



THE LASALIN MASSACRE AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS IN HAITI

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INTRODUCTION

On November 13, 2018, police and other paramilitary personnel entered the neighborhood of Lasalin in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. What followed was a massacre of the civilian population. Buildings, including schools, were fired upon and destroyed, people were injured and killed, with some burned alive, women were sexually assaulted and raped and hundreds were forcibly displaced from homes. Bodies were either burned, taken away to be disappeared, buried, never to be found, or in some cases left to be eaten by dogs and pigs.

There has been widespread acknowledgement from the Haitian government, mainstream human rights groups and even the United Nations occupiers in Haiti, known by the acronym MINUJUSTH, that something terrible took place in Lasalin. However, in every case, there has been an attempt to downplay and obscure what actually happened. The numbers of the dead and wounded have been minimized, the extent of destruction to communities and displacement downplayed, and the violence has been primarily blamed on “gangs fighting over territory.”

The Lasalin massacre was designed to punish and destroy a neighborhood long known as a stronghold of the grassroots Lavalas movement and center of opposition. Our investigation determined that the narrative of “gang warfare” obscures the reality that the attack on Lasalin was government-orchestrated and supported, with police collaborating with and weaponizing criminal elements. According to many Lasalin residents and survivors, the coordinator of the massacre was Pierre Richard Duplan, alias Pierrot, of the PHTK (Parti Haïtien Tèt Kale, the ruling party

of Jovenel Moise). Duplan had failed in his bid to become the mayor of Port-au-Prince and was now the government delegate for the West Department of Haiti.¹ A UN human rights report released on June 21st, 2019, also implicates Duplan.² *The Miami Herald* disclosed in a May 15th article that a police investigation had confirmed the involvement in the massacre of high-level government officials in the government of Jovenel Moise, tracing an assault rifle assigned to the National Palace to the massacre.³ These are just some of the examples of government involvement in the massacre.

On April 1, 2019, members of the Haiti Action Committee (HAC) and the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) went to Haiti to investigate the November 13th massacre in Lasalin as well as the ongoing pattern of repression and extrajudicial killings targeting the people of Lasalin and other neighborhoods known for their activism against the government. We found a clear pattern of paramilitaries/death squads being armed and abetted by the government in order to terrorize the population and prevent opposition. This level of violence and repression has not been seen since the 2004 coup against President Aristide which, according to a study published in the medical journal *The Lancet*, resulted in an estimated 8,000 deaths in the Port-au-Prince area alone.⁴

Our team included Judith Mirkinson, President of the San Francisco Chapter of the National Lawyers' Guild; Margaret Prescod, producer of the “Sojourner Truth” radio program nationally syndicated on Pacifica Radio and member of Women of Color/ Global Women's Strike; Ramiro Funez, assistant producer of “Sojourner Truth”, and Seth Donnelly, member of Haiti Action Committee

and the California Teachers Association. Margaret Prescod provided coverage of our delegation's findings on "Sojourner Truth" and on "The Real News Network" television program.⁵

REPORT METHODOLOGY

On April 1, 2019, our team went to Lasalin and conducted interviews with residents who had witnessed the killings and/or who had lost loved ones in the massacre. We also gathered physical evidence of the killings. That same afternoon, we went to an abandoned market in Waf Jeremy and interviewed some of those residents who had been forced to flee from their homes in Lasalin.

We followed up these direct interviews on April 2nd by speaking to Haitian investigative journalists who had been closely following the situation in Lasalin, from before the massacre to the present day. We also met with Haitian human rights workers.

After our visit, another U.S. human rights delegation went to Haiti between April 24th and

April 27th to follow up on our investigation. This second delegation included U.S. Representative Maxine Waters, investigative journalist Margaret Prescod, Haiti Action Committee co-founder Pierre Labossiere, actor Danny Glover, and NLG human rights attorneys Walter Riley and Brian Concannon. The additional evidence gathered by this second delegation confirms the findings of this report. As Walter Riley expressed: "We have eyewitness reports that these attacks are not simply gangs as they are being referred to by the press and the US Embassy, but part of militias backed by some in the Moïse administration. The murder and brutality is a policy of the Haitian government which is backed by the United States." Similarly, Brian Concannon stated: "I have worked on political violence cases in Haiti for 24 years and the witness reports from Lasalin, Tokyo and Site Vincent are all too similar to other notorious acts of state-sponsored oppression ... With the Duvaliers' Ton-Ton Macoutes, the FRAPH death squads and now the violent groups under the Moïse administration,



Street scene in Lasalin

the motive for each has been silencing calls for justice and democracy and terrorizing government opponents, while disguising government participation.”⁶ Congresswoman Waters said she was ‘appalled and shocked’ at the killings and promised to engage with her colleagues in Congress to use ‘whatever leverage and power we have to help make the violence cease because this is not conscionable and not tolerable.’”⁷

In addition to the information collected from these steps and sources, we have also read and analyzed reports by Haitian human rights organizations on the November 13th massacre. Furthermore, we have extracted corroborating evidence for our findings from investigative Haitian journalists and from a public interview with one of the key perpetrators of the massacre, former police officer Jimmy Cherizier, aka “Barbecue”.

WHY LASALIN?

Lasalin is a neighborhood with a population of about 5,000 in the downtown section of Port-au-Prince. It is part of the West Department of Haiti and borders the infamous port of Croix des Bossales where enslaved Africans were first brought to Haiti by the French. The port is still heavily used for commercial traffic. Lasalin has been known as a stronghold of Lavalas—the mass popular grassroots party of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide—ever since President Aristide was a parish priest there in the St. Jean Bosco Church. During the Aristide period, hospitals, housing and schools were all built there in accordance with policies enacted throughout the country. These buildings were particularly targeted during the massacre.

The attack on Lasalin comes at a time of increasing violence and repression. Starting in July 2018, there have been massive demonstrations protesting the theft of 4.2 billion dollars of PetroCaribe money: oil lent by Venezuela to Haiti which could then be sold for a profit. The extra money could then be used to fund social programs

in Haiti. Instead, this money simply vanished. Over three days in July 2018, tens of thousands protested in the streets demanding an end to gas price hikes, an accounting for the missing funds and the resignation of President Jovenel Moise. The demonstrations brought Port-au-Prince to a virtual standstill and resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Jacques Guy Lafontant. The demonstrations, which are met with tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition continue to the present day.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Based upon extensive interviews with Haitian human rights workers, journalists, and the residents of Lasalin, we have constructed the following timeline of events leading up to and following the November 13th massacre.

- **On October 13, 2017**, a government delegation including Haitian First Lady Martine Moise and then Minister of the Interior Roudolphe Saint Albin went to Lasalin and met with Herve Bonnet Barthelemy, known as “Bout Jan Jan”, and other community leaders. Among other matters discussed, the government delegation asked these leaders not to allow anti-government, opposition demonstrations within and through Lasalin, as well as in Saint Jean Bosco, an area in front of the nearby Tokyo neighborhood, close to an intersection frequently used for protests.⁸
- **On October 15, 2018**, representatives of the political opposition held a press conference in Lasalin, supporting the PetroCaribe movement and demanding the end of the government of Jovenel Moise.⁹
- **On October 17, 2018**, a national holiday commemorating the death of Haitian revolutionary leader Jean Jacques Dessalines, people in Lasalin refused to welcome President Jovenel Moise who came to the neighborhood in order to lay the traditional wreath at a monument for Dessalines.

Instead, Moise's presence was protested vigorously by the community. Police responded with gun fire. Moreover, there was a massive Petro Caribe protest that occurred within and passed through Lasalin that day.¹⁰

■ **According to Lasalin** residents, First Lady Martine Moise visited Lasalin in October, 2018 days before the killings started in November. She reportedly tried bribing the community with offers of money. Her attempt to secure their loyalty was unsuccessful.

■ **On November 1, 2018**, a holiday known as "All Saints Day", Serge Alectis aka "Ti Junior," leader of Chabon—a paramilitary force working with the government—led an attack on Bout Jan Jan and Julio Pyram, aka "Kiki" in Lasalin, killing Kiki along with four others, and wounding Bout Jan Jan.¹¹ Police subsequently arrested Bout Jan Jan in the hospital despite community opposition and he remains imprisoned to this day. According to community members who met with us, Chabon was the only group in the larger area that had wanted former President Michel Martelly (who had picked Jovenel Moise to be his successor) to come to the neighborhood to perform during the past Mardi Gras festivities.

■ **On November 13, 2018**, Ti Junior and his group Chabon returned to Lasalin—heavily armed—and carried out the massacre. They were accompanied by other government-backed paramilitary elements, including the police officer Jimmy Cherizier, alias "Barbecue," police officer Gregory Antoine, alias "Ti Greg," and other police officers. The perpetrators used several vehicles, including an armored truck given to them by the Brigade of Operation and of Departmental Intervention (BOID), and several public transport vans. The residents reported that several police units, including

one from BOID and Departmental Unit to Maintain Order (UDMO), involving officer Gustave Jouspite, were heavily involved in supporting Chabon, including providing them with munitions. The massacre, which started on November 13, continued intermittently for the following several days.¹² On June 21, the UN finally issued a report on the massacre that implicated Pierre Duplan as a coordinator, just as Lasalin eyewitness survivors had been doing since November. According to the UN report, Duplan reportedly admitted to direct communication with perpetrators of the massacre on the ground in Lasalin.¹³

Lasalin residents and Haitian journalists with Radio Timoun reported that there were as many as eight attacks by government-backed paramilitary



forces on the people of Lasalin between the November 13th massacre and our arrival in Lasalin. In an interview with a Radio Timoun journalist who has reported consistently from Lasalin, we were told that over the last week in March one paramilitary attack burned down a popular market and killed 13 people. While in Lasalin, this reporter saw the remains of people who had tires put around their necks and were then burned to death.¹⁴

THE POLICE AND RIGHT WING ACTIVISTS BOAST OF THEIR ROLES IN THE MASSACRE

Former Police leader Jimmy Cherizier (Barbecue) publicly stated that he had a number of police officers in his group block escape routes from Lasalin during the November operation. This statement corroborates the testimony given by survivors in Lasalin accusing him and other police officers of participating in the massacre. Cherizier has denied support from the government for his organization, correctly identified as a death squad

by survivors. Yet, this denial is to be expected given Barbecue's high profile status as a member of the PHTK and as someone who remains uncharged and at large. Significantly, Barbecue does publicly thank Reginald Boulos—widely regarded by the Haitian public as a right-wing oligarch—for his financial support. Boulos had been integral in financing the 2004 coup against the democratically elected and popular President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. During a radio interview, Boulos admitted that he was financially supporting paramilitary elements, claiming that they were providing social programs when the state was absent.¹⁵

COUNTING THE VICTIMS

Due to the fact that so many bodies were taken away and so many people displaced, it has been difficult to get an accurate number of those killed, injured and/or sexually assaulted. The ages of those attacked on November 13th and the days following, ranged from 10 months to 72 years. One Haitian human rights organization, RNDDH (Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains), did interview many residents, and was able to

identify 71 murdered. However, residents and local human rights defenders maintain that this number is deplorably low, based only on the number of bodies actually left on the ground and not taking into account either those buried or taken away.¹⁶ The RNDDH report lists the names of the victims and describes in detail how each victim was killed, some being hacked to death with machetes with their body parts fed to pigs, some being burned alive, others being riddled with bullets.¹⁷ The methodology employed by the RNDDH to reach these findings involved, among other steps, interviewing four hundred and thirty-nine (439)



They also took us to a small school riddled by bullets. We were told that five students and two teachers had been killed there.

community members of Lasalin including victims and victims' relatives. The December 1, 2018 report concludes with a decisive classification of the November 1st killings as a "state massacre" and categorically states that the killings could not have occurred without the current government's support—on all levels—for the perpetrators.

French journalist Amelie Baron, reporting for *Agence France-Presse* from Haiti, initially placed the number at 283 in an article that no longer seems to be available online.

Journalists and human rights workers who visited the scene shortly after the massacre told us: "We will never know how many were killed": many bodies were not identified, their surviving family members having been forced to leave the area. Other bodies and remains were soon disposed of; religious leaders claimed some, while many others, including those burned beyond recognition, were simply taken away by garbage trucks and dumped somewhere. Many people were also brought to hospitals: it's estimated that hundreds were wounded in the attacks. Then there are those who were simply jailed, no records being taken. None of these additional numbers are accounted for in any issued reports. Since the PetroCaribe protests which began in the summer of 2018, hundreds have randomly been thrown in jail, without charges, never having seen a judge.

Women were assaulted and raped—some left pregnant. One 14-year old girl raped by Ti Junior actually went to radio stations to report the crime, but could not get help. Due to the continuing stigma surrounding rape and because many were forced to flee, the true numbers of those sexually assaulted is not known.

INTERVIEWS WITH RESIDENTS OF LASALIN: CONDUCTED ON APRIL 1, 2019

Our human rights delegation visited Lasalin on Monday, April 1st, during the late morning and early afternoon. The neighborhood, usually

teeming with people, was eerily empty. No one was on the streets, and the houses—many of which were shot up, burned and/or completely destroyed—were abandoned. Upon our arrival we were told that the situation was still precarious and that people had to be off the streets completely by 4 PM. We were met by a group of about 15 to 20 community members, consisting mostly of women of different ages who were anxious to give testimony about the massacre. They guided us down a main street, showing us housing, including affordable housing units built during Aristide's presidency, that had been shot up by heavy munitions with bullet holes measuring 2-3 inches across.

One person after another described how their relatives were killed, many hacked and/or burnt to death. People we interviewed said, "This neighborhood has been made a mausoleum. There is no water, no hospital and no school." They repeatedly told us, "This is a humanitarian crisis. People are not living as human beings." Photographs of the aftermath document bodies being left to rot, to be eaten by pigs or dogs. Others



Bullet hole in
the chalkboard
of the school.

show bodies that had been hacked and then burned.

What follows is testimony we gathered from community members during our visit to Lasalin. Translation was provided on the ground during our meeting in Lasalin by a Haitian professional translator. The names of the people who provided testimony have been altered for their protection.

From Mildred, a young pregnant woman:

“On November 15, my husband was in the house with me and they grabbed him and used the machetes to kill him... I lost my husband while I’m pregnant.”

She thinks she’s due next month and has no access to healthcare. She pointed to her shoeless, swollen feet. She’s sleeping now by the ocean where there’s “bad breeze” and no proper food.



From Jeanne:

“I lost my 28 year-old son. He was burned and I also lost my husband. Why?”

“This community, Lasalin, has a reputation of revolution. We don’t stand with dictatorship since the Macoutes and Duvalier. And still now. Children, youth, and adults here have the blood of revolution. That’s why the government doesn’t like this community...So what’s happening is that the death squad involved in these killings has been living in a [nearby] neighborhood ‘Na Chabon’. They’ve been involved in sexual assaults, they’ve been involved in raping women, and because of this, the community [Lasalin] decided that they would keep them away. But because of this, they [the death

squad named ‘Chabon’] got together with Martine Moise, the First Lady of Haiti, who helped them to come back after 6 years to really terrorize the population and kill people.”

“One thing that is very important for us—you can see these houses—they were houses that President Aristide built... People who were living there had to leave and go into a displaced community because they can’t live here.”

“On March 13, 2019, there was a huge incident where they murdered some people in this community and even burned them. Right now the place where this happened... you can see some of the skeletons that were burned. But also this community is using the place as a mausoleum in memory of all the people who died. It is the house where the people were living and we decided to keep it as a mausoleum.”

“So the whole community...is essentially living through the women being vendors on the street, selling whatever they can find. Like a young child here in Lasalin is selling something. It can be a small fish, it can be a little bit of fried food, street food. But since this happened, if the children can no longer be involved in these kind of vending activities, it can be worse. This makes the situation of hunger really awful in this community. I have not had anything to eat since Saturday.” [she was speaking to us on Monday]

“So right now people in Lasalin aren’t living as human beings should be living. They [the death squad] steal everything that people own in this community. Now the people have no resources to take care of themselves. And during the day you can see that there’s still a lot of people in the community, but when it gets to be 4 or 5, you will see that people will be spreading, looking for places under bridges, next to the water, to leave the neighborhood, because it will be dark and anything can happen with the same group coming back just to attack...”

“Yesterday there was shooting going on, but today not yet. But at any time, around 2 PM, they might come back...”

From Daniel:

"I lost my son."

"Right now the community of Lasalin has lost everything. Over there you can see the building without the window. It's a building that used to be a well-known hospital. Now it's gone..."

"Lasalin used to have water access. Now we don't have it anymore. The people in Lasalin used to find their own ways to survive, but after the incidents, things got worse. That's why the people of Lasalin aren't just calling for legal assistance for what happened, but also calling for humanitarian assistance...."

"Most of the people in this community have escaped and fled because they fear so much from new attacks... I'm under threat because I've been involved in reporting to human rights organizations. We've heard threats.... Since the massacre, no one from the government comes here to really talk with us. The prime minister at the time [Ceant] said that all of the pictures [of the massacre] that were in the media and the social media were not real pictures from November, but that these were pictures from 2004 [the year of the coup]."

"... we need to find justice for what happened, for people who've lost loved ones, for people who didn't even find the bodies of their close friends and relatives to even have a decent funeral. For all of this, the people of Lasalin want justice. And they know justice won't come from this government."

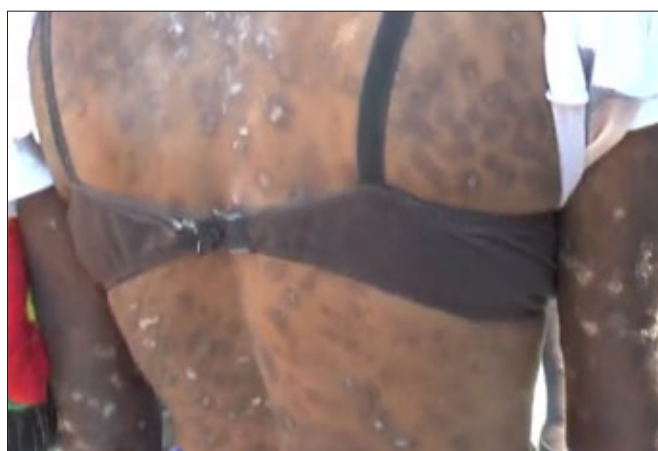
From Annette:

"I had a child who was 24. And he was not someone involved in any trouble activity. He was an artist and a DJ who helped with music. He was inside, the group came in, killed him, cut him up with machetes, and burned him. Many others have lost loved ones like this. My house was ransacked. I'm now dealing with hunger. After all of these massacres have happened here, it's nonsense that people have to escape from the community they were born in and have to go live by the ocean where there's bad breeze [toxic air]...The President should have someone sent here, maybe a minister

or maybe a director of somewhere, to talk to the victims, but the President is actually working with the death squad. They become his entourage. They become his people and this way the people of Lasalin constantly live under fear, the threat that something can happen."

From Paulette, an older woman with a skin rash:

As explained by a man next to her—"Her son was cut up in front of her and because of this trauma was so bad that she had all of this [rash].



In her words—"They shot him, then cut him up, and burned him."

He was 32 years old.

Jeanne went on to say:

"The people you see here are the fearless. They want to come here [to talk with you] because they have no fear. There are people who... don't want to come back to this community. They've seen too much. They stay by the water..."

"The group that perpetrated this is Chabon. They are connected with the government and are working with the government in the Ministry of the Interior. This group [Chabon] was supportive of Martelly during the election. They [the people of Lasalin] did not want Martelly to come into Lasalin, but this group was very supportive of Martelly... What they [Chabon] claim is that they have to control this community because this way they would really control the situation. And they want this community to become PHTK

[ruling government party]. But this will remain opposition.”

From Jean, a young man:

“I want to see more follow-up from this human rights delegation because what’s going on in Lasalin right now is something that needs to stop, because what’s going on here in Lasalin is political. It’s really orchestrated by the actual government that pays these guys to perpetrate all of these violations....And now they have all kinds



Photo at the “mausoleum;” remains of a pregnant woman burned alive and then left on the floor.

of systems to torture people, like the burning of people. They would set the person on fire while alive. This has really traumatized the whole community. All of this is being orchestrated by a department delegate named Pierrot who is under the PHTK [and] who wanted to become a mayor under the party but couldn’t elected.... [so] he assigned guys like Junior who used to live in the community but who was kicked out because of his involvement in sexual abuse.... All the people who participate in the massacre, they have pictures.”

Jean further explained to us that community members are also demanding that Bout Jan Jan, a

leader of the community who provided protection be freed. “Martine Moise, the wife of President Jovenel Moise, tried to bribe Bout Janan so that he would discourage people to protest against the government. Bout Janan did not do this. Consequently, he was arrested. While he was arrested, the opportunity was created for Chabon—armed with weapons from the government—to attack the community.”

Another young man showed us a photo of his brother who had been killed, knifed to death, and then had his naked body put out on display.

THE CONDITIONS OF LASALIN REFUGEES NOW LIVING IN WAF JEREMY

After leaving Lasalin, we travelled to Waf Jeremy, an area next to the sea port. There, we interviewed refugees from Lasalin who were barely surviving in an abandoned market. Men, women, children, and babies were all living together below cold, damp concrete market stalls draped with blankets or just cardboard on cement floors. The floors were teeming with bugs that would bite them on the cement floors where they slept. There was no plumbing, no toilets, no source of potable water and no food. The air was thick with a toxic, burning plastic smell which was making people sick. This was the place they were forced to call home. Thus far, no one from the government had visited them and/or attempted to offer any relief or reparations

People explained that they had to flee Lasalin, many of their relatives having been killed and their homes destroyed. There were perhaps 50 people living on the floor under the stalls in one large room. Adjacent market rooms were also packed with people. We estimated that hundreds were living, with scant resources, in these conditions.

As one older woman put it: “This is the worst situation in my life. I have nowhere to live as my house was burned. I left with no clothes—someone



told us she had delivered her daughter right there on the concrete floor. Without food for herself, she was unable to properly nurse the baby, who appeared ill and despondent. There was no medical care. To our delegation, it appeared that the baby was on the verge of death.

THE KILLINGS AND MASSACRES CONTINUE

- **On April 2** we interviewed women active in grassroots organizations. Betty, a founder of the popular organization Conscious and Devoted Women, told us: “The repression is reaching new heights and the country is going deeper into chaos. We’re facing a wall. There is a deep feeling of insecurity and terror, even felt by those with money! Just on my way to this interview, today, I saw three bodies with bullet holes in their heads.”
- **On April 24 and 25**, there were attacks on the nearby, popular neighborhoods of Tokyo and Kafoufey. One Haitian reporter was trapped in Kafoufey during the attack.

had to give me a dress. I have no money and only one person to help me at all.”

Below one stall we encountered a young mother and her one month old baby daughter, The mother



■ **Since then killing and massacres** by the police and paramilitary affiliates have been reported in different parts of the country, targeting popular neighborhoods and grassroots activists. On June 18, *Radio Timoun* reported a massacre in Village de Dieu. Since then, multiple media and eyewitness reports have documented that the perpetrators—including the group led by Jimmy Cherizier, alias Barbecue—burned some bodies and removed others, making it difficult to determine the number of victims. Though further investigation is required to determine the number of victims, preliminary reports indicate that dozens of people were killed. One photograph shows only the legs left of a victim after the remaining body had been burned. More recently, reports are reaching us that between June 23–24, police and paramilitary affiliates violence and killings in both Akay (Les Cayes) and Kap Ayisyen (Cap Haitien). The numbers of people injured and killed are yet to be determined.

■ **On June 24**, as reported by both Radio Timoun, *Vision 2000*, and other Haitian radio stations, Presidential security police units CIMO and USGPN, working with paramilitary affiliates, opened fire on demonstrators in Port-au-Prince, killing perhaps as many as 30. Bodies were removed and it is hard to determine the exact number of those killed without further investigation. USGPN is infamous in Haiti for human rights abuses.

POLITICAL PRISONERS:

As a separate part of our investigation we also met with human rights lawyers from the office of *Cabinet Masionneuve & Associes* in order to hear about further aspects of government repression. Hundreds of people have been arrested since the first anti-government demonstrations began in August. Often, those arrested are summarily thrown in jail with no paperwork or any charges. Families are forced to wait for days in order to determine where their relatives are being held. If they are lucky, they can locate them, but then charges must be filed and lawyers have to go through the complicated process of even getting a hearing.



Street in Lasalin.

Testimony of Madame Joseph

“There were protests on July 6–7, 2018. However, my son, was not involved. He was not even in the neighborhood in those days. In the aftermath of the demonstrations, the police were still ‘cleaning up.’ In the ensuing ‘sweep’ of Arimage, nine were arrested, including my son. After three days, he tried to get a hearing, but ironically the prosecutor’s office was on strike and he was sent directly to the penitentiary. I tried to find him for three days, going from office to office and finally found him. I’ve had to spend all my money and leave my housing just to provide him with clothes and food.”

Testimony of Antoine

“I still don’t understand what happened. I was in my house getting ready to go to church. The police broke into the house and arrested me—I was arrested with my Bible! I was beaten and taken away. My mother didn’t know where I was, she thought I had been killed. I was still in school in the twelfth grade and missed my exams. I was in a cell with 40 other people, many of them criminals. The conditions are horrible, it’s dirty,

you can’t even lie down and there is no food and it’s very violent. I was afraid all the time. I should be compensated for what happened to me.”

Testimony of Pierre

“I was on November 22, 2018 at 6 AM. I’m a mason and I was leaving home for a construction job when I was arrested. I was beaten so bad that I really thought I was going to die. I was kidnapped and disappeared. There are 50–60 people in a cell and usually there is a “boss” who often is armed. So it is very dangerous.”

“Thank goodness for mothers. Without mine I would have had no food or clothes because the prison gives you nothing.”

These scenarios are repeated again and again.

One of the attorneys, Marc Antoine Maisonneuve summed it up: “There is no paper trail, no facts, no case, no record. Sometimes we get lucky and get a sympathetic judge or halfway decent prosecutor and we can get them out. But the number of prisoners is overwhelming and we don’t have enough attorneys to help them.”

CONCLUSION

It is our finding, based upon our investigation, that the Lasalin massacre was directed and facilitated by the Moise/ PHTK government. Lasalin was chosen as the target for this massacre because of its significance as a base of resistance and a staging ground for anti-government protests. This was certainly a reason why First Lady Martine Moise went to Lasal in in October 2018 and attempted to convince community leaders to stop the protests.

The massacres are continuing. Due to a lack of systematic data collection, it is still unclear how many have been killed, how many injured and how many displaced. However, it is not overestimating to say that these numbers may actually be in the hundreds and perhaps more. It is essential that

complete data must be obtained and analyzed.

The evidence of government and paramilitary collusion is clear. At first, the government and others in the media claimed the killings were horrific but that they were just the result of gangs fighting over turf. However, it has been confirmed that leaders of the killings arrived with the police and the subsequent massacre had both police protection and participation. Reginald Boulos has also publicly admitted to financing paramilitary leaders involved in the massacre. Pierre Duplan, the PHTK delegate for the West Department of Haiti, has also been implicated as a coordinator of the massacre. While the government may support his prosecution and try to paint the massacre as one carried out by a “rogue” official and “rogue”

police officers in coordination with “gangs,” it is clear that responsibility extends to the highest level of the ruling party and government. A thorough investigation must be held and those responsible must face charges. The people injured and displaced should receive reparations and be guaranteed the right to return to Lasalin and their homes with full security.

It is also imperative that there be an investigation into the role of the US embassy and government in both the election of Jovenel Moise and the ensuing corruption and human rights abuses. Jovenel Moise was placed into power through a fraudulent November 2016 elections held under UN occupation and aided by the U.S. government. Despite overwhelming evidence of fraud, the U.S. State Department immediately heralded the elections as legitimate and proceeded

to continue to provide the Haitian government with financial and diplomatic support. At the same time the United Nations, while announcing preparations to leave Haiti, continued to train and create a militarized police force.¹⁸ “Since 2010, the United States has provided \$259.9 million to train, equip, and provide technical assistance to the Haitian National Police.¹⁹ Clearly, without the U.S. government’s active intervention in the domestic affairs of Haiti, the Moise government would never have come to power. As the toll mounts from the atrocities committed in Lasalin, it is time for both the United States and the United Nations to be held to task for their continued support of the repressive and illegitimate regime now in power in Haiti. The people of Haiti deserve the right to live without the daily threat of state-directed violence. ■

Report Authors

Seth Donnelly is a public high school teacher in the Bay Area of California, where he has taught social studies for nearly two decades. He has been an activist with the Puerto Rican independence and Black liberation movements, doing solidarity work with prisoners from those movements. He has also been involved in the Haiti Action Committee since 2004. He is the author of the 2005 report *Growing Evidence of a Massacre by UN Occupation Forces in Port-au-Prince Neighborhood of Cité Soleil: a Summary of Findings of the U.S. Labor and Human Rights Delegation to Haiti* (Berkeley: U.S. Labor and Human Rights Delegation to Haiti, July 12, 2005). Donnelly has also co-authored 2005 human rights petitions filed with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights censuring the U.S. and Brazilian governments for their roles in the killings of Haitian civilians following the 2004 coup.

Judith Mirkinson is a long term women’s and human rights activist. She has spent decades doing international solidarity work and is a co-author of the NLG 2007 report: *Seeking Answers: Probing Political Persecution, Repression & Human Rights Violations in The Philippines*. Her most recent article is: [*We Are Seeing Ourselves Being Dragged Back Into a Time When Women Were Dehumanized: Sexual Violence As a Tool of Repression in Haiti*](#).

She is president of the SF/Bay Area Chapter of the NLG.

All photos by Judith Mirkinson for the delegation.

Cover image: Part of a wall within an elementary school that was shot up. Two teachers and five students were killed as a result.

ENDNOTES

1. RNDDH, *The Events in La Saline: from Power Struggle between Armed Gangs to State-Sanctioned Massacre*, December 1, 2018, p.13. Lasalin residents also told our delegation that Duplan was involved in coordinating the massacre.
2. <https://minujusth.unmissions.org/en/minujusth-and-ohchr-release-report-violent-events-13-and-14-november-la-saline>, full report in French: https://minujusth.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/minujusth_hcdh_rapport_la_saline.pdf
3. “Dozens brutally killed, raped in Haiti massacre, police say. ‘Even young children were not spared’”, Jacqueline Charles, Miami Herald, May 15, 2019, updated May 17, 2019, <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article230380739.html>.
4. Athena Kolbe and Royce Hutson, “UN Peacekeepers in Haiti,” *The Lancet* vol.368/ issue 9538 (September 2, 2006). 8000 people were killed within a one and half year period after the 2004 coup.
5. For coverage on “Sojourner Truth”, see <https://soundcloud.com/sojournertruthradio/sojourner-truth-radio-april-5>. For coverage on the “Real News Network,” see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-6kQH-IrAg&v=Vz64mWYpOgQ>
6. Margaret Prescod, “Human Rights Delegation Condemns Political Massacres Tied to Haiti’s Government,” Press Release, May 8, 2019.
7. Representative Maxine Waters, “Congresswoman Waters Leads Delegation to Haiti; Finds Both Inspiration and Evidence of Violence”, Press Release, May 13, 2019.
8. RNDDH, *The Events in La Saline: from Power Struggle between Armed Gangs to State-Sanctioned Massacre*, December 1, 2018, p.5.
9. Ibid, pp.5-6.
10. *Le Nouvelliste*, “La Police Tire a Hauteur D’Homme au Pont-Rouge” (October 17, 2018). Also, see *Le Nouvelliste’s* video coverage <https://youtu.be/UX-ac8kDFzM>. For additional video evidence of police shooting at demonstrators on demonstrators, see Kodinasyon Depatmantal Lwes Fanmi Lavalas <https://www.facebook.com/1421526351403611/videos/2276771565875806/>
11. RNDDH, *The Events in La Saline: from Power Struggle between Armed Gangs to State-Sanctioned Massacre*, December 1, 2018, p.6.
12. Ibid, p. 7
13. <https://minujusth.unmissions.org/en/minujusth-and-ohchr-release-report-violent-events-13-and-14-november-la-saline>, full report in French: https://minujusth.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/minujusth_hcdh_rapport_la_saline.pdf
14. Interview with Radio Timoun staff, April 1-2, 2019
15. The interview with Barbecue was published on Youtube on December 27, 2018 under the title “Massacre ‘La Saline’ Jimmy Cherizier (Barbecue) Les Bandits ‘Legal’ dans la police Haïtienne.” The interview was conducted by Bob C, a Haitian radio host and well-known PHTK supporter. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BILs2fIG-A>
- The interview with Reginald Boulos was conducted by a reporter with *Radio Sans Fin*, a progressive media outlet, on April 25, 2018. One journalist, Rospide Petion, with this radio station was subsequently assassinated on June 10, 2019.
- Translations provided upon request.
16. RNDDH, *Massacre d’Etat à La Saline: Révision à la hausse du bilan des personnes tuées et violées le 13 novembre 2018*, (December 20, 2018).
17. RNDDH, *The Events in Lasaline: from Power Struggle between Armed Gangs to State Sanctioned Massacre*, p.8.
18. Here are but a few examples of the fraud uncovered:
 - After Fanmi Lavalas, Haiti’s most popular political party successfully challenged the elections in Haitian court, Lavalas obtained a court order to investigate the election results. Dr. Maryse Narcisse, the Lavalas candidate for president, then visited the Vote Tabulation Center shortly after the elections, to investigate the results. She was joined by election officials, observers, representatives of another contesting smaller party Meksepa and of the ruling PHTK party. They examined 78 randomly selected vote tally sheets (proces verbaux), and all present agreed that every one of the 78 tally sheets was fraudulent, without exception. The US-backed CEP election commission then abruptly ended the legally-mandated verification process —invalidating those 78 particular tally sheets, but failing to check the over 13,000 tally sheets remaining to be verified. With that, the CEP inexplicably accepted the fraudulent election “results” as legitimate.
 - Deputy A.R.Bien-Aime and 2 other PHTK candidates made a startling revelation about UNOPS, a U.N. agency assigned to transport ballot boxes to the Tabulation Center. They charged that while in U.N. custody, the ballot boxes were switched en route with boxes of pre-filled-out ballots. In addition, a National Palace official was involved in a vehicle accident in which pre-filled-out ballots, marked for the Presidential candidate of Martelly’s PHTK party, Jovenel Moise, were spilled on the road.
 - 15 prominent Haitian intellectuals, outraged by “clear involvement of U.N. agencies in the fraud that marred the elections,” wrote an Open Letter to the U.N. Mission stating, “the whole world is discovering, under pressure from the street ...the truth of the biggest electoral fraud operation...for the last 30 years in Haiti.”
- * Also, see: Board, The Editorial. “Opinion | Haiti Deserves a Legitimate Election.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 19 Jan. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/opinion/sunday/haiti-deserves-a-legitimate-election.html?_r=1.
19. As quoted in a letter dated April 18, 2019, by Charles S. Faulkner, United States Department of State, to Representative Anna Eshoo, United States Congress.

RESOURCES ON HAITI

Articles

We Will Not Forget: The Achievements of Lavalas, by Haiti Action Committee <<https://politicaleducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/wnnf.pdf>>

“The Haitian Revolution: A Past Forever Present”, speech by Mildred Trouillot Aristide (March 31, 2017), <<https://haitisolidarity.net/voices-from-haiti/the-haitian-revolution-a-past-forever-present-by-mildred-aristide/>>

Eyes of the Heart: Seeking a Path for the Poor in the Age of Globalization by Jean-Bertrand Aristide, <<https://www.powells.com/book/eyes-of-the-heart-seeking-a-path-for-the-poor-in-the-age-of-globalization-9781567511871/2-6>>

“Crisis and Resolution: Fanmi Lavalas Statement, 11/15/2018 <<https://haitisolidarity.net/crisis-and-resolution/>>

Books

The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution by CLR James, <https://politicaleducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CLR_James_The_Black_Jacobins.pdf>

An Unbroken Agony: Haiti, From Revolution to the Kidnapping of a President, Randall Robinson, <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B001AQJ2XO/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1>

Films

Haiti: Harvest of Hope by Kevin Pina
<https://haitiinformationproject.net>

We Must Kill the Bandits by Kevin Pina
<https://haitiinformationproject.net>

Massacres in Haiti by Margaret Prescod
available upon request.

Haiti Action Committee is a Bay-Area based network of activists who have supported the Haitian struggle for democracy since 1991.

Learn more at haitisolidarity.net

National Lawyers Guild (NLG)

Dedicated to the principle that human and civil rights are more sacred than property rights, the National Lawyers Guild seeks to unite lawyers, law students, legal workers and jailhouse lawyers to function as an effective political and social force to protect and defend communities, social justice movements, and political and grassroots organizations and activists advocating and organizing for those rights.



For over 80 years, the National Lawyers Guild has served as the legal arm of movements leading the fight for meaningful social change in the United States. As a progressive and leftist legal organization, the NLG has represented and defended activists in the courtrooms and on the streets.

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