



HS Security Council - "The Ongoing Situation in Haiti"

The Francophone Caribbean nation of Haiti is currently in the midst of one of the most horrific humanitarian disasters in the world. For decades, Haiti has invariably ranked last in the Western Hemisphere in almost all measures of development, stability, and health. Since gaining definitive independence in 1804, Haiti has suffered at the hands of foreign powers, paying reparations to France (and later US banks) from 1825 until 1947. In the last century, Haiti has experienced a 19-year US occupation, a series of infamously brutal dictatorships, and declining public health, education, and bureaucratic institutions. These problems were exacerbated further by the 2010 earthquake in the capital of Port-au-Prince, which left over 300,000 dead and destroyed key infrastructure. On July 7, 2021, President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated, plunging the country into a political crisis and destroying what little governmental legitimacy still existed. Today, Moïse's government has been succeeded by that of Ariel Henry, the acting prime minister whose constitutional mandate ended over a year ago and whose government has zero remaining elected officials. In October 2023, the UN reported that most schools and clinics in Haiti are operated by gangs in the absence of any effective government.

Since the ascension of President Ariel Henry in 2021, Haiti has seen a dramatic rise in organized crime continuing through 2024, plunging the nation into a deep crisis. Up to 90% of the capital Port-au-Prince is de facto gang territory, with hospitals, ports, and groups of civilians frequently being held hostage by organized crime groups. Rapidly deteriorating state institutions leave law enforcement and military options increasingly challenging, with only small-scale local operations seeing success. Over 200 gangs are estimated to operate within Haiti with a variety of goals, with several declaring revolutionary goals in opposition to the Ariel Henry government. Gang alliances include dozens of national and local gangs, and have continued to scale up the level of conflict. Thousands have been killed, injured, or assaulted since 2020, and UN estimates suggest that over five million Haitians require humanitarian aid and over two hundred thousand are displaced internally. This has led to widespread concern from the international community. In response to the ongoing crisis, and at the request of the Haitian government a Kenyan-led security force including the United States, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Antigua and Barbuda is preparing to be deployed to the island.

Kenya's UN Ambassador Martin Kimani welcomed the Security Council's vote as evidence of an "exemplary spirit of cooperation". "With this action, the Security Council has ignited a beacon of hope for the beleaguered people of Haiti," Kimani said. The United States has dragged its feet in acting to bolster the security mission but finally took action to approve support for the mission in October 2023. Regional supporters of this mission include Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Antigua and Barbuda. Russia's UN Representative Vassily Nebenzia called the move "an extreme measure that must be thought through" and warned it would be "short-sighted" to approve a force without a detailed plan for its eventual withdrawal. Chinese UN Representative Zhang Jun said

Haiti needed a “legitimate, effective, accountable government” in place for any foreign intervention to be effective. The Haitian people remain skeptical of international aid missions because of a history of failed UN-led interventions in the past. These interventions have led to disease outbreaks, have furthered instability, and have seen high rates of sexual violence perpetrated by foreign security forces.

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