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**URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO STOP THE ONGOING ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST POOR  
HAITIANS  
CURRENT HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN PORT-AU-PRINCE  
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In the days following the acts of repression against demonstrators commemorating the 1991-1994 dictatorship last week (resulting in many killings, disappearances and arbitrary arrests), various other repressive actions have been carried out by the police force in poor neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince. There have been reports that former soldiers in uniform or in civil are also involved in these operations.

Civilian armed groups are also contributing to the current situation of internal strife.

Acting in broad daylight and at night during the last few days, various teams comprising the Haitian Police Force, many of them masked, have been conducting operations into areas such as La Saline, Martissant, Cité Soleil and Bel Air. Residents claim officers have aimed their guns directly at them and in several cases, have forcibly entered their shacks and searching through their possessions on the basis that they were looking for weapons. There are similarly many reports of acts of physical violence against innocent residents. Many have been beaten up by the officers using the butt of their guns or kicking them with their boots.

Gunfire exchanges have been taken place between these various groups and it is feared that both political activists and innocent bystanders have been victimized in the outcome. At night, shootings are continuously heard further increasing the terror felt by residents and the possibility of an increase in the number of those killed.

Dead bodies have been seen lying in the streets and there are even reports of many disappearances. Searches in relevant places such as hospitals or morgues have not revealed the whereabouts of those disappeared. Those who have been wounded in the shootings cannot obtain vital medical treatment for fear of being further targeted. In one known case, the police have intervened to remove someone who has been shot in the stomach from a hospital in Cité Soleil while he was there seeking treatment. Relatives were unable to find out where he was and it was only after the intervention of an international humanitarian organization that it was acknowledged that he was being detained in a police station in the capital city.

At this time it is impossible to assess the full extent of violations committed in these areas as the indiscriminate shootings taking place make it dangerous to continue going there to investigate.

However it is certain that insecurity and deteriorating day to day living conditions are on the increase in these poor neighborhoods. There is as yet no sign that there is a will amongst the authorities that the situation is going to improve for the better for residents of those areas.

Instead of intervening to protect the residents of these poor neighborhoods, it would seem that the police are acting to terrorize them and further increase the climate of insecurity. Those acts carried out by the police force show classic signs of the machine of dictatorship operating to repress dissent and to terrorize those who have been claiming for better living conditions and democratic values.

It should also be noted that the already desperate living conditions of poor Haitians have been affected by the continuing violence in the following ways:

- street vendors who rely on day to day sales to buy their one daily meal cannot do so; many

areas have been closed off and it is dangerous to go and fetch water for daily consumption or seek medical treatment;

- children cannot go to school; and

- residents of these targeted areas are living in perpetual terror, fearing for their lives because of the indiscriminate shootings and incursions in their places of residence.

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The Haitian police force must

- stop the acts of terror being carried out in poor neighborhoods;

- stop the indiscriminate killings of innocent civilians;

- stop the removal of the wounded from medical establishments;

- ensure the protection of all individuals in the country; and

- act according to the rule of law when conducting operations: the right to life belongs to everyone and those suspected of crimes must be arrested and tried within established rules and procedures. While those at high official level or status are arrested and detained (the arbitrary methods of these arrests must of course be denounced), those who are the poorest and without any kind of protection or assistance are being killed or disappeared without the possibility of establishing their innocence or guilt " this is clearly discriminatory against the poor.

The UN peacekeeping force must

- ensure protection to all: it must not only offer back-up to the police but must protect the population against the police and other armed groups;

- carry patrols in these poor neighborhoods day and night; and

- work with the authorities and with human rights and grassroots organizations to find immediate and long term solutions to the ongoing violence in Haiti:

The Haitian interim government must:

- ensure that the rule of law is observed;

- disarm ALL armed civilian groups in the country; and

- ensure medical treatment is provided to all those injured: medical establishments must remain protected at all times to allow every individual free and safe access to treatment.