



# Research Report

Security Council (SC)

Issue 1: Addressing the escalation  
of gang violence and the  
breakdown of governance in Haiti

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## Introduction

Haiti is in the middle of a dire security and governance crisis due to the rapid expansion of armed gangs, which exercise de facto control over the entire country, especially in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Ever since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, transitional governments have not been able to retain legitimacy, resulting in complete political instability (Amnesty International, 2026). The gangs control nearly all transport roads and economical routes, using tactics such as mass violence, kidnapping, extortion, and sexual violence to maintain and further anchor said control. The lack of governance has led to mass displacement of civilians and exacerbated humanitarian needs and conditions, both internal and broader regional security (United Nations, 2026).

The situation represents not only a humanitarian catastrophe, but a threat to regional peace and human rights. With no effective governance in place, violence levels have skyrocketed, thousands upon thousands have been killed, over one million displaced, and the rule of law has virtually collapsed (Amnesty International, 2026). The sheer scale of the crisis makes it impossible to resolve internally, as it far exceeds the capabilities and capacity of existing Haitian institutions, therefore requiring multilateral cooperation seeking to uphold human rights, stabilize security and develop a long-term restoration of a legitimate government.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Governance:**

The system and processes through which a state exercises authority, enforces laws, and provides public services.

**Humanitarian Crisis:**

A situation where a population's basic needs, such as food, water, shelter, and health, cannot be met, often due to conflict or natural disasters.

**Sanctions:**

Measures imposed by countries or international organizations to pressure individuals or groups, such as asset freezes or arms embargoes.

**Transitional Government:**

A temporary governing body established to lead a country toward stability, usually after a crisis or collapse of authority.

## Background

Haiti's present-day crisis has a deep history entangled with political instability and a socioeconomic fragility which has been decaying for decades. Although armed gangs have already existed for years, the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021 marked the fall of any form of legitimate government, and the gangs assumed power (Haiti - Global Centre For The Responsibility To Protect, 2025). Prior to the assassination, Haiti's governance was far from stable, struggling with delayed elections, political polarization, and a severe lack of public trust. As the government fell, especially in the capital Port-au-Prince, criminal enterprise proliferated. Estimates state that gang control encompasses around 90% of the capital and increasingly extends into other regions such as Artibonite and Centre (Haiti Response, 2025; Human Rights Watch, 2026). Furthermore, gangs have not only unleashed violence upon the nation but have also slowly begun establishing parallel governance structures, imposing forms of "taxation" and controlling transport routes.

The United Nations have engaged in the crisis attempting to support stability and development, however as the issue evolved, the nature of the UN's involvement has changed. Peacekeeping and stabilization missions such as the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) established in 2004, have aimed to counter armed gangs, and support institutional reform while prioritizing civilian security. The United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), MINUSTAH's successor organization, concluded in October of 2019, putting an end to 15 consecutive years of UN peacekeeping in Haiti, amid hopes of a strengthened police force (United Nations in Haiti, 2022). However, since then the situation has become increasingly dire requiring more robust responses. In 2022, the SC adopted resolution 2653, putting in place a system of sanctions that targets those who contribute to instability, such as asset freezes and arms embargoes (UN Security Council Resolution 2653, 2022). In 2023, the Council authorized the Multinational Security Support (MSS) Mission. This Kenya-led initiative aimed to assist national police in combating gangs and restoring general order. However, due to severe resource-oriented limitations, the mission's effectiveness was challenged, leading to the approval of a Gang

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Suppression Force (GSF) in 2025. The GSF is a stronger effort targeting criminal networks on a 12-month mandate, which began in October. The GSF's force more than doubles its predecessor, with around 5500 soldiers, compared to the MSS's 2500. The GSF marks the international community's transition into a direct and forceful response.

Despite all these efforts, violence continues prevailing. It is estimated that gangs control around 90% of the capital Port-au-Prince. Since 2022, nationwide, over 16,000 have been killed and more than 1.5 million displaced, half of whom are experiencing a famine (Explainer: Organized Crime And Gang Violence in Haiti, 2026). Vital health and education related infrastructure has become entirely inaccessible or under gang control. The justice system's current state of paralysis has further enabled gangs to seize control over ports and transportation routes, restricting access to humanitarian aid for those in need and granting them economical control. As a result, the crisis has evolved beyond a domestic security issue into a multidimensional emergency encompassing human rights violations, economic breakdown, and regional instability, underscoring the urgent need for coordinated international action. In conclusion, Haiti's governance collapse proves to be one of the most severe security and humanitarian crises currently present before the United Nations. The combined convergence of judicial paralysis, territorial control by gangs, inaccessibility to basic humanitarian aid to civilians, and the overall severity of the political instability has created a situation in which the state can no longer fulfill their duties to the population. Despite previous UN missions and sanctions regimes, the persistence of gang expansion has proved that short-term interference is simply unsustainable and insufficient. Without durable solutions achieved via a multilateral integration of underpinning humanitarian security and political transition and restoration, Haiti risks further fragmentation and deepening regional consequences.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### **Haiti**

As the directly affected state, Haiti's authorities are the center of the crisis response. Haiti's government has requested international security assistance. Facing legitimacy challenges, Haiti's primary interest remains restoring sovereignty and territorial control.

### **Kenya**

As the leaders of the MSS mission, Kenya have provided key funding and assisted the Haitian National Police in securing infrastructure.

### **CARICOM (Caribbean Community)**

CARICOM plays a diplomatic mediation role and has facilitated negotiations toward a transitional political framework in Haiti. As a regional organization, CARICOM is particularly concerned with regional spillover effects, including migration, organized crime, and economic instability.

### **USA**

The United States have historically strongly supported Haiti's stabilization, backing sanctioned regimes, and provided financial support to the MSS and GSF. The USA sees the crisis as both a humanitarian one and a regional security concern due to migration.

### **United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH)**

BINUH advises the Haitian government on governance, rule of law, and institutional reform. However, it does not possess military mandate, it encourages political dialogue and monitors human rights.

**Dominican Republic**

As Haiti's neighbours and members of CARICOM, the Dominican Republic suffers from regional instability overflowing and border security. Dominica advocates for Haiti's sovereignty but does not possess sufficient military or financial power to support security operations.

## Possible Solutions

Solutions to the issue should seek to restore an effective governance structure, while ensuring civilian safety and security such as:

Strengthening security and restoring law enforcement nationwide.

Supporting the creation of a legitimate and stable government.

Encouraging regional cooperation to prevent spillover effects.

Ensuring and fostering the delivery of humanitarian aid to affected populations. Addressing economic instability and supporting local livelihoods. Implementing long-term programs to reduce gang influence and recruitment.

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