

OBSERVATORY OF VIOLENCE AND RESILIENCE IN HAITI

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ABOUT THIS RISK BULLETIN

Welcome to the first issue of this Risk Bulletin, a periodic publication of the Observatory of Violence and Resilience in Haiti, a forum for research and analysis, civil society empowerment, capacity building and support for multilateral actors. The bulletin will analyze key trends in the political economy of violence in Haiti.

The crisis that began on 29 February, with coordinated gang attacks on the capital, Port-au-Prince, led to a violent reconfiguration of the political situation on the ground. The ensuing months have been marked by an unprecedented level of humanitarian crisis, infrastructure destruction and deep institutional transformation, with the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, the creation of a Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) and the recent formation of a government, led by the appointed prime minister, Garry Conille.

Although the crisis undoubtedly marked the edge of the abyss, the gangs have ceased in their conquest of the

capital. Port-au-Prince has returned to the precarious order that prevailed before 29 February, in which daily life coexists with gang shootings and attacks. One major exception is that the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission, led by a Kenyan police force, was finally deployed on 25 June, with 200 troops on the ground. This inaugural issue analyzes these dynamics and more.

For more analytical content from the Observatory of Violence and Resilience in Haiti, see <https://globalinitiative.net/observatory/ht-obs/>.

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) is a platform to promote greater debate and innovative approaches to serve as the building blocks of an inclusive global strategy against organized crime. See GI-TOC: <https://globalinitiative.net/>.

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Summary highlights



Viv Ansanm: How a gang coalition has transformed violence in Port-au-Prince.

A key development in Haiti's gang violence is the re-formation of the gang coalition Viv Ansanm (Living Together, in Haitian creole), meant to bring together the criminal groups in a unified front against the Haitian national police and the government. The operations and influence of Viv Ansanm, represented by Jimmy 'Barbecue' Chérizier, illustrate the multifaceted nature of Haiti's crisis. Viv Ansanm's control over significant parts of Port-au-Prince and strategic infrastructure, coupled with its violent tactics and political connections, poses a systemic threat, and demands comprehensive and sustained efforts to dismantle its influence and restore order. Security, economic, humanitarian and political challenges will not be miraculously solved by the MSS mission alone.



The rebuilding of Haitian institutions, the MSS and the ecosystem of criminal violence: How to provide coordinated security and justice responses?

Driven by the international community, in particular the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) was established to replace Prime Minister Ariel Henry. After a chaotic start, the TPC appointed in May a new prime minister, Garry Conille, who formed his government on 11 June. As Haiti's institutions look to transition to a more solid mode of

operation, the MSS should not be considered a silver bullet. A way forward, framed by solid and transparent legal bodies, and a clear public security strategy, must be put in place to tackle the complex Haitian ecosystem of violence, marked by a coexistence of criminal groups and the state. It is critical that the Haitian authorities and the international community make progress in terms of facilitating humanitarian access and development by reconsolidating public institutions and by seeking a judicial solution to the gangs.



Sanctions and Haiti's criminal crisis: What can be done to strengthen the mechanism?

Given the delays in the deployment of the MSS mission, the most visible multilateral response to Haiti's crisis has been the use of targeted sanctions by the international community. However, both UN and unilateral sanctions have seen little further movement, with no designations issued since late 2023 (with the exception of Canada). The EU, which has several members with important ties to Haiti, has not issued any designations under the sanctions regime it created in July 2023. There appears to be substantial reluctance by the Security Council to designate such backers, most likely because of the risk that designations on elites could negatively impact peacebuilding and government formation, though this comes with the equally palpable risk of allowing the elite-gang nexus to operate unhindered.

Viv Ansanm: How a gang coalition has transformed violence in Port-au-Prince.

On 29 February 2024, a coalition of gangs known as Viv Ansanm (Living Together, in Haitian Creole) was formed through the merger of two former rival alliances: the G9 Family and Allies, and the G-Pèp (G-People) alliance.¹ Collectively, Viv Ansanm, embodied by Jimmy 'Barbecue' Chérizier, exerts control, or at least substantial influence, over an estimated 80% – possibly more – of the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, as well as the zones immediately outside the capital.²

The coalition's attacks have left a large majority of the capital's population facing a dire humanitarian crisis (see the box). The first quarter of 2024 was the deadliest since the United Nations started monitoring gang-related violence in the country.³ According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM),

between March and June 2024, the number of internally displaced people increased from 362 000 to over 578 000.⁴

In the capital, gang-led violence has severely impacted daily life. At the peak of the violence, between March and May, hospitals, stores and schools closed or became largely inaccessible, while most people who lived in safer areas avoided venturing out of their homes. Moving around the capital became almost impossible, leading one contact to liken the city to an 'open-air, gang-controlled prison'. Gangs forced the closure of the international airport between 3 March and 20 May, placing the country under almost total lockdown.



FIGURE 1 Port-au-Prince and periphery, showing areas prone to gang violence.

QUANTIFYING THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT IN HAITI

Homicide rate: 40.9 per 100 000⁵

Numbers killed or injured, January to March 2024: 2 500⁶

Rate of internal displacement: 60% increase, March to June 2024⁷

Number facing emergency levels of food insecurity: 1.64 million⁸

Proportion of households that lack macro- and micro-nutrient requirements: 65%⁹

As the capital's main shipping ports came under blockade by Viv Ansanm, the cost of fuel, food and basic goods has skyrocketed over the past months. The World Food Programme reported that since January 2024, the cost of a food basket has risen by 27%, 'making food inaccessible for millions of Haitians', while violence and the closure of critical infrastructure has driven more and more people to the black markets, where fuel prices, can be '40% to 50% higher than the official price'.¹⁰

While large numbers of the population are displaced, mostly in the capital and the south of the country, living conditions in gang-controlled areas still depend almost exclusively on the standards imposed by criminal groups. As they regulate daily life, including by enforcing restrictions on movement, the gangs have at the same time, through the Viv Ansanm coalition, leveraged their rhetoric of protecting the population. By distributing food or petty cash, or providing work and social recognition to children enrolled as foot soldiers,¹¹ the gangs seek to consolidate their legitimacy. This quest involves promising

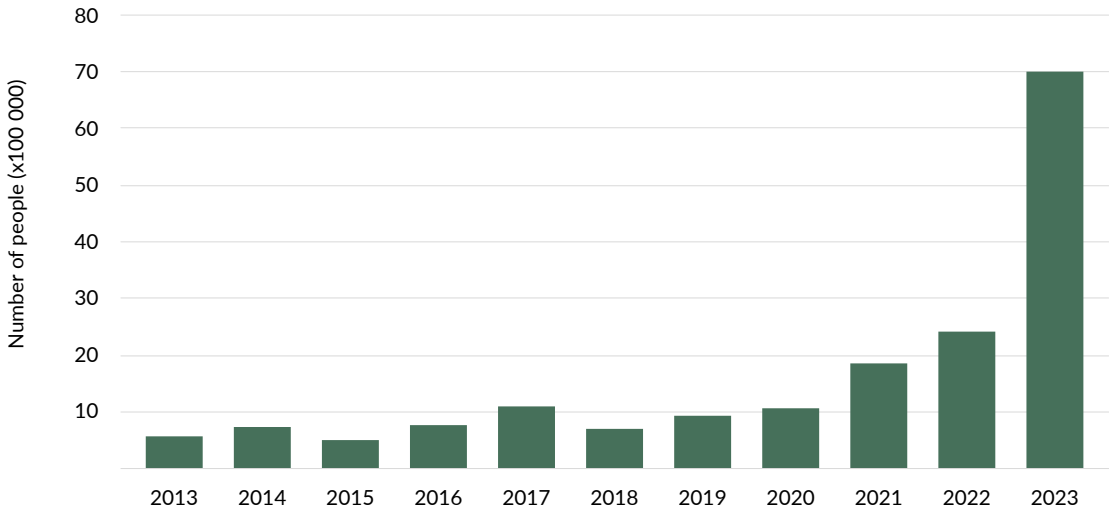


FIGURE 2 Forcibly displaced persons, 2013–2023.

Note: At close to 700 000, the number of forcibly displaced reached an all-time high in 2023. The latest annual figure is more than twice that of any previous figure in the past decade.

Source: UNHCR

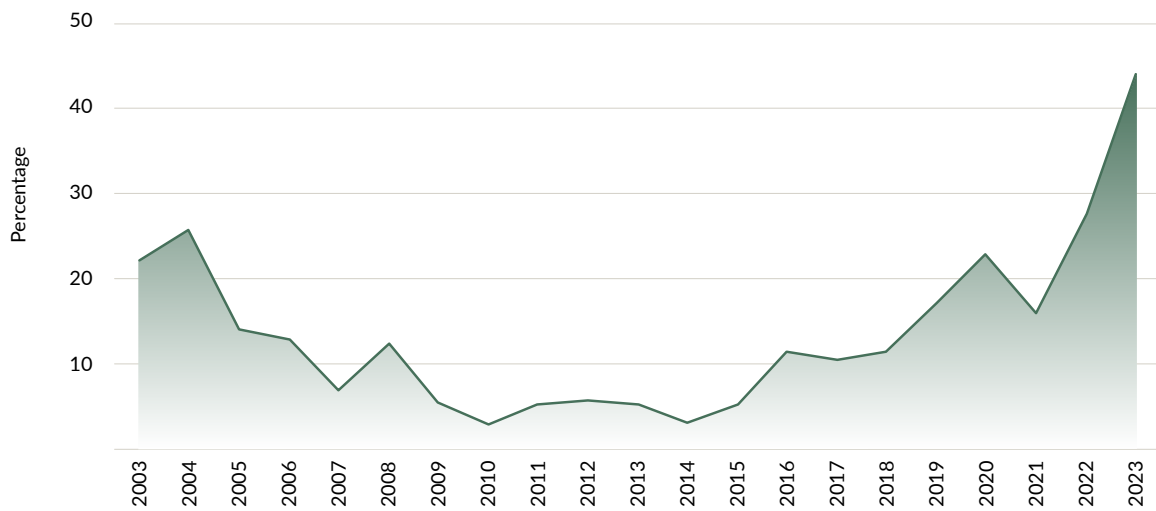


FIGURE 3 Inflation, 2003–2023.

Note: 2023 marked the largest annual percentage increase in the past two decades.

Source: IMF

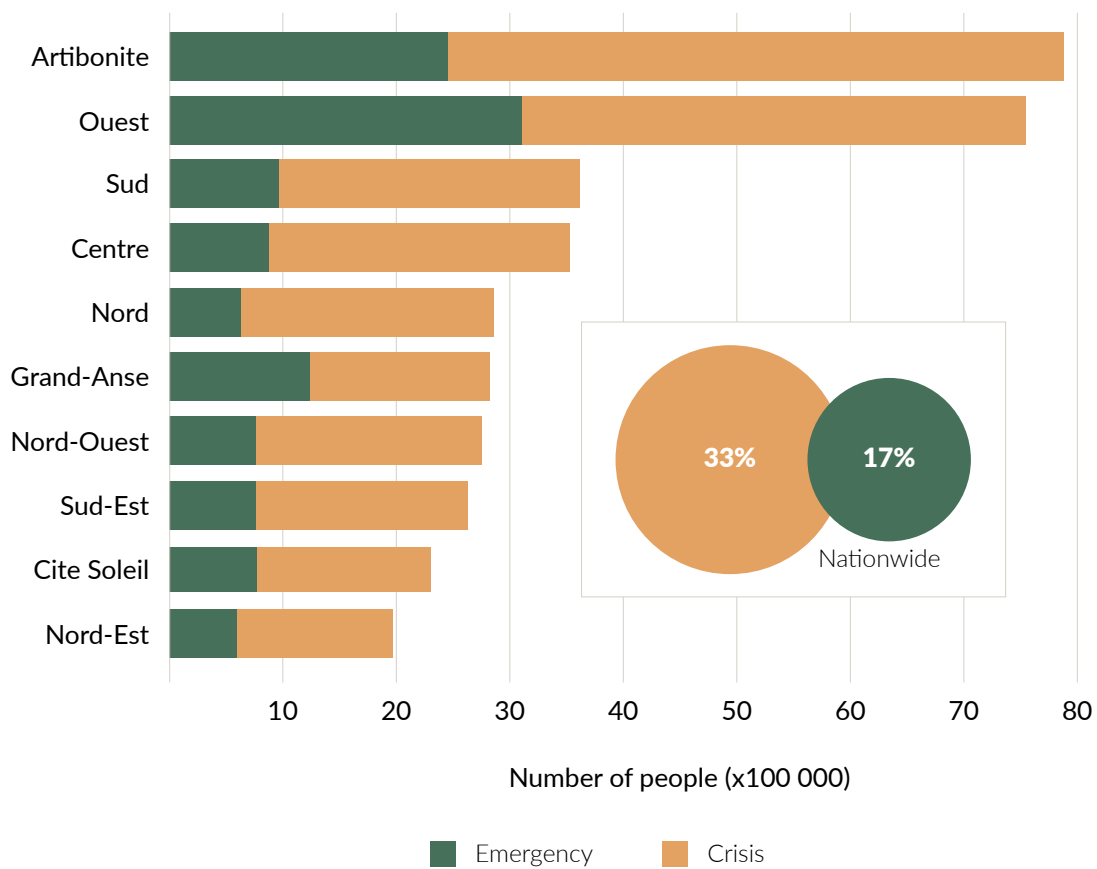


FIGURE 4 Food insecurity, June 2024.

Source: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Famine and Early Warning System

to protect the population from attacks by the police, or the MSS mission; they capitalize on their closeness to the people, in contrast to their abandonment by the state.¹² Chérizier, in particular, has put much effort into cultivating his public image, casting himself as an anti-state, anti-system and anti-elite hero of the people.¹³

These practices, classic of criminal groups, are aimed as much at rallying the population as solidifying the group itself, by reinforcing the separation between the gang's territory and the rest of society. This division between the inside, presented as safe, and the outside, the land of danger, has been adopted in the rhetoric of the gangs, who called on the displaced population to return to their original neighbourhoods, despite the unprecedented level of destruction in much of the downtown.¹⁴ Residents feared that the gangs' aim is to use them as human shields against the police and the MSS.¹⁵

Some residents of areas that have been controlled by gangs for several years, notably parts of Cité Soleil and Martissant, also express how they have had to adapt to living in a domain controlled by criminal bosses. Although they do not necessarily place hopes in the promises made by the criminals, the stark reality expressed by interviewees is that it is the gang leaders who regulate daily life.

Other testimonies, however, illustrate the diversity of criminal leaders' profiles. In certain territories, some of which are small enclaves, criminal leaders are seen as effective protectors, particularly against attacks by rival gangs. They are also seen as de facto authorities capable of maintaining a semblance of organized daily life. These gang leaders, who usually do not feature in the media, would appear to reflect the construction of the 'legal bandit'. As such, and besides their social embeddedness in the neighbourhood, such gang leaders seek to position themselves as interlocutors with the authorities, with a view to the political sequence of events that will soon begin, especially with the MSS force now on the ground, and around future elections.

Despite efforts by gang leaders to project themselves as service and governance providers, only a small proportion of the population genuinely supports the groups. What dominates is a sense of abandonment by the state and despair in the face of a catastrophic economic situation. The state and the gangs are regularly pitted against one another, with both sides seen as responsible for the current crisis, leaving the

population between a rock and a hard place. The MSS, as an external player, will need to rapidly deliver tangible security results to the community, so as not to be seen as part of the problem but part of the solution.

Beyond violence: The political and economic game

Since February, the gangs' ecosystem has evolved in several ways. Viv Ansanm has now taken root,¹⁶ and criminal groups have got used to working together in the coalition, even though sporadic conflicts have occurred between them. The months of collaboration have nurtured a kind of institutional memory, a habit of cooperation that has produced positive results for the coalition and contributed to their feeling of being now more powerful as a collective. This is true in terms of territorial control, political and economic weight, and media exposure, as well as the capacity to arm themselves.

Under the banner of Viv Ansanm, gangs have not only extended their domination, but have also changed their strategy by systematically targeting key public and private institutions. These include prisons, one of them the capital's main penitentiary, from which most of the inmates have escaped in March; a dozen police stations, which have been looted or destroyed; the international airport, which remained closed for almost three months; and the capital's fuel terminal, which was blocked by the gangs for several days, between April and May.

Their modus operandi has also shifted. The most powerful gangs have shown they are capable of hours-long shoot-outs and have become more confident in how they conduct operations.¹⁷ Between February and June, the gangs moved from a strategy of maximum pressure, marked by daily, simultaneous attacks on multiple points of the city to more punctuated targets.¹⁸ This seemed to be a shift towards more strategic objectives, such as ambush attacks on police convoys,¹⁹ and destroying police stations and secondary jails.²⁰ The latter have been shelled in large-scale attacks in cat-and-mouse tactics that have left dozens of dead officers,²¹ and such tactics might be used again, including against MSS officers. Several of these attacks have been claimed by gang leaders in videos posted on social media.²²

The gangs have improved their coordination and tactical operating capabilities, presenting a huge challenge for the Haitian police and MSS force. A police officer told the GI-TOC that gangs have also become more powerful 'because of the political influences that finance them'.²³ Media reporting corroborates this, with

one report stating the Village de Dieu gang (led by Johnson André, 'Izo') has received support from the former head of presidential security, Dimitri Herard, who escaped from the central prison during the March attacks (the last story in this bulletin also examines elite political protection). Herard is allegedly helping train

Village de Dieu members in operations to confront the police,²⁴ coaching them into a more organized, militia-type operation, as well as providing key connections for drugs and arms trafficking.

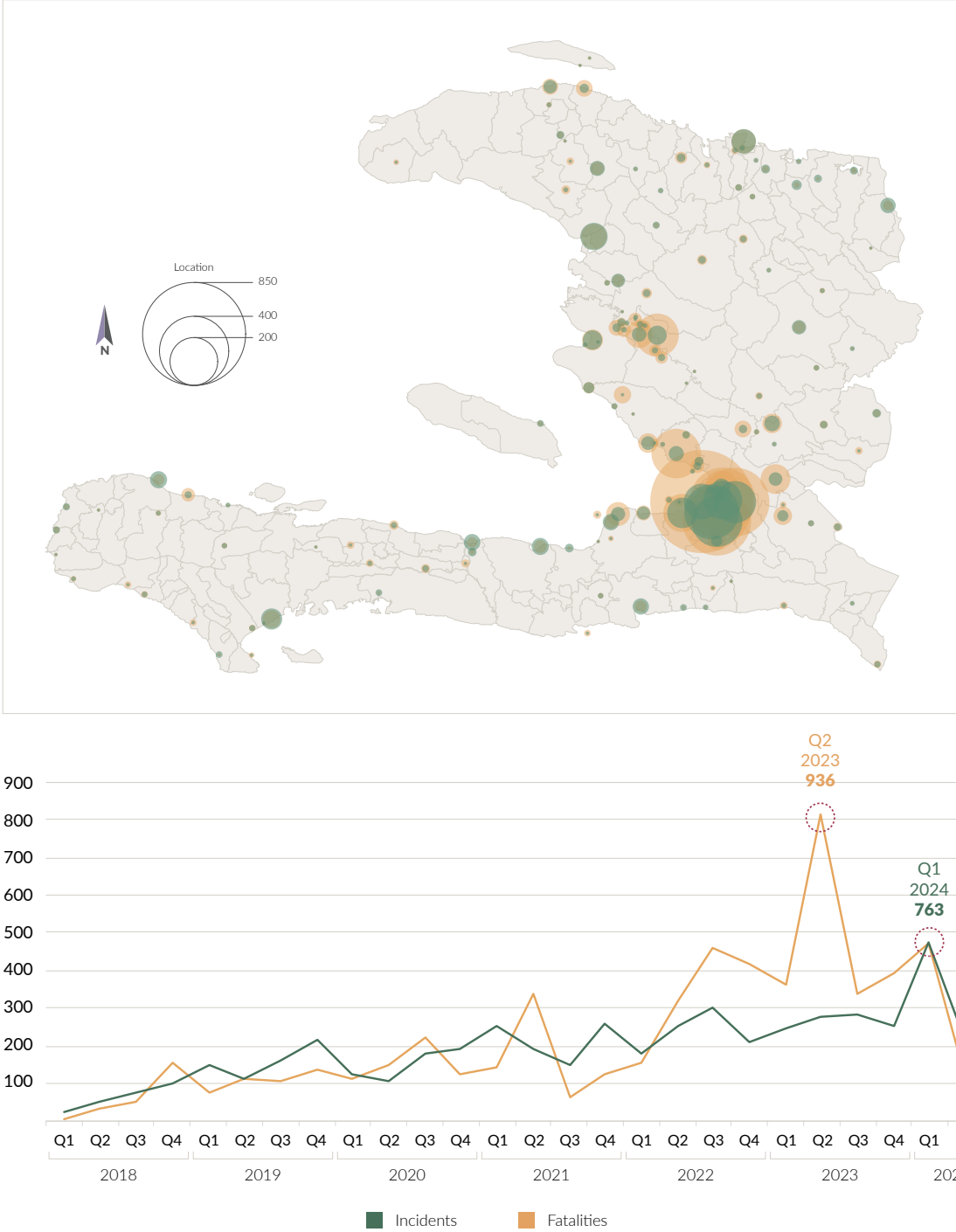


FIGURE 5 Incidents of gang violence in Port-au-Prince and periphery, 2018–2024.

Note: Since 2018, close to 60% of violence has been concentrated in the capital.

Source: ACLED

In the face of these tactics, the Haitian National Police (HNP), lacking in capacity, have been forced to adopt a reactive strategy, intervening following alerts or citizens' calls for help.²⁵ Between April and May, however, the police progressively managed to retake certain strategic infrastructure, including the fuel terminal and the airport, thanks to more offensive operations,²⁶ while in June 455 new specialized officers were sworn in, a rare but crucial development.²⁷ The rebuilding of the police, and their coordination with the MSS (notably through strategic meetings and joint patrols), represents a crucial effort on the part of the government and builds the foundation for a public security strategy.

Military-grade weapons

Since February, however, gangs' firepower has raised much concern. While it is unlikely that the most powerful groups acquired their entire arsenal in the months since then, the period has nevertheless revealed the scale of their weaponry power. The most structured groups are in possession of military-grade weapons, commercial drones and tactical equipment and gear, and are capable of mobilizing men who look like they are trained and kitted out for combat. In this respect, some gangs – Village de Dieu, in particular – are increasingly looking like small militias.

According to William O'Neill, the UN Designated Expert of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,²⁸ and a UNODC May 2024 report to the UN Security Council, gangs received shipments of weapons, ammunition and equipment, even during the total blockade of the capital and despite the UN arms embargo on the country. Moreover, evidence coming from judicial cases confirm not only the central role of the Florida-to-Haiti route used by arms trafficking networks – an axis that allegedly includes the Port-de-Paix area in the north of the country

as a key entry point – but also the myriads of intermediaries that smuggle weapons and ammunition within the country.²⁹ These networks make use of individuals in the United States and Haiti to acquire legal weapons through straw purchasers in the US, before packing them – assembled or not – into containers, clearing them through customs and transporting them to Haiti.³⁰ In the capital, larger gangs are said to be in charge of bulk acquisition of firearms and ammunition, before reselling some of them to other, smaller gangs, that do not necessarily have access to the full chain of brokers.

Within these networks, the presence of Haitian officials, from customs and the police, has come to light. These actors are essential to facilitating the firearm trade. Reports have also indicated links between Haitian gangs and Dominican arms smugglers, as well as South American criminal organizations.³¹ The potential connection with Colombian traffickers has sparked alerts about combined cocaine and firearms routes, while the presence of Belgian FN FAL rifles, which can be manufactured in Brazil (under licence by Indústria de Material Bélico do Brasil),³² raises questions about potential links between Brazilian and Haitian criminal groups.

It is difficult to measure precisely the number of firearms in circulation in Haiti. In 2019, the head of the National Commission for Disarmament, Dismantling and Reintegration, said that around 500 000 illegal firearms were circulating in the country, more than double the figure announced by the HNP in 2015.³³ According to the United Nations Security Council Group of Experts, the figure for 2022 was around 600 000 weapons, the vast majority of which were illegal.³⁴ An estimate of the acquisition prices of firearms is shown in the table.

Category	Price (US dollars)
AR-15	7 000–9 000
AK-47	6 000–8 000
IMI Galil	9 000–12 000
Rifle	4 000–7 000
Glock pistol (9 mm)	1 500–3 000
Ammunition	US\$1 per bullet (on average)

FIGURE 6 Estimated firearm prices, Port-au-Prince, June 2024.

Source: Information based on interviews in Port-au-Prince, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

These dynamics illustrate the diversity of gang profiles in Haiti. While not all criminal groups have the means to acquire weapons of war, the consolidation of networks of intermediaries and the continual inflow of firearms pose the risk of 'democratized' access to weapons by medium-sized or small groups. Moreover, the situation requires the Haitian authorities, in coordination with the

MSS, the governments of the countries concerned (first and foremost the US) and the international community (such as CARICOM's Implementation Agency for Crime and Security³⁵), to step up the fight against arms trafficking and draw up an effective disarmament strategy for Haiti.

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The rebuilding of Haitian institutions, the MSS and the ecosystem of criminal violence: How to provide coordinated security and justice responses?

After months of delays, the MSS force, mainly funded by the United States and led by Kenya, finally deployed in Port-au-Prince on 25 June. With this initial force of 200 officers, the MSS should bring operational oxygen to the Haitian police in the form of much-needed capacity, and will help recruit and train local officers. Hopefully, it will also provide some respite for the population, enabling them to return to a more normal life, and allow improved humanitarian access to the country.

However, there is still much uncertainty surrounding the mission in terms of its strategy and rules of engagement, and questions over mechanisms to provide oversight of the force. And it is still not clear how the mission will coordinate with the Haitian authorities, the international

community and civil society.¹ In an environment of fragmented and violent governance, with institutional responsibilities dispersed between the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC), and the recently formed government of Prime Minister Conille, there is a risk of a lack of coordination of the MSS Mission on the ground, and lack of clarity regarding its oversight, with particular concerns over judicial and human rights repercussions.

The TPC was sworn in on 25 April, and Henry's official resignation as prime minister came immediately afterwards.² The fruit of an agreement brokered by CARICOM in March, the TPC is a governance body made up of seven members from Haiti's main political parties and representatives of the private sector and civil



Haiti's Prime Minister Garry Conille meets members of the first contingent of Kenyan police, who arrived on 25 June as part of the Multinational Security Support mission.

Source: © Guerinault Louis/Anadolu via Getty Images

society.³ The TPC's terms of reference state that it will exercise presidential functions until the investiture of the president-elect, 'which must take place no later than February 7, 2026'. Garry Conille was appointed by the TPC as prime minister on 28 May.⁴

The decree establishing the council also mandates it to set up a national security council, although at the time of writing, it had not yet been appointed. The TPC is also required to collaborate with the National Commission for Disarmament, Dismantlement and Reintegration, and to oversee the installation of a truth, justice and reparations commission.

These initiatives, which are fundamental to the policy to be pursued for conflict resolution, seem to be making slow progress. The TPC must develop these structures if it is to formulate a clear proposal and strategy for the future of peace and stability in Haiti. In the context of the arrival of the MSS force, a way forward, framed by solid and transparent legal bodies, must be put in place to tackle the complexity of the Haitian security crisis, marked by a violent coexistence between criminal groups and the state. As is the case in other situations involving criminal groups, particularly in urban contexts — such as Rio de Janeiro, for example — armed confrontations, public governance and political-criminal relations do not operate as a zero-sum game.

As previously reported by GI-TOC,⁵ Haitian gangs do not follow an insurrectionary logic.⁶ They seek to maximize their position within the political and economic system, not outside of it, and to position themselves as indispensable brokers between the community, and the public and private sectors. To establish oneself as a broker, a future political ally, or to remain in place as a rent-seeking 'legal bandit', one must appear reliable, indispensable and powerful. This is precisely how gangs' leaders, whether they choose to be visible in the media or not, want to position

themselves in this moment of political transition, and particularly since the installation of the TPC.

Although the rhetoric of some Haitian gang leaders, such as Chérizier's repeated declarations, might be inferred as a will to overthrow the system, they are not actually proposing an alternative ideological or governance model. Instead, criminal groups focus on gaining strategic territories or markets. Whether by force or negotiation, or usually both, the gangs are therefore able to extract rents from trade routes, ports and passenger transport, agricultural production and illicit trade, with cocaine at the forefront.

In this sense, gangs participate in governance, but without intending to replace the state model. Rather, gangs are part of a logic of shared sovereignty within territories where civilian populations must oscillate between the authority — and violence — of the gangs and of the state. The two coexist in an unstable order that now includes the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission, formed by elite officers drawn from Kenya's Police Recce Squad, Rapid Deployment Force and a Special Operation Group comprising Kenyan border police.⁷ Other countries have also pledged to provide personnel for the MSS, including Jamaica, Bahamas, Guyana, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Benin and Chad.⁸

While it is impossible to predict how the gangs will react to the deployment of the MSS force in the long term, it is likely that it will not be a homogeneous response. Some of them may fight, while others will seek to negotiate with the Haitian government. It is therefore critical that institutional roles are better defined, and that the Haitian authorities speak with one voice — both for the country's citizens and the international community. As Haiti's institutions look to transition to a more solid mode of operation, the two-headed functioning of political life will pose challenges.

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Sanctions and Haiti's criminal crisis: What can be done to strengthen the mechanism?

With delays in the deployment of the MSS force, the most visible response to Haiti's criminal crisis has been the use of targeted financial and mobility sanctions by the international community. This involves two separate, though complementary, elements.

First, in October 2023 and January 2024, the UN Security Council issued designations on five gang leaders, emanating in part from investigations conducted by the designated Panel of Experts (POE).¹ Secondly, there have been a series of unilateral designations issued mainly by the United States, Canada and the Dominican Republic. Notably, US and Canadian authorities have been willing to designate politically powerful individuals, including politicians and businessmen, which the UN has avoided to date.² Since late 2023, however, both UN and unilateral sanctions have seen little further activity, with no designations issued. Notably, the EU – which has a number of members with important ties to Haiti – has not issued any designations under the sanctions regime it created in July 2023.³

Precise reasons for this seeming pause in activity are unclear. The UN Security Council is historically slow in considering and issuing sanctions, with decisions requiring consensus among members of the Security Council.⁴ In Haiti, this general trend is likely to have been exacerbated by the complexities of the situation and the reality that many gang backers are also prominently involved in business and/or political activity.⁵ There appears to be substantial reluctance by member states on the Security Council to designate such backers, most likely because of the risk that designations on elites could negatively impact peacebuilding and government formation, though obviously this comes with the equally palpable risk of allowing the elite-gang nexus to operate unhindered.

Such a rationale may also explain why the US and Canada have hit pause in their designations. However, there is another explanation, in that unilateral sanctions on some elites are also likely to be impeded in cases where those individuals hold both Haitian and US or

Canadian nationality. States are generally reluctant to levy sanctions on their own citizens, preferring the route of legal prosecutions (although there have been few visible investigations or legal actions pursued by the US or Canada against senior officials alleged to have backed gangs to date).

While understandable, the consequence of this approach of waiting on prosecutions, or in some cases prioritizing the slow development of national designations over UN designations, is shaping a number of negative developments on the ground in Haiti.

The pause in designations, either due to slow UN processes or a preference for prosecutions, will have a counter-productive effect on efforts to target the gangs and the key elites who back them. During a previous lengthy pause in UN sanctions, between November 2023 and February 2024, the GI-TOC recorded growing scepticism in Haiti on the reality of sanctions, as well as on the international community's political will to enforce them. Between late 2023 and early 2024, the dissuasive effect of sanctions, or at least the deterrent impact of their possible application, seemed to have partly disappeared.

Given the overall degradation in the situation in Haiti and the lengthy delay in the deployment of the MSS force intended to help stabilize the country, a renewed push on sanctions is arguably an important element both to address and shape the criminal threats impacting Haiti and to signal focus to the Haitian population.

Doing so, however, arguably needs to be rethought in a way that is both more strategic and has a deeper impact than current approaches. A multinational strategy should be developed to address Haiti's gangs, their logistical suppliers and business partners, and their political and business enablers.

The development of such a strategy should involve the UN and the Security Council, as well as regional actors, such as CARICOM. The strategy should not be solely sanctions-focused, but rather seek to coordinate ways in

which all cooperating state tools, including national prosecutorial approaches, aid, data sharing and sanctions, can be applied towards a cohesive end.

Crucially, such a strategy should aim to draw together states that use sanctions and those that do not as a tool against organized crime, with the latter instead leveraging other options in their foreign policy or justice toolkits – including economic and security force assistance, information sharing and prosecutions – to contribute to the broader effort. Such a strategy should also bring non-traditional players, such as the US Department of Justice, more directly into the effort, heightening investigations, prosecutions and mutual legal assistance to Haiti and its neighbours.

There also needs to be a dose of realism in the near-, middle- and long-term objectives of such a strategy. Eliminating gangs in Haiti is likely to prove unfeasible. Degrading their current martial power, breaking the link between gangs and elites, and ending sexual violence are arguably more realistically achievable.

To support this strategy, there needs to be a rethinking of how sanctions are employed, including their potential deeper impact. This involves a more comprehensive sanctioning approach targeting the totality of the criminal ecosystem around Haitian gangs, rather than simply a focus on gang leaders. Lower-profile but critical actors, such as financiers, money launderers and weapons suppliers, should be a key focus.

The same thinking should apply to criminal actors outside of Haiti's borders, who play important supportive roles with the gangs, or who have deepened their business ties during the current crisis. An example could be the targeting of drug trafficking organizations explicitly for working with gang boss Izo, and through him shipping cocaine to Europe.⁶ The aim of such an approach would be to deter regional criminal actors from engaging with Haitian ones, impacting the financing of the latter.

A regional approach could also help expand support within Haiti for international efforts to address the current crisis, underscoring the international community's understanding of the substantial transnational elements fuelling the country's gangs.

Finally, there is a need for a more nuanced focus on the business and political enablers of gang activity within Haiti. As the UN POE has detailed, many of these enablers wear multiple hats, engaging in a melange of business, politics and criminality.⁷ This has complicated efforts to sanction them, as some within the international community view any involvement in politics as sufficient grounds to avoid designation. While understandable, such a Manichean approach to political involvement risks distorting incentives in Haiti. It could well lead business actors with connections to gangs to dabble in politics as a shield against sanctions, to the detriment of both Haitian politics and efforts to break the link between elites and gangs. A more nuanced approach would involve a fine-toothed assessment of the degree to which an individual is a political actor, and how current and systemically important such political activity is.

Ultimately, information suggests that international sanctions can have a shaping effect within Haiti, particularly when it comes to deterring business and political elites. Used strategically and in tandem with other elements in the international toolkit, sanctions thus offer an option for responding to the current crisis. Doing so, however, requires a renewed drive of unilateral and UN designations, done in a strategic manner, with a focus that goes beyond key leaders and towards the facilitative actors and political backers who support them. As sanctions progress, targeting and messaging need to be calibrated to have a stronger impact, without stigmatizing the entire private or state sector, and risking turning them into pariahs. Critically, the aperture for such approaches should be widened beyond Haiti to include the complex criminal and financial networks that enable the gangs. Such an approach can help Haiti, while also helping the broader region to address increasingly transnational threats.

Notes

1 Romain Le Cour Grandmaison, Matt Herbert and Ana Paula Oliveira, Haiti: The gang crisis and international responses, GI-TOC, February 2024.

2 Ibid.

3 Council of the European Union, Haiti: EU sets up autonomous framework for restrictive measures, 28 July 2023.

4 Matt Herbert and Lucia Bird, Convergence zone: The evolution of targeted sanctions usage against organized crime, GI-TOC, December 2023.

5 See UN Security Council, Interim report of the Panel of Experts on Haiti submitted pursuant to Resolution 2700 (2023), S/2024/253, 29 March 2024.

6 Maria Abi-Habib, Haiti's gangs grow stronger as Kenyan-led force prepares to deploy, *The New York Times*, 21 May 2024.

7 See UN Security Council, Interim report of the Panel of Experts on Haiti submitted pursuant to Resolution 2700 (2023), S/2024/253, 29 March 2024.

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