PERRY CENTER OCCASIONAL PAPER
DECEMBER 2025

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By Luis Bitencourt, Celina Realuyo, and Boris Saavedra

WILLIAM J. PERRY CENTER FOR HEMISPHERIC DEFENSE STUDIES
National Defense University

Cover concept: Silhouette of Haiti featuring the Haitian flag, the damaged National Palace, rubble, and street scenes from Port-au-Prince.
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Introduction

Haiti remains in the grip of severe political, economic, and security crises driven by the continued expansion of gang control of the country, political instability, and weak state institutions. Since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021, the country has been without elected officials at the upper levels of government. The current Haitian government, led by the seven-person Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) and Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé, faces immense challenges in restoring order. Ongoing violence has crippled already-weak essential services, including law enforcement and the judicial system, and the economy. According to the World Bank, Haiti's economy contracted by 4.2% in 2024 with an inflation rate of 24.8% in early 2025, and Haiti has the lowest per capita income in the region.

Gang violence has continued to escalate, with criminal organizations controlling key areas of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and extending their influence across the country. Sustained insecurity continues to hinder the delivery of lifesaving assistance to food-insecure populations, including more than 703,000 internally displaced persons. More than 5.4 million people, nearly half of Haiti's population, are projected to experience crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity across the country in 2025. Corruption within law enforcement and a lack of effective governance have allowed armed groups to operate with impunity, undermining Haiti's efforts to combat drug, arms, and human trafficking. Corruption is deeply embedded within all levels of government and law enforcement, severely undermining the judicial system.[2]

This paper will examine the political, security, and economic situation in Haiti and offer recommendations to promote democratic governance and prosperity in the country with the support of the international community. First, the political and security crisis in Haiti and role of the UN Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission will be examined. Subsequently, the paper will analyze threats to Haiti's economy and financial system from illicit financial flows and how to counter them. Finally, the paper

[1] The views expressed in this chapter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, National Defense University, or the Department of Defense.

[2] United States Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2025, Volume 1: Drug and Chemical Control, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-International-Narcotics-Control-Strategy-Volume-1-Accessible.pdf

will look at how UN resolutions UNSCR 2793 and 2794 offer Haiti and the international community a crucial opportunity not only to suppress gangs and restore security but to address the underlying institutional weaknesses that have repeatedly undermined past interventions. This initiative seeks to establish a coordinated, Haitian-led, and internationally supported framework to restore public order, reinforce the Haitian National Police (HNP), and rebuild the institutional capacity necessary for long-term stability. This paper offers a road map to design, develop, and implement a framework to realize security, democratic governance, and prosperity in Haiti.

The Security Situation and UN Missions in Haiti

The historical dominance of France and the United States has profoundly shaped Haiti's enduring political, economic, and social crises. France's imposition of a devastating indemnity after Haiti's 1804 independence drained national resources for generations, while U.S. interventions—most notably the 1915–1934 occupation—further entrenched foreign control over finances, governance, and trade.[3] These interventions fostered cycles of debt, corruption, and instability that undermined Haitian sovereignty and development. The country's present turmoil, marked by fragile institutions and persistent poverty, reflects the legacy of external exploitation and imposed dependency.

Fast forward to the present day, following the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021, the country has not had a proper presidential election in several years. Haiti's continuously heightened political and security crisis is driven mainly by the unchecked expansion of armed territorial gangs, all of which now exert their control over critical infrastructure, including major roadways, ports, and even fuel distribution centers. Their dominance has severely restricted mobility, forcing businesses to shut down and as a result, creating localized economic collapse.[4] Between January and May 2025, Haiti reported over 4,000 homicides, a 24 percent increase from the previous year. Meanwhile, more than 1.3 million people, representing over one in ten Haitians, are now displaced within the country, half of them children.[5]

The role of regional organizations like the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of American States (OAS) in facilitating stability is under scrutiny. While past international interventions have struggled to effect lasting change, some experts advocate for a regionally led, sovereignty-focused approach to restore governance and security on the island. To this end, UN Security Council Resolution 2793 on Haiti passed on September 30, 2025 that authorizes UN member states to transition the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission into a Gang Suppression Force (GSF) for an initial period of 12 months, with an authorized personnel ceiling of 5,550 (5,500 uniformed personnel and 50 civilians). This new force, working closely with the Haitian authorities, is mandated to conduct

[3] U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian. U.S. invasion and occupation of Haiti, 1916-1934,
[4] Kush Dave, Institute for Youth in Policy. International Interventions in Haiti: stabilization potential, sovereignty consideration, and long-term development policy strategies, October 11, 2025, https://yipinstitute.org/journal/international-interventions-in-haiti-stabilization-potential-sovereignty-considerations-and-long-term-development-policy-strategies
[5] Romain Le Cour Grandmaison, "Ending Haiti's criminal Governance Crisis," Americas Quarterly, September 25, 2025, https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/ending-haitis-criminal-governance-crisis/

intelligence-led, targeted operations to neutralize and deter gangs threatening civilians and undermining institutions. The resolution also requests the establishment of a UN Support Office in Haiti (UNSOH) to assist the mission's logistics and operations.[6]

On October 17, 2025, UN Security Council Resolution 2794 was passed to renew for another year the Haiti sanctions regime, which includes a travel ban, asset freeze, and arms embargo on individuals and entities that destabilize Haiti, notably through gang activity and illicit exploitation of resources. The resolution emphasizes strengthening border controls to prevent arms trafficking, supporting Haitian authorities in weapons management, and maintaining the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the sanctions committee. It also expands the sanctions list and underscores the need for robust compliance to restore security for the Haitian population.[7]

The UN resolutions are intended to improve the security situation in Haiti. The Haitian National Police (HNP) is comprised of approximately 9,000 officers for a population exceeding 11 million and is overwhelmed and under-resourced. This disparity hampers their ability to effectively combat gang violence, leading to increased insecurity. Further, the judiciary's paralysis enables gang rule, as courts remain largely nonfunctional. Years of underfunding, political interference, and a lack of trained legal personnel have left the judicial system unable to operate effectively. Judges and prosecutors in Haiti often receive threats from armed groups because they are seen as obstacles to gang operations and political corruption.[8]

The United Nations-backed Kenyan-led Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission aimed to restore stability in Haiti by addressing the widespread gang violence and political instability that have plagued the nation since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021. Their mission, authorized by the UN Security Council in October 2023, represents a significant intervention effort by the international community with primary objectives being to dismantle the influence of armed gangs, restore public safety, and create the conditions necessary for political and economic recovery. However, despite its ambitious goals, the MSS mission has faced significant logistical and operational challenges, raising concerns about its ability to achieve long-term stability in Haiti while safeguarding the country's sovereignty.[9]

One of the major hurdles facing the MSS mission is the overwhelming control exerted by gangs in Haiti, particularly in the capital, Port-au-Prince. The MSS mission was expected to fill the military power gap, but its deployment has been hindered by logistical and funding issues. It has struggled to

[6] United Nations, Security Council Report, October 22, 2025, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2025/10/haiti-briefing-and-consultations-15.php

[7] United Nations. Meeting Coverage and Press Release. Security Council Renews Sanctions Regime on Haiti; Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2794 (2025) posted October 16, 2025, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2025/10/haiti-vote-on-a-draft-resolution-renewing-the-sanctions-regime.php

[8] Even Sanon, "Haitian police spokesman says new gang attacks overwhelmed officers: 'The city center was at war,' Associated Press, March 1, 2024, https://apnews.com/article/haiti-violence-police-killed-kenya-gangs-84eb8a827967238805827742bbd7bf69

[9] United National Security Council Report on Haiti, September 29, 2024, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/09/haiti-vote-to-renew-the-authorisation-of-the-multinational-security-support-mission.php

become operational due to a lack of necessary financial resources, significantly hindering efforts to curb gang violence in the country.[10] In late February 2025, UN Secretary-General António Guterres recommended establishing a UN-funded logistics support office to back the Kenyan-led MSS mission, emphasizing that the mission remains under-resourced, with only 1,000 personnel deployed out of the 2,500 needed and insufficient funding to sustain operations.[11]

Beyond financial limitations, there are operational challenges tied to the structure of the mission itself. Kenya, the leading country in the MSS coalition, has faced internal legal and political obstacles in deploying its forces with the Kenyan High Court initially blocking the deployment, questioning the constitutional basis for sending police forces abroad.[12] Concerns about the effectiveness of a primarily police-based mission rather than a military force raise questions about whether the MSS can adequately combat well-armed gangs that operate with impunity. Police units are typically trained for law enforcement, crowd control, and community engagement, but they often lack the heavy weaponry, tactical training, and logistical capacity needed to confront heavily armed and organized criminal groups. The gangs frequently possess military-grade weapons and control fortified areas, rendering conventional policing tactics insufficient. The limited size and resources of the MSS restrict sustained operations, undermining efforts to dismantle entrenched criminal networks or maintain territorial control. This mismatch between the mission's capabilities and the security challenges fuels skepticism about its ability to restore stability and protect civilians effectively. The challenges of deploying forces in unfamiliar environments, where gang members often outgun law enforcement, further show the limitations and currently unsustainable nature of the current approach.[13]

Current Security Challenges in Haiti

Haiti's internal security governance in 2025 is beset by intertwined challenges including rampant gang violence, political paralysis, an under-resourced police force, compromised judicial institutions, expanding humanitarian crises, and persistent problems with arms trafficking, narcotrafficking, and privatized security operations.

Gang control and violence: Armed gangs continue to exert control over Haiti's capital and have expanded their activities into the Artibonite, Centre, and Northwest departments, generating widespread insecurity, displacing over 1.4 million people, and undermining State institutions. According to Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), the persistent

[10] Juhakenson Blaise and Fritznel D. Octave, "Did US founding for Haiti's security mission stop? The Haitian Times breaks it down," The Haitian Times, February 28, 2025, https://haitiantimes.com/2025/02/28/us-aid-haiti-security-mission/

[11] Daniel Forti, "Can a UN Logistics Package Give the Kenyan-Led Police Mission in Haiti a Much-Needed Boost?, IPI Global Observatory, March 13, 2025, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2025/03/can-a-un-logistics-package-give-the-kenyan-led-police-mission-in-haiti-a-much-needed-boost/

[12] Tom Odula, Kenya's high court rules that deploying the nation's police officers to Haiti is unconstitutional," Associated Press, January 26, 2024, https://apnews.com/article/kenya-haiti-gang-violence-deployment-7eecfbf8a1d2cdd8e9d5892fa623087e

[13] Kush Dave, Institute for Youth in Policy. International Interventions in Haiti: stabilization potential, sovereignty consideration, and long-term development policy strategies, October 11, 2025, https://yipinstitute.org/journal/international-interventions-in-haiti-stabilization-potential-sovereignty-considerations-and-long-term-development-policy-strategies

use of sexual violence, extortion, and property attacks has intensified the humanitarian crisis, while the erosion of family and community structures coupled with limited economic opportunities has fostered child exploitation and gang recruitment. He emphasized that the recent adoption of Security Council resolution 2793, authorizing the formation of the Gang Suppression Force and the establishment of the United Nations Support Office in Haiti (UNSOH), together with the renewal of the sanction's regime, are vital steps toward improving security and supporting a Haitian-led political transition. With authority scheduled to transfer to elected officials by February 2026, Ruiz Massieu noted that progress on security, political dialogue, and sanctions implementation remains essential to restore democratic governance, end impunity, and advance stability and prosperity in Haiti.[14]

Weak state institutions: Haiti's weak institutions have significantly contributed to the country's persistent instability, as evidenced in international assessments by the UN and World Bank. The Haitian National Police (HNP) remain under-resourced and incapable of reclaiming key neighborhoods from powerful gangs, despite support from the UN and the Multinational Security Support Mission, further exacerbating insecurity throughout the country. The judicial system is equally debilitated, suffering from widespread corruption, frequent strikes, and direct gang interference, resulting in near-paralysis and a pervasive climate of impunity. Politically, Haiti is mired in deadlock with repeated dismissals and replacements at the head of government, fragmentation within the transitional Presidential Council, and the persistent postponement of elections, all of which hinder the restoration of legitimate governance and effective public administration. These institutional weaknesses, repeatedly highlighted in donor and UN evaluations, pose a fundamental barrier to effective governance, development, and the protection of basic rights in Haiti.[15]

Haitian law enforcement and private security forces: The increasing reliance on private security firms and the military's deployment of advanced technologies, such as drones, reflect the Haitian authorities' efforts to address persistent gang violence amid institutional limitations. Private military contractors, including internationally recognized companies like Vectus Global, have been engaged to supplement the Haitian National Police and compensate for the Multinational Security Support mission's restricted mandate and limited capacity for sustained kinetic operations. In parallel, the adoption of drone technology has enabled law enforcement to conduct real-time surveillance, map gang territories, and coordinate tactical responses, offering critical support in urban areas too dangerous for regular police operations; drones have also provided essential intelligence for both the HNP and private security operatives. However, inconsistent coordination between the MSS stabilization force and national authorities has hampered these gains, undermining mandate implementation, delaying funding, and

[14] United Nations Meeting Coverage & Press Release, Time to Turn the Tide of Violence Special Representative for Haiti Tell Security Council, Amid Calls for Dialogue, Unity in Tackling Gang's Violence, October 22, 2025, https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16199.doc.htm

[15] World Bank Group, Commitment Through Crisis: The World Bank's Strategy for Haiti's Recovery, September 15, 2025, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2025/09/15/haiti-continues-the-world-bank-on-the-ground-support-despite-increasing-uncertainty-and-volatility and United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2025/641), October 15, 2025, https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/united-nations-integrated-office-haiti-report-secretary-general-s2025641-enarruzh

limiting operational effectiveness—resulting in missed opportunities to retake territory or respond swiftly to emerging threats. This fragmented approach has ultimately constrained the overall impact of security interventions, perpetuated instability, and enabled gangs to maintain territorial control in key regions.[16]

Arms trafficking and sanctions enforcement: Illicit arms trafficking remains a critical driver of Haiti's security crisis, as gangs continue to obtain weapons—primarily sourced from the United States—despite longstanding embargoes and international efforts to disrupt these flows. Weak border controls, corruption among customs officials, and the lack of adequate tracing mechanisms facilitate the steady influx of high-powered firearms, often hidden in legitimate cargo and shipped by exploiting loopholes in both Haitian and U.S. export oversight. While recent UN resolutions have expanded sanctions and added more individuals to arms trafficking watch lists, enforcement is hampered by Haiti's limited institutional capacity and the complexity of international coordination, resulting in patchy and inconsistent application of these measures. This persistent arms influx has strengthened gang power, intensified violence, and severely undermined state authority, further entrenching the country's humanitarian and political emergencies.[17]

Political uncertainty: Electoral and political uncertainty in Haiti is both a consequence and a catalyst of the nation's security crisis, as efforts to organize elections are routinely undermined by the dominant territorial power of armed gangs. Despite official commitments to hold general elections, pervasive gang violence controls much of Port-au-Prince and other regions, making voter participation perilous and casting serious doubt on the prospects for a credible and inclusive poll. Resources and operational capacity are inadequate, with the Provisional Electoral Council struggling to access many areas and provide basic infrastructure for polling amid widespread displacement and destruction. Even with international pressure for democratic restoration, the lack of a broad-based political agreement among Haiti's fragmented parties impedes lasting solutions, as any security intervention to facilitate elections risks being superficial or destabilizing without a consensus on national governance and future reforms. Thus, Haiti's political landscape remains intractably volatile—the absence of cohesion between political and security actors threatens to perpetuate the crisis beyond the end of the transitional government's mandate.[18]

Humanitarian aspects: Ongoing violence and mass displacement in Haiti have severely eroded community protection structures, leaving families and children increasingly vulnerable to exploitation and recruitment by armed gangs. Displacement—often triggered by brutal territorial offensives—has led to the breakdown of social networks and protective mechanisms, making it easier for criminal groups

[16] Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, Multinational Security Support Mission and the Haitian Police: Stuck Between a Rock and a Hard Place, April 2025, https://riskbulletins.globalinitiative.net/ht-obs-003/01-multinational-security-support-mission-haitian-police.html

[17] Jacqui Wakefield, Christopher Giles and Joshua Cheetham, "Smugglers' paradise: How US guns flow to gang-ravaged Haiti," BBC, April 16, 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly15pp707go

[18] Sara Morland, Haiti gang warfare stalls long-awaited elections, Reuters, October 22, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/haiti-gang-warfare-stalls-long-awaited-elections-2025-10-22/

to target displaced children, some as young as ten, for forced enlistment and gender-based violence. As displaced populations swell, now numbering over 680,000 people, many reside in makeshift encampments lacking access to food, clean water, healthcare, and education; the resulting socio-economic deprivation further exacerbates vulnerability, perpetuating a cycle in which children join gangs for survival in the absence of effective humanitarian support. This dynamic intensifies humanitarian needs and undermines the prospects for community resilience and social recovery in gang-afflicted areas.[19]

Haiti's internal security crisis is multidimensional and deeply entrenched, with weak state institutions and rampant gang influence fueling persistent instability and violence. Despite repeated international interventions and the deployment of stabilization forces, efforts to restore order are hampered by funding gaps, coordination challenges, and inadequate resources, which undermine the effectiveness of both security and humanitarian responses. The pervasive power of armed groups exacerbates protection risks, disrupts essential services, and drives mass displacement, while a dysfunctional judicial system and persistent political fragmentation impede progress toward democratic governance and social reconstruction. The absence of broad-based political consensus and robust rule of law continues to challenge the prospects for sustainable peace, leaving millions in crisis and highlighting the urgency of comprehensive, Haitian-led solutions supported by reliable international engagement.

Illicit Financial Flows Undermine Haiti's Economy and Financial System

Haiti's economy is one of the most fragile in the Western Hemisphere with the lowest per capita income in the region. The economy is small, undiversified, informal, and extremely vulnerable to internal instability and external shocks. According to the World Bank, Haiti's economy contracted by 4.2% in 2024 with an inflation rate 0f 24.8% in early 2025. Security problems, political instability, governance weaknesses, over reliance on remittances, and repeated natural disasters have prevented the country from achieving sustained growth or building resilient institutions. Gang violence has crippled the already weak economy and critical infrastructure, disrupt transportation, supply chains, and markets, making normal commerce impossible in many areas. Corruption within law enforcement and a lack of effective governance have allowed armed groups to operate with impunity, undermining Haiti's efforts to combat drug, arms, and human trafficking. Corruption is deeply embedded within all levels of government and law enforcement, severely undermining the judicial system.[20] The gangs' parallel governance, violence, expanding illicit economy, and corruption create difficult conditions for Haiti to counter money laundering and illicit financial flows. Haiti must build more capacity to combat threat financing and safeguard the integrity of its financial system and economy.

[19] Amnesty International. Gang's Assault's in childhood in Haiti. New report documents relentless gang violence, February 12, 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/02/haiti-children-suffering-gang-recruitment-attacks-sexual-violence/
[20] U.S. Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2025, Volume 1: Drug and Chemical Control, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-International-Narcotics-Control-Strategy-Volume-1-Accessible.pdf

The Diversified Financing of the Gangs

Haitian gangs undermine the security and prosperity of Haiti as they have become increasingly organized, armed and powerful across the country. The gangs are well financed by a diverse, lucrative criminal economy that mixes local extortion and racketeering with transnational trafficking, kidnappings for ransom, and exploitation of weak governance and diaspora networks. They generate significant income from the following activities:

Extortion / "Illicit taxation" of businesses and households: Gangs charge businesses, truckers, market vendors and ordinary households "protection" fees at scale — sometimes bureaucratized with cards or weekly payments — generating steady cash flow. Reports cite businesses coerced to pay up to tens of thousands of dollars per week in some areas.

Kidnapping for ransom: Kidnapping is a major revenue generator: thousands of kidnappings were reported in recent years, and ransoms (paid by families, employers, or foreign governments/NGOs) raise large sums that fund arms purchases and operations. U.S. prosecutions have shown gangs laundering ransom proceeds internationally. The UN recorded 1494 kidnappings in 2024, generating some U.S. $25 million annually.[21]

Drug trafficking and transshipment (cocaine, often en route to the U.S./Caribbean/Europe): Haitian gangs profit by facilitating shipments, providing security for transshipment routes, and taxing or directly participating in cocaine flows from South America.

Control of logistics, ports, and black-market trade (fuel, rice, charcoal, imports/containers): Gangs levy tolls at checkpoints, charge percentages on containers and hijack commodity flows (fuel, charcoal, rice) to sell on black markets. Haitian Finance Minister Alfred Metellus believes gangs are extracting U.S. $60-70 million annually from cargo container extortion alone.[22]

Arms trafficking and illicit trade in commodities: Proceeds are reinvested to buy weapons (often trafficked from abroad) and sometimes arms are sold onward that creates a reinvesting criminal economy that fuels further revenue generation. UN and journalistic reporting document weapons flows and gangs using ransom/drug money to arm themselves.

Fraud, money-laundering, and diaspora/foreign support networks: Gangs and their intermediaries launder money through informal networks, front companies, and in some cases via diaspora actors who send funds or help move cash/assets abroad. Recent U.S. indictments and sanctions allege U.S.-based intermediaries helped funnel money to gang leaders.

Extortion of humanitarian aid and service fees from businesses and NGOs: Gangs tax or extort shipments of aid, charge NGOs for corridor access, and siphon humanitarian supplies into the black market—both

[21] Sara Moreland, "Haitian gangs' growing funds, arsenals challenge planned intervention -report," Reuters, February 16, 2024, https://ibw21.org/news/haitian-gangs-growing-funds-arsenals-challenge-planned-intervention-report/
[22] How Haiti Gangs Make Millions from Insecurity," Kenyan Insights, September 21, 2025, https://kenyainsights.com/how-haiti-gangs-make-millions-from-insecurity/

raising funds and undermining relief efforts.

Through these criminal activities, the gangs are generating significant illicit financial flows that undermine the integrity of the Haitian financial system and legitimate economy.

Haitian Anti-Money Laundering/ Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Efforts

The Haitian government's anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) efforts face significant hurdles due to political instability, pervasive gang violence, and a largely nonfunctional judicial system. Regional drug trafficking and money laundering networks exploit Haitian couriers, particularly via maritime routes, with trafficking and associated money laundering often linked to activities in the U.S. In the face of these challenges, Haiti's Central Financial Intelligence Unit (UCREF) has aligned its structure and operations to address criminal practices. Authorities state they are using technological tools to combat crime, including artificial intelligence for investigations. This increases UCREF's ability to monitor and analyze emerging trends, counter and address risks to the financial system, and bolster national and regional security. Authorities recognize the threat of new channels for money laundering/terrorist financing as digital assets increasingly enable anonymity in sophisticated laundering and fraud schemes, particularly those involving organized groups.

Haitian gangs and corrupt political and private sector actors engage in drug trafficking and other criminal activity. Between December 2022 and September 2023, UCREF received 258 suspicious transaction reports (STRs). Most filed suspicious transaction reports STRs came from the money transfer sector (230), followed by the banking sector (23). The concentration of money transfer sector STRs indicates this area's heightened exposure to money laundering and potential terrorist financing activities. Sixty-seven percent of Haiti's bank deposits are in foreign currency.

Money laundering operations frequently involve large sums of U.S. currency held in offshore banks or within Haiti by nonfinancial entities. A notable portion of property seizures by the Haitian government relates to significant drug traffickers prosecuted in the United States. The proceeds from other criminal activities - corruption, counterfeiting, ransom-based kidnappings, and tax evasion - contribute to Haiti's money laundering concerns.[23]

Financial Action Task Force Monitoring and Recommendations

Haiti's financial system is vulnerable to threat financing due to high levels of criminality and corruption. Since 2021, Haiti has been "grey-listed" by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and is subject to increased monitoring due to strategic deficiencies in their regime to counter money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing. When the FATF places a jurisdiction under increased monitoring, it means the country has committed to resolve swiftly the identified strategic deficiencies within agreed

[23] U.S. Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs International Narcotics Control Strategy Report Volume 2: Money Laundering, March 2025, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-International-Narcotics-Control-Strategy-Volume-2-Accessible.pdf

timeframes and is subject to increased monitoring. Since June 2021, when Haiti made a high-level political commitment to work with the FATF and CFATF to strengthen the effectiveness of its AML/CFT regime, Haiti has taken steps towards improving its AML/CFT regime, including implementing risk-based AML/CFT supervision for all financial institution and ensuring the FIU has adequate resources and processes to produce and disseminate operational and strategic analysis to competent authorities for combatting money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF).

The FATF recognizes the political commitment expressed at a high level and the efforts demonstrated by Haiti to advance its commitment amid the challenging social, economic, and security situation within the country. Haiti should continue to work on implementing its action plan to address its strategic deficiencies, including by: (1) completing its ML/TF risk assessment process and disseminating the findings; (2) implementing risk-based AML/CFT supervision for DNFBPs deemed to constitute a higher ML/TF risk; (3) ensuring basic and beneficial ownership information are maintained and accessible in a timely manner; (4) demonstrating authorities are identifying, investigating and prosecuting ML cases in a manner consistent with Haiti's risk profile; (5) demonstrating an increase of identification, tracing and recovery of proceeds of crimes; (6) addressing the technical deficiencies in its targeted financial sanctions regime; and (7) conducting appropriate risk-based monitoring of NGOs vulnerable to TF abuse without disrupting or discouraging legitimate NGO activities. The FATF notes Haiti's continued progress across its action plan, however all deadlines have expired, and work remains. The FATF encourages Haiti to continue to implement its action plan to address the above-mentioned strategic deficiencies.[24]

U.S. Treasury Sanction of Former Haitian President for Drug Trafficking in 2024

The U.S. government is concerned with the criminality and corruption challenging governance in Haiti. It has been employing the financial instrument of national power in the form of sanctions and designations to identify and isolate criminal actors threatening the security, economy and democracy in Haiti. On August 20, 2024, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned the former President of Haiti, Michel Joseph Martelly (Martelly), pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 14059 of December 15, 2021, "Imposing Sanctions on Foreign Persons Involved in the Global Illicit Drug Trade" for having engaged in, or having attempted to engage in, activities or transactions that have materially contributed to, or pose a significant risk of materially contributing to, the international proliferation of illicit drugs or their means of production. Martelly abused his influence to facilitate the trafficking of dangerous drugs, including cocaine, destined for the United States. Additionally, he engaged in the laundering of illicit drug proceeds, worked with Haitian drug traffickers, and sponsored multiple Haiti-based gangs. The existence of widespread gang activity and human rights abuses in Haiti creates a permissive environment for drug trafficking activities, and the country is a transit point for illicit drugs entering the United States. Many of Haiti's political and business elites have long been involved in drug trafficking and have been linked to the gangs responsible for the violence

[24] Financial Action Task Force Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring - 24 October 2025, https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/High-risk-and-other-monitored-jurisdictions/increased-monitoring-october-2025.html

that has destabilized Haiti. The United States is committed to promoting accountability and charting a more prosperous, democratic, and secure future for all Haitians. The United States, along with our international partners, is committed to disrupting those who facilitate the drug trafficking, corruption, and other illicit activities fueling the horrific gang violence and political instability.[25]

U.S. Designation and Indictment of Gang Leader Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier

The U.S. has been using designations and sanctions to target specific Haitian gang leaders to limit their mobility and access to the financial system. On December 10, 2020, U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned gang leader Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier under Executive Order 13818, which implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. Chérizier has for years led the G9 Family and Allies, a gang known for killings, mass kidnappings, sexual violence, and extortion. In 2023, he united the G9 with enemy gangs to form Viv Ansanm, a coalition that has launched waves of coordinated attacks against Haitian neighborhoods, government buildings, prisons and critical infrastructure. It has also repeatedly attacked health care facilities and blocked humanitarian aid. The designation is based on his role in serious human rights abuses connected to multiple violent attacks in Port-au-Prince (2018–2020). Treasury determined that he led armed groups responsible for extrajudicial killings, violence, and intimidation targeting civilians and political opponents. Barbecue was accused of orchestrating or participating in the La Saline massacre in November 2018 in which 70 civilians were killed.

On August 12, 2025, a federal grand jury indicted Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier, the leader of a powerful coalition of gangs that has paralyzed and terrorized Haiti, on charges of conspiring with Haitians and members of the Haitian diaspora in the U.S. to evade U.S. sanctions. The self-styled revolutionary is believed to be in Port-au-Prince, where his gang coalition launched a new round of attacks as he threatened again to overthrow the country's transitional government in August. A one-count indictment filed in D.C. federal court alleges that Chérizier, 48, and several others conspired to violate U.S. sanctions from 2020 to 2025, an offense that would be punishable by up to 20 years in prison — if Chérizier can be taken into custody, prosecuted and convicted. Prosecutors allege that Chérizier and Bazile Richardson, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Haiti, led a conspiracy to transfer money from the U.S. to Chérizier to fund his gang activities in violation of the sanctions. The pair allegedly sought money transfers from members of the Haitian diaspora in the U.S. through social media and direct-messaging apps, and that Chérizier used the funds to pay his soldiers and buy illegal firearms from black-market dealers in Haiti. The funds were sent to intermediaries in Haiti, they allege, to conceal Chérizier's involvement.[26] The State Department, meanwhile, is offering a $5 million reward for information leading to Chérizier's arrest or conviction.

[25] U.S. Department of Treasury OFAC Press Release, Treasury Sanctions Former Haitian President for Drug Trafficking, August 20, 2024, https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2542

[26] Amanda Coletta and Salvador Rizzo, "U.S. charges Haiti gang leader 'Barbecue' with evading sanctions," Washington Post, August 12, 2025, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/08/12/jimmy-barbecue-cherizier-indicted/

U.S. FTO Designation of Haitian Gangs in 2025

The Trump Administration has intensified efforts to counter transnational criminal organizations and cartels by designating them as foreign terrorist organizations across the Western Hemisphere, including the Haitian gangs. On May 2, 2025, the Department of State announced the designation of Viv Ansanm and Gran Grif as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) and Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs). Viv Ansanm is a group formed in September 2023 as a coalition of gangs through an alliance between the two main gang factions operating in Port-au-Prince, G-9 and G-Pép. The groups provide a unified platform for criminal groups to use violence to destabilize Haiti and quash actions aimed at restoring state control. Viv Ansanm has launched coordinated attacks on critical infrastructure in Haiti, including prisons, government buildings, and Haiti's main airport in Port-au-Prince as part of a campaign that, among other things, forced the resignation of former Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry.

Gran Grif is the largest gang in Haiti's Artibonite department, a region that is home to much of the country's rice fields. Since 2022, Gran Grif has been responsible for 80 percent of civilian death reports in Artibonite. Gran Grif has attacked Haitian National Police and the UN-authorized Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission, including in the February 2025 attack that killed a Kenyan MSS mission officer.[27]

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement "These Haitian gangs are a direct threat to U.S. national security interests in our region," adding that providing material support or resources to the gangs could lead to "criminal charges and inadmissibility or removal from the United States." These designations as "foreign terrorist organizations" and "specially designated global terrorists" are intended to disrupt the financial networks and degrade the operational capabilities of these criminal groups. As a result, individuals and entities providing support or resources to the designated entities may be subject to criminal charges under U.S. law, asset freezing and decisions related to admissibility and removal from the United States. The Dominican Republic, which also designated some Haitian criminal groups as terrorist organizations, could also enact and enforce laws that target the same gangs.[28]

According to the UNODC, the designation of Viv Ansanm and Gran Grif as foreign terrorist organizations constitutes a significant escalation in U.S. efforts to counter organized crime in Haiti and internationally. However, such designations would be effective only if they are part of a broader cohesive strategy and can also generate unintended outcomes, including additional legal, criminal justice, and operational complexities for humanitarian, commercial, and international actors. For example, reports have already started emerging that gangs are increasing extortion fees in response to these designations. There are also fears that sanctions could disrupt fuel and other deliveries, pushing transportation and other sectors to collapse. The designation process for terrorist organizations should ensure that all measures taken to address security concerns are in line with relevant obligations under international law,

[27] U.S. Department of State, Designation of Viv Ansanm and Gran Grif, May 2, 2025, https://www.state.gov/designation-of-viv-ansanm-and-gran-grif/

[28] Sarah Morland, "US designates powerful Haiti gang alliance as transnational terrorist group," Reuters, May 2, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-designates-haitian-gang-alliance-viv-ansanm-transnational-terrorist-group-2025-05-02/

including international human rights law and, as applicable, international humanitarian law, mitigating any potential adverse effects on the population, including the wider aid sector. Additional exemptions or arrangements could be included in the relevant framework to ensure that humanitarian, development or civil society organizations can work in a rule of law-based legal and procedural framework and in line with principles of humanitarian action.[29]

Ways to Enhance Haiti's AML/CFT Regime

Since economic security is national security, Haiti must intensify efforts to combat illicit financial flows through domestic and international measures. Haiti continues to wrestle with high levels of violence, insecurity, weak governance, corruption and illicit financial flows that threaten the security, economy and welfare of the country. Criminality and the illicit economy create significant vulnerabilities to Haiti's financial system in the form of money laundering and terrorist financing. Haiti should continue to work on implementing its action plan to address its strategic deficiencies identified by the Financial Action Task Force. To protect its economy and financial system, Hait must build, resource, and sustain an effective counter threat finance regime with the following features:

1. Legal Framework to Criminalize Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing
2. Financial Regulatory System to Oversee Financial Institutions
3. Financial Intelligence Unit
4. Law Enforcement Capacity to Investigate Financial Crimes
5. Judicial Capacity to Bring Threat Financiers to Justice

Legal Framework to Criminalize Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing: Haiti must update legislation to address new emerging methods of money laundering such as cryptocurrencies. Haiti also must ensure that basic and beneficial ownership information are maintained and accessible in a timely manner.

Financial Regulatory System to Oversee Financial Institutions: Haiti must improve its implementation of AML/CFT preventive measures and supervision for all financial institutions and DNFBPs deemed to constitute a higher ML/TF risk. Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) are non-financial sector entities that, due to the nature of their less regulated environment compared to financial institutions, are vulnerable to misuse for money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing.

Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU): Haiti must facilitate information sharing with relevant foreign counterparts as many of the crimes related to money laundering and terrorist financing are transnational in nature. The FIUs of Haiti and the Dominican Republic should be empowered to conduct proactive forensic audits of accounts and remittance channels associated with arms trafficking and organized crime. These efforts could also be coordinated with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) of

[29] United Nations Security Council Letter June 26, 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime pursuant to paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution 2692 (2023), https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/420

the U.S. Department of the Treasury and similar entities from other partner nations to track suspicious financial flows and issue joint risk advisories. Measures should include tighter scrutiny of informal money transfers, crypto assets and real estate transactions, alongside mandatory reporting by financial institutions of high-risk cross-border transactions, with penalties for non-compliance.

Law Enforcement Capacity to Investigate Financial Crimes: There should be better use of financial intelligence and other relevant information by competent authorities for combating ML and an increase of identification, tracing and recovery of proceeds of crimes. Haiti must address the technical deficiencies in its ML offense and demonstrate that authorities are identifying, investigating and prosecuting ML cases in a manner consistent with Haiti's risk profile. Haiti should enhance collaboration with international partners can support intelligence-sharing, training, and technical assistance efforts, which are critical to dismantling drug trafficking networks and related money laundering activities.

Judicial Capacity to Bring Threat Financiers to Justice: Regarding the prosecution of financial crimes, Haiti needs to show that authorities are identifying, investigating, and prosecuting money laundering cases in a way that is consistent with its risk profile. For example, the Anti-Corruption Unit (ULCC) has delivered seven meticulously compiled investigation reports to the courts regarding the misappropriation of public funds and illicit enrichment to money laundering and abuse of office. ULCC has submitted 94 cases to the justice system since 2004. However, justice has largely remained elusive, with only one conviction achieved to date. Regarding asset forfeiture, Haiti must increase the identification, tracing, and recovery of proceeds of crime to take the money from criminals, terrorists, and corrupt officials. Haiti can build on the administrative freezing measures against individuals sanctioned under Security Council resolution 2653 (2022) to locate their assets and to operate a criminal seizure (in Haiti or abroad) in the context of a criminal investigation against them to subsequently obtain the confiscation of their assets.

Haiti has demonstrated political will to combat money laundering and terrorist financing before the international community but must do more under the monitoring of the Financial Action Tast Force. The country must dedicate more human, financial and technological resources to the financial regulatory, FIU, law enforcement investigative and judicial agencies charged with fighting financial crimes and protecting Haiti's financial system. With the U.S. designation of Viv Ansanm and Gran Grif gangs as foreign terrorist organizations, Haiti should avail of more authorities and assistance to counter and dismantle these powerful gangs threatening the security and prosperity of the country. When a new government assumes power in 2026, it should consider economic security part of national security and invest in shoring up capabilities to counter threat financing to complement its efforts to combat terrorism, crime, and corruption in Haiti. The country must seek foreign assistance to build their capacity to counter terrorist financing and money laundering that is undermining their financial system.

A Reality Check on UNSC Resolutions 2793 and 2794: Could they succeed in Haiti?

As mentioned above, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2793, which authorizes

a transition of the existing multinational support mission in Haiti into a new "Gang Suppression Force" of up to 5,550 personnel, comprising 5,500 uniformed personnel and 50 civilians. The operative language of the resolution emphasizes "intelligence-led, targeted, counter-gang operations to neutralize, isolate, and deter gangs that continue to threaten the civilian population and institutions of Haiti," while also establishing a United Nations Support Office in Haiti (UNSOH) to provide logistical and operational support to the mission and to the Haitian institutions. The resolution's adoption on September 30, 2025 reflects mounting international recognition of the severe breakdown of public security in Haiti, where armed gangs have attained de facto territorial control, and the state's governance capacity has been rapidly eroded.

Shortly thereafter, on October 17, 2025, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2794, which renewed Haiti's sanctions regime—maintaining the arms embargo, assets freeze, and travel ban—and reinforced mechanisms to disrupt the financial and logistical networks enabling gang activity. It also reaffirmed the inseparable link between security operations and the strengthening of governance institutions. Taken together, Resolutions 2793 and 2794 establish a comprehensive international framework designed to confront the immediate security emergency while advancing the medium-term institutional reforms necessary for Haiti's long-term stability and resilience.

Nevertheless, the resolutions are marked by significant operational ambiguity. While the numbers and the urgency of deployment are clearly articulated, key elements such as the chain of command, precise rules of engagement, coordination with Haitian national institutions, funding and sustainability mechanisms, and exit strategy remain ill-defined. This gap between strategic ambition and operational clarity is central to the challenge that follows.

The U.S. Role in and Explanation of the UNSC Vote on Resolution 2793

The United States plyed a lead role in sponsoring and negotiating Resolution 2793 (in partnership with Panama) and in the subsequent Explanation of Vote it provided to the UN.[30] In its statement, the U.S. reaffirmed its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, the principle of collective action to maintain international peace and security, and the imperative to support Haiti in recovering its institutions and protecting its people:

> "Today, this Council took an important step in reaffirming its commitment to the founding purposes and principles of the UN Charter."
>
> "With this vote to transform the Multinational Security Support mission to the new Gang Suppression Force, a mission five times the size of its predecessor and with a strengthened mandate to go after the gangs, the international community is sharing the burden and living up to its promise to help Haiti turn the tide. It offers Haiti the chance to re-assume responsibility for

[30] U.S. Mission to the UN, "Explanation of Vote Following the Adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution for a UN Support Office and Gang Suppression Force in Haiti," Representation of the United States in the United Nations, September 30, 2025, https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-on-following-the-adoption-of-the-un-security-council-resolution-for-a-un-support-office-and-gang-suppression-force-in-haiti/

its own security. We are grateful to those countries that have participated in the MSS to date and have signaled their intention to remain under the new Gang Suppression Force structure. Their commitment is greatly appreciated as we work to expand the force."[31]

The U.S. explanation further emphasized that Haiti's crisis is not simply internal but poses a threat to regional stability and U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere, underscoring the urgency of multilateral, coordinated action. From a U.S. strategic perspective, the interpretation of U.S. interest may be summarized as follows:

1. **Preventing state collapse and regional spill-over.** The precipitous degradation of Haiti's security environment—gang rule, mass displacement, collapse of public services—threatens the state's very existence and by extension regional stability in the Caribbean/South American corridor.

2. **Upholding the rules-based international order.** As a sponsor of the resolution, the U.S. signals its support for multilateral solutions to global security challenges, reaffirming its role as a normative power in defense governance.

3. **Bridging the Security–Governance Nexus.** The U.S. interest extends beyond the kinetic suppression of armed groups. It emphasizes that durable stability in Haiti requires the development of robust institutions, accountable governance, and effective integration between civil and security sectors. Haitian leadership and ownership are essential to any legitimate reform process. In this context, the United States underscores the importance of advancing community policing models that strengthen trust, improve local security delivery, and support the reestablishment of state authority at the neighborhood level.

4. **Engaging and Empowering Haitians.** The U.S. underscores the importance of including the Haitians in the decision-making related to Haiti.

By embedding U.S. engagement within the normative framework of the UN Charter and linking it to regional and governance imperatives, the U.S. explanation of vote provides a clear strategic justification, even as operational roles and responsibilities remain unspecified.

The Shortcomings of the Ambitious U.S. Ten Year Plan for Haiti and Current Crisis

The current crisis in Haiti is not a sudden development but the cumulative result of years of governance failures, institutional fragility, recurring natural disasters, external shocks, and international interventions that have too often generated limited and short-lived outcomes. In 2022/23, the U.S. Department of State released The U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability: 10-Year Plan for Haiti, delineating a decade-long horizon for U.S. efforts to support security, governance, and prosperity in Haiti. The Plan emphasizes a phased approach beginning with the security-justice sector, followed by governance and

[31] Ibid.

civil-society strengthening, and finally economic development and resilience.[32]

Despite this strategy, the outcomes to date have been deeply disappointing. Key indicators of institutional breakdown—collapse of policing capacity, gang expansion, political paralysis, humanitarian crisis—have accelerated rather than declined. Commentators note that the international mission before Resolution 2793 (the MSS) had been under-resourced, under-deployed, and lacked a credible exit/transition strategy. The transition to a Gang Suppression Force is, therefore, a procedural admission that the earlier vision fell short.

Key analytical observations regarding the gap between the 10-Year Plan and current reality:

- **Sequencing mismatch:** The 10-Year Plan's phased architecture presupposes a baseline of functional governance and security institutions; in Haiti, these had already largely collapsed by 2024–25, necessitating immediate enforcement-oriented operations.
- **Resource and sustainability constraints:** The earlier plan envisioned sustained, multidimensional engagement. Instead, the MSS lacked predictable funding, troop contributions, and clear coordination—conditions which the new resolution also warns may repeat.
- **Ownership and legitimacy deficits:** The 10-Year Plan emphasized Haitian ownership and civil-society engagement; however, much of the recent international architecture has been built externally and faces local legitimacy challenges.
- **Integration of security and governance:** While the plan recognized the need for governance reform, enforcement operations were not front-loaded. The current enterprise under 2793 emphasizes enforcement first, pushing governance recovery into a secondary position.
- **Overly Ambitious Priorities with Insufficient Implementation Guidance.** The Plan expanded its focus to include several policy themes aligned with the previous Administration's preferences — such as "climate change," "gender inequality," and "Women, Peace, and Security" — which diluted the clarity of the strategic agenda while providing limited direction on how these priorities would be operationalized.

In short, the current Haitian crisis can be viewed as the outcome of the failure to operationalize the strategic ambition of the 10-Year Plan, particularly its integration of security, governance, and resilience, and the absence of an enduring institutional backbone. The adoption of Resolution 2793 thus represents both a critical inflection point and a belated recognition of the urgency of enforcement-governance integration.

Possible Way Forward prior to UN Gang Suppression Force Deployment in Haiti

While the deployment of the authorized Gang Suppression Force under Resolution 2793 is essential,

[32] U.S. Department of State, The U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability: 10-Year Plan for Haiti, Washington, D.C., March 2024, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/The-U.S.-Strategy-to-Prevent-Conflict-and-Promote-Stability-10-Year-Plan-for-Haiti-Accessible-3.22.2024.pdf

it should not be the sole focus or the starting point of U.S. and inter-agency efforts. Gangs are just the symptom of a broader, multifaceted problem. Before or in tandem with force deployment, the U.S. and stakeholders from the international community, as well as other actors, should concentrate on advancing five interlinked preparatory lines of effort (LOEs) designed to maximize the impact and sustainability of the mission:

1. A Reliable Evaluation of the Strategic Context

Conduct a realistic and detailed assessment of the current Haitian environment, including a critical analysis of the achievements, limitations, and failures of the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission led by Kenyan troops, as well as the structural obstacles it has faced.

2. Security-Governance Education and Advisory

Short-term modules and partner institutions should train Haitian senior security and governance leaders (including the Haitian National Police, the armed forces, civil-service ministries, and local governance authorities) in civil-military coordination, accountability frameworks, rule of law, and crisis-management decision-making. This builds foundational capacities upon which the enforcement operations can build.

3. Design of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Frameworks

Before the deployment of large forces, designing robust MEL systems ensures that parallel governance recovery and institutional legitimacy efforts are embedded from the start. This will aid transparency, local ownership, and help avoid repetition of past mission failures.

4. Community Policing and Local Engagement Pilot Initiatives

While gangs are being suppressed, grassroots-level interventions—community policing pilots, local governance dialogues, civil society engagement, youth and neighborhood reintegration programs—should be initiated. These provide the civilian-governance complement to the suppression operations and help mitigate backlash once kinetic operations begin.

5. Toward a New Concept for the Haitian Police Force

A new strategic concept for the Haitian police is urgently needed—one that transcends traditional policing and embraces an integrated framework that connects security, governance, community trust, and legitimacy. The new model must be Haitian designed, internationally supported, and institutionally sustainable.

The following principles should guide a new conceptual approach:

Policing must be legitimacy-based, not merely force-based. Tactical operations alone cannot defeat armed groups that are deeply embedded in neighborhoods and local political economies. Successful policing requires:

- trust between police and communities
- protection of civil rights
- transparency and accountability

- predictable, consistent presence

The HNP must be rebuilt as an institution—not only as a force. Training and equipment are only a fraction of what is needed. Comprehensive institutional architecture should include:

- leadership development and professional education
- internal affairs and oversight bodies
- recruitment standards and vetting
- personnel management systems
- a national police academy with governance training
- crime-analysis and intelligence units
- integration with justice and corrections sectors

Comparative models offer instructive lessons. International experience demonstrates that durable security emerges from trust and governance, not from coercion alone.

- Medellín, Colombia – Combined community policing with social inclusion, infrastructure investment, and cross-sector coordination.

- Rio de Janeiro's Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora (UPP-a form of Community Policing) – Initially reduced violence through community presence, but ultimately failed because it lacked institutional reform, political backing, and socio-economic integration.

- MINUSTAH's partial stabilization – Successful in tactical terms but failed to translate gains into lasting institutions because it lacked governance, ownership, and consistent political commitment.

6. Simulation and Decision-Exercises

Using decision-game simulations among Haitian, U.S., UN, and regional partner personnel to rehearse the coordination mechanisms, chain of command, inter-agency responsibilities, transition scenarios, and exit strategies. Simulations help identify gaps, test assumptions, and build trust.

By initiating these preparatory lines of effort, the U.S. and its partners can ensure that the forthcoming force deployment under Resolution 2793 is not a stand-alone military intervention but a component of an integrated strategy that links enforcement, governance, institutional recovery, and Haitian stakeholder ownership.

Conclusion

The adoption of UNSC Resolutions 2793 and 2794 represents a pivotal shift in the international approach to Haiti's security and governance crisis. While the emphasis on gang suppression addresses an urgent and lethal threat, it encompasses only one dimension of a profound multidimensional challenge. Tactical security gains, if unaccompanied by institutional reform, have historically proven temporary and reversible.

The United States, through its Explanation of Vote, has underscored the strategic necessity of linking

security operations with governance, accountability, and the reconstitution of legitimate state authority under a multilateral framework. This position also implicitly recognizes the shortcomings of the U.S. 10-Year Plan for Haiti, whose ambitious goals were undermined by insufficient political traction, lack of Haitian ownership, and the dramatic expansion of gang control over key urban areas.

To avoid repeating this pattern of failure, the international community must ensure that coercive actions against armed groups are embedded within a comprehensive strategy to restore the rule of law and public trust. Governance-oriented, Haitian-led institution-building—including police professionalization, justice-sector integration, and community-based security—must begin immediately and continue throughout the deployment of the 5,500-person force authorized by the UNSC.

The proposed preparatory Lines of Effort (LOEs) are designed to create the conditions for a secure, legitimate, and sustainable stabilization process. Without them, the mission risks becoming yet another episode in Haiti's long history of externally supported interventions, producing short-lived security improvements followed by a relapse into violence and institutional fragility. This moment must not be wasted. A comprehensive approach that advances Haitian leadership, strengthens accountable institutions, and rebuilds public confidence is the only viable path toward enduring security and democratic renewal.

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