

Nég Mawon p'ap jamn krazé
[“The free man will never be defeated”].

- Haitian proverb

Introduction

Haiti, located at the western end of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic, is the setting for a history marked by violence.

Following the rapid annihilation of its original population, *Saint-Domingue* emerged as the most profitable jewel in the French empire. The demand for freedom and defiance of the global colonial order represented by the victory of the *Armée Indigène* (1791-1804) was severely punished, with France imposing, for the loss of 'human property'¹ and as the only case in history, the payment of exorbitant compensation, which was paid over 122 years and exceeded 150 million gold francs, a figure reduced in 1838 to 90 million.

The situation of profound political instability was exacerbated by a prolonged period of US tutelage and occupation between 1915 and 1934, consolidating the political and economic domination of Haiti by the United States.

The victory of François Duvalier, *Papa Doc*, in 1957 imposed a harsh dictatorship on the Caribbean country, backed by the United States during the Cold War. He proclaimed himself president for life in 1964 and established a police state through the Tonton Macoute ("Bagmen")², while Haiti experienced growing international isolation, corruption, an exodus of professionals and deepening economic dependence. After his death in 1971, his son, Jean-Claude, *Baby Doc*, continued the corruption and authoritarianism until 1986.

The attempt at democratic transition in Haiti began in 1990 with the election of Jean Bertrand Aristide, the first democratically elected president. However, his term was interrupted in September 1991, prompting a strong multilateral response, with two international missions blocked from deployment, the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) and the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH), along with

¹ TABER, Robert D. "Navigating Haiti's History: Saint-Domingue and the Haitian Revolution". *History Compass*, 2015, vol. 13, no. 5, pp. 235–250. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12233> [ALL LINKS CHECKED ON 10/09/2025].

² During the Duvalier era, they became the brutal and omnipresent arm of state terror in the country, in the form of a paramilitary force composed largely of marginalised and criminal elements, authorised to persecute, torture and execute dissidents.

sanctions, diplomatic isolation and a trade embargo. ³His second term (2001-2004), undermined by the emergence of armed gangs such as the Cannibal Army, ended with his departure from power, the suspension of MICAH in 2001 and an interim government under international supervision: the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), active from 2004 to 2017.

The early hours of 7 July 2021 marked a turning point in Haiti's already fragile contemporary history: its president, Jovenel Moïse, was assassinated. He left behind a state in ruins, where Ariel Henry took power until March 2024 as prime minister to fill the vacuum.

Its prosperous past contrasts dramatically with its present, as it has become the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and one of the most vulnerable on the planet, characterised by structural poverty that affects more than half of its inhabitants. At the same time, the rapid structural decomposition of the Haitian state can be seen with the rise of armed gangs, operating as a parallel power in large areas of the country.

In such a volatile context, the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti (MMS) is deployed in 2023, under unusual Kenyan leadership and endorsed by the United Nations, which, together with the Haitian Transition Council, established in April 2023, and the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH)⁴ until 2026, sees its actions stalled, unable to curb violence, forced migration and chaos.

This bleak outlook has led to the country being labelled a failed state, a concept that is, however, insufficient and simplistic. Haiti faces a perfect storm: environmental collapse, humanitarian crisis, endemic violence, natural disasters and a fragmented state, not only the result of internal failures, but also a direct consequence of failed military and humanitarian interventions.

Nature without respite in a nation under siege

³ AZNÁREZ, Juan Jesús. The 'cannibals' ravage Haiti. *El País*, 9 February 2004. Available at: https://elpais.com/diario/2004/02/09/internacional/1076281210_850215.html.

⁴ The BINUH, created by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2476 (2019), acts as a bridge between the international community and the Haitian people, in the form of a special political mission, whose functions include supporting elections through respect for due process, strengthening the police and promoting dialogue in the face of violence by armed gangs.

Between the boundary of the North American and Caribbean tectonic plates to the south, the heart of the Caribbean sits on the intermediate Gonâve microplate, characterised by an estimated left-lateral displacement of 2 centimetres per year⁵. Two strike-slip faults can be seen: the Enriquillo-Plantain Garden system, which extends along the southern flank of the island, and, to the north, the Septentrional Fault. Overall, it is established as one of the most active contact zones in the Western Hemisphere.

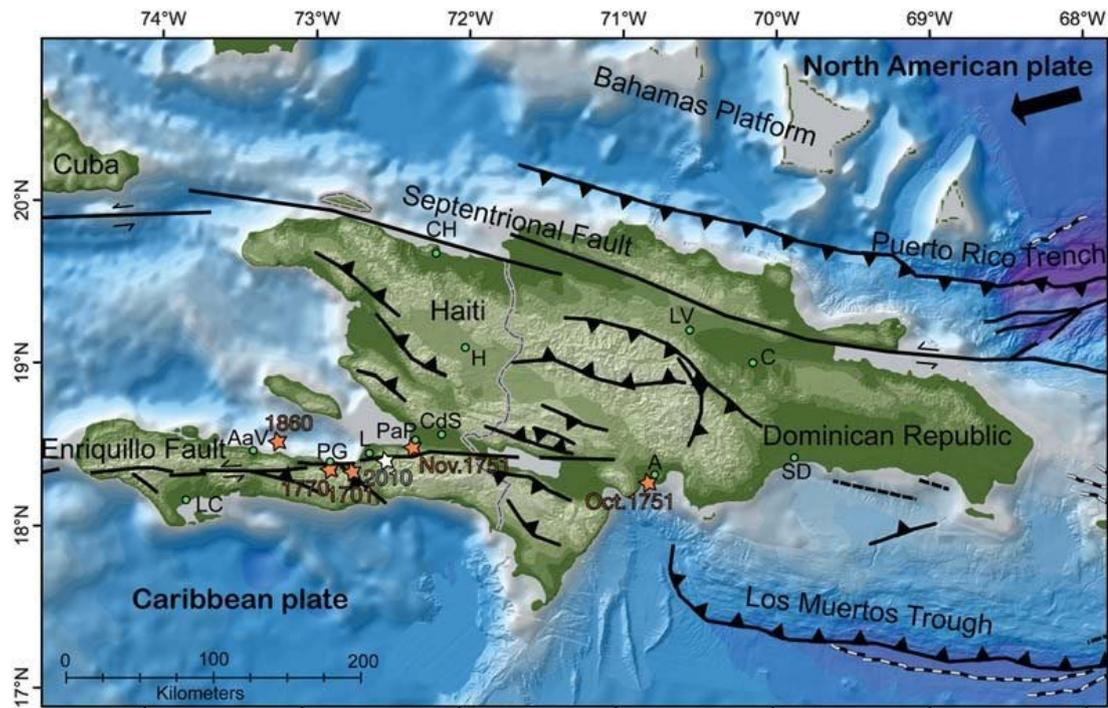


Figure 1: Network of tectonic plates and faults in the Caribbean. Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Hispaniola-Haiti-and-the-Dominican-Republic-Fault-traces-are-shown-as-black_fig1_258611153.

The devastation in Haiti cannot be explained solely by the intensity of the earthquakes; environmental degradation exacerbates its vulnerability to extreme weather events such as hurricanes, torrential rains and droughts. The interaction between the depth of the epicentre, the composition of the subsoil and the type of vibration, amplified by rugged topography⁶ and inadequate urban planning, with buildings designed for hurricanes on

⁵ BBC NEWS MUNDO. Why are there so many earthquakes in Haiti?, January 2010 [updated 15 August 2021]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-58222126>.

⁶ Port-au-Prince is located at sea level on sandy deposits that amplify seismic waves. A short distance away, mountainous formations with denser rocky substrates emerge. This creates abrupt contrasts in relief, where tremors can be felt in both lowlands and highlands. CHINCHAR, Allison. When it comes to earthquakes, size matters but so does the terrain. *CNN Weather*, 2 May 2021. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/01/weather/weather-earthquake-soil-rock-types-explainer/index.html>.

soft soils, heavy roofs and lacking earthquake-resistant standards, results in their easy collapse in the event of tremors.

This is evidenced by the earthquakes of 1751, 1770, 1860, and most recently on 12 January 2010, which measured 7.0 on the Richter scale. Not only did it reduce the capital to rubble, with a death toll of 220,000 and 1.5 million people left homeless, but it also precipitated a cholera epidemic spread by United Nations (UN) troops and propagated by the Artibonite River, adding 9,792 deaths to the previous figure⁷. This series of devastating events was compounded by Hurricane Matthew in 2016, whose losses exceeded 32% of the national GDP⁸, culminating on 14 August 2021, when a new 7.2 magnitude earthquake devastated south-western Haiti. Just three days later, Tropical Storm Grace intensified the collapse, with 2,207 deaths and 53,000 homes destroyed⁹.

However, despite sharing the same island geography in the heart of the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic and Haiti represent two radically different realities. The former enjoys a favourable ecological configuration, with abundant rainfall, mighty rivers and fertile valleys such as the Cibao, favouring its agricultural development and remarkable economic growth. In contrast, the latter faces a drier geography, mountainous terrain, less fertile soils, poor water resources (only the Artibonite River¹⁰ and Lake Saumâtre), and pronounced exposure to natural disasters¹¹.

Various Haitian actors reject the concept of "climate change" and use "climate disorder" instead, which more accurately reflects the destructive and unpredictable nature of the ecological transformations the country is experiencing.

In a context where trees and forests are fundamental to environmental health and climate resilience, Haiti is experiencing severe deforestation. Beginning under French colonial rule with massive logging to establish plantations for short-cycle crops, the extraction of

⁷ WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION. Cholera – Haiti, 12 October 2022. Available at: <https://www.who.int/es/emergencias/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON415>.

⁸ REYES RAMÍREZ, Rocío de los. Haiti, the country that nobody cares about [IEEE 47/2021]. In: *IEEE Bulletin No. 24*, April 2022, pp. 249-275. Available at: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/ceseden/-/bolet%C3%ADn-del-ieee-24>.

⁹ EUROPA PRESS INTERNACIONAL. Haitian police present plan to secure humanitarian aid against armed gangs, 24 August 2021. Available at: <https://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-policia-haiti-presenta-plan-asegurar-ayuda-humanitaria-contra-bandas-armadas-20210824053124.html>.

¹⁰ The only navigable waterway and agricultural and hydroelectric hub in the country.

¹¹ JIMÉNEZ VALENCIA, Sebastián. Why does Haiti suffer so much from earthquakes (and not the Dominican Republic)? *CNN Latin America*, 16 August 2021. Available at: <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2021/08/16/por-que-haiti-sufre-tanto-por-los-terremotos-y-no-republica-dominicana>.

firewood and charcoal¹², in addition to policies during the Duvalier era, have led to coastal erosion, rising temperatures¹³ and sea levels.

Between 2001 and 2024, the country lost approximately 81,300 hectares of forest cover, of which 3,120 hectares correspond to primary rainforest, representing a 36% decrease in this type of ecosystem, which is key to biodiversity. This loss is concentrated in three regions, led by the southern department with the loss of 16,800 hectares¹⁴. National parks, such as Parc La Visite, Parc Macaya, and Forêt des pins¹⁵, represent the last vestiges of its natural forest and are considered protected areas that burn easily.

At the same time, Haiti faces a water crisis that is as paradoxical as it is devastating. Although it is not among the Caribbean countries with the highest water stress, access to safe water sources has fallen from 60% to 32.6% in 2022¹⁶. At the same time, rising temperatures, progressive desertification and an alarming decline in rainfall, even in traditionally rainy seasons, have exacerbated a drought that by 2022 was already affecting more than 64% of the country, impacting soil fertility and leaving 4.3 million Haitians suffering from food insecurity¹⁷.

In urban areas such as Port-au-Prince, the situation is becoming critical, as resource deprivation, the collapse of public infrastructure and the consolidation of gangs have turned water into a private, expensive, scarce and inequitable commodity, forcing vulnerable families to spend up to 10% of their income on water, which is often contaminated¹⁸. In marginal areas of the capital, such as the Cité Soleil commune, the lack of drainage and sanitation exposes the population to flooding, water pollution, increased disease and forced displacement.

¹² Main source of cooking fuel and one of the few ways families can earn money.

¹³ The average temperature in 2023 reaches a record high of 25.59°C, surpassing the average of 24.31°C recorded in 1901. TRADING ECONOMICS. Temperature in Haiti (1901-2023 Data), n.d. Available at: <https://es.tradingeconomics.com/haiti/temperature>.

¹⁴ GLOBAL FOREST WATCH. Haiti. <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/HT/>.

¹⁵ FLÉCHER ET ONZ CHÉRY, José. At the heart of Haiti's biodiversity: conservation allows rare wildlife to thrive in Pic Macaya Park. *The Haitian Times*, 21 April 2025. Available at: <https://haitiantimes.com/fr/2025/04/21/Ha%C3%AFti--parc-Pic-Macaya--pr%C3%A9servation-des-Cara%C3%AFbes/>.

¹⁶ HAPPEL, Ellie; MEROPE-SYNGE, Sienna; MORLEY, S. Priya. Bay Kou Bliye, Pote Mak Sonje: Climate Injustice in Haiti and the Case for Reparations. *Global Justice Clinic*, 2024. Available at: <https://www.haitianstudies.org/hsawp/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Report-Climate-Injustice-in-Haiti-and-the-Case-for-Reparations.pdf>.

¹⁷ EUROPA PRESS. Deforestation and poverty in Haiti, a vicious circle that must be broken, 4 June 2023. Available at: <https://www.europapress.es/epsocial/cooperacion-desarrollo/noticia-deforestacion-pobreza-haiti-circulo-urge-salir-20230604120258.html>.

¹⁸ HAPPEL, Ellie; MEROPE-SYNGE, Sienna; MORLEY, S. Priya. *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

Demographics of the exodus

Haiti's population in 2025 is estimated at 11,753,943, with moderate annual growth of 1.23%¹⁹. Although 60% of the population is under 25 years of age, the demographic dividend is not a promise of development, but rather a tragic paradox: millions of young people are trapped between latent potential, with a dependency ratio of 46.7%, and structural hopelessness. It also has a birth rate of 21.5 and a mortality rate of 7.7 per 1,000 inhabitants, with the figure rising in the case of infant mortality (38.8 per 1,000 births) and a life expectancy of just 64.8 years.

The indivisible force driving the country's economy is the two-fifths of the population engaged in small-scale subsistence agriculture²⁰. The vulnerability of agriculture to natural and climatic disasters is also affected by the lack of investment and the systematic dismantling of the Haitian agricultural sector, driven by neoliberal reforms from the United States, which drastically reduced tariffs on rice from 50% to 3%²¹, thus destroying domestic production and creating a structural dependence on global markets that now provide more than 50% of basic foodstuffs. The consequences of this situation can be seen in the forced rural exodus to the urban peripheries of Port-au-Prince, with an annual urban growth rate of 2.47%.

In just five years, especially after the destruction of the country's infrastructure in the 2010 earthquake, criminal gangs in Haiti have evolved from sophisticated local groups exploited by successive leaders²² to hybrid power networks. There are more than 200 criminal gangs and two major rival alliances: the G9 an fanmi e an alye, led by former police officer Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier, sustaining itself through extortion and the systematic use of terror, and the G-Pèp de Ti Gabriel, whose activities focus on mass

¹⁹ CIA, The World Factbook. *Haiti*. Online: last updated 25/06/2025. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/haiti/>.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ MCCABE, Coco. Haiti no longer grows much of its own rice and families now go hungry. *Oxfam*, 3 June 2008. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/haiti-no-longer-grows-much-its-own-rice-and-families-now-go-hungry>.

²² From the Tonton Macoutes in the Duvalier era, to the violent insurrection from Gonaïves by the Cannibal Army, then the Artibonite Revolutionary Front, and the loyalty of the G9 an fanmi e an alye to President Moïse.

kidnapping, reaching a figure of around 2,500 in 2023 and almost 1,500 in 2024, in addition to drug trafficking²³.

Their most significant conquest is not territorial or financial, but institutional. Far from establishing a promised liberating order, they have built a *de facto* regime in those areas where the state is absent, through an increasingly professional and lethal criminal machine. They control 90% of Port-au-Prince²⁴, expanding to other cities such as Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Les Cayes, Jérémie and Jacmel.²⁵ There are warnings of blockades of strategic territories and critical infrastructure such as ports, roads, and power stations.

Through violence and intimidation, they regulate daily life, imposing tribute payments and controlling the distribution of food, water, medicine, fuel and movement. Clashes between these groups have led to summary executions, the burning of corpses and homes, kidnappings and extortion, resulting in almost 4,800 deaths that year, a figure that rose to 5,600 in 2024²⁶ and 4,026 in the first six months of 2025, an increase of 24% over last year's figures, according to BINUH²⁷.

It is not unexpected, although revealing, that their territories, infrastructure, education, health, and, in general, their living conditions have not been a central priority for the Haitian state.

Access to public health has become a privilege rather than a guaranteed right, especially in Port-au-Prince, where violence has caused the collapse of 60% of hospitals, which were already overwhelmed by the limited availability of doctors and beds²⁸.

For its part, education shows alarming rates. One in seven Haitian children is out of school and nearly one million are at risk of dropping out. Last year alone, 284 schools were

²³ LE COUR GRANDMAISON, Romain; OLIVEIRA, Ana Paula; HERBERT, Matt. A critical moment: Haiti's Gang Crisis and International responses. *Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime*, February 2024. Available at: <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Romain-Le-Cour-Grandmaison-Ana-Paula-Oliveira-and-Matt-Herbert-A-critical-moment-Haitis-gang-crisis-and-international-responses-GI-TOC-February-2024.pdf>.

²⁴ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. Haiti's gangs have 'near-total control' of the capital, U.N. says. *NPR*, 3 July 2025. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/03/nx-s1-5455540/haiti-gangs-capital-port-au-prince-violence>.

²⁵ The southern exit of the capital via National Route 2 is controlled by three gangs loyal to G-Pèp and G9 (Ti Bwa). Meanwhile, National Route 1, to the north, is controlled exclusively by the group led by Ti Gabriel.

²⁶ UN NEWS. Haiti: More than 5,600 deaths from gang violence in 2024, 7 January 2025. Available at: <https://news.un.org/es/story/2025/01/1535551>.

²⁷ UNITED NATIONS INTEGRATED OFFICE IN HAITI. Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/418], 27 June 2025. Available at: <https://docs.un.org/es/S/2025/418>.

²⁸ MALDONADO, Carlos S. The UN warns that Port-au-Prince is running out of hospitals: more than 60% of health centres are not operational. *El País*, 6 May 2025. Available at: <https://elpais.com/america/2025-05-06/la-onu-alerta-de-que-puerto-principe-se-queda-sin-hospitales-mas-del-60-de-los-centros-sanitarios-no-estan-operativos.html>.

destroyed, forcing the closure or relocation of those near areas controlled by armed gangs such as Martissant or Bel Air²⁹. Without access to education, many of them are recruited, increasing their recruitment by 70% in 2023, including children as young as 8 years old³⁰, while sexual violence increases by 1,000% in 2024³¹.

For all these reasons, including environmental collapse and the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, the country has generated one of the most persistent and desperate waves of migration on the continent. Although Port-au-Prince is the epicentre of the violence, this phenomenon has spread to the Centre and Artibonite departments, with 147,000 and 92,000 displaced persons, respectively. In 2025, nearly 1.3 million people, 10% of the population, mostly women and children, have been forced to leave their homes, a figure that represents a 24% increase over last year³².

Precariousness and instability become routine for those who no longer have the resources to start over. Eighty-three per cent of displaced persons live with host families, plunged into extreme vulnerability, while this wave has overwhelmed various host communities and makeshift settlements, increasing from 142 to 246³³, in an environment marked by a lack of access to education, health care and sanitation. In addition, the collapse of essential public services and overcrowded conditions in displacement camps have contributed to the spread of disease, with 1,298 new cases of cholera³⁴.

Many others have preferred to make longer journeys, with the Dominican Republic being the main destination for Haitians seeking work. However, under the administration of Luis Abinader and the increase in migration flows, the Dominican authorities have intensified the mass deportation of undocumented Haitian migrants, with up to 10,000 expulsions

²⁹ UN NEWS. In Haiti, gangs destroyed 284 schools in 2024, 28 February 2025. Available at: <https://news.un.org/es/story/2025/02/1536841>.

³⁰ UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND [UNICEF]. Education in danger in Haiti, 3 March 2025. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/lac/comunicados-prensa/declaracion-haiti-educacion-peligro-ataque-grupos-armados>.

³¹ FRANCE24. Sexual violence against children in Haiti increases by 1000%, 12 February 2025. Available at: <https://www.france24.com/es/programas/ellas-hoy/20250212-la-violencia-sexual-contra-ni%C3%B1os-y-ni%C3%B1as-en-haiti%C3%AD-aumenta-un-1000>.

³² INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION [IOM]. 1.3 million people flee violence in Haiti, setting another record for displacement levels, 11 June 2025. Available at: <https://www.iom.int/es/news/13-millones-de-personas-escapan-de-la-violencia-en-haiti-marcando-otro-record-en-los-niveles-de-desplazamiento>.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ BLAISE, Juhakenson. Cholera spreads in Haiti's displacement camps, deepening humanitarian crisis. *The Haitian Times*, 19 May 2025. Available at: <https://haitiantimes.com/es/2025/05/19/Amenaza-de-brote-de-c%C3%B3lera-en-Haiti%C3%AD/>.

per week, including pregnant women in hospitals³⁵. Faced with the crisis and violence in Haiti, the government deployed more than 11,000 soldiers and immigration agents, accelerating the construction of a border wall³⁶, measures defended as necessary. However, these measures have resulted in the deportation of more than 276,000 foreigners in 2024.

In the United States, policy towards Haitian migrants has oscillated between containment and repression, denying them the possibility of seeking asylum or international protection. During Donald Trump's first term, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) was revoked³⁷ and Title 42 was implemented³⁸. The former was briefly restored in 2021 by Joe Biden, but the latter was maintained until 2023, with tens of thousands of Haitians being repatriated by air without due process. Similarly, a federal judge in New York blocked the early cancellation of TPS for more than 500,000 Haitian migrants, a measure taken by the Trump administration in 2025³⁹. The judge highlighted the persistent violence, mass displacement and food crisis that make it unfeasible to eliminate this humanitarian measure.

International aid: do Haitians only matter when the earth trembles?

The 2010 earthquake not only shook the earth, but also revealed the collapse of a devastating economic model. Following this, the country received substantial international aid, more than 13 billion dollars, but it was ineffective. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) channelled more than £1.5 billion after the earthquake, but only a tiny fraction was managed by local institutions⁴⁰, with more

³⁵ DW. Dominican Republic tightens policy against Haitian migration, 7 April 2025. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/es/dominicana-endurece-su-pol%C3%ADtica-contramigraci%C3%B3n-haitiana/a-72157097>.

³⁶ CNN EN ESPAÑOL. Dominican Republic fights illegal migration with border wall with Haiti, 16 February 2025. Available at: <https://cnn.espanol.cnn.com/2025/02/16/latinoamerica/video/republica-dominicana-haiti-muro-fronterizo-mirador-mundial-tv>.

³⁷ Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a migration lifeline in the United States, temporarily protecting people from countries affected by conflict, natural disasters or other extraordinary conditions from deportation, allowing them to work and remain legally while their country is unsafe.

³⁸ Health measure used as justification for rapid expulsions without assessment of asylum applications.

³⁹ EUROPA PRESS INTERNATIONAL. US judge blocks order to leave half a million Haitians without protection, 2 July 2025. Available at: <https://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-juez-eeuu-bloquea-orden-dejar-proteccion-medio-millon-haitianos-20250702131024.html>.

⁴⁰ VALLAS, Paul. How USAID squandered billions in Haiti and around the globe. *New York Post*, 22 February 2025. Available at: <https://nypost.com/2025/02/22/opinion/how-usaid-squandered-billions-in-haiti-and-around-the-globe/>.

than 80% of public services and security being outsourced to private and international actors⁴¹.

Other organisations, such as Manos Unidas, are promoting reforestation and sustainable agriculture programmes in Haiti, combining timber and fruit trees with agroecological practices. The aim is to curb the intensive use of charcoal and strengthen agricultural self-sufficiency, actions that require the involvement of local authorities and the international community⁴².

Since then, international attention has declined dramatically, highlighting the phenomenon of "humanitarian fatigue", despite the fact that between 2021 and 2024, the US government allocated \$1.1 billion to Haiti, with 43% going to humanitarian assistance and 26% to health, and the rest being spread across educational, governance and agricultural programmes⁴³.

This trend has become more acute in 2025, when the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is attempting to assist 3.9 million Haitians, reaching only a fraction of them.

The pattern is repeating itself. In November 2024, the World Food Programme distributed food to more than 150,000 people in hard-to-reach areas⁴⁴, yet more than 2 million people remain in a state of severe hunger and 8,500 are on the brink of famine. Simultaneously, UNICEF implemented educational programmes, distributing school *kits* and providing financial support to families, while its mobile clinics served 30,000 displaced persons⁴⁵. Both organisations complain of a lack of funding, the former requesting \$94 million and the latter stating that it has received only 6% of the funding needed under the \$908 million Humanitarian Response Plan⁴⁶.

⁴¹ ÁVILA-CLAUDIO, Ronald. "The problems we see in Haiti have been perpetuated by international organisations." *BBC News Mundo*, 12 March 2024. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/articles/cy6z7jvx5go>.

⁴² EUROPA PRESS. *Op. cit.*

⁴³ OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL. Haiti: Risks to U.S. Foreign Assistance. *U.S. Agency for International Development*, 18 February 2025. Available at: <https://oig.usaid.gov/node/7450>.

⁴⁴ WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME USA. Haiti on the Brink: WFP Scales up as Violence Fuels Displacement and Hunger, 13 January 2025. Available at: <https://www.wfpusa.org/articles/wfp-scales-up-haiti-violence-fuels-displacement-hunger/>.

⁴⁵ UN NEWS. Increased deportations and collapse of essential services worsen humanitarian crisis in Haiti, 24 April 2025. Available at: <https://news.un.org/es/story/2025/04/1538296>.

⁴⁶ EFE. Humanitarian community needs more than \$900 million for assistance in Haiti, 26 February 2025. Available at: <https://efe.com/mundo/2025-02-26/haiti-comunidad-humanitaria/>.

In 2025, the new Trump administration froze more than 90% of USAID contracts, paralysing crucial health, food distribution and medical care programmes. Funding cuts to the Inter-American Foundation left more than 82,000 Haitians without assistance, closing 17 community projects⁴⁷, reflecting a system that collapses when the cameras and catastrophes disappear.

In the midst of an unprecedented political, humanitarian and security crisis, particularly exacerbated by the paralysis of the Presidential Transition Council despite the recent appointment of its president, Laurent Saint-Cyr⁴⁸, Haiti is the focus of a unique international intervention. The MSS is authorised by UN Security Council Resolution 2699 (2023), with its mandate extended until October 2025. Unlike classic 'blue helmet' missions, the MSS breaks new ground with a new logic: an *ad hoc* coalition led by Kenya, not the UN, backed by a dozen countries. The MSS's objective is ambitious and politically sensitive: to support the weakened Haitian police in restoring order, protecting key infrastructure, facilitating humanitarian aid and laying the security foundations for future elections.

⁴⁹In this volatile context, its legality, funding and viability were questioned from the outset. It is a foreign police force, led by a country whose officers do not speak the local languages, deployed in unfamiliar territory without strategy, real coordination or adequate resources. The territory is dominated by expert gangs that are mounting an evolving armed resistance, with the union of the G-9 and G-Pèp in February 2024 under the Viv Ansanm ("Living Together") coalition. These gangs also control densely populated areas, where any tactical error could lead to a humanitarian tragedy.

⁴⁷ COTO, Danica. Upheaval at Inter-American Foundation slashes critical aid in Haiti, report says. *AP News*, 5 April 2025. Available at: <https://apnews.com/article/haiti-trump-interamerican-foundation-grants-29332b27090af6349eac237eb1e76fac>.

⁴⁸ FRANCE24. Laurent Saint-Cyr, Haiti's new leader amid gang threats, 8 August 2025. Available at: <https://www.france24.com/es/américa-latina/20250808-laurent-saint-cyr-el-nuevo-líder-haitiano-en-medio-de-amenazas-de-pandillas>.

⁴⁹ Initial deployment limited to just 1,000 Kenyan troops, out of the 2,500 to 5,000 planned. In addition, they do not have enough helicopters or armoured vehicles.

It should be noted that the United States has offered five million dollars for the capture of Jimmy Chérizier, a measure described by experts as symbolic and lacking in real impact⁵⁰

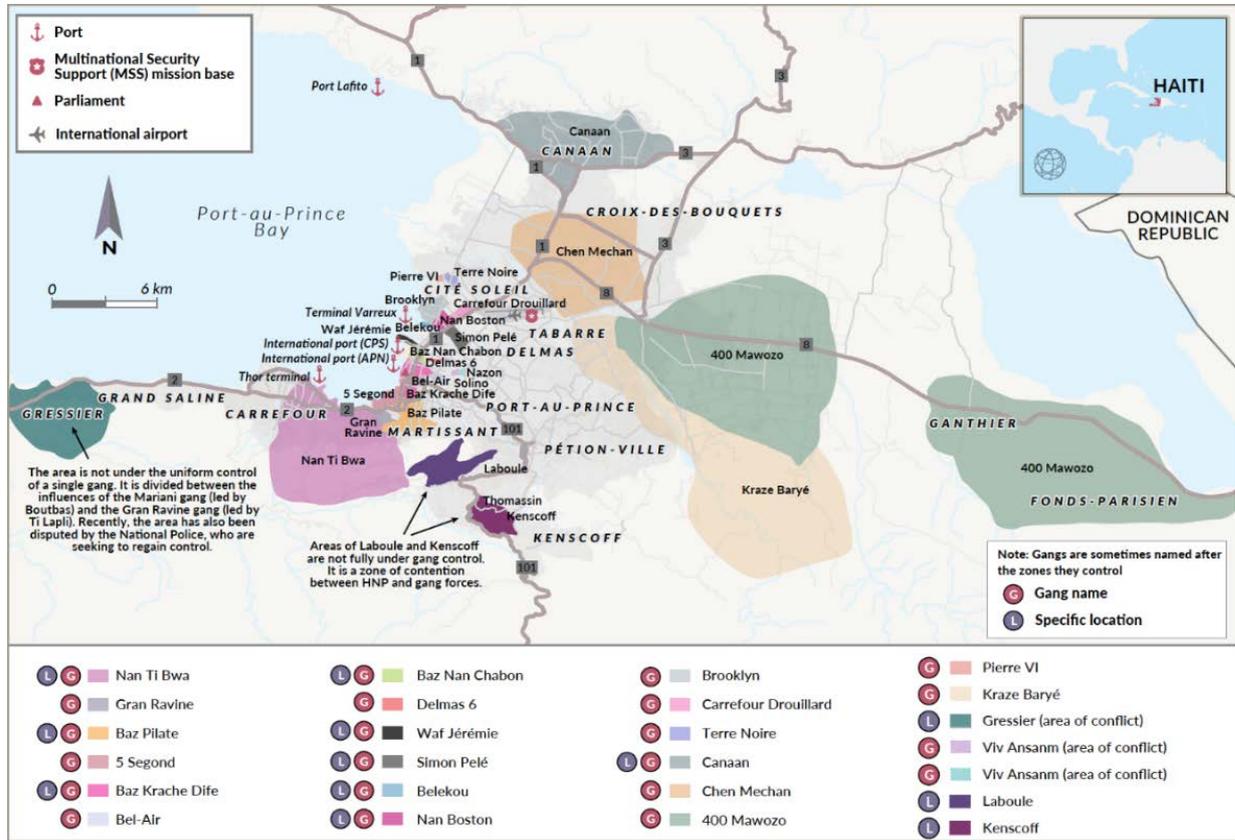


Figure 2: Areas of Haiti controlled by gangs in January 2025. Source: <https://smallwarsjournal.com/2025/01/24/last-chance-breaking-haitis-political-and-criminal-impasse/>.

That is why legitimacy will be as crucial as effectiveness, as every move will need to combine tactical precision with ethical sensitivity.

Conclusions

Haiti embodies the collapse of an international development model based on broken promises, failed interventions and fragmented solidarity. Gangs, which emerged in the 19th century when Haitian leaders recruited criminals as a means of consolidating their power, reflect an early precedent for the immediate and worrying problem in the country:

⁵⁰ ROBLES, Frances. Why is the US offering a £3.5 million reward for a Haitian gang leader? *The New York Times in Spanish*, 16 August 2025. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2025/08/16/espanol/america-latina/eeuu-recompensa-barbecue-haiti.html>.

the consolidation of armed gangs as an alternative power following the assassination of its president, Jovenel Moïse. The resistance of the G9 and G-Pèp is both armed and symbolic, adapting their discourse to erode popular support, which hinders the viability of action by the Presidential Transition Council and the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti.

The population is fleeing and Haitian children are growing up without schooling, food or a future. Haiti emerges as a mirror of the paradoxes of global development: the first Latin American country to gain its independence continues on its path as one of the countries most dependent on foreign economic and humanitarian assistance⁵¹. Without an approach that goes beyond welfare, with objectives that include massive reforestation and alternative energy sources, Haiti will remain trapped in a cycle of environmental, social and economic poverty that is increasingly difficult to reverse.

Rural exodus, the erosion of social resilience and the intensification of the frequency and devastating power of natural disasters are not accidental effects, but the traces of an unequal model. Likewise, there is a new trend of subjecting migrants, especially Haitians, to arbitrary detentions and expulsions, with a deterrent approach prevailing over compliance or non-compliance with the principle of non-refoulement and humanitarian protection.

Haiti does not need more patches, but rather a radical transformation. This country, located in the heart of the Caribbean, warns the world: continue to manage chaos without policies that restore autonomy and productive capacity and short-term interventions with the clear risk of perpetuating this country's dependence on foreign aid, or, on the contrary, commit to decisive support for the sovereignty of Haitian citizens and the dignity of a people who, despite adversity, has never stopped fighting.

Haitian history, marked by failures such as MINUSTAH, will not tolerate further impunity. The Haitian state is not a distant problem or a passing crisis; it is a mirror reflecting the contradictions of a world in search of global justice. In 2025, the international community

⁵¹ Rosas, Paula & Visual Journalism Team. Five factors that explain the historical roots of the ongoing crisis affecting Haiti. *BBC News Mundo*, 13 March 2024. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/articles/cy9zk78gnldo>.

faces a moral crossroads: persist in abandonment or take a decisive step towards reparation and true solidarity. It does not take another year of analysis to understand that only Haitians, the true victims of the chaos, can reclaim their destiny.

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