

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



**Jean Denis Massacre:  
RNDDH Denounces State Authorities' Complaisance in  
the Face of Armed Gang's Deadly Attacks**

**April 11, 2026**

**Table of Contents**

***I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY .....3***

***II. PRECEDING EVENTS AND PROBABLE CAUSES OF THE MASSACRE 4***

***III. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS DURING THE MASSACRE.....5***

***IV. TOLL OF THE MASSACRE.....6***

    a) ***Persons Killed: ..... 6***

    b) ***Person Reported Missing..... 12***

    c) ***Persons Injured by Gunfire and/or Bladed Weapons..... 12***

    d) ***Displaced Persons ..... 13***

    e) ***Burned Buildings: ..... 13***

***V. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS AND AUTHORITIES' REACTIONS.....15***

***VI. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....16***

## I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1. On the night of March 28 to 29, 2026, in the locality of Jean Denis, 1st communal section of Bas Coursin I, commune of Petite-Rivière de l'Artibonite, armed bandits operating within the Gran Grif gang based in Savien perpetrated a massacre of extreme savagery against the population.

2. The first data shared by the media reported enormous human and material losses and numerous gunshot casualties.

3. Dismayed by this latest attack by armed bandits, the National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH) conducted an investigation and offers to share its preliminary observations with those interested in the matter.

4. As part of this work, RNDDH met with:

- Chief Commissioner Lyvenson GAUTHIER, assigned to the Saint-Marc Police Station;
- Magistrate Fanel's F. MICHEL, sitting judge at the Saint-Marc Justice of the Peace Court;
- Magistrate Venson FRANCOIS, government commissioner at the prosecutor's office of the Saint-Marc Court of First Instance;
- The interim executive agent of the commune of Petite-Rivière de l'Artibonite, Lereste DORT;
- The interim executive agent of Saint-Marc, Myriam Fièvre;
- A member of the Communal Section Administrative Council (CASEC) of Bas Coursin 1, Derniela Joseph MERCY;
- A member of the Communal Section Administrative Council (CASEC) of Bas Coursin 2, Fadoul CENOBLE;
- Members of the Artibonite Dialogue, Reconciliation and Awareness Commission (CDRCA);
- Members of the Women's Association for the Development of Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite (AFEDPRA);
- People living in Jean Denis, witnesses to the massacre.

## II. PRECEDING EVENTS AND PROBABLE CAUSES OF THE MASSACRE

5. The deterioration of the security situation in the Artibonite department dates back several years. RNDDH, which during its monitoring activities discovered that several agents of the Haitian National Police (PNH) assigned to the Departmental Unit for Maintaining Order (UDMO) were colluding with the Kokorat San Ras armed gangs and the Gran Grif Base, as well as with the Talibans armed gang, had, on December 22, 2025, addressed a letter to the General Inspectorate of the Haitian National Police (IGPNH).

6. In this letter, RNDDH denounced the agreement reached between UDMO agents and the aforementioned armed groups to the detriment of the population, an agreement according to which they sell them weapons and ammunition, transmit strategic information to them on troop movements during planned police operations, and manage ransom checkpoints with them. IGPNH did not take these denunciations seriously, and the police officers indexed by the population, clearly identified in the letter in question, are still in their positions today.

7. It is therefore unsurprising that despite the fact that for several weeks before the massacre, rumors about preparations for an armed attack against the locality of Jean Denis were circulating in the Artibonite region, the police institution did not intervene to prevent it.

8. Furthermore, according to people living in the communal sections of Bas Coursin I and Bas Coursin 2 with whom RNDDH spoke, the Gran Grif armed gang, based in Savien, perceived as specialized in stealing goods from peasants living in the localities where it operates, has numerous cattle stolen from several areas, notably in Jean Denis, in Bera, the 3rd communal section of Marchand-Dessalines, in Préval; etc. To move them, the armed bandits use certain livestock traders who do business in Anndan Lavil, 1st section Bas-Coursin I, from where they can easily access Jean Denis, a locality controlled by the Self-Defense Coalition. This is why, according to those who advance this thesis, as soon as it was informed of the issue of recurring cattle thefts, the Coalition decided to open an investigation.

9. Thus on March 10, 2026, a truck from the Bwa Lavil Anwo area went to Kalavil to load a number of cattle. Upon its arrival in Jean Denis, the Coalition proceeded to intercept it to verify the documents relating to the transport of the animals. The inspection revealed that several cattle lacked identification documents while others

were not branded. These irregularities led the Coalition to inform the police institution. For its part, the Haitian National Police (PNH) recommended that the Coalition call on peasants from the different areas where cases of livestock losses had been reported to allow them to identify their animals. If, for some, many people from different localities were able to recover the cattle that had been stolen from them, for others, the cattle were simply sold by the coalition, which kept for itself the money from this sale. Thus, for many, the cause of the massacre perpetrated in Jean-Denis lies in the interception by the Self-Defense Coalition of cattle that had been stolen by members of the Gran Grif armed gang.

10. According to a second hypothesis, it is because of the regular seizures of weapons and ammunition destined for the Gran Grif armed gang by the Coalition that said armed gang decided to attack the population of Jean Denis. For example, at the beginning of 2026, a significant quantity of weapons and ammunition had been confiscated. They came from Saint-Marc and were being transported by a motorcycle taxi driver residing in the locality of Anndan Lavil, who had been tasked with delivering them to the Savien armed gang. Moreover, on this point, it should be mentioned that many residents of this locality are perceived as accomplices of the Gran Grif armed gang. Thus, strongly irritated by these repetitive seizures, gang leader Lucson ELAN had promised to make the members of the Coalition as well as the population of Jean Denis pay a heavy price.

11. Finally, according to a third explanation, the Jean Denis massacre is the result of a hegemonic struggle between armed groups, with Gran Grif feeling wronged that the Coalition has, unlike them, the latitude to install several ransom checkpoints on National Route No. 1. In this sense, RNDDH was told that the Coalition indeed has several ransom checkpoints, including one in the Bois-Neuf area, at the entrance to the city of Saint-Marc but dependent on the commune of Montrouis, and another at Carrefour Kado, at the entrance to Jean Denis. Consequently, Gran Grif intends to impose its control over the road axis connecting Saint-Marc and the Far North by installing a ransom checkpoint at Carrefour Paye, a locality that depends on the commune of Petite-Rivière de l'Artibonite.

### **III. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS DURING THE MASSACRE**

12. According to information gathered by RNDDH, the armed attack began around 2:00 in the morning in the locality of Pont Benoît, 2nd section of Bas Coursin 2. From there, the armed bandits advanced towards Bas Coursin 1, where the locality called Jean Denis is located. Upon their arrival, the population had not fled, thinking that the Self-Defense Coalition led by Francky PIERRE, alias Ti Mepri, would be able to protect them.

13. At first, members of the Coalition did indeed resist. And until 6:00 in the morning, detonations of large-caliber weapons could be heard. However, being undermanned and less armed than the bandits, they could not maintain the resistance. They were forced to retreat. The population then found itself left to its own devices, without any form of protection.

14. One hour after the start of hostilities, the attack descended into horror, particularly in the communities of the 2nd section of Bas Coursin 2, Blain, Pont Benoît, Bwa Lavil, Descordes, Koutèt, Dupitraye, Akasya, Legiyèl, Bofò, Raymoncin, Sedrène and Maglouwèt.

- People attempting to flee were coldly shot down by the armed bandits, while others were executed at point-blank range;
- Houses were set on fire with their occupants inside;
- Entire families were killed.

15. Among the victims are adult men and women, young people, children, and persons living with disabilities as well as elderly persons. And, in addition to information shared by victims' relatives, numerous photos and videos that went viral on social networks show corpses bathed in their blood, lying on the pavement of Jean Denis.

#### **IV. TOLL OF THE MASSACRE**

16. The toll of the atrocities committed on the night of March 28 to 29, 2026, though not exhaustive despite being so heavy, was established from testimonies collected from both survivors and judicial authorities.

##### **a) Persons Killed**

17. At least seventy (70) people were killed. With the help of families and relatives of victims, RNDDH was able to identify fifty-three (53) of them. They are:

- ADRIEN Didy, thirty-five (35) years old
- ALZURIN Wilsindy, twenty-nine (29) years old

- ALEXIS Kénol
- CELLUS Edlens
- CHARLES Ednord, twenty-eight (28) years old
- CHARLES Elvie
- CHARLES Mendès
- DELICE Edner, thirty-five (35) years old
- DESIR Marc Eugène
- DESIR Rodnel, forty-two (42) years old
- DESIR Vital, alias Bijou
- DOR Berlancia
- DORVIL Onick
- ELCE Phadael, fifty-four (54) years old
- EXILHOMME Licius, eighty (80) years old
- FILS-AIME Estimable, eighty-five (85) years old
- FRANÇOIS Kenol
- FRANÇOIS Samson
- FRANÇOIS Veniet
- JANVIER Marie-Mène
- JOISEUS Nerlande
- JOSEPH Exan, thirty (30) years old
- JOSEPH Ghislaine, seventy (70) years old
- JOSEPH James, twenty-seven (27) years old
- JOSEPH Laurent, thirty-two (32) years old
- JOZAMA Auguste, forty-six (46) years old
- JOZAMA Semana, fifty-eight (58) years old
- JOZAPHA Tifrère
- LOUIS Elvire, eighty (80) years old
- LOUIS Innocent
- MARSEILLE Macenat, twenty-nine (29) years old
- MICHEL Servius
- MICHEL Woldy
- MICHEL Yvan Joseph, alias Ti Joseph
- MILDORT Wilerme, forty-seven (47) years old
- MOISE Daniel, fifty-one (51) years old
- PAUL Walgens, alias Gwobou, thirty-eight (38) years old
- PIERRE Dieunack, alias Dj Cobois

- PIERRE Richard
- RENE Wilner, eighty (80) years old
- SAINTIL Titil
- SIMILIEN Onel, twenty-five (25) years old
- THELOT Thelomène, fifty-two (52) years old
- THEOPHILE Geradin, sixty-four (64) years old
- THEOPHILE Guinot, forty-five (45) years old
- THEOPHILE Onick, fifty-two (52) years old
- THEOPHILE Wilgens, thirty-four (34) years old
- THOMAS Oldy, twenty (20) years old
- VERTU Alius
- VERTU Edlet, forty-four (44) years old
- VERTU Eliane, twenty-three (23) years old
- VERTU Franau, 52 years old
- VERTU Fransen, twenty (20) years old

18. Some corpses were recovered and buried by their families on the day of the massacre, while others were taken to Morgue Beaubrun or to l'Oiseau funèbre, two (2) funeral homes in Saint-Marc, located respectively near the Saint-Marc Civil Prison and at Portail Guêpe. In this regard, the sitting judge of the Saint-Marc Justice of the Peace Court, Fanel'd's F. MICHEL, told RNDDH that he observed twelve (12) corpses at Morgue Beaubrun and four (4) others at l'Oiseau Funèbre.

19. RNDDH also collected from the relatives of thirty-four (34) victims the account of the circumstances in which they were murdered:

- Yvan Joseph MICHEL, forty-five (45) years old and father of two (2) children, was at home in Carrefour Manglouwèt sleeping when around 3:00 in the morning, the armed bandits broke into the area. Suffering from a hearing impairment, Yvan Joseph MICHEL did not hear the gunfire announcing the massacre. He was killed by several bullets inside his own house. He was buried the next day;
- Oldy THOMAS, cousin of Yvan Joseph MICHEL, himself twenty-eight (28) years old and father of one (1) child, was also at home in Carrefour Manglouwèt at the time of the attack. He was trying to flee when he was shot down with several bullets. Oldy THOMAS suffered from a motor disability in his right arm. Like his cousin, he was buried by his family the next day;

- Estimable FILS-AIME, eighty-five (85) years old and father of six (6) children, was at home in Jean Denis, in the area called Anba Sedrène at the time of the attack. He had decided to stay hidden in his house. The armed bandits set it on fire. He died burned alive. Three (3) days later, his family found his bones and buried them in the cemetery of the area;
- In the locality of Dupitraye, Wilerme MILDORT, forty-seven (47) years old and father of five (5) children, was murdered by the armed bandits as he tried to flee. His corpse was discovered in the brush;
- Ednord CHARLES, twenty-eight (28) years old, was coldly shot down at the Carrefour de Dupitraye;
- In the Dupitraye area, Exan JOSEPH, father of four (4) children, was killed as he tried to flee. He was about thirty years old;
- In Jean Denis, Ghislaine JOSEPH, seventy (70) years old and mother of two (2) children, was killed by the armed bandits from Savien who also set fire to her house;
- In Jean Denis, Wilner RENE, eighty (80) years old and father of eight (8) children, was killed by the armed bandits. Very advanced in age, he was not able to flee to save his life;
- In Jean Denis, around 2:00 in the morning, Onick DORVIL, sixty-two (62) years old and father of eight (8) children, was sleeping at home with his family when he was awakened by the gunfire. He went outside his house and was hit by a bullet in front of the gate of his residence, where he died;
- In the locality of Jean Denis, between 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning, Berlancia DOR, eight (8) years old, was fleeing with her family when she received a bullet in the sternum. She died instantly;
- In Jean Denis, Marie-Mène JANVIER, alias Brèt, thirty-seven (37) years old and mother of two (2) children, was killed by a bullet to the head during the armed bandits' attack;
- In Raymoncin, Rodnel DESIR, alias Allemand, forty-two (42) years old, father of three (3) children, received three (3) bullets, one (1) in the back, one (1) in the head, and one (1) other in the left foot. Subsequently, the bandits cut off his hands. His body was recovered and placed in the Saint-Marc Morgue. His funeral was held on April 8, 2026;

- In Jean Denis, five (5) people from the same family were killed at home. They are Franau VERTU, fifty-two (52) years old, father of four (4) children, who received a bullet to the head; Eliane VERTU, twenty-three (23) years old, mother of one (1) child, who was also killed by a bullet to the head; Edlet VERTU, forty-four (44) years old, father of two (2) children, who was hit by a bullet in the throat; Fransen VERTU, twenty (20) years old, who received a bullet to the abdomen; and Alius Vertu, father of two (2) children, who, for his part, was hit by several projectiles in the ribs area;
- On March 29, 2026, between 4:00 and 5:00 in the morning, six (6) people from the same family, including three (3) brothers, one (1) nephew, and two (2) cousins, were murdered while attending a wake. The bodies of these victims were buried the same day, around 4:00 p.m., in alley 9. They are:
  - Guinot THEOPHILE, forty-five (45) years old, father of five (5) children, scrap metal worker;
  - Onick THEOPHILE, fifty-two (52) years old, father of five (5) children, farmer;
  - Gérardin THEOPHILE, sixty-four (64) years old, father of nine (9) children, farmer;
  - Wilgens THEOPHILE, nephew of Guinot, Onick and Gérardin THEOPHILE, thirty-four (34) years old, father of two (2) children;
  - Elcé Phadael, cousin of Guinot, Onick and Gérardin THEOPHILE, fifty-four (54) years old, father of five (5) children, farmer;
  - Didy ADRIEN, cousin of Guinot, Onick, and Gérardin THEOPHILE, is thirty-five (35) years old and the father of three (3) children.
- It should be noted that on February 12, 2024, two (2) years earlier, during the armed attack that was led by the Gran Grif base in Liancourt, Fresnel THEOPHILE, thirty (30) years old and father of five (5) children, was murdered. He was one of the Theophile brothers. The bandits had then torn him from his home, dragged him on the ground, and then executed him. His body had been recovered the same day by his family. He had been placed at the Saint-Marc Morgue, before being buried five (5) days later, on February 17, 2024;

- On March 29, 2026, in the morning, in Raymoncin, Walgens Paul, also known as Gwobou, thirty-eight (38) years old and father of three (3) children, was murdered by a bullet to the head as he tried to flee. His body was recovered and buried the same day in Boulin;
- On March 29, 2026, around 5:00 in the morning, in Raymoncin, in the locality of Jean Denis, Marie Elvire LOUIS, eighty (80) years old and mother of five (5) children, lost her life after receiving two (2) bullets, one in the neck and the other in the ribs. She was in front of the door of her house;
- On March 29, 2026, around 5:00 in the morning, still in Raymoncin, in the locality of Jean Denis, Kenold FRANÇOIS, father of four (4) children, died instantly after receiving several bullets to the abdomen. He was in the yard of his house at the time of the events;
- On March 29, 2026, early in the morning, in Camatin, Thélomène THELOT, sixty-two (62) years old and mother of five (5) children, received three (3) bullets while she was in the yard of her house. She was subsequently lynched by the armed bandits. According to her family, the victim showed signs of cognitive impairment. Her body was buried the day after the events, on March 30, 2026;
- On March 29, 2026, early in the morning, in Manglouwèt, three (3) people were killed. They are Edner DELICE, thirty-five (35) years old, Onel SIMILIEN, twenty-five (25) years old, and Joseph LAURENT, thirty-two (32) years old;
- In Jean Denis, around 3:00 in the morning, Moïse DANIEL, fifty-one (51) years old, father of seven (7) children, as well as his nephew Edlens CELLUS, twenty-five (25) years old, himself father of two (2) children, were murdered. The victims lived in Saint-Marc. However, they had gone to Jean Denis the day before, on March 28, 2026, to dig the grave of a deceased person. Not having been able to return home that evening, they had decided to spend the night there. The bodies of Moïse DANIEL and Edlens CELLUS were deposited at Morgue Beaubrun;
- Around 3:00 in the morning, at Kafou Jean Denis, Semana JOZAMA, 58 years old, father of two (2) children, was murdered by one (1) bullet to the head as he tried to flee the armed bandits' attack. His body could not be recovered by his family;

- On March 30, 2026, Licius EXILHOMME, also known as Chode, eighty (80) years old, was murdered at 3:00 p.m. in Pereste as he was returning home to assess the damage.

## **b) Person Reported Missing**

20. At least one (1) person is reported missing. Indeed, on the night of March 28 to 29, 2026, around 3:00 in the morning, in Raymoncin, Auguste JOZAMA, forty-six (46) years old, father of four (4) children, fled the armed attack. Since then, his family has had no news of him.

## **c) Persons Injured by Gunfire and/or Bladed Weapons**

21. According to what was reported to RNDDH, more than thirty (30) people were injured by gunfire or bladed weapons. However, with the help of judicial authorities and relatives, thirteen (13) of them were identified. Some are still receiving treatment in hospital. They are:

- H. P. L., sixty-nine (69) years old, injured in Bois Jour;
- J. D., twenty-three (23) years old, shot in the left foot and right arm;
- M. S. J., twenty-two (22) years old, injured in the left foot. In addition, an orifice was noticed in his right arm;
- E. P., sixty-three (63) years old, injured in the left foot and left arm;
- S. S., twenty-six (26) years old, injured in the right arm;
- F. L., sixteen (16) years old, was injured in the left foot and right leg while fleeing at the time of the attack;
- S., nineteen (19) years old, injured in the knee of the left foot;
- S. D., eighty (80) years old, injured in the head;
- B.P., sixteen (16) years old, was grazed by a bullet while fleeing. She was taken the same day to Saint-Nicolas Hospital, where she received treatment;
- C.F.-A., twenty-nine (29) years old and mother of two (2) children, was shot during the attack in Dupitray, an area dependent on the locality of Jean Denis. Today, she is still hospitalized and is in critical condition;
- M., was shot in the foot while running to escape the armed bandits' attack in Jean Denis;
- J. S.;

- C. A.

#### **d) Displaced Persons**

22. According to data shared by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Jean Denis massacre caused the internal displacement of five thousand two hundred ninety-one (5,291) people.

23. Some of the victims went to relatives' homes, to downtown Saint-Marc, and to Bokozèl, the 5th section of the commune of Saint-Marc, while others went to Chawon, in the commune of Marchand Dessalines.

#### **e) Burned Buildings**

24. At least twenty-three (23) buildings, including family residences and businesses, were set on fire by the armed bandits at the time of the attack. RNDDH spoke with several owners or tenants who stated they lost everything:

- On the night of March 28 to 29, 2026, around 3:00 in the morning, G.P., twenty-seven (27) years old and mother of two (2) children, was at home in Kafou Jean Denis, very close to the F.J. morgue, when she heard automatic weapons fire and cries of distress. She fled with her children. Subsequently, she learned that her house had been set on fire;
- Around 3:00 in the morning, in Labé, in the locality of Bois Laval, R.M., seventy (70) years old and father of four (4) children, saw his house set on fire by bandits;
- In Legrièl, S.S.L., sixty-nine (69) years old, mother of six (6) children, lost her house, set on fire by the bandits;
- Still in Légrèl, the house of D.S.L., thirty-five (35) years old, father of one (1) child, was set on fire. He lived in a compound grouping several residences called Lakou Madan Janel Valerie;
- In Legrièl, E. R., sixty (60) years old, mother of nine (9) children, lost her house during the attack, set on fire by the armed bandits;

- In Legriél, J.P., forty-three (43) years old and father of two (2) children, fled with his family at the time of the attack. His house, as well as a booth that contained food provisions, was set on fire by the armed bandits. His daughter, B.P., sixteen (16) years old, was grazed by a bullet as she was fleeing the area. She was taken the same day to Saint-Nicolas Hospital, where she received treatment;
- Around 5:00 in the morning, in Legriél, in a compound grouping several houses called Lakou Kay Ti Machan, the armed bandits set fire to eight (8) houses. Among them were those of the following:
  - J.B.D., sixty-four (64) years old;
  - I. D., forty-nine (49) years old, mother of five (5) children;
  - F.L., father of four (4) children, including F.L., sixteen (16) years old, who was injured in the left foot and right leg while fleeing at the time of the attack;
  - S. D., fifty-eight (58) years old, mother of seven (7) children, including Rodnel DESIR, forty-two (42) years old, alias Allemand, who was murdered during the attack;
  - M. J., forty-three (43) years old, mother of four (4) children.
- 25. On the night of March 29, 2026, several houses and businesses were again set on fire by the armed bandits. They belonged to:
  - M.F., thirty-seven (37) years old and father of three (3) children. He lived in Bourèt, a locality of Jean Denis;
  - F.D., thirty-nine (39) years old and the father of three (3) children. He learned that the armed bandits set fire to his food provisions booth. His brother, Rodnel DESIR, was murdered earlier in the morning;
  - A. D., twenty-nine (29) years old, mother of one (1) child.

26. On the night of March 29 to 30, 2026, around 2:00, in Raymoncin, in a compound grouping several family houses called Lakou Alitte Léandre, the armed bandits set fire to four (4) houses and two (2) food provisions shops as well as a rice container. Among these buildings were those of the following:

- Ma. J., forty-two (42) years old, mother of four (4) children;

- o Mo. J., forty-one (41) years old, father of two (2) children;
  - o Ed. J., fifty-four (54) years old, father of five (5) children;
  - o Er. J., thirty-nine (39) years old, father of three (3) children.
- On March 30, 2026, in Pont Jour, between 10:00 and 11:00 in the morning, L.N., sixty-three (63) years old, mother of four (4) children, saw her house and her business looted then set on fire by the armed bandits. Her family and she took refuge in Saint-Marc;
  - On March 30, 2026, in the morning, in Pont Jour, P.C.D., a fifty-one (51)-year-old father of five (5) children fled with his family. The bandits then looted and set fire to his house as well as his food provisions warehouse named Patience Dépôt Gazeuse;
  - On March 30, 2026, between 10:00 and 11:00, E.D., sixty-one (61) years old and mother of four (4) children, learned that her house, located in Pont Jour, had been looted by armed bandits;
  - On March 30, 2026, in the morning, in Pont Jour, D.C., thirty-nine (39) years old and mother of three (3) children had to flee with her family. Armed bandits looted and then set fire to her house as well as her clothing business specially made for Rara festivities.

## V. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS AND AUTHORITIES' REACTIONS

27. On March 29, 2026, in the morning, several Jean Denis residents who had fled returned to assess the damage, which will force some of them to seek refuge elsewhere, due to the extent of their losses.

28. On March 30, 2026, the armed bandits returned to the locality of Jean Denis with the intention of establishing a permanent base there. However, the presence of PNH armored vehicles dissuaded them.

29. On March 31, 2026, early in the morning, the armed bandits positioned themselves in the Pont Benoît area, where they fired gunshots, sowing panic in the surrounding communities. They simultaneously launched an offensive on the 3rd communal section of Marchand-Dessalines, specifically in the localities of Bois Jour,

Pont Jour, and Baraj. It was the Baraj Self-Defense Brigade that had to resist, thwarting their plan. The same day, armed bandits from the Kokorat San Ras gang, based in Laroix-Périsse, in the commune of L'Estère, invaded the commune of Marchand-Dessalines. The police station, which no longer existed, made their task easier.

30. Furthermore, Saint-Marc Chief Commissioner Lyvenson GAUTHIER stated that he dispatched three (3) armored vehicles to the locality of Jean-Denis on March 29, 2026, at 4:00 in the morning. By the time the agents removed the barricades placed on the road by the armed bandits and arrived on site, it was already close to 5:00. After stabilizing the situation, two (2) hours after their arrival, the police officers withdrew to Pakchwal, a locality located in Pont Sondé.

31. On March 30, 2026, faced with repeated attempts by armed bandits to establish a permanent base in Jean Denis, PNH armored vehicles returned there and have since received orders to remain in position.

32. A few days later, on April 6, 2026, in the afternoon, law enforcement, under the pretext of responding to the massacre perpetrated by the Savien armed bandits against the population of Jean Denis, launched three (3) kamikaze drones intended to target the stronghold of the Gran Grif armed gang. Two (2) of the drones fell in the locality of Bwa Lavil Anba, while the other was dropped in the Descordes area, leading towards Anndan Lavil. And while it is true that armed bandits had gathered at the place where the third drone fell, in the Pon Tenma area, well before impact, they had already withdrawn.

## **VI. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

33. On the night of March 28 to 29, 2026, the population of Jean Denis experienced horror: people were killed, including women, children, elderly persons, and persons living with disabilities; houses and businesses were set on fire; many families were forced to flee during the night, etc. According to combined information from local authorities, Artibonite civil society organizations, and witnesses to this massacre, at least seventy (70) people lost their lives, of which fifty-three (53) were identified by RNDDH; at least one (1) person is reported missing, and thirty (30) people were injured by gunfire or bladed weapons. Twenty-three (23) residences and businesses were set on fire. Five thousand two hundred ninety-one (5,291) members of the population were massively displaced.

34. About ten days after this massacre, it must be noted that the Haitian State does not consider it its duty to contact victims and victims' relatives. Those who were injured or who lost everything are abandoned to their fate. The corpses that had been taken to the Saint-Marc morgues still lie there. The costs of the rare funerals that were held were borne by the depleted families. And while the Haitian State wounds its citizens with its silence, police institution officials parade in the media, claiming that the toll of the massacre presented by Artibonite civil society is not as heavy as is being said.

35. RNDDH regrets that the sporadic raids that were perpetrated in different communes of the Artibonite department since 2022, added to the Pont-Sondé massacre, committed on the night of October 2 to 3, 2024, and the twenty-four (24) episodes of violence that were recorded in the department only during the year 2025, did not lead police authorities to equip the department with police equipment and materials allowing the institution's agents assigned there to confront armed bandits. Similarly, intelligence and information cells have not been in a way to regularly provide precise information on the activities of armed bandits.

36. Furthermore, the Artibonite population regularly denounces UDMO agents who are presented, for the most part, as colluding with armed bandits. In response to these denunciations, on December 22, 2025, RNDDH addressed a letter to the General Inspectorate of the Haitian National Police (IGPNH), requesting the opening of an investigation into these clearly identified agents. However, no follow-up was given to these various denunciations.

37. RNDDH believes that the Jean Denis massacre could have been avoided if IGPNH had done its job and had investigated these UDMO agents who supply armed bandits with weapons and ammunition and provide them with information on police institution operations.

38. In light of all the above, RNDDH recommends that state authorities and law enforcement:

- Regain control of the national territory in general;
- Track down, arrest, try and convict all armed bandits who sow mourning and terror among the Haitian population;

- Provide victims and victims' relatives of the Jean Denis massacre with financial assistance allowing them to meet medical expenses and proceed with the burial of their loved ones;
- Carry out the vetting of the Departmental Unit for Maintaining Order (UDMO) as a whole, whose agents are too often presented as colluding with armed bandits.