



**GLOBAL  
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AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL  
ORGANIZED CRIME

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# LAST CHANCE?

**BREAKING HAITI'S  
POLITICAL AND  
CRIMINAL IMPASSE**

JANUARY 2025

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This brief is an output of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)'s Observatory of Violence and Resilience in Haiti, which serves as a forum for research and analysis, civil society empowerment, capacity building and support for multilateral actors. We would like to thank the people in Haiti who made this study possible. Although for security reasons their names cannot appear in the report, their support is crucial to this work. The authors would also like to thank Mark Shaw, Tuesday Reitano and Walter Kemp for their comments, and the GI-TOC's Publications team for their support in reviewing and developing the brief.

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## SUMMARY

In 2024, Haiti suffered a year of unprecedented violence as gangs tightened their grip on the country. Criminal groups now control 85% of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and large swathes of the provinces. Over a million people are now internally displaced, a three-fold increase in one year.<sup>1</sup> At least 5 601 murders were recorded during the year, an increase of more than 1 000 victims compared to 2023, equivalent to an annual homicide rate of almost 48 per 100 000 inhabitants, a national record.<sup>2</sup>

The deployment in June 2024 of a Kenyan-led Multinational Security Support mission (henceforth MSS) has so far failed to help Haiti's National Police (HNP) to tackle the gangs. The Haitian and Kenyan forces remain tactically and operationally overwhelmed by adversaries who have vastly increased their arsenals and territorial control.

Beyond the security dimension of the crisis, 2024 was marked by shifts in the gangs' strategy. Three key developments stand out. Firstly, the gangs forged a criminal coalition known as Living Together (Viv Ansanm, in Haiti creole).<sup>3</sup> Through this collaboration, the gangs consolidated their capacity for criminal governance, which they have enforced through extortion and the enactment of ever stricter rules over the daily life of Haitians. Finally, through their capacity for violence and by increasing their voice in public debate, criminal leaders are able to influence the course of the country's political transition, to put pressure on Haitian authorities and the international community, and to become more embedded than ever in Haiti's political and economic system.

The challenges posed by Haiti's criminal groups are therefore greater than just their security threat. The country is now marked by not only militia-type practices and vigilantism, but also the gangs' ability to shape the political sphere. The situation in Haiti in 2025 therefore presents a politico-criminal crisis in which gang leaders will seek to occupy a strategic space within the system, not replace it.

Faced with this grim outlook, national and international responses are proving feeble. On the security front, lack of international funding and political support for the MSS, and consequently for Haiti's police, is preventing any progress. On the domestic political stage, the two-headed governance structure set up in April 2024, with the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) on one side and the government on the other, has become paralyzed by political infighting.

In 2024, institutional weaknesses and internal political wars opened up opportunities for the gangs to exploit. Criminal groups acted quickly and strategically, adapting to the context and putting pressure on the authorities. Institutional fragility thus feeds gang power, which, in turn, continues to weaken transition efforts, in a vicious circle from which no one seems to escape.



The gang crisis that has engulfed most of Haiti, particularly its capital, Port-au-Prince, needs a comprehensive approach encompassing security, justice, development and humanitarian efforts. © Clarens Siffroy/AFP via Getty Images

Against this backdrop, the United States and Haiti have asked the United Nations Security Council to transform the MSS into a peacekeeping operation.<sup>4</sup> As we await the response, the situation is deteriorating. But whether an operation materializes or not, without a holistic response that draws on a better understanding of Haiti's political economy of violence, and explicitly tackles the problem of impunity, corruption and collusion between gangs and their white-collar allies, any sort of mission will not turn the tide. It is illusory to think that security will improve without institutional and political solidity, and vice versa.

While Haitian people are subjected to unprecedented human rights violations, the pathway to resolving the crisis has reached an operational and conceptual impasse. This brief offers avenues of action for 2025. It begins by outlining how the gangs' governance has developed alongside the inadequacy of the current public security strategy, before looking at the political challenges ahead for Haiti's transition and the international community. To have a significant impact, the brief makes the case for a paradigm shift in the national and international response, which must take full account of the Haitian organized crime ecosystem. The challenge is immense, but the tools are at our disposal to forge joint action in the face of a criminal crisis that is unique on a global scale.

The methodology for this brief combines fieldwork observation and interviews conducted in Haiti, and desk research. The study also draws on previous research conducted by the GI-TOC in Haiti. All fieldwork activities were conducted by GI-TOC teams. To protect their security, the names of the participants are not given.

# A YEAR OF CRISIS IN HAITI



■ Political events

■ Gang-related events

■ UN, MSS, international cooperation

# THE VIV ANSANM GANG COALITION: AN ALLIANCE FOR PARALLEL SOVEREIGNTY

For Haiti, 2024 was marked by unprecedented violence, interrupted only between May and September 2024 by a period when gangs reduced their attacks on the population and police.<sup>5</sup> The calm was shattered by a massacre carried out on 3 October by the Gran Grif gang in the Artibonite region.<sup>6</sup> This and subsequent massacres demonstrated that cycles of violence and appeasement are dictated by criminal groups, not by any strategy on the part of the state or the international community.

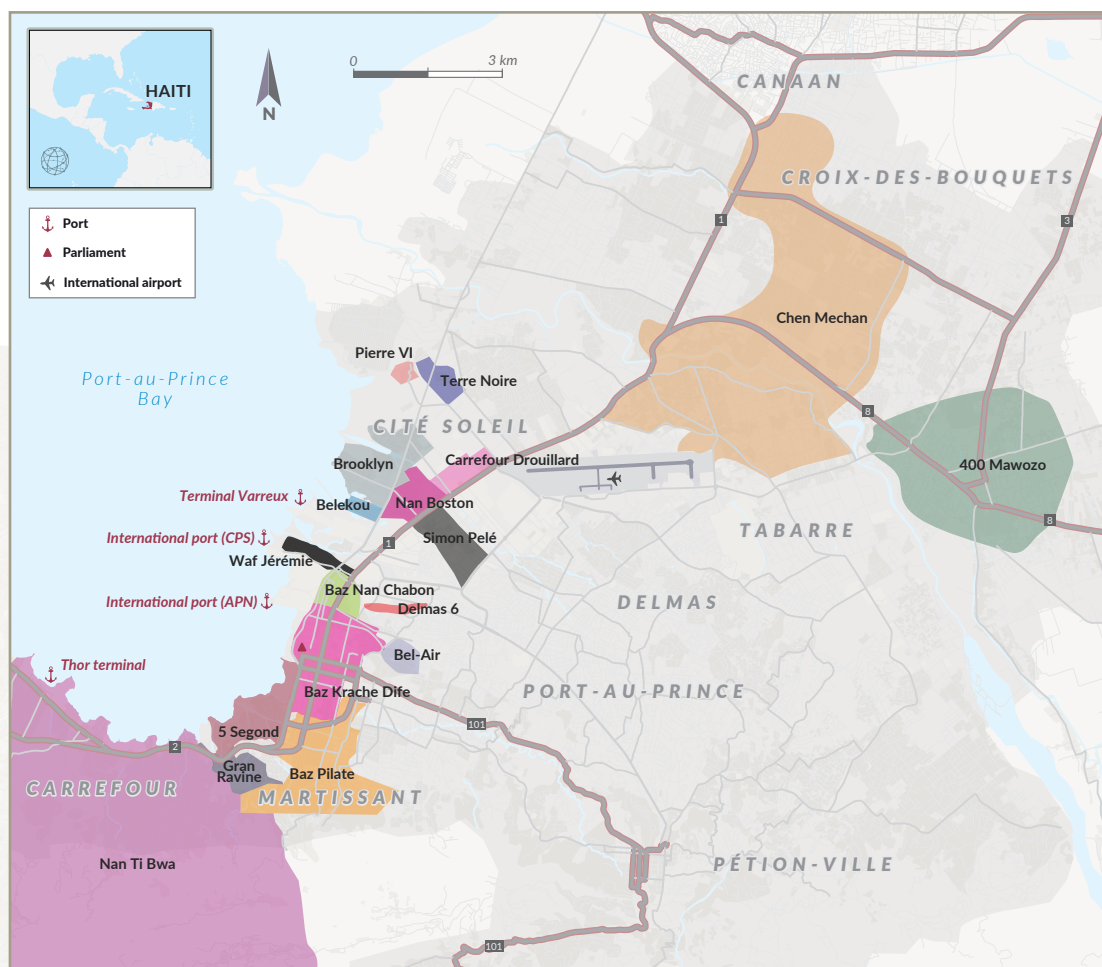
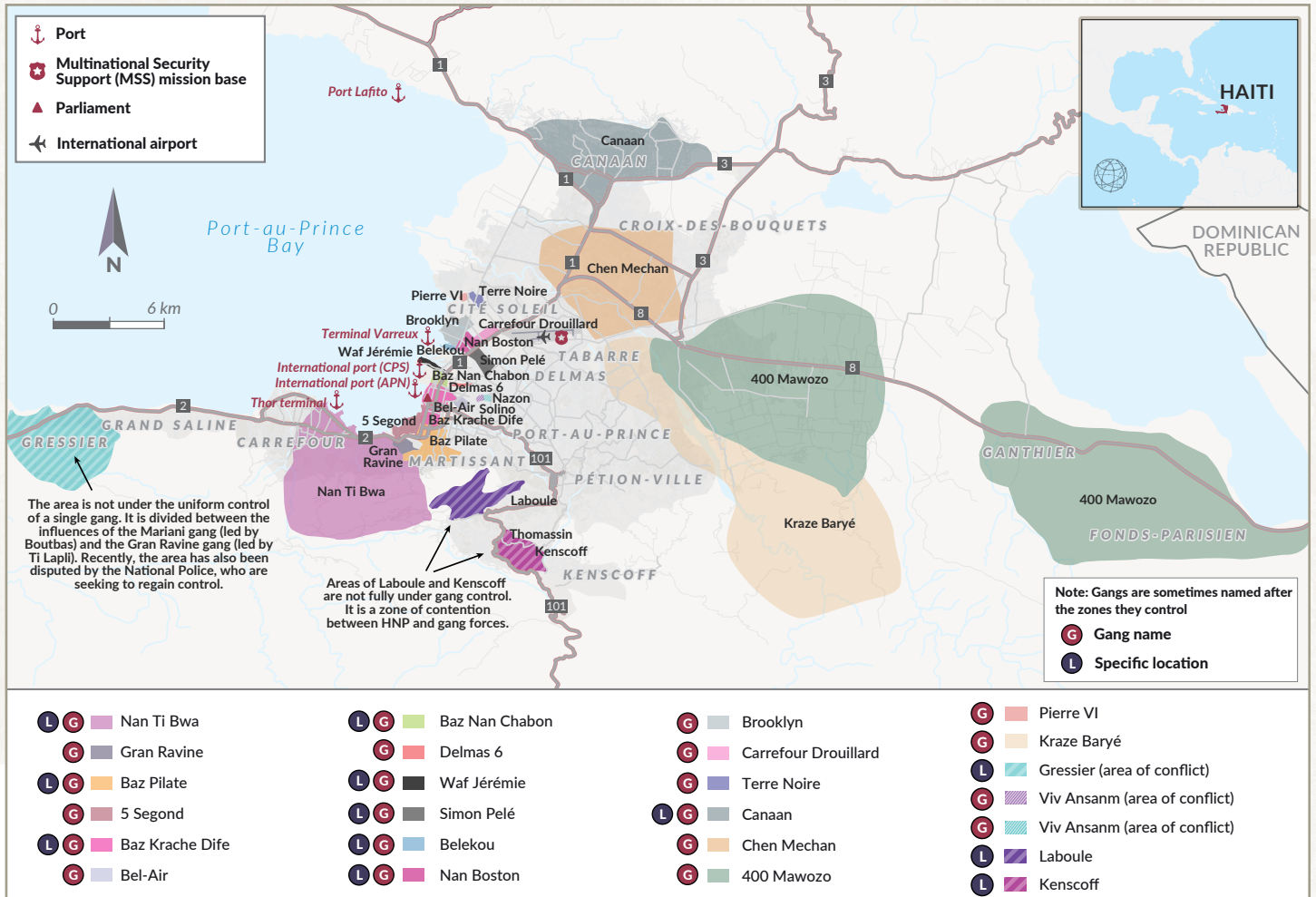


FIGURE 1 Gang-controlled zones of Port-au-Prince as of January 2024.



**FIGURE 2** Gang-controlled zones of Port-au-Prince as of January 2025.

Above all, Haiti's criminal landscape was transformed in 2024 by the creation of a coalition of gangs called Living Together (Viv Ansam). Under the coordination of Jimmy Chérizier (alias Barbecue), this coalition almost eliminated inter-gang clashes.<sup>7</sup> Criminal groups were thus able to concentrate on expanding into areas previously beyond their control, both in the heart of the capital and in the provinces. This extended the urban and rural domination of the gangs, which are now better coordinated than ever before.

The gangs' alliance has created new tactical and strategic opportunities, accompanied by phases of sustained conquest. In 2024, in the communes and districts of Pont-Sondé, Cabaret, Gressier, Ganthier and Solino (see map), gangs launched attacks lasting several days, sometimes even weeks. The police and MSS personnel were often forced to retreat in the face of outnumbered forces and heavy fire from increasingly formidable arsenals.

While there is no precise figure on total gang membership, the groups can muster thousands of personnel and far outnumber the security forces. Criminal groups dramatically increased their recruitment in 2024, including a 70% yearly increase in the number of child recruits, who are often enrolled forcibly.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, they invested heavily in the acquisition of weapons and ammunition stocks, which now include AK-47, AR-15 and FN-FAL semi-automatic rifles.<sup>9</sup> Here, too, the gangs used their



coordination skills to consolidate arms supply networks, not only from the United States and the Dominican Republic, but also in collaboration with Jamaican criminal outfits (and allegedly also South American groups).<sup>10</sup>

Finally, on the ground, the gangs have scaled up their strategy of systematically destroying homes and, increasingly, hospitals, prisons and police stations.<sup>11</sup> This development accentuates the political weight of gang violence in dismantling vital public services.<sup>12</sup> Confronted by this aggressive expansionism, national and international police forces do not have the personnel, equipment or infrastructure – such as forward operating bases – to repel the assaults, let alone to pursue the criminals or reclaim territory sustainably.



Gang leaders such as Jimmy 'Barbecue' Cherizier, pictured patrolling Port-au-Prince with members of his G-9 federation, have installed themselves as parallel authority figures, but criminal governance remains unaddressed by crisis resolution strategies. © Giles Clarke/Getty Images



## GROWING THREAT OF VIGILANTE GROUPS

**T**he challenges faced by public forces have led to growing numbers of vigilante groups in the capital and rural areas. While these groups offer some protection to the population, as well as embodying a form of reconstruction of the social fabric, they operate outside any legal framework, contributing to territorial fragmentation and the erosion of citizens' confidence in state protection.<sup>13</sup>

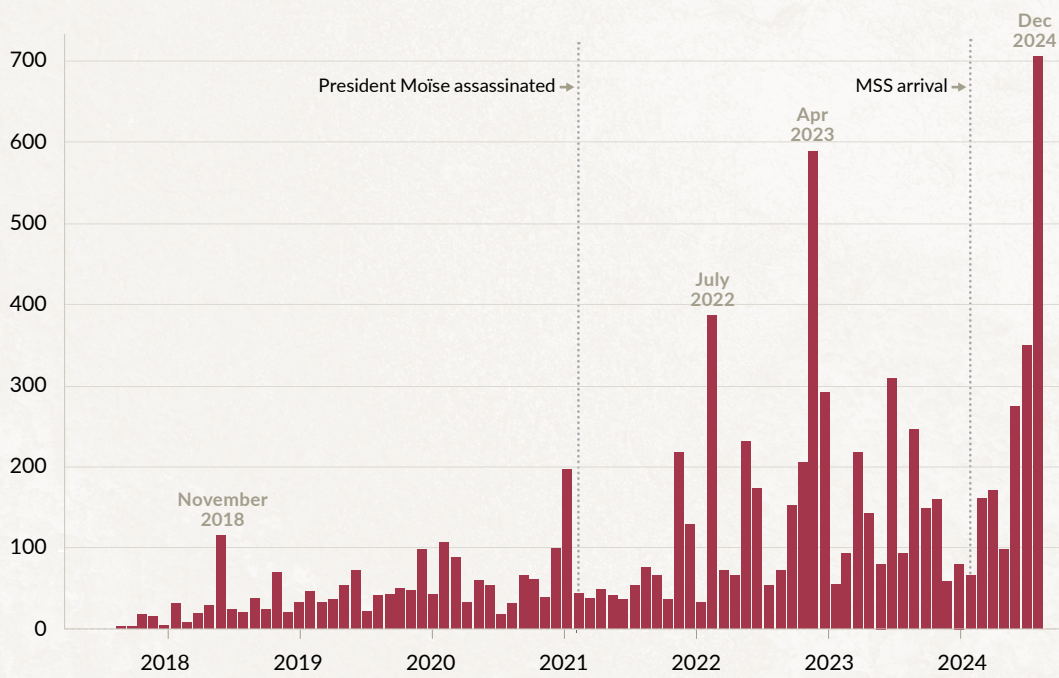
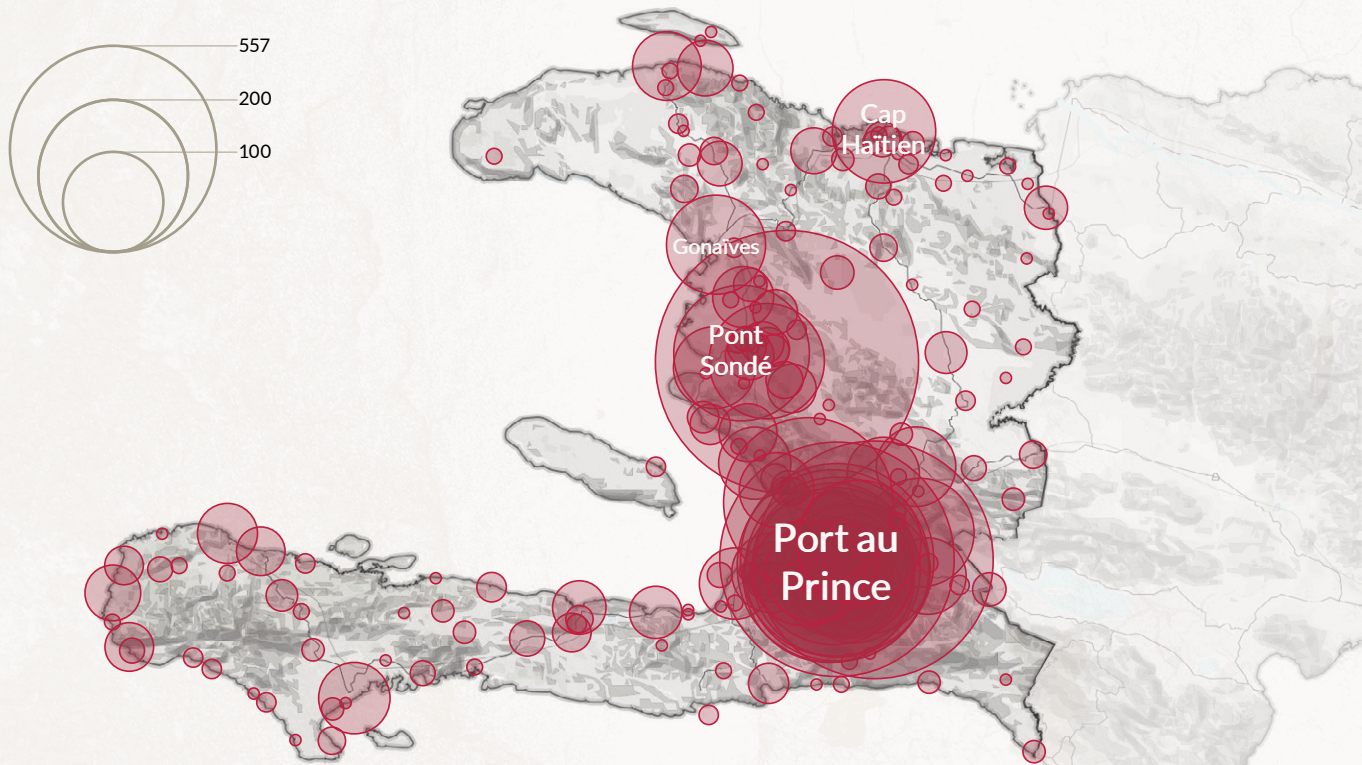
Moreover, Haiti's vigilante brigades – and police officers – stand accused of serious abuses against staff and patients of medical NGO MSF (Doctors Without Borders), prompting the organization to suspend activities in Port-au-Prince and its environs in November.<sup>14</sup> These accusations highlight the collapse of chains of responsibility and the fact that the boundary between public forces and vigilante brigades is now more blurred than ever.

Alarming, the government and police have in recent months extolled the virtues of what they describe as a 'police–population marriage'.<sup>15</sup> This raises concerns about the growing normalization of extra-judicial violence, the breakdown of the institutions of law enforcement and the potential risk of an explosion of inter-community violence, especially in the capital and particularly in Artibonite.<sup>16</sup> As some vigilante groups have previously morphed into gangs in Haiti, it is urgent to draw up a public strategy for vigilante brigades.



The repeated political crises have left Haiti's police without strategic guidance. The levels of violence call for a complete overhaul of the public security strategy.

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**FIGURE 3** Deaths in Haiti, 2018–2024.

SOURCE: Based on ACLED data



## FROM GANG VIOLENCE TO CRIMINAL GOVERNANCE

**B**eyond the security threats, the Viv Ansanm alliance is a means for structuring and bureaucratizing Haitian criminal groups. It has enabled the main gang leaders to focus on their governance capabilities and place themselves at the heart of the political and economic system as parallel authority figures.

Three main patterns of gang control over territories are discernible. Firstly, there are parts of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area where gangs exercise monopolistic control. In Martissant, Village de Dieu, Wharf Jérémie and Canaan, among others, no public services (including the police) enter. Gangs have effectively detached these areas from the rest of Haiti, allowing in only a few humanitarian or religious organizations, and only then after negotiations with the criminal leaders.

Then, some gang-controlled areas remain partially accessible to public or private services. Since gangs of Cité Soleil signed a truce in July 2024, for example, the population has regained some freedom of movement while public and private services, including canal sanitation and garbage collection, have occasionally resumed in the Boston, Belekou and Brooklyn neighbourhoods.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, there are the disputed areas, where civilians pay the highest toll. This is the case in Artibonite, but also in the heart of the capital, in Solino, Nazon and the surrounding Bas-Delmas area.<sup>18</sup> Here, the police and the MSS, often supported by vigilante groups, confront the gangs, with no one actor able to impose total control. The situation turns into a violent game of cat and mouse between the authorities and the gangs, stoking further displacement from already largely depopulated and destroyed areas.

In all cases, the gangs' domination enables them to further regulate people's daily lives. In addition to monitoring individual behaviour, gang leaders operate as judges and advisors in their fiefdoms, settling disputes and conflicts, and enforcing law and order. This dynamic accentuates Haiti's social and territorial fragmentation, characterized by dozens of leaders behaving like sovereigns, self-endowed with the right to spare life and decree death. It is a system of social domination that can turn against the population at any moment, as demonstrated by the Artibonite and Wharf Jérémie massacres in October and December 2024.<sup>19</sup>

Such criminal governance took hold dramatically in 2024, yet this core threat is not properly understood or addressed by the crisis resolution strategies, and contributes to the country's institutional collapse whereby criminal leaders install themselves as de facto rulers.

## Embedded actors, mafia-like rule

The state's inability to challenge criminal sovereignty exacerbates the institutional crisis and fuels gang-rule as a model of parallel governance. However, the gangs' domination does not extend to their complete autonomy. This is one of the keys to understanding Haiti's crisis: the criminals still operate *within* the politico-criminal ecosystem, not outside of it.

Systemic racketeering is a case in point. Extortion lies at the heart of Haitian gangs' activities, linking territorial control with their governance credentials.<sup>20</sup> In 2024, extortion expanded significantly, and now amounts to a vast illegal taxation system.<sup>21</sup> Once a new stronghold is established, the gangs set up local cells to administer their territory and extend their extortion capabilities or control of trafficking and smuggling routes, particularly around the seafront or strategic border crossings.

Today, the gangs control or interfere with virtually all the country's critical infrastructure, both public and private, ranging from the port terminals in the bay of Port-au-Prince, to the main roads linking the capital to the rest of Haiti, certain aspects of agricultural production and a large number of border crossings (both legal and illegal) with the Dominican Republic.<sup>22</sup> The gangs also influence the operation of the international airport, can periodically suspend internet networks in parts of the capital – by attacking the cables and terminals that link Haiti to the international network – and maintain a land blockade against the south of the country.<sup>23</sup>

As a result, it is impossible to move goods in, out or around large parts of the country without paying taxes to the gangs. This dynamic, which extends to the main national roads, is organized throughout Haiti by dozens of gang-run checkpoints.

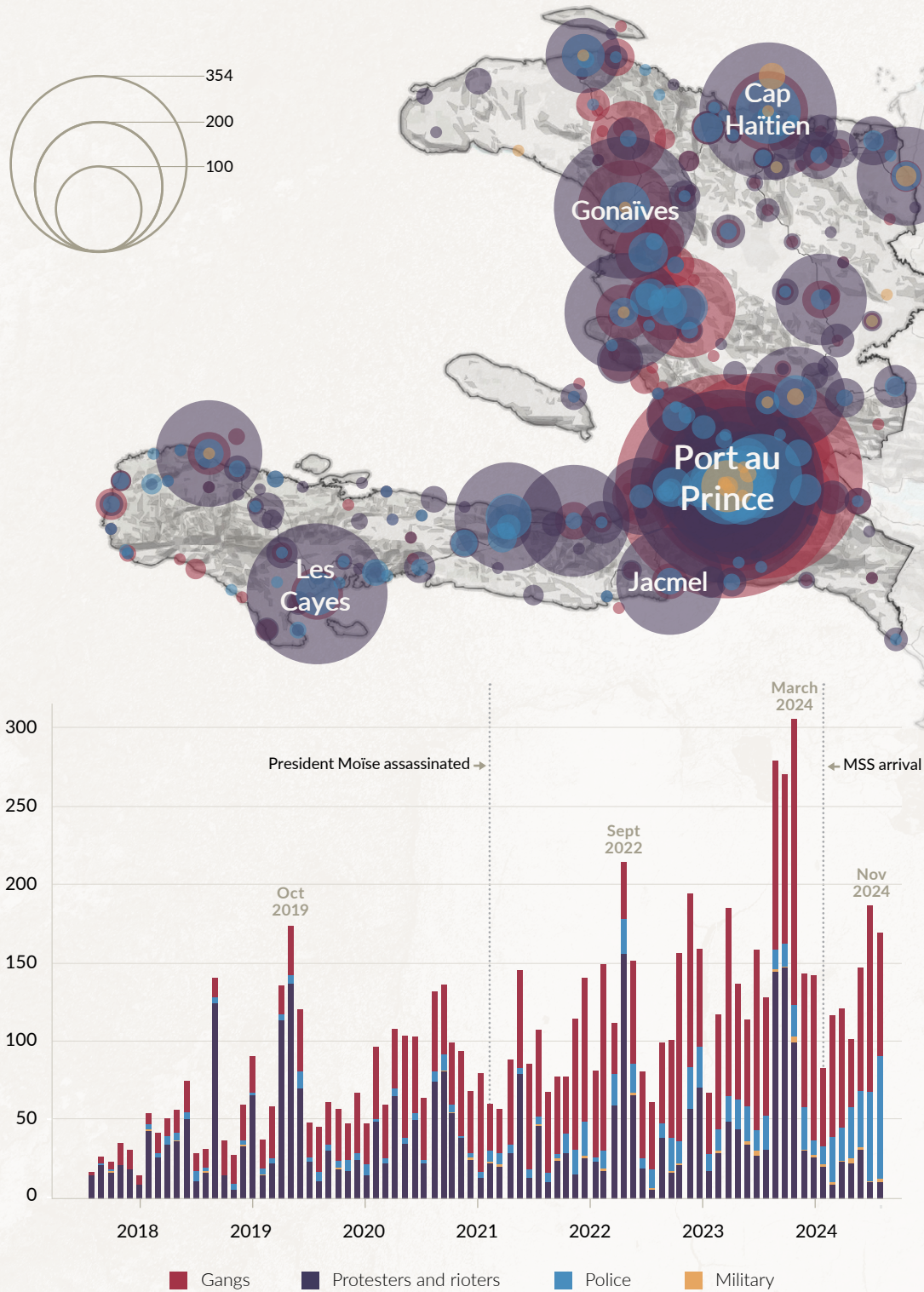
With the exception of the Village de Dieu gang and some of its allies – and the substantial income generated by a handful of gangs from arms trafficking and kidnappings – most Haitian criminal groups depend on extortion for their financial survival.<sup>24</sup>

The duality of the gangs' governance position is clear. To continue generating income, they must ensure legal trade runs smoothly. This is one of the central points of the gangs' integration into the political and economic system, in their simultaneous roles as facilitators and parasites. If containers are not unloaded from ships, or if trucks are no longer in transit, trade in Haiti grinds to a halt, and gang revenues plummet accordingly.<sup>25</sup> The terms of extortion must therefore be constantly renegotiated between the criminal groups and institutional players – national and international, public and private – who come into contact with them.

These negotiations, which involve key brokers, are unstable. They oscillate between periods of agreement interspersed with moments of maximum pressure and violence, when gangs temporarily prevent economic activity – as was the case on several occasions in 2024 through the blockade of port terminals and attacks on ships in the bay of Port-au-Prince, or the Artibonite massacres in October.<sup>26</sup> In such cases, violence is used as a strategic tool to force political and economic players to negotiate, or surrender. The blockades, for example, which can sometimes last several weeks, generally lead to an increase in extortion revenues. Haiti's gangs have therefore established a mafia-like model that is so entrenched that the country can barely function without their consent.

Acknowledging this reality must be placed at the heart of any viable public security and justice strategy. Dislodging gangs' territorial control is crucial, since this represents the cornerstone of their current financing model. Establishing priorities for reclaiming areas and transport routes in the capital and the

provinces is key. However, to be sustainable, these efforts must be accompanied by the investigation and prosecution of those who finance criminal groups, including the networks of brokers who facilitate exchanges and orders. This should be done in addition to the investigations carried out by the UN Panel of Experts, with a view to finally implementing the sanctions regime against these actors in Haiti.



**FIGURE 4** Violent incidents by actor, 2018–2024.

SOURCE: Based on ACLED data



## HAITIAN POLITICS: BETWEEN PARALYSIS AND PERMANENT CONFLICT

**T**he status of gang leaders as parallel authorities puts Haiti's politicians on the front line. Unfortunately, Haiti's political transition, which should be spearheading these efforts, is in a state of paralysis, incapacitated by internal conflicts, and incapable of designing or coordinating the country's institutional, social and security reconstruction.

The adoption of a transition plan in 2024, largely driven by the United States and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), led to the installation of the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) in April.<sup>27</sup> Comprising nine representatives from Haiti's main political parties and key activity sectors, this body is mandated to lead the reconstruction of public institutions and the organization of a presidential election before the end of 2025.

The TPC is also mandated to appoint a prime minister. In practice, Haiti's transition and public governance have quickly fragmented. Efforts by the transitional council and Prime Minister Gary Conille – who was named to the position in May 2024 – advanced on parallel and then opposing trajectories. This competition for power culminated in Conille's dismissal on 11 November. Although the council appointed a replacement (Alix Didier Fils-Aimé), the intervening months have amounted to lost time in terms of institution building and establishing a viable relationship with the MSS and other key international stakeholders. This sense of drift is accentuated by accusations of corruption against three transitional council members by the country's anti-corruption agency.<sup>28</sup>

Without overhauling the transition's architecture, it is crucial to put it back in working order. This will require rebuilding a common programme and accountability rules within the council, strengthening the government's mandate, and putting back on the table a precise agenda for cooperation with the international community.

Without an urgent political construction endeavour, the efforts undertaken for the public safety strategy will remain in vain, as 2024 has shown that politics, both national and international, can render investments and initiatives obsolete. A renewed dialogue mechanism and mediation must first bring Haiti's and international actors around the same objective. This could take the form of working groups or retreats, aimed at re-establishing a minimum level of trust between stakeholders. At present, each player, national and international, seems to be following its own logic, aiming to maintain personal, political or institutional interests, and preventing the establishment of a common strategy.

## Multinational Security Support mission: between a rock and a hard place

The repeated political crises leave Haiti's police and the MSS without strategic guidance. This also accentuates weaknesses in the strategic design of cooperation between national and international forces, to the point where misunderstandings and tensions have emerged between them.

The police and the MSS are therefore caught between a rock and a hard place. Haiti's police force is ill-equipped and its over-stretched personnel are not only on the front line of gang violence, but also exhausted by months of clashes, while the multinational force is criticized for its difficulties in mounting large-scale anti-gang operations.<sup>29</sup>

However, some of these issues can be attributed to the international community's lack of financial and human commitment. Currently staffed by a deployment of 566 officers<sup>30</sup> – far short of the proposed full deployment of 2 500 personnel – the MSS has proved unable to help Haiti's security forces stem the tide of criminality. Funding, in particular, has fallen short of what is required. As of January 2025, the MSS had received funding of just US\$97.4 million, a far cry from the estimated US\$600 million needed annually.<sup>31</sup>

And besides the lack of equipment and funding, it is increasingly clear that the deployment was not accompanied by sufficient reflection on the tactical and operational response needed to combat gangs in Haiti. At a time when new elements from Guatemala and El Salvador have just been deployed to the mission, it is more urgent than ever to ensure proper coordination between troops, without which there is a risk of accentuating the institutional cacophony, rather than providing real solutions.

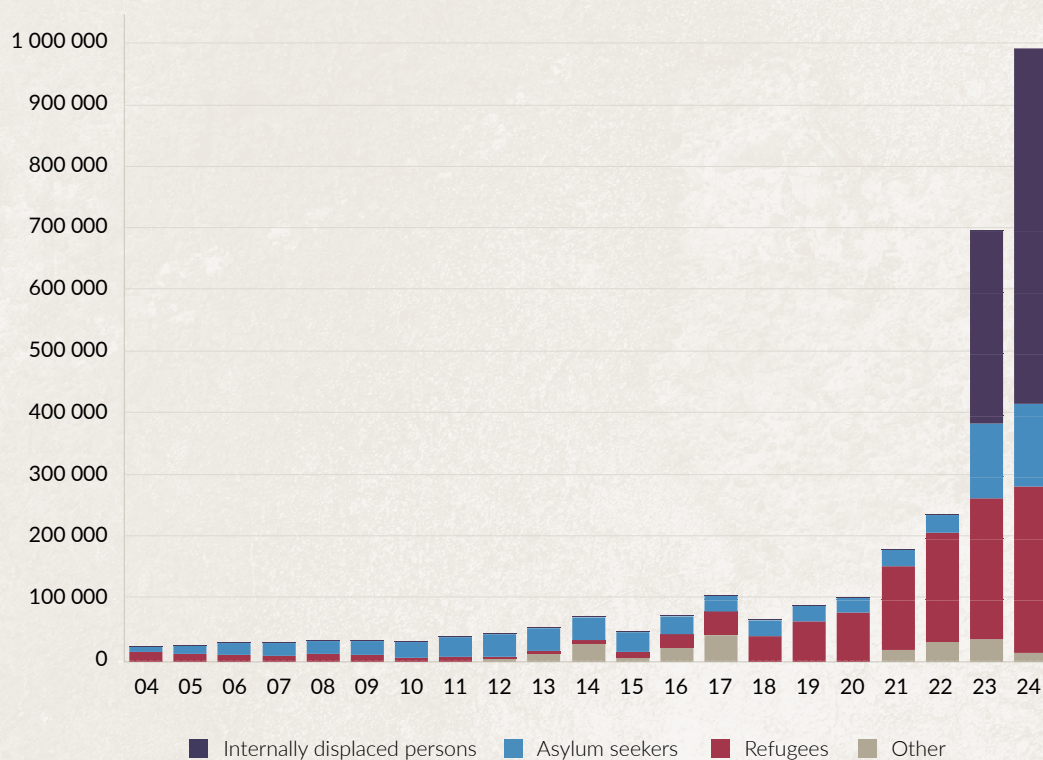


FIGURE 5 IDPs, asylum seekers and refugees, 2004–2024.





## MANDATE NEEDED TO TACKLE ORGANIZED CRIME

**T**he current security impasse also reflects Haiti's systemic impunity, the weakness of the judiciary and the failings of international mechanisms in tackling the root causes of corruption and violence. While the reports penned by the UN Panel of Experts on Haiti clearly expose the links between Haiti's gangs and political and economic players (both Haitian and foreign), the UN Security Council and Haiti's judicial institutions are still failing to act on this information.

If we add to these the lists of bilateral sanctions imposed by the United States, Canada and the Dominican Republic against a large part of the country's ruling class and economic sector, up to and including former presidents, we realize that while the diagnosis seems clear, few steps are being taken to ensure that judicial investigations, and possible arrest warrants, are opened and issued against the actors cited. The arrest of Prophane Victor on 12 January 2025, sanctioned by the Security Council in September 2024, is a glimmer of hope in which we must invest at all costs.

The need for judicial proof of these collusions goes to the heart of systemic violence and political-criminal ties in Haiti. Here lie the core difficulties of Haiti's justice system and the international community's inability to deal with organized crime accusations. However, public security responses will only bear fruit if they combine the reconquest of territories and a return to civil order with a judicial assault on the politico-criminal networks that perpetuate the violence.

On this front, the international response is not easy to read. The UN Security Council voted on 30 September to renew the MSS's mandate until October 2025, without providing it with the funds, equipment or resources to fulfil its mission, and on 18 October the Security Council extended for one year the sanctions regime on Haiti, while expanding the scope of the arms embargo. Then, on 20 November, the Security Council discussed the possibility of transforming the MSS into a peacekeeping operation. While this proposal was supported by Haiti's government and the United States, it was rejected by Russia and China.<sup>32</sup>

The deployment of a peacekeeping operation may appear to be a last-resort response to Haiti's collapse, but it will require strategic thinking that goes beyond diplomatic considerations.<sup>33</sup> On the one hand, the tools currently deployed – the MSS and sanctions – must be crucially taken into account and funded for their proper implementation. Otherwise, there is a risk of shifting from the current policy instruments to a new one – a potential peacekeeping operation – before they have run their course.

On the other hand, the challenge will lie in the UN's ability to design a peacekeeping operation tailored to Haiti's specific political economy of criminality.<sup>34</sup> Over the past decade, the UN has elsewhere



With severe funding and personnel shortages, the Multinational Security Support mission has been unable to help Haiti's security forces stem the tide of criminality. They must be supported as a matter of urgency. © Roberto Schmidt/POOL/AFP via Getty Images

attempted to tackle this issue by mobilizing more police expertise in peacekeeping operations, devoting more effort to gathering intelligence on illicit economies and building the capacity of host states' national police forces. While some peacekeeping mandates have been updated, they have not necessarily been backed up by sufficient support.

Several crises and conflicts, from Afghanistan to Somalia, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo, have shown the importance of tackling the impact of illicit economies and criminal actors, whether armed or white-collar, in perpetuating violence and the intractability of crises. Above all, they have highlighted the importance of providing judicial responses to the challenges posed by organized crime.

Therefore, a peacekeeping operation alone will not be the panacea that will cure Haiti's gang problem and the structures that support the criminal groups. This is a far greater challenge, requiring the deployment of all available domestic and international instruments, including a mix of public security, justice, development aid and humanitarian cooperation.



## CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2025

**T**he first weeks of 2025 will need to be devoted to consolidating the MSS strategy, ahead of any potential transition to a peacekeeping operation, as part of a coherent strategy for Haiti. The risk of neglecting the MSS would be to deepen the operational void in the country. In doing so, it will be essential to address collusion between criminal and state actors, and articulate the policy imperative of procuring justice alongside public security, as the two indispensable pillars of national and international action. In so doing, the following measures are recommended.

**Analysis of the political economy of violence in Haiti deserves more resources, at the political and operational levels.** Although the UN Panel of Experts has done some impressive work, tangible information and evidence are lacking. There is a gap between the threat posed by organized crime in Haiti and the resources provided to deal with it. Intelligence is essential to track down and disrupt illicit activities, while information sharing and a culture of analysis can improve understanding of the political economy of conflict. There is an urgent need to relaunch a strategic analysis effort, linking national and international tools, civil society and the judiciary, with the aim of investigating the nature of Haitian gangs, how they operate and are financed, and the mechanisms that link them to corrupt political and economic actors, both Haitian and foreign, and transform this information into actionable tools of justice.

**Haiti's police force and the MSS must be supported as a matter of urgency.** The MSS and HNP must receive additional funding, as well as personnel and equipment. The levels of violence and determination of the gangs, combined with their knowledge of the territory and their formidable numbers, also call for a complete overhaul of the public security strategy. It does not appear that the current strategy, in either its tactical or operational dimensions, responds to the nature of Haiti's criminal groups. Here again, it is imperative to carry out precise diagnoses, highlighting the heterogeneity of the gangs. Moreover, one of the pitfalls to be avoided is opening multiple fronts simultaneously without being able to concentrate sufficient resources to carry out operations over the long term. In 2024, public forces were unable to regain control of the ports, the bay of Port-au-Prince, the areas around the international airport and strategic roads. All these were objectives cited for 2024, without any of them finally being achieved.

**Reopening dialogue and security coordination is a key priority.** Logistical support for Haiti's police and the MSS will be of no use if it is not accompanied by reopening and consolidating viable channels of dialogue among Haitian and international institutions that hold stakes in the public security strategy. Today, this dialogue is dysfunctional to the point of being broken. A tool for cooperation, mediation and dialogue is urgently needed to get the public security strategy back on track. Every additional day creates new avenues for gangs to intensify their attacks and their governance capabilities.

**Mediation and accountability tools must be deployed to relaunch the political transition.** The transition is currently at a standstill. Its effectiveness will determine the country's ability to rebuild institutions and implement the measures needed to return to normal democratic life. In 2025, the focus must be on promoting political stability and transparency within the transitional government, restoring public confidence and laying the foundations for reform. Indeed, without coherent governance, efforts to combat gang violence, meet humanitarian needs and implement security sector reforms will continue to falter, prolonging Haiti's crisis. Constitutional reform, the setting up of the Provisional Electoral Council, and a concrete study on the feasibility of organizing elections must be at the heart of the agenda.

**Beyond law enforcement, a justice strategy is needed.** Alongside public security, investment is needed in the criminal justice system, to act against the actors that fuel illicit activities. Fighting organized crime requires a broad set of interventions. The initial goal must be to break the impunity pacts that support mafia networks. Better accountability mechanisms need to be put in place, so that criminal leaders can be prosecuted on a variety of charges, including human rights violations, and the impunity that protects their political and economic backers can be erased. These mechanisms should be implemented by independent fact-finding missions, based in Haiti and/or abroad, to support the efforts of Haiti's Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

**A coherent international and national implementation of sanctions and the arms embargo must be designed.** Coordination over sanctions is urgently needed to improve the fight against gang support and arms trafficking. Implementing a viable regime will require a simultaneous effort in terms of human and technical resources – border control and tracing, for example – and judicial investigations, the purpose of which must be to identify and arrest traffickers and their accomplices, with a view to dismantling the criminal networks at the transnational, national and local level. The United States, the Caribbean Community, the Dominican Republic and Haiti should collaborate and lead on this as a matter of priority.

**Deploying a peacekeeping operation or maintaining the MSS? In both cases, a strategy is needed that takes organized crime into account.** If a peacekeeping operation were deployed, it would need to be accompanied by expertise to carry out organized crime threat assessments. Such assessments are critical in the pre-deployment process, to identify, prepare for and deal with the threats posed by criminal groups and markets in Haiti. These evaluations should be based on the current context, but also past experience, both at home and abroad. The interventions in Somalia, Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone can provide important strategic pointers, particularly as few states have personnel with the skills required to intervene in such crises, and training is inadequate. Moreover, mediators generally have little guidance on how to deal with criminal actors and economies in the context of crisis management and peacebuilding. Threat assessment tools and training are therefore needed, and analysis of the political economy of conflict and post-conflict situations should be part of the mission's standard operating procedures.

**Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and community violence-reduction strategies must be enhanced.** The policies currently in place are not tackling the issue of gang membership, especially since many members are children and adolescents. Programmes need to be designed now to prevent gangs' exploitation of children and to reintegrate young recruits. Violence-reduction programmes must also address the presence of vigilante groups with a clear institutional policy towards them. Finally, violence-reduction programmes must address the issue of sexual and gender-based violence, both in their prevention and in the support provided to victims, including in the context of displaced persons' camps.



## NOTES

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