

***The United Nations Security Council***



***Measures to combat gang violence and to  
rehabilitate a stable government in Haiti.***

*-Committee Guide-*

**Alisa Lachner**

*-Chairperson-*

**Leon Heckmann**

*-Chairperson-*

**Paula Leitner**

*-Chairperson-*

## **CONTENTS**

- I. Introduction
  - a. Introduction to the committee
  - b. Introduction to the topic
- II. Facts and current situation
  - a. Facts
  - b. Current situation
- III. Economy
- IV. Haiti's justice system
- V. Intervention of the UN
- VI. Missions of the UN
  - a. UNMIH
  - b. MIPONUH
  - c. MINUSTAH
  - d. MINUJUSTH
- VII. Criticism of these missions
- VIII. Possible solutions
- IX. Definitions of key terms
- X. Useful links and resolutions

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE**

The UN Security Council consists of 15 Member States. The permanent members are the five states which the UN Charter of 1945 grants a permanent seat on the Security Council: China, France, The Russian Federation, The United Kingdom and the United States of America. Those Member states have the right of veto, which allows them to reject resolutions. The non-permanent Members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The current non-permanent Members are Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. Each Member State has one vote. Under the Charter of the United Nations, each and every Member State is obligated to comply with Council decisions.

The Security Council has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. Therefore, the Council's first action is usually to recommend that the parties try to reach agreement by peaceful means. It may set forth principles for such an agreement or appoint special envoys. Beyond this, the Security Council may opt for enforcement measures, including for example economic sanctions, financial penalties and restrictions, travel bans or blockade.

On 17 January 1946 the UN Security Council held its first session at Westminster, London. Since its first meeting, the Council has taken permanent residence at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. There must always be a representative of each of the Member States at UN Headquarters so that the Security Council can meet at any times as the need arises.

### **2. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC**

Civil war unrest has been raging in Haiti since 1986. Since Haiti's independence from France, there have been repeated violent clashes between different gangs, making a normal life in Haiti almost impossible for both adults and children. In addition, there is a government that thrives on corruption and works with gangs to secure its power. President Moïse was shot dead in his own home by gang members in 2021, fueling increased political instability. Moïse was replaced by an acting president, Ariel Henry, who is unelected and widely viewed as illegitimate. In September 2022, the G9<sup>1</sup> gang coalition blockaded the main port and fuel terminal after Henry caused fuel prices to double when he announced a cut to fuel subsidies- a development that brought the crises to new heights. Haiti is experiencing in 2023 its worst ever famine, with 4.7 million people facing acute hunger. However, gang rivalry also suffered a massive upswing, which is why Haiti is also being proclaimed a Failed State<sup>2</sup>.

Armed gangs regularly take control of the distribution routes. This leads to bottlenecks in the supply of raw materials and fuel. Rising food prices are making it increasingly difficult for people to buy basic groceries. In the absence of a functioning state, gangs have filled the void. Port-au-Prince is the centre of a very bad turf war in which there have been prolific kidnappings, many civilian deaths, gang rape of elderly people and children. There are about 100 gangs in Port-au-Prince, many of them lose alliances at war with rival groups. Gangs control major roads and draw income from customs, water and electricity distribution, and even bus services. Membership has become so desirable for some young men that some gangs now have waiting lists for new recruits.

The Haitian National Police force is severely understaffed and ill-equipped to address the violence and criminality.

Despite steps towards the establishment of a Provisional Electoral Council, Haitians continue to suffer one of the worst human rights crises in decades, with gangs using sexual violence to terrorize populations.

The United States and Canada sanctioned leading Haitian politicians for their links to the gangs and drug trafficking and sent armored vehicles to the National Police Force of Haiti. The two countries and the United Nations passed sanctions against several gang leaders, including "Barbecue"<sup>3</sup>.



## II. FACTS AND CURRENT SITUATION

### 1. Facts

- Geographical location: State on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean between the United States and South America
- In the east of the island is the Dominican Republic
- Population: 11.45 million (2021)
- Capital of Haiti: Port-au-Prince
- Population of the capital: 2 754 812 (2019)
- Gross domestic product: \$20.94 Billion (2021)
- Form of government: Presidential Republic

- Current President: Ariel Henry (temporary)



## 2. Current situation

- About 10% of all Haitians live abroad
- Poverty rate: 25%
- President Moïse has been shot in 2021
- Last massive earthquake: August 2021
- Ongoing gang violence hinders humanitarian aid
- Corruption within the government: cooperation with different gangs
- Different gangs rule different districts in Port-au-Prince
- Daily gunfights between rival gangs → daily civilian deaths

## III. ECONOMY

Haiti remains one of the most vulnerable countries world-wide to natural hazards, mainly hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes. More than 96 percent of the population is exposed to these types of shocks. On August 14, 2021, an earthquake measuring magnitude 7.2 on the Richter scale, struck the southern region of Haiti, an area where approximately 1.6 million people live. The earthquake's epicenter was recorded approximately 12 km north-east of Saint-Louis-du-Sud, about 125 km west of the capital Port-au-Prince. The direct human toll of the earthquake resulted in 2,246 deaths, 12,763 injured and 329 missing in the three departments of the Southern Peninsula. In terms of infrastructure, 54,000 houses were destroyed while 83,770 other buildings were damaged, including schools, health facilities

and public buildings. At the government's request, the World Bank worked with development partners to produce a post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) to estimate the extent of the damage and to chart a path to recovery. The results of the assessment of the effects of the August 14, 2021, earthquake indicate a total of more than US\$1.6 billion in damage and losses, or 11% of GDP. The same region was impacted in 2016 by Hurricane Matthew, which caused losses and damages estimated at 13 percent of the 2015 GDP, and the 2010 earthquake that killed approximately 250,000 people and decimated 67 percent of the country's GDP. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency, intensity, and impacts of extreme weather events, and Haiti, while making some progress, still lacks adequate preparedness and resilience-building mechanisms.

On the human development front, after three years with no laboratory-confirmed cases, Haiti is experiencing a new cholera outbreak, with a total of 2,523 confirmed cases from October 3 to March 18<sup>th</sup>. Improvements in human capital have therefore stalled and, in some cases, deteriorated since. Infant and maternal mortality remain at high levels, and coverage of prevention measures are stagnating or declining, especially for the poorest households.

According to the Human Capital Index, a child born today in Haiti will grow up to be only 45 percent as productive as they could be if he or she had enjoyed full access to quality education and healthcare. Over one-fifth of children are at risk of cognitive and physical limitations, and only 78 percent of 15-year-olds will survive to the age of 60.

#### **IV. HAITI'S JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Haiti's justice system barely functioned. Only 3 of 12 justices of the Supreme Court of Justice continued working, meaning the court lacks a quorum to hear cases and issue rulings. Without an elected president and functioning Senate, the appointment of additional justices stalled.

In the first half of 2022, the Council of Ministers, which is made up of cabinet members, appointed 113 lower-level judges, increasing the capacity of the

judicial system. However, in June, a gang took control of Port-au-Prince's Palace of Justice, the main justice complex in the country. It appears to have stolen or destroyed evidence that may be impossible to recover, as Haitian courts do not have digital copies of files.

Only 200 criminal trials were held from October 2021 through September 2022. In some jurisdictions, courts had held no hearings on criminal cases for three years.

As September, Haiti's prisons held almost three times more detainees than for which they were built. Many of the more than 11,700 detainees, 84 percent of whom were awaiting trial, are living in inhumane conditions.

## **V. INTERVENTION OF THE UN**

In October 2022, Henry called for foreign intervention to break the gangs' siege and restore basic functionality. However, the proposal was rejected by the opposition, as well as many Haitians who have bitter memories of prior interventions exacerbating the country's problems. The 2014-17 UN intervention in Haiti was associated with the spread of cholera and UN peacekeepers' sexual misconduct.

However, any intervention, especially a temporary limited one, as the mission was conceptualized abroad in 2022, would face enormous challenges. If it were used to provide security for elections, assuming that Henry and the opposition would agree on electoral timelines and procedures, the foreign intervention would have to operate in the worst of battlefields: urban slum labyrinths, with minimal knowledge of Haiti's physical and human terrain and limited strategic and tactical intelligence on the gangs.

In the shantytowns, the international forces would possibly struggle to distinguish civilians from gang members. The risk of gangs using civilians as shields and thus perpetrating civilian casualties would be high.

If the intervention were to secure only election booths and major highways, to break the gangs' chokehold on critical infrastructure, the gangs would still control the neighborhoods and thus who would show up to vote. The risks of political assassinations and campaign intimidation would also remain high.



## **VI. OPERATIONS OF THE UN**

### **a. UNMIH**

UNMIH was a UN peacekeeping mission that operated from 1993 to 1997. The purpose of this mission was to accelerate the modernization of Haiti's armed forces, to build a new Haiti police force and to establish free and fair elections.

### **b. MIPONUH**

MIPONUH was the name of the UN peacekeeping mission which took place in 1997 to 2000 and aimed to continue police training in Haiti.

### **c. MINUSTAH**

MINUSTAH took place in Haiti from 2004 to 2017 and was a UN Security Council peacekeeping mission created to ensure international peace and security. Due to multiple mandate extensions, this mission was the longest UN mission in Haiti hitherto.

### **d. MINUJUSTH**

MINUJUSTH was the successor mission of MINUSTAH and took place from 2017 to 2019. In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2350, the mission's goal was to assist the Government of Haiti in strengthening Haiti's rule of law institutions, to further support and strengthen the Haitian National Police and to monitor, analyze and report on human rights situations

## VII. CRITISCM OF THESE MISSIONS

Many critical voices were raised about the MINUSTAH mission. Organizations such as Amnesty International have claimed that MINUSTAH forces are responsible for the death of a Haitian man. But also, the Haitian human rights organizations KONAMAVID and OFARC accuse the UN mission of serious allegations. The risk of children, women and girls becoming victims of exploitation and sexual violence is said to have increased due to the 5,000 civilian, military and police forces in MINUSTAH.

## VIII. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Arguably the two most important steps for the restoration of order are ending the gangs' power and holding meaningful new elections. Both seem a distant prospect.

One suggestion is the deployment of international forces. There is some support in Haiti for such an idea, but critics say it could simply escalate the violence.

Meanwhile, President Henry's power remains unchecked.

## IX. DEFINTION OF KEY TERMS

- <sup>1</sup>*The G9*: federation of the strongest gangs in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince, founded in 2020
- <sup>2</sup>*Failed State*: a state whose political or economic system has become so weak that the government is no longer in control
- <sup>3</sup>*Barbecue*: Founder of the gang G9, real name: Jimmy Chérizier

## X. USEFUL LINKS

- [S/RES/2653 \(2022\) | United Nations Security Council](#)  
(Resolution of the SC from 2022)
- <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/haiti-in-2023-political-abyss-and-vicious-gangs/>

(Article about the situation in Haiti)

- <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15266.doc.htm>

(Report by the UN)

- [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/latin-america-and-caribbean/haiti\\_en](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/latin-america-and-caribbean/haiti_en)

(Factsheet by the European Union)

- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/central-america-and-the-caribbean/haiti/report-haiti/>

(Report by Amnesty International)