area, compared with nineteen (19), or 6%, who stated the opposite. Six (6) others did not answer the question. And, to be more precise:

- For two hundred and forty-seven (247) respondents (83%), their community has several private schools.
- Another one hundred and eighty (180), or 61%, assured us that their community is served by at least one national school and one high school.
- Two hundred and eighty-three (283) respondents (96%) felt that private and public schools, as well as vocational training establishments, were generally not operating,

or were only operating when the security situation in the areas targeted by the survey allowed. Thirteen (13) others (4%) did not clearly answer the question.

- One hundred and ninety-three (193) respondents (65%) stated that there are no vocational training establishments in their community, while one hundred and three (103) (35%) said the opposite. However, the scenario is the same: these establishments only operate when the security situation in the area permits.

88. When asked about the construction of houses in their communities, respondents stated that, in the areas targeted by the RNDDH survey, there are as many houses built from concrete blocks and sheet metal as from bits of cardboard, sheet metal Shelters. The result is a veritable shambles, bearing witness to the poor management of the area by the state authorities.

89. Regarding access to service water, two hundred and twenty-three (223) respondents, representing 75% of them, stated that residents must obtain water themselves from a neighbor or buy it, while sixty-seven (67) others, or 23%, stated that they had access to service water. Six (6) respondents did not answer the question.

90. Two hundred and eighty-three (283) respondents (96%) said they had to buy drinking water, while thirteen (13) (4%) said the opposite.

91. One hundred and eighty (180) respondents, representing 61% of them, do not have access to mains electricity, compared with one hundred and sixteen (116), or 39%, who do.

92. One hundred and ninety-nine (199) respondents, or 67%, stated that their community is served by public transit, versus ninety-seven (97), or 33%, who stated the opposite.

III. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF PEOPLE LIVING IN TARGET AREAS

93. RNDDH was keen to extend its survey to the income-generating activities of respondents. In this respect

- Two hundred and twenty-seven (227) respondents (77%) stated that they had a business. They sell refrigerated bottled drinks, home-made food, food supplies, cosmetics, cleaning products and so on.
- Forty-one (41) respondents (14%) said they were in construction, dressmaking, nursing and public transport.
- Eighteen (18) others, or 6%, provide housekeeping services.
- Ten (10) of the respondents (3%) said they had no income-generating activity.

94. One hundred and ninety-four (194) respondents, representing 66%, said they had at least one market serving their area of residence, compared with one hundred and two (102), or 34%, who said they did not.

95. Ninety-nine (99) respondents (33%) said they didn't know who ran the markets in their community, compared with one hundred and ninety-seven (197) others (67%) who said armed bandits ran the adjacent markets. Fifty-five (55) of these one hundred and ninety-seven (197) respondents stated that market managers were appointed by police officers.

a) Ransoming of people operating in the areas targeted by the survey

96. One hundred and seven (107) respondents, representing 36%, stated that merchants assigned to markets adjacent to their community do not, to the best of their knowledge, have to pay to be allowed to sell in said markets, against one hundred and eighty-nine (189) others, or 64%, who stated the opposite.

97. Similarly, for forty-three (43) respondents (15%), the owners of small businesses located in the target areas are not held to ransom, compared with two hundred and fifty-three (253) (85%) who said the opposite.

98. Ninety-two (92) respondents, representing 31%, claimed that public transport drivers were not being held to ransom by armed bandits in order to travel in the targeted areas, compared with two hundred and four (204), or 69%, who claimed the opposite.

99. Finally, while sixty-one (61) respondents (21%) stated that residents do not have to pay the bandits to gain access to their homes and live there in peace, two hundred and twenty-one (221) respondents (75%) stated that they are regularly solicited for all kinds of participation: buying ammunition, buying food for the armed gangs, patching up roads, etc. Fourteen (14) respondents (14%) stated that they do not have to pay the bandits to gain access to their homes and live there in peace. Fourteen (14) respondents did not clearly answer the question.

IV. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

100. The survey conducted by the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) from July to November 2023 among three hundred (300) citizens on armed violence and its consequences for the population proves, if proof were needed, that the general living conditions in neighborhoods plagued by recurrent armed violence are very worrying.

101. Since 2018, life in the neighborhoods of Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air has changed drastically, with successive massacres, the creation and strengthening of coalitions of armed gangs, the links between these armed gangs and the political and judicial authorities, and the acceptance of armed gangs as a new component of social and political life in Haiti.

102. The survey confirms that armed violence is a daily reality for Haitian citizens:

- For 98% of respondents, wars and armed confrontations are frequent in their area of residence;
- 92% of respondents have experienced violence at the hands of armed bandits. Among them, 32% had had their parents or relatives murdered, and 26% - all women - had been gang-raped. On this particular point, it is worth noting that rape victims represent 34% of the women interviewed for this survey;
- 57% of respondents know their attackers, and among those who don't, 40% can at least provide information on the gang to which they belong;
- 55% of respondents have been attacked by armed bandits operating close to home;
- 69% of respondents justify attacks on their community by rivalries between different gang groups, while 14% believe that these incessant wars are justified by police resistance to armed bandits who want to take control of certain neighborhoods. 15% of respondents believe that armed bandits systematically attack the civilian population for no reason at all.

103. The survey reaffirms that behind the hegemonic nature of armed gang struggles, there are many vested interests:

- 59% of respondents believe that bandits fight among themselves for control of territories. In their view, these are often territories of great wealth or economic opportunity.
- 6% of respondents believe that the fights are caused by acts of revenge, or by the misallocation of money received by armed bandits;
- 7% blame the absence of the government for the violence in their community;
- 26% believe that the reasons for these fights are known only to the protagonists.

104. The survey reveals that armed bandits do not hide and are generally known in the neighborhoods where they often operate with minors:

- 85% of respondents believe that armed bandits control their area of residence and can do whatever they want without fear of being bothered because they enjoy impunity;
- 62% of respondents know the bandits operating in their community;
- 76% of respondents generally notice minors operating with armed bandits.

105. The survey shows that people in the target communities experience times of peace and times of war differently:

- 89% of respondents believe that in times of peace, residents can go about their business as usual.

106. The survey proves that women and girls are always in a situation of insecurity, whether or not there is war in their community:

- 72% of respondents testify to cases of rape and gang rape against women and girls recorded during the 2023 clashes;
- 68% say that women and girls are raped even in times of peace;
- 94% of respondents believe that rape victims are unable to press charges against their attackers.

107. The survey illustrates the chronic absence of the government in neighborhoods plagued by armed violence:

- 45% of respondents live in neighborhoods without an adjacent police station, where police patrols are virtually non-existent;
- 84% of respondents live in communities without an adjacent registry office;
- 66% of respondents live in neighborhoods with no adjacent justice of the peace;
- 80% of respondents live in communities where no local authority is known.

108. The survey shows that citizens in the Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air neighborhoods find it hard to do without the presence of the authorities in their community:

- 42% of respondents believe that the presence of local authorities is not important, because they have abandoned them, unsanitized areas are overflowing with garbage and armed bandits control their areas of residence;
- However, 58% believe that the presence of one or other of the police, judicial, civil registry or local authorities is still very important because, although they cannot defend them against the activities of armed gangs, these authorities do guide them, deter certain illegal activities and sometimes provide humanitarian aid to those displaced by insecurity.

109. In addition, the survey reveals that the denial of fundamental rights and the absence of basic social services are evidence of the state authorities' abandonment of neighbourhoods plagued by armed violence.

- Health: 79% of respondents live in communities where there is at least one health center or hospital. However, these health facilities operate only

sporadically or not at all, due to criminal activity. Some have even been evicted by their owners.

- For 47% of respondents, when injured or raped, victims have to go to a health facility outside their community. For 13%, victims turn to a midwife when one is available in their community. However, these midwives are often overwhelmed by the number of cases referred to them.
- In terms of education: 87% of respondents live in communities with schools, and 35% have vocational institutions. However, for 96% of them, these training establishments do not function, or work only when the security situation permits.
- In terms of housing, the survey reveals that in Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel Air, reinforced concrete buildings are being joined by houses built from pieces of cardboard, wood, sheet metal and shelters. As a result, many people live in insalubrious housing, in dirty, unventilated and unlit slums, most of which have no toilet facilities. Entire families defecate on the floor or in plastic bags, and dirty water stagnates not far from their homes.
- On the environmental front, respondents were unanimous in stating that the Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air neighborhoods are crumbling under piles of garbage and mud. The situation is worsening due to the absence and inaction of municipal authorities.
- On access to service water and drinking water: 75% of respondents have to buy service water or get it from a neighbor, while 96% have to buy drinking water.
- Access to electricity: 61% of respondents live in areas without mains electricity.
- Public transit: Only 67% of respondents live in areas served by public transit.
- Economic: 77% of respondents own a business, while 14% work in construction, sewing, nursing, public transport and 6% in household services.

110. Respondents were keen to highlight the difficulties they encounter when running a business or living in affected neighborhoods plagued by recurring violence. In this sense :

- 64% of respondents said that merchants in Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air are held to ransom by armed bandits;
- 69% said that public transport drivers are being held to ransom by armed bandits;
- 75% of respondents stated that residents are solicited by armed bandits to participate financially in all kinds of activities: buying ammunition, buying

food for armed bandits, patching up roads, etc. In fact, according to respondents, the bandits who control their area of residence even arrogantly claim the right to hand out envelopes to residents.

111. In addition to this information, the survey carried out by RNDDH also proves that the insecurity and precarious living conditions of the populations of Carrefour Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air make them very vulnerable. Some respondents showed signs of worry and anxiety about the uncertainty of their future and that of their offspring. Many of them asked for psychological help, arguing that they felt bad and that they were losing their minds.

112. What's more, the dehumanization and trivialization of life by the state authorities, the fact that respondents are subjected to recurrent violence, combined with the fact that they are totally on their own, undermine their hope of a return to normalcy in their communities.

113. Faced with this situation, the respondents themselves made the following recommendations:

- End the protection of armed bandits;
- Dismantle the armed gangs operating in Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel Air and regain control of these areas;
- Arrest, try and convict all armed bandits who are causing mourning among the Haitian population;
- Provide psychological assistance to victims in Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air;
- Ensure the temporary and safe relocation and reception of victims of insecurity;
- Clean up the Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air neighborhoods;
- Promote adequate security conditions for the reopening of schools and vocational training establishments, to enable schoolchildren and students to resume their academic activities;
- Establish reliable and functional drinking water and electricity distribution networks;
- Promote adequate safety conditions to enable the populations of Carrefour-Feuilles, Cité Soleil and Bel-Air to have access to functional health facilities.