

**National Human Rights Defense Network
(RNDDH)**

Membre de la

fidh

**Deterioration of the Security Situation in the Artibonite:
The RNDDH Calls on the Authorities to Protect the Population**

October 9, 2025

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Summary

1. Since 2018, the Haitian population has been facing widespread and persistent insecurity with disastrous human and social consequences. This insecurity, which has ravaged the Department of the West with the complicity of state and judicial authorities, has spread into the Departments of the Center and the Artibonite, where it has taken root. As a result, the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) has extended its attention to the security situation in these two other departments.
2. Investigations conducted in this regard revealed that in 2022, the raids carried out by armed gangs in the Artibonite Department were only sporadic. However, they intensified in 2025. From January to September 2025, at least 24 massacres and armed attacks were recorded across 25 different localities and towns, located in 8 of the 17 communes of the department.
3. Some of these attacks were carried out simultaneously in multiple areas, causing significant human and material losses, as well as numerous injuries from gunfire and bladed weapons. Dozens of people were murdered, of which the RNDDH documented 84 victims, representing an average of 3 people killed per violent incident and an average of 9 people killed per month over the 9 months analyzed. Four officers of the Haitian National Police (PNH) and two agents of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MMAS) were among those who lost their lives. Six state institutions, including three police stations, one sub-station, and two justices of the peace courts, were vandalized and/or set on fire.
4. Subjected to daily assaults by armed gangs from the Kokorat San Ras Base, the Gran Grif Base, and the Taliban/Mawozo groups, the communes of Gros-Morne, La Chapelle, Liancourt, L'Estère, Marchand-Dessalines, Montrouis, Petite-Rivière de l'Artibonite, and Verrettes have become extremely dangerous for the population. With eight armed attacks recorded, the commune of Petite-Rivière de l'Artibonite appears to be the most targeted by armed gangs, making its population particularly vulnerable to acts that threaten life and property.
5. At the same time, an unusual phenomenon has emerged in the department: certain communities have been targeted by members of self-defense brigades who accuse them of not contributing to the collective security efforts of their localities. This was revealed through RNDDH's investigations into the massacre that occurred in Préval on May 20, 2025.
6. Without providing a comprehensive assessment of the losses caused by these violent incidents or presenting any concrete actions taken to restore order and security in the Artibonite Department, the Vice-Delegation of the Saint-Marc District, the interim representatives of the Executive Branch, the public prosecutors' offices of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves, and the various justices of the peace in the communes affected by insecurity and armed violence have all acknowledged that the security situation is indeed alarming. The departmental police, lacking both human and material resources, have been overwhelmed by the situation, despite limited reinforcements in some areas by specialized units.

7. As a result, the Artibonite Department, once considered Haiti's agricultural breadbasket, has in recent times become one of the epicenters of armed violence in the country. If state, police, and judicial authorities do not take immediate measures to address this situation, it will worsen, and armed violence will continue to spread to other regions of the country.

8. In light of the above, the RNDDH demands that the state authorities adopt immediate measures to protect the population of the Artibonite, and recommends that they:

- Provide the police institution with the necessary resources to regain control over the entire territory of the Artibonite Department;
- Restore minimum security conditions in the department to facilitate the return of displaced persons and enable them to resume their livelihoods;
- Provide, according to their medical, financial, and psychological needs, assistance to victims and relatives of victims of acts threatening life and property recorded in the Artibonite Department between January and September 2025;
- Make available to law enforcement agencies the full amount allocated for intelligence operations, allowing them to monitor the activities of armed gangs throughout the national territory and prevent the entire country from falling under gang control.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. For several years, the security situation in Haiti has continued to deteriorate, deeply affecting the lives of its citizens. While at first only the Department of the West was particularly affected by this situation, for more than three (3) years now, armed violence has spread to the Departments of the Artibonite and the Center. Indeed, heavily armed gangs have been sowing terror throughout these three departments, heightening the vulnerability of a population already weakened by poverty, natural disasters, and chronic social, political, and economic instability.

2. The escalation of armed violence in the Artibonite Department, the scene of all kinds of criminal atrocities, massacres, armed attacks, raids, murders, gunshot and knife injuries, rapes, gang rapes, thefts, and arson, has prompted the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) to conduct an investigation into the episodes of violence recorded there between January and September 2025.

3. Today, the RNDDH seeks to share with the public the findings of its investigation.

II. CONTEXT

4. The Departments of the West, Artibonite, and Center are engulfed in a systematized wave of violence against which the Haitian State has never taken a firm

stand. This inaction has led to the emergence of territories that have become the stage for countless acts threatening the lives and property of citizens.

5. To date, the law enforcement authorities have shown no genuine willingness to put an end to the deterioration of the country's security situation. At the highest levels of the State, officials merely lament the worsening crisis, condemn the actions of armed gangs, and continue to promise to restore law and order in preparation for elections and a return to constitutional normalcy. However, it is evident that these promises have not been fulfilled, and instead of improving, the security situation continues to worsen.

6. Since 2018, the Haitian population has been facing an alarming and unprecedented level of insecurity in the country's history:

- At least fifty-eight (58) episodes of violence have been recorded, twenty-nine (29) of which occurred between March 2024 and September 2025, during the tenure of the Transitional Presidential Council (CPT).
- Hundreds of gang rapes committed during these violent episodes have been reported.
- Women and girls kidnapped during such attacks were held captive for several days, during which they were subjected to sexual slavery.
- Hundreds of people were murdered, with an average of thirty-two (32) deaths per violent incident.
- Thousands of homes were looted, occupied, or burned by armed gangs.
- According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as of June 11, 2025, the number of internally displaced persons was estimated at nearly one million three hundred thousand (1,300,000).
- The Directorate of Civil Protection (DPC) recorded two hundred forty-six (246) displacement sites sheltering people affected by insecurity and armed gang attacks.

7. Hundreds of victims, relatives of victims, and their legal representatives have filed complaints before the Haitian judicial system. However, to date, the judicial response has been virtually nonexistent. Only one committal order has been issued, on June 20, 2024, by Investigating Magistrate Jean Wilner Morin, referring before the criminal court the intellectual and material perpetrators of the La Saline massacre, which took place on November 13 and 14, 2018.

8. The crimes against individuals committed by armed gangs over the past seven (7) years, from 2018 to 2025, have thus gone unpunished by the Haitian judiciary, whose complacency continues to embolden armed gangs to attack citizens without fear of consequence.

9. The Artibonite Department, once regarded as the agricultural breadbasket of the country, has today become one of the most alarming centers of violence. Indeed, eight (8) of its seventeen (17) communes, Gros-Morne, La Chapelle, L'Estère, Liancourt, Marchand Dessalines, Montrouis, Petite-Rivière de l'Artibonite, and Verrettes, live daily under the rhythm of armed clashes, extrajudicial executions, massacres, rapes, gang rapes, arson attacks, looting of private property, destruction of state property, kidnappings followed by detention, extortion of the population, and massive forced displacements of citizens.

10. The first violent episodes recorded in the Artibonite date back to 2022, marked by sporadic attacks that intensified in 2023. On January 25, 2023, armed men from the Gran Grif Base attacked the Liancourt police station where six (6) police officers were murdered¹.

11. On August 4, 2023, at Carrefour Peille² in the commune of Liancourt, a simultaneous attack by members of the Gran Grif Base and Kokorat San Ras resulted in the murder of at least five (5) people, and several others were wounded by gunfire. A few days later, on August 16, 2023, the Gran Grif Base attacked the population again, killing three (3) people³: Peter Fils Barthelemy, Sophonie Exantus, and Richecader Adrien, also known as "Blanc." That same day, police officers traveling to Croix Périsse fell into an ambush, and their vehicle, a Haitian National Police (PNH) pickup truck, was set on fire.

12. In June and again in October 2024, the towns of Gros Morne and Pont Sondé⁴ were subjected to raids in which eight (8) people were killed in the first incident and more than seventy (70) in the second. In December 2024, Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite was attacked as well, resulting in the murder of seven (7) people by armed gangs. Subsequently, numerous other attacks were recorded in this commune, significantly increasing the number of victims.

¹ Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains. 2023, January 26. *Position du RNDDH sur les assassinats en série d'agents-tes de la PNH* [RNDDH's position on the serial killings of PNH officers] (*Rapport/A23/No2, 6 pp.*). RNDDH. <https://web.rnddh.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2-RapM-PNH-Insecurite-26Jan2023-FR.pdf>

² Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains. 2023, August 18. *Escalade de la violence dans les départements de l'Ouest et de l'Artibonite, Le RNDDH dénonce la complicité du CSPN* [Escalation of violence in the West and Artibonite departments, the RNDDH denounces the complicity of the CSPN] (*Rapport/A23/No7, 8 pp.*). RNDDH. <https://web.rnddh.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/7-RapM-Escalade-de-violences-Carrefour-Feuilles-18Aout2023-FR.pdf>

³ Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains. 2024, October 4. *Massacre au Pont Sondé, Le RNDDH exige des autorités étatiques la protection immédiate de la population haïtienne*

⁴ Massacre in Pont Sondé, the RNDDH demands that state authorities immediately protect the Haitian population] (*Com.P/A2024/No2, 4 pp.*). RNDDH. https://web.rnddh.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2-CP-Pont-Sonde-04Octobre2024.FR_.pdf

13. Beginning in January 2025, following the first attack in Gros Morne where thirteen (13) people were murdered in the localities of Grépin and Campêche, the situation in the department descended completely into horror.

14. Three (3) armed gangs control the department's strategic roadways and decide who and what can circulate. They are:

- **Kokorat San Ras**, whose strongholds are located in Ti Bwadòm, commune of Gros Morne, and La Croix Périsse, commune of L'Estère.
- **Gran Grif Base**, headquartered in Savien, in the commune of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite.
- **Talibans Mawozo**, a group formed from a merger between members of the Taliban gang and former members of the 400 Mawozo gang, whose respective bases are located in Canaan and Croix des Bouquets.

15. Alongside the control exerted by these armed groups, several self-defense brigades have been created across multiple towns in the department to resist gang incursions. These brigades have also established their own control strategies. This dynamic often leads to violent clashes between armed gangs and self-defense brigades, resulting in major human and material losses. One of the most prominent self-defense structures in the Artibonite Department is **La Coalition**, which is composed of brigades from several areas, including Canaux, Chandelle, Labady, Liancourt, and Jean Denis, among others. Hated by the armed gangs, La Coalition is frequently targeted by them.

16. In addition, police officers deployed in the field are accompanied by soldiers of the **Armed Forces of Haiti (FAD'H)** and agents of the **Multinational Security Support Mission (MMAS)**. Despite their presence, several of the aforementioned communes have fallen under the control of armed gangs, who now impose their law there.

17. It is therefore within this context of impunity and general institutional decay that armed violence has spread into the Artibonite Department and established itself there, under the complicit gaze of state authorities.

III. METHODOLOGY

18. This report covers the bloody events that occurred between January and September 2025 in the Artibonite Department. For its preparation, the RNDDH held meetings and interviews with the following:

- The Departmental Directorate of the Artibonite of the Haitian National Police (DDA/PNH)
- The Gros Morne Police Station
- The L'Estère Police Station
- The Marchand Dessalines Police Station
- The Saint Marc Police Station
- The Office of the Public Prosecutor at the Court of First Instance of Gonaïves
- The Office of the Public Prosecutor at the Court of First Instance of Saint Marc
- The Justice of the Peace Court of Désarmes
- The Justice of the Peace Court of Gros Morne
- The Justice of the Peace Court of La Chapelle
- The Justice of the Peace Court of L'Estère
- The Justice of the Peace Court of Liancourt
- The Justice of the Peace Court of Marchand Dessalines
- The Justice of the Peace Court of Montrouis
- The Justice of the Peace Court of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite
- The Vice Delegation of the Saint Marc District
- The Interim Executive Agent of Gros Morne
- The Interim Executive Agent of Montrouis
- Members of the Association of Women for the Development of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite (AFEDPRA)
- Members of the Commission for Dialogue, Reconciliation, and Awareness to Save the Artibonite (CDRCA)
- Victims and relatives of victims
- Community leaders
- Local residents

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE ARTIBONITE DEPARTMENT

19. With an area of four thousand nine hundred eighty-seven square kilometers (4,987 km²), divided into five (5) districts composed of seventeen (17) communes, the Artibonite is the largest of the country's ten (10) geographical departments in terms of land area. It is named after the river that crosses it, the Artibonite River.

20. The department's judicial and security chain includes eighteen (18) police stations, six (6) sub-stations, twenty-four (24) justices of the peace courts, two (2) courts of first instance located in Saint Marc and Gonaïves, one (1) Court of Appeal in Gonaïves, and two (2) prisons attached to the two (2) courts of first instance.

21. The Artibonite Department is the main rice-producing region in Haiti. Its lands are highly fertile, which explains the intensity of agricultural activity that has earned it the reputation of being the nation's breadbasket. For instance, Gros Morne, La

Chapelle, L'Estère, Liancourt, Marchand Dessalines, Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, and Verrettes cultivate, each according to their local specialties, rice, sugarcane, cassava, corn, sweet potatoes, sorghum, several varieties of beans, onions, tomatoes, peppers, coffee, cocoa, bananas, and various tropical fruits such as limes, mangoes, avocados, grapefruits, and soursop. Numerous medicinal plants also grow in different communes, particularly in La Chapelle. In Montrouis, the economy is based mainly on tourism, coastal fishing, small-scale agriculture, and trade.

V. ATTACKS RECORDED IN THE ARTIBONITE DEPARTMENT

22. From January to September 2025, at least twenty-four (24) episodes of violence were recorded in eight (8) communes of the Artibonite Department.

a) Armed Attacks in Gros Morne

23. On the morning of January 18, 2025, in the localities of Campêche and Grépin in the commune of Gros Morne, at least thirteen (13) people were killed and several others injured by members of the Ti Bwadòm armed gang led at the time by “Grand Black,” as he was known. He was later killed on September 16, 2025, during a police operation.

24. On May 31, 2025, Elie Limage, aged eighty-four (84), owner of Le Beau Rivage Hotel, was kidnapped from his home. On June 9, 2025, his body was found at Morne Marguerite, still within the commune of Gros Morne, after three (3) weeks in captivity. During this period, three hundred thousand (300,000) U.S. dollars were paid and two (2) vehicles were handed over to the armed men of the Kokorat San Ras Base.

25. A few months later, on the morning of August 6, 2025, near Lycée Jacques Roumain in the locality of Pay Kann, heavily armed individuals from the Kokorat San Ras Base attacked the town center of Gros Morne, killing at least two (2) people and seriously injuring one (1) other. Among the victims was “Balnave,” as he was known, owner of a construction materials business and resident of the Méderique neighborhood in Gros Morne. He was killed around 11:00 a.m.

26. On August 24, 2025, heavily armed individuals from the Kokorat San Ras Base again attacked the town center of Gros Morne, killing at least six (6) people. They also kidnapped businessman and radio station owner, Wedner Gédéon, proprietor of Radio Union FM, after severely wounding him by gunfire. A few days later, on August 31, 2025, Wedner Gédéon was released after his family paid a ransom to the armed gang. He was then taken to the hospital for treatment.

27. The RNDDH reconstructed the circumstances under which several of these victims lost their lives:

- **Pierrecilien Joseph**, also known as “Tchotcho,” aged sixty (60) and father of five (5) children, was at Carrefour Merlec in front of a local credit union when, between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m., he was hit by several bullets, two (2) in the chest and one (1) in the arm. His body was retrieved by his family and buried on August 31, 2025.
- **Johnny Accilien**, aged thirty-four (34) and father of one (1) child, was on the main street of Gros Morne when the armed gang attacked the commune between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. He was running home when he was hit by three (3) bullets, one (1) in the heart, one (1) in the abdomen, and another in the left arm. His body was recovered by family members and buried on August 28, 2025.
- **Schneider Mones**, born on August 21, 2000, aged twenty-five (25), was returning from work between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. when he was riddled with bullets. He received nine (9) gunshots that damaged his lungs, legs, and kidneys. He was transported to the Alma Mater Hospital (HAM) in Gros Morne, then transferred to another medical facility in Gonaïves. He died the same day at 6:00 p.m. His body was recovered on August 23, 2025, and his funeral was held on September 5, 2025.
- **Loubenson Tide**, born on April 22, 1999, aged twenty-six (26) and father of one child, was inside the building complex housing Radio Union FM, where he was charging his phone when he was shot in the head. His body was recovered around 5:00 p.m. by his family and buried on August 28, 2025, in Gros

b) Armed Attack in La Chapelle

28. On June 22, 2025, the Talibans Mawozo gang, led by Jeff Larose, also known as Jeff Gwo Lwa, and Wilson Joseph, also known as Lanmò San Jou, invaded the commune of La Chapelle. During this attack, they set fire to the town’s sub-station of the police.

29. The following day, June 23, 2025, the armed gang members returned and completely destroyed the sub-station using sledgehammers and other heavy tools. Since then, the population has fled the commune, which is now under the full control of the armed group.

30. On June 24, 2025, the Saint Marc police arrested Inspector Pierre Jean Philippe, also known as Pipo, for his alleged involvement in the Talibans Mawozo attack. He was the officer in charge of the La Chapelle sub-station and is accused of having intentionally handed over the town to the armed gang.

31. On June 26, 2025, Jeff Larose, also known as Jeff Gwo Lwa, publicly claimed responsibility for the attack on La Chapelle and for the subsequent control of the commune.

32. A few days later, on July 1, 2025, the Talibans Mawozo kidnapped several people in the commune of La Chapelle and took them as hostages to their base in Canaan, located in the Department of the West.

c) Armed Attacks in L'Estère

33. Early in the morning of July 19, 2025, around 4:00 a.m., armed men from the Kokorat San Ras Base attacked the locality of Kapenyen in the commune of L'Estère. During this raid, which was carried out simultaneously on at least five (5) fronts, seven (7) people were killed and more than ten (10) others were injured.

34. Two (2) months later, on September 21, 2025, around 1:00 a.m., the same armed men invaded the locality of Kapenyen once again, setting fire to several houses and a church, and taking away livestock found on site.

35. Barely twenty-four (24) hours later, on the morning of September 22, 2025, they orchestrated another attack in the commune of L'Estère. They set fire to at least ten (10) houses, killed one (1) person, and injured several others by gunfire.

36. It is worth noting that, because of its self-defense brigade led by Wilguens Sanon, the locality of Kapenyen is considered one of the strongholds of resistance against the armed gangs operating in the Artibonite Department, particularly the Kokorat San Ras Base.

d) Armed Attacks in Liancourt

37. On July 22, 2025, armed men from the Gran Grif Base launched an attack against the commune of Liancourt, forcing the civilian population to flee and leaving behind a battlefield where police officers and armed gang members clashed.

38. During the confrontation, an armored vehicle of the Haitian National Police (PNH) fell into an ambush. The vehicle was immobilized and then set on fire. Inside were at least three (3) police officers and two (2) scouts who were accompanying them. All were killed. The police officers who died were identified as Daniel Jean Louis, Daniel Darius, and Fegensly Mertus. They were all assigned to the Departmental Unit for the Maintenance of Order (UDMO).

39. A few days later, on August 11, 2025, during a police operation in Liancourt, law enforcement officers clashed with members of the Gran Grif Base in Savien. Officer

Guy Rurley Bathalien was shot in the head and succumbed to his injuries at the hospital.

40. During a new attack carried out by armed gangs on the evening of September 14, 2025, the Liancourt police station was destroyed and then set on fire.

e) Armed Attacks in Marchand-Dessalines

41. On May 2, 2025, around 8:00 a.m., the locality of Grand-Hatte, in the fourth communal section of Marchand-Dessalines, was attacked by armed men from the Gran Grif Base. At least three (3) people were killed, and several houses were looted and then burned. The RNDDH documented the circumstances in which two (2) of the victims were killed:

- **Franel Ephraïm**, aged twenty-five (25), was shot once in the head. His body was buried on May 3, 2025, by family members.
- **Franklin Noel**, aged twenty-five (25) and father of one (1) child, was abducted by armed men from the Gran Grif Base. Shortly afterward, he was shot twice. That same evening, his family recovered his body and buried him.

42. More than two (2) months later, on July 17, 2025, early in the morning, armed individuals from the Kokorat San Ras gang attacked the commune of Marchand-Dessalines and set fire to the town's police station. Office equipment, including metal filing cabinets, chairs, and drawers emptied of their contents, which were scattered on the floor, was completely destroyed by the flames. Three (3) detainees were in custody at the time. They were all released. They had been charged respectively with theft, assault, and rape committed against a thirteen-year-old girl.

43. The RNDDH was also informed that several motorcycles seized by the police station, as well as one belonging to the PNH, were stolen by the armed gang. Weapons and ammunition, including one (1) M1 rifle, twelve (12) 12-gauge shotguns, one (1) box of 5.56 mm cartridges, and half a box of 12-gauge cartridges, as well as personal items belonging to police officers such as bank cards, boots, and cell phones, were also taken.

44. After carefully searching the Marchand-Dessalines police station to steal whatever they wanted and after vandalizing and setting the building on fire, the members of the Kokorat San Ras armed gang also set fire to two (2) vehicles that were parked at the station's entrance.

f) Armed Attacks in Montrouis

45. Since 1990, a land dispute that has caused several deaths over the years has opposed two (2) localities in the second communal section of Montrouis, Piatre and Délugé. However, at the beginning of 2025, the situation worsened.

46. On February 12, 2025, the gang leader known as Ti Jera, who operated in Trou Sable in the Ti Gode area and had set up a checkpoint on National Road #1 to extort passing vehicles, was killed by the police. That evening, armed men attacked the town's police station, killing Police Officer Fils Emmanuel Thomas and the ad hoc clerk of the Montrouis Justice of the Peace Court, Elysée Louis, solely because he had assisted the judge who examined the body of Ti Jera. The clerk's wife was seriously wounded by a bullet to the chest.

47. More than six (6) months later, during the night of August 29 to 30, 2025, armed men attacked the population of Délugé. Police officers present on the scene attempted to repel them but failed. One (1) woman was killed, and nine (9) other people were injured, including three (3) police officers. One (1) police vehicle was set on fire.

48. A few days later, during the night of September 17 to 18, 2025, around 10:00 p.m., the police station of Montrouis was burned down after the police had killed, in Bois-Neuf, two (2) gang leaders known as Wilguens Destin, also called Tibab, and Black.

g) Armed Attacks in Petite-Rivière de l'Artibonite

49. On March 15, 2025, during an attack in the locality of Haut Canal, in the second communal section of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, armed men from the Gran Grif Base led by Luckson Élan killed six (6) members of the population. Among the victims was **Anthony Joseph**, aged sixty-three (63), father of seven (7) children. That morning, around 7:00 a.m., Anthony Joseph was on his way to his garden when he was shot twice, once in the chest and once in the ribs. After killing him, the armed men threw his body into the canal and left. The same day, his family recovered his body, took it to the morgue, and buried him the following day, March 16, 2025.

50. On the afternoon of March 25, 2025, ten (10) days later, armed men from the Gran Grif Base attacked the population of Kafou Lavil in Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite. One (1) Kenyan police officer was killed, and three (3) armored vehicles of the Haitian National Police (PNH), trapped in an ambush in the Kafou Lavil area, were set on fire. The Kenyan officer was **Benedict Kabiru**. His death brought to two (2) the number of Kenyan agents killed in the Artibonite Department. Indeed, on February 23, 2025, Officer **Samuel Tompoi Kaetuai** had been shot during a confrontation with armed men from the Gran Grif Base in Savien. He later died of his injuries after being taken to the hospital.

51. During the night of April 27 to 28, 2025, in Haut Fourneau, armed men from the Gran Grif Base set fire to more than twenty (20) houses, including that of **A. J.**, aged thirty-one (31) and father of one (1) child. He and several other victims sought refuge in Place Solidarité in Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite.

52. From April 28 to 30, 2025, armed men from the Gran Grif Base simultaneously attacked five (5) localities in the commune of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite: Carrefour Peigne, Haut Fourneau, Haut Canal, Quatorzième, and Morne de la Crête-à-Pierrot. Several members of the population were killed or injured. Houses were burned, and businesses were looted or set on fire. Many residents were forced to seek refuge in Place Solidarité in Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite and in Place Philippe Guerrier in Saint Marc.

53. During these three (3) days, several victims were identified by the RNDDH. Here are the accounts of some of them:

- On April 28, 2025, around 5:00 p.m., armed men stormed the affected neighborhoods:
 - While trying to flee, **Rony Séance**, aged nineteen (19), was shot in the back, and the bullet exited through his chest. His body was retrieved by family members the next day and buried.
 - **C. W.**, aged twenty-two (22), was running alongside Rony Séance when he fractured his left arm.
 - **O. M. J.**, aged seventy-eight (78), mother of four (4) children, lived in La Crête-à-Pierrot. She fled during the armed attack. On April 30, 2025, her family informed her that her house had been vandalized by the armed gang.
- On April 30, 2025, around 3:00 a.m., armed men from the Gran Grif Base entered the locality of La Crête-à-Pierrot again, coming from the upper area of Depèp. They set fire to more than twenty (20) houses, killing and wounding several residents and forcing many to flee. The following details describe how some of the victims were affected by the attack:
 - **D. J.**, aged fifty-three (53), father of four (4) children, narrowly escaped from his home, which the attackers set on fire. He also lost a small store and his carpentry workshop.
 - The home of **N. L.**, aged thirty-two (32) and father of two (2) children, was looted and burned by the armed gang.
 - In the locality of Haut Fourneau, around 2:00 a.m., the house of **B. N.**, aged seventy (70), was set on fire by armed men. He managed to escape and took refuge in Place Solidarité in Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite.

- Around 3:00 a.m., in La Crête-à-Pierrot, armed men looted and set fire to the home of **D. E.**, aged fifty-one (51).

54. On May 26, 2025, armed men from the Gran Grif Base of Savien attacked the localities of Bwa Lavil, Pon Benwa, and Dekòd, all located in the commune of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite. According to several accounts, these are areas under the control of La Coalition. Two (2) days later, on May 28, 2025, around 5:00 a.m., the Gran Grif Base invaded the locality of Jean Denis. During this incursion, several residents were killed and dozens of houses were burned. The statue of a sacred bull's head located at the crossroads of Jean Denis was torn down by the armed men and taken away to Savien.

55. On May 20, 2025, a large-scale armed attack was carried out in the locality of Préval.

56. The locality of Préval, located in the first communal section of Bas-Cousin 1, in the commune of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, is situated not far from Savien, the stronghold of the Gran Grif Base led by Lucson Élan, and near Jean Denis, a locality kept secure from armed gangs by the self-defense brigade known as La Coalition.

57. Although the Gran Grif Base had never before attacked Préval, for safety reasons, particularly because of its proximity to the gang's stronghold, the persistent tensions between the localities of Savien and Jean Denis, and the rumors of imminent attacks, many residents, including farmers and traders, had developed the habit of working in Préval during the day and leaving the area at night to sleep elsewhere. This survival strategy allowed them to continue their daily and commercial activities despite the risk.

58. At the same time, according to several residents, the La Coalition brigade had long accused the population of Préval and its diaspora of refusing to contribute financially to the brigade's activities or to the purchase of ammunition. For instance, rice farmers from Préval often traveled to Pont-Sondé to sell their harvest and were systematically harassed by members of La Coalition, who accused them of having money but refusing to support efforts to protect the locality. Caught between the Gran Grif Base and La Coalition, the population of this area, particularly the farmers who were already struggling to survive, was being bled dry since they were regularly extorted by both groups.

59. Furthermore, according to other residents, about three (3) weeks before the armed attack on May 20, 2025, two (2) members of La Coalition who were riding through Préval on a Cross-brand motorcycle fired several shots toward the population, spreading panic in the area.

60. Thus, on May 20, 2025, early in the morning, near the locality of Jean Denis, a member of the La Coalition brigade, **Hudlert Charles**, was shot dead by armed men from the Gran Grif Base. In retaliation, between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m., several members of the La Coalition brigade, from the branch based in Jean Denis and led by **Francky Pierre**, also known as *Ti Mepri*, and **Jean Baptiste Mercidieu**, attacked the population of Préval. Armed with guns, knives, machetes, axes, and daggers, they carried out a blind expedition, unleashing extreme violence against the population.

61. They went into the fields where they murdered farmers who were at work. They also killed several people they encountered along the way, including some who were trying to flee the area. Some victims were decapitated, and their heads were thrown into the river, which was swollen due to recent rains. At least twenty-four (24) people were killed that day. Several houses were also set on fire. The belongings of the farmers, including stored rice and motorcycles, were looted. Below are the names of some victims and the circumstances under which they lost their lives during this brutal attack:

- On May 20, 2025, around 2:00 p.m., members of La Coalition entered the **Maranatha Baptist Church**, affiliated with the **Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Haiti (UEBH)**, where they coldly executed **Pastor Jean Jacques Brutus** and thirteen (13) congregants who were attending a prayer service. Born on April 19, 1939, Pastor Brutus was a respected figure in the community. He was decapitated inside the church. His body was recovered by his family, and his funeral was held on May 23, 2025, at the Eben-Ezer Church in Saint Marc. He was the father of one (1) child.
- On May 20, 2025, **Kervenson Charles**, born on April 20, 1991, aged thirty-four (34) and father of two (2) children, was returning to Préval after visiting Pont-Sondé. Around 2:00 p.m., upon arriving in Daquin Renald, a locality in the first communal section of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, he was shot twice in the head by members of La Coalition. His body was found by his family four (4) days later and buried the same day.
- **Ramy Charles**, born on January 6, 1974, aged fifty-one (51) and father of three (3) children, had left Préval to go to Pont-Sondé to meet a relative. Around 2:00 p.m., in Daquin Renald, he was intercepted by members of La Coalition, who executed him with two (2) bullets, one (1) to the head and one (1) to the back. His family retrieved his body that same evening and buried him in Saint Marc.
- **Marc Edeline Meritil**, aged fifty-five (55) and father of two (2) children, was a rice farmer in Préval. He was inside the **Maranatha Baptist Church of the UEBH** when he was shot in the head by members of La Coalition. The following day, May 21, 2025, his family recovered his body. His funeral was held on May 27, 2025.

- **Elga Paul**, born on April 26, 1965, aged sixty (60) and father of four (4) children, lived in Préval where he cultivated rice. On May 20, 2025, between 1:00 p.m. and 2:15 p.m., he was riding his bicycle toward Pont-Sondé with several other people when he was intercepted by members of La Coalition. According to relatives, he was taken to Dutrèjet, where he was interrogated before being mutilated with a machete. His body bore a deep wound in the abdomen and three (3) others on the right arm. His body was recovered on May 21, 2025, and buried eight (8) days later.
- **Roselène Charles**, aged thirty-three (33) and mother of three (3) children.
- **Ilius Charles**.
- **Marlène Claude**, mother of four (4) children.
- **Francilène Jacques**, in her twenties, mother of one (1) child and pregnant at the time of her death.
- **Reha Jean Baptiste**.
- **Wilfrid Mondesir**.
- **Méranta Medius**.
- **Emanie Romeus**, mother of one (1) child.
- **Vieux Coq Thales**.
- **Kiki**, known in the area as suffering from mental illness.

62. It was also reported to the RNDDH that three (3) unidentified bodies were devoured by dogs.

63. A few days later, on June 21, 2025, still in the commune of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, members of the Gran Grif Base killed at least two (2) people, wounded several others, and kidnapped civilians, including minors.

h) Armed Attack in Verrettes

64. On June 30, 2025, armed men from the Talibans and 400 Mawozo gangs, collectively known as the Talibans Mawozo, carried out an armed attack in the locality of Désarmes, the fourth communal section of the commune of Verrettes. However, they were repelled thanks to the resistance of local brigadiers and officers of the Haitian National Police (PNH), who successfully prevented them from entering the commune.

VI. SUMMARY OF THESE ARMED ATTACKS

65. From January to September 2025, at least twenty-four (24) episodes of violence were recorded in twenty-five (25) distinct towns and localities across the Artibonite Department. These events caused enormous human and material losses, as well as numerous injuries from gunfire and bladed weapons. As shown in the following table,

several of these areas suffered more than one armed attack, and many of the assaults were carried out simultaneously.

| Communes | Dates | Zones / Localities Attacked |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Gros-Morne | January 18, 2025 | Campêche |
| | | Grépin |
| | August 6, 2025 | Pay Kann |
| | August 24, 2025 | Downtown Gros-Morne |
| 2. La Chapelle | June 22–23, 2025 | La Chapelle |
| 3. L'Estère | July 19, 2025 | Kapenyen |
| | September 21, 2025 | Kapenyen |
| | September 22, 2025 | Downtown L'Estère |
| 4. Liancourt | July 22, 2025 | Liancourt |
| | August 11, 2025 | Liancourt |
| | September 14, 2025 | Liancourt |
| 5. Marchand Dessalines | May 3, 2025 | Grand Hatte |
| | July 17, 2025 | Marchand Dessalines |
| 6. Montrouis | February 12, 2025 | Downtown Montrouis |
| | August 29–30, 2025 | Délugé |
| | September 17–18, 2025 | Downtown Montrouis |
| 7. Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite | March 15, 2025 | Haut Canal |
| | March 25, 2025 | Kafou Lavil |
| | April 27–28, 2025 | Haut Fourneau |
| | April 28–30, 2025 | Carrefour Peigne |
| | | Haut Fourneau |
| | | Haut Canal |
| | | Quatorzième |
| | | Morne de la Crête-à-Pierrot |
| | May 20, 2025 | Préval |
| | May 26, 2025 | Bwa Lavil |
| | | Pon Benwa |
| | | Dekòd |
| | May 28, 2025 | Jean Denis |
| | June 21, 2025 | Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite |
| 8. Verrettes | June 30, 2025 | Désarmes |

66. Dozens of people were murdered in the Artibonite Department, based on information shared by the authorities interviewed, civil society organizations operating in the Artibonite, victims, and relatives of victims. Eighty four (84) of those who lost their lives were documented by the RNDDH, including four (4) officers of the Haitian National Police, PNH, and two (2) agents of the Multinational Security Support Mission, MMAS.

67. At least six (6) state institutions were vandalized and or set on fire. These include three (3) police stations, one (1) sub station, and two (2) justices of the peace courts:

- The police stations of Liancourt, Marchand Dessalines, and Montrouis, and the sub station of La Chapelle.
- The justices of the peace courts of Liancourt and La Chapelle.

68. Hundreds of houses were looted and or burned. Numerous vehicles, including four (4) armored vehicles and two (2) cars, one (1) of which belonged to the PNH, were set on fire. In addition, several motorcycles that belonged either to the police institution or to private individuals, as well as other vehicles, were stolen.

69. At least three (3) detainees were released when armed gangs stormed the Marchand Dessalines police station.

VII. REACTIONS OF THE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES

70. The Government Commissioners of Saint Marc and Gonaïves, with whom the RNDDH spoke several times for this investigation, confirmed the occurrence of the various violent episodes mentioned above. Although they were unable to provide a comprehensive accounting of these armed attacks against the population of the Artibonite, they acknowledged that the human and material losses remain extremely heavy.

71. According to Magistrate Venson François, steps were taken by the Office of the Public Prosecutor in Saint Marc to initiate criminal proceedings against the gang members involved in the armed attacks recorded in the communes under its jurisdiction. For example, in connection with the massacre carried out in the locality of Préval on May 20, 2025, a letter was sent on May 23, 2025, to the Departmental Directorate of the Artibonite Police, with a copy to the Justice of the Peace of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, requesting the judge's assistance in conducting the necessary observations to build a case file to be transmitted later to the Investigating Office, pending the complaints to be filed by the families of the victims.

72. An arrest warrant was issued against the leader of the Gran Grif Base, Lucson Élan. This does not appear to be the case for those responsible for La Coalition operating in Jean Denis, namely Francky Pierre, known as Ti Mepri, and Jean Baptiste Mercidieu, even though many people have pointed to La Coalition for its role in the Préval massacre.

73. The deputy judge of the Justice of the Peace Court of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, Pergame Norelus, stated that he was unable to carry out site inspections for the violent episodes within his jurisdiction because of access difficulties to the affected areas. This is the case, for example, for the locality of Préval.

74. According to Vilar Meris and Hubert Ceneac, respectively the clerk at the Justice of the Peace Court of Gros Morne and the Interim Executive Agent for that commune, the court, which has only two (2) judges, Dieubon Supérieur and Marie Claude Alfred Michel, is not functioning. No official inspections were conducted following the acts of violence recorded in the commune.

75. The deputy judge of the Justice of the Peace Court of Marchand Dessalines, Maître Karl Berny Jean, stated that on July 26, 2025, between 8:30 and 10:00 a.m., at the verbal request of the Vice Delegate of the Marchand Dessalines District, Dunelson Duval, and Police Inspector Williamson Pierre, he and his clerk went to the town's police station to document the damage. According to the official report, the police station was partially burned. Inside, office equipment had been destroyed by the flames and files were strewn across the floor. The report also notes that the three (3) holding cells were empty, which corroborates information that the three (3) detainees who had been incarcerated escaped at the time of the gang assault.

76. According to Magistrate Norelus Pergame, the Justice of the Peace Court of L'Estère has been completely nonfunctional since the kidnapping on May 12, 2024, of the former sitting judge, Magistrate Verto Vertilus. He and an attorney who accompanied him, Maître John Wesley Alerte, were abducted while returning to Marchand Dessalines. Since then, no one knows what happened to them. Magistrate Norelus Pergame, previously assigned to Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite and transferred to L'Estère as the sitting judge, has still been unable to take office. Consequently, nothing has been done by the Justice of the Peace Court of L'Estère in response to the armed attacks recorded in the commune.

77. According to the sitting judge, Daniel Altenor, the Justice of the Peace Court of Liancourt operates out of a private house downtown. Since the takeover of the commune by armed gangs during the night of September 14 to 15, 2025, during which the court building was burned, the court has not been functioning. Therefore, the Justice of the Peace has taken no action in response to the armed attacks suffered by the commune of Liancourt.

78. When, on June 22, 2025, armed gangs took control of the commune of La Chapelle and looted the Justice of the Peace Court, the court closed its doors. No follow up was conducted by the Justice of the Peace in response to the armed attacks perpetrated in La Chapelle.

79. The Justice of the Peace Court of Montrouis has only one (1) judge and one (1) clerk. It operates at a reduced pace. Since the attack of September 18, 2025, during which the town's police station was burned, the judge and the clerk have been working only in downtown Montrouis. As a result, no follow up has been carried out by the court regarding the episodes of violence recorded in Délugé and Piatre.

VIII. REACTIONS OF THE POLICE AUTHORITIES

80. The Departmental Directorate of the Artibonite of the Haitian National Police, DDA, PNH, stated that it is in daily contact with the judicial apparatus and that police officers in the department are always available to assist judges in the course of their duties. Moreover, since the intensification of armed gang activity, the departmental strength of the Departmental Unit for the Maintenance of Order, UDMO, has been reinforced. However, the Directorate believes that the revised number of officers does not allow for an effective response to the many challenges related to attacks on the lives and property of citizens, and the police institution continues to face, within the department, a shortage of police materials and equipment.

81. The Chief Commissioner of Saint Marc, Jean Jude Chery, with whom the RNDDH spoke, stated that the police station of Désarmes, in the commune of Verrettes, is operational. Since September 29, 2025, the Temporary Anti Gang Unit, UTAG, has been deployed there, contributing to the maintenance of order in the locality. He believes, however, that in general, even though armored vehicles are deployed in certain areas to allow strategic management and to prevent the advance of gangs, it is essential to increase the number of police officers in the Saint Marc District and to provide them with police materials and equipment. Only then will they be able to effectively guarantee the security of the population.

82. Following the armed attack of August 24, 2025, the head of the Gros Morne police station, Levelt Gedeon, was dismissed. His replacement, Divisional Inspector Jean Morose Roosevelt, who took office on August 26, 2025, and with whom the RNDDH spoke, considers that it was a coordinated attack. In addition, due to persistent rumors that criminal groups were planning new armed attacks, the DDA, PNH, reinforced the Intervention Brigade, BI, as well as the UDMO, which had been deployed in support of local forces.

83. On June 24, 2025, two (2) days after the attack recorded in La Chapelle on June 22, 2025, the police inspector who headed the town's police station, Pierre Jean Phillipe, was taken into custody in Saint Marc because of his alleged links with the armed gangs that invaded the commune on June 22, 2025. Consequently, at the time of publication of this document, there was no police presence reported in the commune.

84. The head of the L'Estère police station, Hervé Jean Joseph, stated that the deployment of agents of the Motorized Intervention Brigade, BIM, allows that police post to continue operating despite numerous difficulties, particularly the lack of materials and equipment needed to enable officers to confront the armed men of Kokorat San Ras. This situation prevents them from launching offensive operations, even as they continue to defend their positions.

85. Inspector Williamson Pierre, head of the Marchand Dessalines police station, told the RNDDH that during the attack by the Kokorat San Ras armed gang on July 17, 2025, four (4) police officers were on duty. They tried to repel the assault by the armed men. However, after about two (2) hours of gunfire, and in the absence of reinforcements despite their urgent requests, they were forced to withdraw. That day, one (1) officer was wounded in the foot. Ammunition, uniforms, and personal effects of the police officers were taken. Several motorcycles, including one (1) belonging to the PNH, were stolen. Office equipment and furniture were set on fire. Two (2) cars parked in front of the police station compound were partially burned. One (1) of them belonged to the institution and was out of service.

86. According to Chief Commissioner Jean Jude Chery, the police station of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite was temporarily placed under the responsibility of Saint Marc. Since that decision by the Departmental Directorate of the Artibonite of the Haitian National Police, DDA, PNH, specialized units have been deployed there.

87. Because the Liancourt police station was burned and its personnel were no longer on site, the RNDDH was unable to speak with the officer in charge before this report was published.

IX. REACTIONS OF THE LOCAL AND MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES

88. The Vice Delegate of the Saint Marc District, Perez Casseus, acknowledges that the situation is extremely difficult in the district, particularly in the communes of La Chapelle, Montrouis, and Verrettes. However, he states that significant measures have been taken to combat the armed gangs, as in Désarmes where specialized police units are deployed.

89. For his part, the Interim Executive Agent of Gros Morne, Hubert Ceneac, with whom the RNDDH spoke for this investigation, stated that members of the Kokorat San Ras armed gang sowed terror in the commune on August 24, 2025, without encountering the slightest resistance, since police officers limited themselves to securing the premises of the town's police station. He added that although, following rumors of a possible return of the gang to the area, the PNH did deploy specialized units, those officers remained only until the evening, then returned on August 25 and 29, 2025. This was not enough to gain the confidence of the population or to rout the armed men.

90. According to the Interim Executive Agent based in the commune of Montrouis, Élysée Blaise, the Montrouis police station was burned during the night of September 17 to 18, 2025. Since then, there has been no police presence in the town because, at the time of the attack, the police station's actual staff numbered only three (3) officers. This abandonment of the commune by the security forces has allowed the gangs to set up toll points on National Road Number 1 between Carriès and Saint Benoît.

X. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

91. The factual description of the armed attacks perpetrated in the Artibonite Department from January to September 2025 shows that violence has undeniably taken root there. Eight (8) of the department's seventeen (17) communes suffered, during the period in question, twenty four (24) massacres and armed attacks. Some of these violent episodes occurred in towns, while others were recorded in rural localities. The communes affected by this armed violence are Gros Morne, La Chapelle, L'Estère, Liancourt, Marchand Dessalines, Montrouis, Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, and Verrettes. For the RNDDH, this is an alarming situation that requires swift action to prevent further deterioration and the spread of armed violence to the remaining nine (9) communes of the department.

92. During these episodes of violence, dozens of people were murdered. Among them, the RNDDH documented eighty four (84) victims, including four (4) officers of the PNH and two (2) agents of the MMAS. This accounting is far from exhaustive.

93. At least six (6) state institutions, including three (3) police stations, one (1) sub station, and two (2) justices of the peace courts, were vandalized and or burned. Hundreds of houses were looted and or burned. Several vehicles, including four (4) armored vehicles and one (1) vehicle belonging to the police institution, were set on fire, in addition to dozens of motorcycles that were stolen or burned, several of which also belonged to the police institution or to police officers. Three (3) detainees who were at the Marchand Dessalines police station escaped during the attack on that commune.

94. With eight (8) armed attacks recorded from January to September 2025, Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite is the commune most exposed to attacks against life and property and appears to be the most coveted by armed gangs. It should be noted, however, that the armed attack of May 24, 2025, in Préval, a locality of that commune, was organized and carried out by members of La Coalition, a self defense brigade composed of brigades from Canaux, Chandelle, Labady, Liancourt, and Jean Denis.

95. Another atypical situation is that of the commune of Montrouis, where two (2) localities in the second communal section, Piatre and Délugé, have been clashing since 1990 in a land dispute that never ends and in which the State has never thought to intervene. In recent times, this land conflict has turned into a gang war, to the detriment of the population of these two (2) localities.

96. The impacts of this armed violence on the population of the Artibonite are enormous. Thousands of people have had to abandon their homes. Entire fields have been abandoned by farmers or devastated by armed gangs. Mills, such as those in Bèlanje, a locality of L'Estère, have been burned. Financial and commercial activity has dropped drastically. Fear has taken hold among the population, since armed gangs and some members of self defense brigades extort farmers and demand that their products be shared with them.

97. The various local, judicial, and police authorities with whom the RNDDH spoke for this investigative work all acknowledged that the security situation in the Artibonite is already very alarming and tends to worsen. While the Vice Delegation claims that measures have been taken to control the situation, the Interim Executive Agents, for their part, lament the ease with which armed gangs carry out attacks against the population, without effective resistance from police officers.

98. Echoing this, several residents believe that no effective measures have been adopted by the PNH to prevent the commission of acts of violence in the Artibonite Department. To support this assertion, the police institution itself recognizes and deplores its state of complete deprivation, which forces its officers to remain confined to the department's police posts and to defend themselves against armed attacks by gangs entrenched in strongholds from which the police cannot prepare or launch offensives.

99. The various Justices of the Peace Courts in the localities plagued by armed violence have, to date, been unable to do anything concrete to help establish the truth and prosecute the armed gangs that spread mourning and terror in the Artibonite Department. The Offices of the Public Prosecutor at the Courts of First Instance of Gonaïves and Saint Marc, for their part, have not yet undertaken anything that would indicate that public action has been initiated against all the

gang members involved in the mass crimes and human rights violations recorded in the department.

100. In light of the above, the RNDDH demands that the state authorities adopt immediate measures to protect the population of the Artibonite and recommends that they:

- Provide the police institution with the resources necessary to regain control of the entire territory of the Artibonite Department.
- Restore the minimum security conditions in the Artibonite Department to facilitate the return of displaced persons and enable them to resume their livelihoods.
- Provide assistance to victims and relatives of victims of attacks against life and property recorded in the Artibonite Department from January to September 2025, according to their medical, financial, and psychological needs.
- Make available to the security forces the full amount of funds allocated for intelligence so that they can monitor the activities of armed gangs across the national territory and prevent the entire country from falling under gang control.