



National Human Right Defense Network (RNDDH)



RNDDH's position on the chaotic situation in Haiti

March 6,2024

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since February 29, 2024, the two (2) major coalitions of armed gangs - G-9 and Fanmi e Alye and G-Pèp - grouped around a federation called "Viv Ansanm", whose leader and spokesman is Jimmy CHERIZIER alias Barbecue, have been demonstrating their power in several communes in the West Department.

2. The number of human and material losses caused by this demonstration of their powers is enormous.

3. The National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH), which has been observing the escalation of violence in the country, considers it is its duty to alert public opinion to the risk of the situation worsening, if no measures are rapidly adopted to regain control of the armed bandits' territory.

II. **Loss of life and property**

a) Loss of life and bullet wounds.

4. Between February 29 and March 3, 2024, several people were shot dead, including six (6) Haitian National Police (PNH) officers stationed at the Bon Repos sub-station and two (2) unidentified merchants on Rue Cameau.

5. It has also been reported that, during the same period, the bodies of several people, including prisoners attempting to escape, littered the streets of various communes in the West department. Some of these bodies were left behind to be devoured by dogs and pigs.

6. Several people were wounded by bullets, including two (2) police officers, S.S. and G.S., assigned respectively to the Bon Repos and Airport sub-police stations; T.C., a young girl whose mother runs a store in front of the Faculty of Human Sciences, was grazed by a bullet in the mouth; and D.W., a first-year student at the Faculty of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine, was grazed by a bullet in the ear;

7. Numerous local residents have also told RNDDH that, because of the terror and the stench of dead bodies in certain streets in and around the capital, thousands of families have had to abandon their homes and take refuge in refugee camps or with relatives.

b) Cases of kidnapping for ransom have been recorded.

8. Armed bandits have taken advantage of the chaos they have created to kidnap several people. Here are two (2) examples:

- On March 1, 2024, on rue de l'Enterrement, Port-au-Prince, armed bandits stormed the rectory of the Sainte Anne parish and kidnapped the parish priest, Reverend Father Alain MICHEL. He was later released;
- On March 5, 2024, in Croix-des-Bouquets, armed bandits stormed the residence of the sisters of the Saint Joseph de Cluny congregation and kidnapped three (3) nuns.

c) At least twenty-one (21) institutions, commercial enterprises and small and medium-sized businesses were vandalized and/or set on fire.

9. On February 29, 2024, in ruelle Alerte, Port-au-Prince, the Special Education Centre for the Integration of All, a school for special children, was vandalized by armed bandits;

10. On February 29, 2024, in Croix-des-Missions, the Faculty of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine (FAMV) was looted by armed bandits, who also shot and wounded student D.W. During this attack, the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR), which shares the FAMV premises, was also vandalized;

11. On February 29, 2024, in Shada, the offices of the National Old Age Insurance Office (ONA) were looted by armed bandits;

12. From February 29 to March 3, 2024, in the lower Delmas area, notably between Delmas 3 and Delmas 18, commercial establishments and small and medium-sized businesses were vandalized by armed bandits. These included: Stico, Informatek, Nicky Eau Traitée, Confiance Hôtel, Détermination (MonCash, NatCash, Eau Traitée), Complexe Kay Bab.

13. On the night of February 29 to March 1, 2024, bandits stormed the Stade Sylvio Cator on rue Osvald Durand, Port-au-Prince. From then until March 3, 2024, they vandalized the premises. Numerous vehicles in the vicinity of the stadium, as well as merchants' stalls, were also set on fire by the armed bandits;

14. On March 1, 2024, at the corner of rue de l'Enterrement and rue Osvald Durand, Port-au Prince, the La Province supermarket was looted by armed bandits and then set on fire;

15. On March 1, 2024, in Tabarre, the offices of the Office d'Assurance Véhicule Contre Tiers (OAVCT) were set on fire by armed bandits;
16. From March 1 to 3, 2024, in Tabarre, the premises of Sun Auto, a commercial enterprise specializing in vehicle sales, were looted by armed bandits;
17. On March 2, 2024, the premises of the Ministry of Culture and Communication were vandalized by bandits and then occupied by members of the population fleeing the assaults of armed gangs;
18. During the night of March 2 to 3, 2024, the Croix-des-Bouquets Peace Court was set on fire by armed bandits. The premises of commercial banks such as Banque Nationale de Cr dit, SOGEBANK and UNIBANK, located in this commune, were also vandalized;
19. On March 3, 2024, on rue de l'Enterrement, Port-au-Prince, the H pital Saint Fran ois de Sales, was vandalized by armed bandits;
20. On March 4, 2024, in Tabarre, the premises of MSC Plus, a commercial enterprise specializing in the sale of building materials, were vandalized by armed bandits.

d) At least nine (9) police stations and sub-stations were looted and/or set on fire.

21. On February 29, 2024, the Portail de L og ne and Bon Repos sub-stations were set on fire by armed bandits.
22. The eight (8) police officers on duty that day at the Bon Repos sub-station spent more than two (2) hours seeking help from the police. The Haitian National Police (PNH) simply handed them over to the armed bandits, who made no attempt to rescue them. At least one (1) of these police officers, himself an Agent II, was shot and wounded, and six (6) others were killed in the attack. They were:

- Junior MARION, Inspecteur principal
- Monode ETIENNE, Divisional Inspector
- Esp ra PIERRE, Divisional Inspector
- Luciana PIERRE, AII
- Guillianson JEAN-BAPTISTE, Agent I
- Pautrace RESULA, AI

23. On March 1, 2024, the Ouanaminthe police station and the Delmas 3 sub-police station were attacked by armed bandits. While those who stormed the Ouanaminthe police station were repulsed by PNH officers, the bandits who attacked the Delmas 3 sub-police station set it on fire;

24. On March 2, 2024, the Croix-des-Bouquets and Cazeau sub-stations were vandalized and then set on fire by armed bandits;

25. On March 3, 2024, the Cabaret police station was set on fire by armed bandits;

26. On the evening of March 4, 2024, the Carrefour de l'Aéroport sub-station and the Morne à Cabris police station were set on fire by armed bandits.

e) The National Police Academy was destroyed, and its premises vandalized.

27. On February 29, 2024, in Routes de Frères, Pétion-ville, the perimeter wall of the National Police Academy was destroyed, giving access to armed bandits who vandalized its premises. On March 5, 2024, the academy was attacked again by the same armed bandits who had looted it previously.

f) Two (2) detention centers and one (1) holding center have been emptied of their inmate population.

28. On the evening of March 2, 2024, the Port-au-Prince Civil Prison was completely emptied of its inmate population, following an attack orchestrated and perpetrated by armed bandits.

29. It should be recalled that according to the report on the movement of the prison population drawn up by the Directorate of Penitentiary Administration (DAP) on February 20, 2024, the prison population was estimated at three thousand six hundred and eighty-seven (3, 687) prisoners, including three thousand three hundred and fifty-five (3,355) on remand and only three hundred and thirty-two (332) convicts, i.e. 91% of the total prison population of this center who were awaiting trial and only 9% who had already decided their fate.

30. Today, according to the DAP, the prison population of the Port-au-Prince civil prison is ninety-nine (99) inmates. These are those who had chosen not to escape. They have been taken to the Centre for the Reintegration of Minors in Conflict with the Law (CERMICOL) pending a decision on their situation by the prison authorities.

31. During the night of March 2 to 3, 2024, the Croix-des-Bouquets civil prison was emptied of its population following an attack orchestrated by armed bandits.

32. Still according to the DAP report on prison movements, on February 20, 2024, the prison population was estimated at one thousand thirty-six (1, 036) prisoners, including eight hundred and five (805) remand prisoners and two hundred and thirty-one (231) convicted prisoners, i.e. 78% of prisoners awaiting trial and only 22% whose fate had already been decided.

33. On the evening of March 3, 2024, six (6) of the PNH officers who were in isolation at the Delmas 33 police station escaped.

34. While it is true that the vast majority of the escaped detainees were awaiting trial, some of them were very dangerous and had already begun to threaten the police officers who had taken part in the operations that led to their arrest. On this point in particular, RNDDH spoke to at least four (4) police officers who now fear for their lives and those of their families.

g) Armed attacks on Toussaint Louverture International Airport and Guy Malary Terminal.

35. On February 29, 2024, Aérogare Guy Malary was riddled with bullets by armed bandits. One (1) policeman G.S., Agent I of the twenty-eighth promotion, assigned to the Airport police station, was shot three (3) times in the back.

36. Numerous windows were broken. Twenty-three (23) bullet holes were found, seven (7) of which hit the terminal waiting room. Two (2) others pierced a plane belonging to Sunrise Airways.

37. The same day, a bullet hole was also found in a plane belonging to a Cuban airline, which was on the tarmac at Toussaint Louverture International Airport.

38. On March 2, 2024, armed bandits wreaked havoc in the vicinity of Toussaint Louverture International Airport, firing in its direction for several hours. Once again, a Sunrise Airways plane was hit by three (3) projectiles.

39. On March 4, 2024, armed bandits again fired towards the airport and attempted to take it over.

III. REACTIONS OF THE AUTHORITIES AND OBSERVATIONS

40. Since February 29, 2024, all public administration institutions have been non-functional.

41. Since March 2, 2024, all police officers have emptied the streets in the various communes of the West Department.

42. On March 3, 2024, the de facto government, whose leader Ariel HENRY is facing great difficulties in returning to the country, ordered a state of emergency in the West Department, for a renewable period of three (3) days. A curfew measure was also adopted for the same period, expiring on March 6, 2024.

IV. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

43. Since February 29, 2024, armed bandits, in a demonstration of power, have taken the entire West Department by storm, spreading terror, killing people, injuring and kidnapping others, setting fire to cars and motorcycles found in their path, looting and/or setting fire to the premises of state institutions, banking institutions, commercial enterprises and small and medium-sized businesses. Twenty-one (21) vandalized premises were recorded by RNDDH. This situation of terror has led many families to abandon their homes and seek refuge elsewhere. No measures have been adopted by the authorities to protect the Haitian population.

44. During the same period, these armed bandits also vandalized at least nine (9) police stations and sub-stations, as well as the National Police Academy, and facilitated the escape of the prison population from the civil prisons of Port-au-Prince and Croix-des-Bouquets, after circulating numerous messages on social networks announcing the orchestration of these armed attacks.

45. The DAP officers assigned to these prisons have not been rescued. Security around the targeted prisons was not reinforced. The only measure adopted by the authorities was to order the removal of the armored vehicles stationed around the Port-au-Prince civil prison. Unsurprisingly, and above all with disconcerting ease, armed bandits were able to attack these prisons, leading thousands of people in conflict with the law to escape.

46. The assessment presented in this document is by no means exhaustive. However, it does demonstrate the extent of the chaos in which the Haitian people find themselves.

47. It was in these circumstances that the de facto government ordered a state of emergency and announced a curfew for the West department. One day after the adoption of these measures, the bandits repeated their attacks on the Toussaint Louverture International Airport and the Guy Malary Air Terminal, demonstrating that nothing can stop them from circulating as they please, nor from attacking the population and targeted institutions; and that their weapons will only fall silent when they want to.

48. In this sense, RNDDH believes that no measure will help to restore order if the armed bandits remain as powerful as they are, if the hierarchy of the Haitian National Police (PNH) continues to collude with them, and if they themselves continue to benefit from the protection of Haiti's judicial and political authorities.

49. RNDDH takes this opportunity to point out that the offices of the offices of the Directorate General of the PNH, the Central Directorate of the Judicial Police (DCPJ), the Central Directorate of the Administrative Police (DCPA), and the Departmental Direction of the West - DDO/2 are adjacent to Toussaint Louverture International Airport and Guy Malary Airport. It is therefore not far from the premises of the components of the police institution's headquarters - with the exception of the PNH Inspectorate General, which itself

is not operational in the ground- that the bandits operate without fear. Under these conditions, there's no need to underline the blatant incompetence of the police force's high command.

50. Lastly, RNDDH deplors the fact that police officers have abandoned the streets because, although they cannot help the population, their presence plays an important role in restoring calm and preventing the perpetration of certain criminal acts.

51. Today, the facts are clear: the government authorities have resigned. The streets of the capital and the entire West department are given over to armed bandits. And the Haitian population has simply been abandoned to its fate.

52. In light of the foregoing, RNDDH recommends that the vital sectors of the Nation provide the country with a non-predatory government of Human Rights, made up of men and women of integrity, competent and committed to:

- Make state institutions functional;
- Make every effort to regain control of the entire national territory;
- Rehabilitate all escaped prisoners;
- Investigate the latest events leading to the escape of prisoners from the Port-au-Prince and Croix-des-Bouquets prisons;
- Investigate the escape of police officers in solitary confinement, which occurred at the Delmas 33 police station;
- Arrest, try and convict all those involved in the orchestration and perpetration of attacks against the above-mentioned detention and holding centers;
- Dismantle the armed gangs;
- Arrest, try and condemn the armed bandits who are sowing terror in the country;
- Dismiss the PNH high command and initiate legal proceedings against its members for failing to prevent the escalation of violence in the country, aggravated by the recent prison escapes.