

SITUATION REPORT - HAITI

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Situation in Haiti

- The violence in Port-au-Prince and surrounding departments has escalated in the past month, with numerous reports of kidnappings and bodies found in the city, as well as an escalation of violence and demonstrations against the government.
- The Haitian National Police Force (PNH) deployed several specialised units on 15 January in Mariani, with the aim of facilitating the circulation of peaceful citizens. The situation there has been tense for 2 months since gangs took control of the area on 1 November 2023.
- The clashes between the police force and armed groups in Mariani have blocked transport of goods through the National Road #2. This has resulted in a drastic price inflation of basic goods in the capital, and an inflation of imported goods in several (southern) regions.
- Heavy fire was reported from the neighbourhoods of La Saline, Alerte street, the Bel'air district, Laraque street, Muller avenue and Maya street in Port-au-Prince on 14 January.
- On 18 January heavy fighting was seen in the neighbourhood of Solino, under attack by the Bel-Air and Kempes gangs, who also set houses on fire. The police forces have not yet intervened in the situation. The two gangs want to take control of the area to serve as transit for kidnappings.
- Former senator Guy Philippe has called on his supporters to civil disobedience, leading to protests in several cities in the country since 15 January. The demonstrations have led to a number of casualties, along with the closure of schools, banks and public offices.
- The demonstrators demand that the Prime Minister Ariel Henri steps down by 7 February 2023, while Guy Philippe is advocating for an armed revolt.
- Guy Philippe has been summoned to the prosecutor's office after farmer's filed a complaint against him for destruction of property, fire, assault, criminal conspiracy and illegal possession of automatic weapons.
- A high ranking government official has stated that the Provisional Electoral Council will be formed in 2024 together with the reform of the Constitution and the organisation of elections.
- 250 executives within the Haitian banking sector have left the sector and the country in 2023, leading to a skills drain. The movement of people out of Haiti due to insecurity has been draining the country of qualified professionals.
- Over 1,800 police officers left Haiti in 2023, according to the national union of Haitian police. The principal drivers behind this are the lack of prospects in the country and the American Parole humanitarian programme.
- 37 Haitian police officers were killed by criminals in 2023. The loss of police officers on the force has significantly reduced the effectiveness of the National Police Forces.
- Doctors without borders (MSF) has pulled out of an emergency clinic in Port-au-Prince after a patient was pulled out of an ambulance and shot. Two MSF hospitals were previously closed in 2023, in Tabarre and Cite Soleil as a result of gang violence.

- 36 high-ranking officials have been issued arrest warrants in a corruption probe related to the misappropriation of property and funds from Haiti's National Center of Equipment (CNE). Among those are two former presidents, Michel Martelly and Jocerleme Privert.
- A new report by the UN has estimated that 673,8 million US dollars are needed to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti in 2024.
- The rate of homicides and kidnappings in 2023 increased by 72% and 71% respectively since 2022, while rape cases increased by 49%, according to the UN report.

Situation on the Multinational Security Support (MSS)

- The High Court Judge Chacha Mwita will decide on 26 January 2024 whether the MSS goes against the Kenyan constitutions.
- The director general of the Haitian National Police (PNH), Frantz Elbé, met with Kenyan police and government officials during a visit to the country at the end of December intended to discuss technical details of the MSS.
- A report was published by the Crisis Group on the challenges that the MSS will face once in Haiti. It included the potential for gangs to work together in fighting the Kenyan forces, enabling an attack on several fronts, if the intervention is deemed poorly equipped and trained.
- Another challenge for the Kenyan-led troops would be to distinguish between gang members and civilians, while navigating parts of the cities under gang control. The inability to speak Haitian creole would also play a part in these issues.
- The Crisis Group further identified that corruption within the Haitian Police Force, and collusion with gangs by police officials, could lead to leaks on the operation. Finally, the report outlines that the local population may not be welcoming a foreign intervention.
- For the MSS to be successful, they would have to intimidate the gangs into cooperation, while working with reliable intel within the neighbourhoods, and placing the protection of civilians at the centre of the operation.

International situation

- The former Haitian senator, John Joël Joseph, has been sentenced to life in prison in the US for taking part in the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. Two others have already been sentenced regarding their role in the assassination.

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