



# Security Council

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## United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2645 \(2022\)](#), by which the Council decided to extend to 15 July 2023 the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), in accordance with resolution [2476 \(2019\)](#) establishing BINUH, and to adjust the reporting requirements from 120 days to 90 days. The report includes significant developments that have occurred since my previous report ([S/2022/761](#)) and provides an update on the implementation of the BINUH mandate.

#### II. Political issues and good governance

2. In the past three months, the political environment was shaped by three events: the adoption of Security Council resolution [2653 \(2022\)](#), by which the Council establishing a United Nations sanctions regime for the implementation of travel bans, asset freezes and a targeted arms embargo against individuals engaging, directly or indirectly, with armed groups and criminal networks; the imposing of bilateral sanctions by two Member States against several high-profile Haitian individuals; and the request by the Government of Haiti for the deployment of an international specialized armed force to assist the Haitian National Police in addressing the insecurity resulting from the criminal action of armed gangs, as well as my proposal of the deployment of a rapid action force in response.

3. Gang-related violence reached levels not seen in decades and remained the major threat to public security in Haiti. Armed gangs sought to expand their influence into neighbourhoods of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area that were considered relatively safe until recently. Turf battles between gangs have displaced tens of thousands of people in Port-au-Prince, with most of the affected living in spontaneous internally displaced persons sites. These, too, have become hotspots for violent crime, further challenging the capacity of the already overstretched national police.

4. My Special Representative for Haiti continued to encourage constructive engagement between key stakeholders and political blocs to achieve a Haitian-led agreement. Direct talks held in early October between the Prime Minister, Ariel Henry, and a prominent member of the Commission for a Haitian Solution to the Crisis (known as the Montana Group) ultimately did not make tangible headway.



Later that month, civil society groups began consultations with political and business groups, industry associations and trade unions. The National Consensus for an Inclusive Transition and Transparent Elections was thus developed, listing the necessary steps towards elections. The steps include the establishment of a multi-stakeholder high transitional council; the creation of a government oversight mechanism; the full restoration of the Court of Cassation; the formation of a new provisional electoral council; and the undertaking of a constitutional review process, with a view to restoring democratically elected institutions within an 18-month time frame. A series of informal meetings and negotiations were held in Port-au-Prince and throughout the country in October and November to build support for the National Consensus document.

5. On 6 December, the civil society groups leading the consultations issued their first statement as the “independent facilitation committee”, emphasizing the inclusive nature of the negotiations and their work to consolidate stakeholders’ proposals into a single document. The independent facilitation committee also called upon all political, civil society and private sector groups to overcome differences and agree, by the end of 2022, on the National Consensus document and work with the Government to move the country towards the restoration of democratic order. On 8 December, business leaders issued a statement similarly urging all stakeholders to work together to put the country back on track towards the holding of elections.

6. On 21 December, the Prime Minister and a broad range of stakeholders, including some signatories of the Montana agreement, various non-aligned groups, civil society, religious groups, the private sector and a large political grouping calling itself “the historic compromise” signed the National Consensus document. The Prime Minister announced the launch of a series of multi-stakeholder discussions in January as a platform for signatories and non-signatories alike to develop a more detailed road map for the transition. For its part, the Montana Group leadership rejected the National Consensus document, labelling it a “manoeuvre” designed for electioneering purposes, at a press conference on 29 December.

7. The Government’s request for the immediate deployment of an international specialized armed force to assist the Haitian National Police in addressing the insecurity resulting from the criminal action of armed gangs, and my letter dated 8 October (S/2022/747) on options for enhanced security support to Haiti, prepared pursuant to Security Council in resolution 2645 (2022), were met with mixed reactions in the country.

8. On the one hand, the Montana Group leadership, known as the *Bureau de suivi de l’accord*, along with several opposition groups, issued public statements criticizing the Government’s request and opposing what they termed foreign intervention, citing, in some instances, lessons learned from past operational security support, including peacekeeping. On 9 October, the 10 still-seated senators (whose terms expired on 9 January 2023) adopted a resolution requesting that the Prime Minister annul the 7 October decision of the Council of Ministers that had triggered the Government’s request. On the other hand, a civil society coalition known as the *Groupe de travail sur la sécurité* issued a statement on 20 October calling for “a clear framework for international operational support” for the national police. On 24 October, business leaders issued a similar statement, asserting that the presence of international armed forces was the only way to avoid a humanitarian and security disaster. On 14 December, a missive signed by all Catholic bishops in Haiti called for the international community to provide immediate support to the national police, including with regard to equipment, training and administrative reform, to bring about conditions that would revive the economy and help to set the country back on course towards the holding of elections.

#### *United Nations and bilateral sanctions*

9. Against this backdrop, the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution [2653 \(2022\)](#) on 21 October, by which the Council established targeted sanctions measures against listed entities and individuals engaging in or supporting criminal activities and violence involving armed group and criminal networks, made news across the country. With a view to distinguishing the scope of the Council's mandated sanctions regime from its own mandate, the Mission sought to build understanding of the resolution, including by holding information sessions with national media.

10. In November and December, two Member States announced bilateral sanctions against several prominent Haitian political figures. Among those designated were a former president, two former prime ministers, at least three former parliamentarians, two senators who were seated at the time of designation, two government ministers who had resigned during the reporting period and a former director general of customs. The bilateral sanctions included travel bans and asset freezes for alleged involvement in the drug trade and collusion with armed gangs and criminal networks, including enabling and protecting their illegal activities through money-laundering and other acts of corruption. On 5 December, one of the two Member States announced further sanctions, freezing the assets, held in its territory, of three prominent Haitian business leaders, for having allegedly used their high profiles "to protect and enable the illegal activities of armed criminal gangs, including through money-laundering and other acts of corruption".

11. The reaction of the Haitian public to the announcements was generally positive, with many calls made through social media for additional individuals to be sanctioned. Within the framework of the Haitian-led dialogue, several political organizations suspended cooperation with the sanctioned individuals and the political groups with which they are associated, including Parti haïtien Tèt Kale, the political party of the late President, Jovenel Moïse.

#### *Electoral council*

12. While the electoral calendar remains uncertain, BINUH and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continue to support electoral council capacity-building. Under a Peacebuilding Fund project, UNDP and BINUH organized a series of meetings on the prevention of electoral violence, bringing together civil society, the private sector, religious groups, the media and others. The first three meetings were held between 25 November and 2 December in Cap Haïtien (North Department), Fort Liberté (North-East Department) and Port-de-Paix (North-West Department), while between 5 and 13 December, meetings were held in the cities of Les Cayes, Jérémie and Miragoâne in the southern peninsula. Electoral council staff also organized an event on 15 December during which election practitioners, journalists and civil society representatives gathered to discuss strategies to tackle disinformation, hate speech and gender-based stereotypes on traditional and social media.

### **III. Violence reduction**

13. The past several months saw a steady increase in major crime trends and gang-related incidents. The number of reported homicides for 2022 increased by 35.2 per cent compared with 2021, with 2,183 victims reported during the year (including 163 women and 22 girls), compared with 1,615 (including 93 women and 19 girls) in 2021. Of the homicides, 81.6 per cent were recorded in the West Department, where gang-related crime is most prevalent. Among those killed were the former presidential candidate Eric Jean Baptiste, on 28 October, and National Police Academy director Harington Rigaud, on 25 November. Kidnappings also continued to rise, resulting in

an increase of 104.7 per cent, with 1,359 victims (including 294 women and 23 girls) recorded by the police in 2022 compared with 664 in 2021. Civil unrest has only compounded the situation. In 2022, the United Nations documented at least 1,490 demonstrations, roadblocks and barricades, an increase of 35.5 per cent compared with the previous year.

14. The Superior Council of the National Police held several extraordinary meetings during the reporting period to identify measures to address crime and gang violence. The measures included the acquisition of six new armoured vehicles on 15 October for the national police, representing the first batch ordered by the Government. Another procurement process has been launched for the acquisition of personnel protective equipment and tactical materials.

15. The Haitian National Police – equipped with new armoured vehicles and trained in tactical intervention by international experts – intensified patrols countrywide and engaged in enhanced anti-gang operations, yielding mixed though occasionally noteworthy results, including the arrest of several dozen gang members. However, despite their determined efforts to curb crime and fight gangs, the overstretched, understaffed and underresourced police force has not been able, on its own, to deter the alarming rise in gang violence. BINUH continues to focus on supporting national counterparts in addressing institutional, policy and procedural challenges facing law enforcement, including by providing advice at the managerial level to improve operational planning, in coordination with units specializing in anti-gang operations.

#### *Siege of Varreux and fuel crisis*

16. The gang siege of Varreux, the largest fuel terminal in Haiti, which began on 18 September during a countrywide period of civil unrest and demonstrations, continued to disrupt nearly all facets of daily life well into November. Public transportation halted, which forced schools, markets, banks and businesses to remain closed, resulted in the reduction or suspension of services at hospitals and health centres and frustrated the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Violence surged, including killings, kidnappings, arson, vandalism and looting. Warehouses used by the United Nations country team, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund, UNDP, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the World Food Programme, were attacked and looted by protesters, in addition to warehouses and facilities run by non-governmental organizations. Much of the lost food and other supplies were part of emergency response stocks for the most vulnerable people.

17. The Haitian National Police, under increasing pressure to break the siege of Varreux and remove the barricades and trenches put in place by the gangs to block fuel trucks' access to the terminal, made several unsuccessful attempts in October to retake control. Reinforced by new tactical armoured vehicles, specialized police units finally gained access to the fuel terminal on 3 November following two days of heavy fighting. By 5 November, the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications and the Haitian Armed Forces had restored access. Over the next several days, gas stations were gradually resupplied, and fuel became available for sale to the public in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area on 12 November.

18. Although the Varreux fuel terminal is now partially operational, the National Port Authority and other commercial ports remain under constant attack by gangs. Road transportation remains at risk, with cargo shipping containers and goods being regularly hijacked and stolen. Police continued to struggle to maintain patrols around the ports, while gangs retained control of most of the main transport thoroughfares linking Port-au-Prince with the northern and southern departments.

### *Community violence reduction programmes*

19. The increasing use of children and young women by gangs to expand their reach highlights vulnerabilities that must be holistically addressed to break the cycle of violence. In this context, BINUH continues to provide assistance to the interministerial task force on disarmament, dismantlement, reintegration and community violence reduction, but further support is needed to make progress towards the implementation of the national strategy on disarmament, dismantlement, reintegration and community violence reduction adopted in 2021. With BINUH support, the task force was reactivated on 17 December, following the suspension of its work at the height of the fuel crisis.

20. Despite security and access challenges, cross-community dialogue initiatives continued in two vulnerable neighbourhoods of the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince (Martissant and La Saline), supported by the United Nations country team with local partners. These efforts involved the organization of six community dialogue sessions and the strengthening of social and community-based organizations. Professional training and psychosocial support were provided to beneficiaries, and women-led microenterprises continue to be supported both technically and financially as part of the project.

21. The international community remains committed to supporting national authorities in addressing the proliferation of illicit arms and ammunition in the country. A baseline assessment, finalized during the reporting period by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlights the political, legal and operational work that remains to be done to tackle the proliferation threat effectively in Haiti. With regard to the Road Map for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030, partners stand ready to support national authorities in the implementation of the national action plan on the road map, which was finalized in August 2022 and is pending signature by the Prime Minister.

### *Illicit weapons and financing programmes*

22. Through the implementation of the Border Management Programme, including the Container Control Programme, the Airport Communication Programme and the Global Maritime Crime Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) continued to support Haitian authorities in their fight against illicit trafficking. UNODC has received 1 million dollars of seed funding from the Government of Haiti to initiate the project. Additional funding is required to support the training of container control and profiling units at all points of entry. Additional bilateral funding will become available through the basket fund. Gang control of port areas and access routes has so far delayed implementation of the programmes.

23. Despite the difficult situation, UNODC made progress during the reporting period, notably by providing legal support in the drafting of the new Customs Code. In addition, studies are currently being prepared to help key stakeholders to better understand the reality and extent of firearm and drug trafficking in Haiti. UNODC and the Organization of American States have developed a proposal to strengthen capacity in Haiti to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of corruption and economic crime, money-laundering and associated offences and to improve information-sharing with international investigators on transnational organized crime.

#### IV. Security and the rule of law

24. The Haitian National Police continued to work to better fulfil its mandate by strengthening its capabilities, enhancing conduct and discipline and improving morale within the institution. Despite these efforts, however, police strength continued to shrink, with high rates of attrition due to deaths, dismissals and resignations. As of 31 December, the Haitian National Police comprised 14,861 officers, including 1,740 women (11.7 per cent). Owing to high rates of desertion, temporary suspensions pending administrative investigations, and other absences operational strength is closer to that of 13,500 personnel, with some 9,700 available to perform as active-duty officers. There are also allegations that a significant number of national police personnel may be associated with gangs in the capital.

25. The graduation, on 23 December, of the thirty-second class of the National Police Academy, comprising 714 new police officers, including 174 women, marginally offsets the losses. With the new officers, the police-to-population ratio has slightly increased to 1.2 officers per 1,000 inhabitants but is still below the United Nations recommended standard of 2.2 officers per 1,000 inhabitants. At the same time, the nationwide enrolment process of the thirty-third class of recruits is ongoing, having received 2,732 applicants, including 644 women. To boost the number of women recruited, capacity-building sessions for 50 women applicants were held in the South Department in 2022 as part of a gender mainstreaming project supported by an international donor. On 23 December, 94 police officers, including 5 women, were promoted to the rank of Police Commissioner after having successfully completed a seven-month training course. On 22 December, a graduation ceremony was held for the second class of the Haitian Armed Forces, comprising 409 soldiers, including 92 women.

26. Day-to-day operations undertaken to counter the ever-growing armed gang phenomenon continued to deplete police resources and hamper the delivery of other necessary, routine services. Taking into consideration mounting operational pressure and rising costs, the Haitian National Police was granted a 45 per cent increase over the previous fiscal budget for the period 2021/22.

27. In the past three years, a significant number of police facilities have been damaged and destroyed by natural disasters and gang crime. In 2021 and 2022 alone, more than 100 deliberate attacks against police infrastructure were recorded, resulting in dozens of police stations requiring urgent reconstruction. Similar trends have been observed for police equipment and vehicles, with a significant portion of the patrol fleet non-operational for lack of servicing and spare parts. While the Government has recently made efforts to address the acute equipment shortages, additional funding is required to complement the national police budget, without which meaningful improvements to public safety are unlikely to be achieved.

##### *Basket fund to support the professionalization of the Haitian National Police*

28. Momentum to address the security situation in Haiti continues to build through joint efforts by the international community in the last quarter of 2022 to support the professionalization of the national police. Advocacy, supported by BINUH, for a UNDP-managed multi-donor joint programme in support of the Haitian National Police (known as the basket fund) has so far resulted in pledges of \$17.75 million out of the \$28 million requested. After the initiation of key processes, including a human rights due diligence assessment and the drafting of terms of reference, the technical working group, consisting of members of the Haitian National Police, the United Nations and funding partners, held its first meeting, on 30 November, at which it approved the implementation action plan.

29. At the end of 2022, financial resources were allocated to the implementation of a total of 15 activities selected by the national police leadership in coordination with UNDP and BINUH. One major ongoing project involves the implementation of a vetting system for police officers whereby they are vetted by both the Permanent Recruitment Service and the General Inspectorate of the Haitian National Police, with the aim of improving background checks for police recruits and ensuring the continuous vetting of serving police officers throughout their careers. Other activities include police intelligence, asset management and police infrastructure projects, as well as the purchase of equipment, including vehicles, motorcycles, handheld radios, drones and office furniture.

*Justice and corrections*

30. The Council of Ministers appointed Judge Jean-Joseph Lebrun as President of the Court of Cassation on 11 November, ending the protracted vacancy that had followed the death of the previous President of the Court in June 2021. While some civil society organizations questioned the constitutionality of the appointment, most judicial stakeholders praised Mr. Lebrun's qualifications for the role and welcomed the nomination as a critical step in returning to a functioning Court of Cassation. Upon his swearing-in ceremony for the presidency of the Court of Cassation on 22 November, Mr. Lebrun automatically became the President of the Superior Council of the Judiciary as well and assumed relevant financial authorities, enabling the Council to reach a quorum to disburse its budget for the regular operation of the judiciary.

31. However, gang-related violence continued to undermine the functioning of the judicial system, affecting efforts to address the high rate of prolonged pretrial detention, among other activities. By the end of the year, State authorities had still not recovered control of the premises of the Court of First Instance of Port-au-Prince, which had been raided and occupied by gang elements in mid-June 2022. The Court of First Instance of Croix-des-Bouquets (West Department), which was also attacked and set ablaze by gang members in late July, continues to be temporarily housed in several government buildings in Tabarre (West Department).

32. During her installation as the new acting Minister of Justice and Public Safety, Emmelie Prophète-Milcé (also serving as Minister of Culture and Communications) announced that her priorities would include addressing prison overcrowding and the excessive rate of prolonged pretrial detention. On 28 November, the Minister met with the Chief Prosecutors from the 18 jurisdictions of Haiti to urge them to carefully weigh the use of detention for minor offences and to accelerate the proceedings of pending cases. In that regard, on 1 December, the Minister sent a circular to all public prosecutors, instructing them to issue at least 10 indictments per month among the pending cases of prisoners in pretrial detention and announcing administrative measures against those who do not meet the target. The circular further instructed public prosecutors to monitor security and health conditions in the prisons.

33. As of 31 December, Haitian prisons held a total of 11,161 inmates, including 285 women, 266 boys and 8 girls, and had an estimated overall occupancy rate of 278.8 per cent, with 9,278 inmates awaiting trial. During the reporting period, judicial authorities showed a renewed sense of urgency in addressing the long-standing challenge of prolonged pretrial detention. An ad hoc committee, launched on 14 October, with BINUH technical support, reviewed individuals in pretrial detention eligible for release, resulting in the endorsement of a list of 350 eligible detainees. The work of the committee, composed of high-ranking judges, the Office of the National Ombudsman, the Chief Prosecutor of the Port-au-Prince jurisdiction, the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, police and penitentiary authorities and the National Legal Aid Council, enabled the two habeas corpus cases to proceed on behalf

of 93 initial detainees at the Court of First Instance of Port-au-Prince. Thanks to the habeas corpus hearings launched in Port-au-Prince, a total of 81 prisoners were released between 3 November and 28 December in that jurisdiction alone. Nevertheless, the rate of individuals in prisons who were on pretrial status remained extremely high, at 83.1 per cent.

34. The disruption of supplies caused by gang blockades of the Varreux fuel terminal access routes further exacerbated already precarious conditions in prisons in Haiti, worsening chronic shortages of food, medication, water and cooking gas. BINUH, in coordination with the United Nations country team and other international and national partners, provided support to ensure that Haitian prisons received temporary emergency supplies of food and medication. Food shortages had a direct bearing on detainees' health; most recent cases of death in the prison system have been directly connected to malnutrition. The year 2022 was marked by an increase in the number of deaths to 185, compared with 147 in 2021. The concerning situation was further exacerbated by the cholera outbreak, which was allegedly linked to 42 deaths among the prison population during the reporting period.

35. Technical and financial partners continued to support prison authorities with the rehabilitation of the Petit-Goâve prison (West Department), a critical infrastructure project aimed at relieving the facility's severely overcrowded conditions.

## **V. Human rights**

36. Turf battles between heavily armed gangs continued to have a negative impact on the human rights situation in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince and in the Artibonite and North departments. Gangs increasingly targeted local populations, deliberately killing, injuring and committing acts of sexual violence during coordinated armed attacks to expand their territorial control. Police officers were also reportedly involved in incidents of excessive use of force, leading to casualties.

37. In Cité Soleil (West Department), gangs continued to target people living in areas under the control of their rivals, mostly in the Brooklyn neighbourhood, in an effort to unseat rival leaders. On an almost daily basis, snipers armed with assault rifles indiscriminately shot at residents, including women and children, in the streets and in homes.

38. In a strategy to tighten its grip on the capital, one alliance of gangs violently stormed the northern, eastern and southern areas held by its rivals. In Croix-des-Bouquets, between 10 and 21 October, at least 71 people were killed, and dozens of residences were looted and destroyed. Turf battles also caused multiple casualties and other human rights abuses in the areas of Savane Pistache (Port-au-Prince) and Laboule 12 (Pétionville), where rival coalitions clashed for control of key arteries connecting the capital to the southern part of the country.

39. Gang violence likewise continued to compel residents to flee their neighbourhoods. As of November, 39,492 internally displaced persons were sheltered at 50 spontaneous sites, while 115,647 others were accommodated in 247 host communities across the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, for a total of 155,139 internally displaced persons. This represents an increase of 77 per cent since end-August. In September and November, an additional 5,575 people were displaced owing to armed attacks in the Artibonite and Centre departments, including people leaving the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area.

40. An increase in human rights abuses and in the disruption of business activities by gangs was also reported in the Artibonite and North departments. In Artibonite, two violent incidents involving a local gang and a vigilante group left at least 22 dead

among the local population in mid-November. Cases of vigilantism also increased in the department capital, where insufficient police presence has resulted in the emergence of lynch mobs against common criminals and gang members.

41. Excessive force used by police while attempting to restore order during protests reportedly resulted in the killing of 34 protesters, journalists and bystanders. In addition, five political activists belonging to one of the main opposition parties who, while protesting in the streets, were apprehended by individuals wearing police uniforms. The bodies of the activists were found days later.

42. Journalists continued to be highly exposed to acts of violence in the course of their work. Between 25 and 30 October, three journalists were killed, and three others were injured during police operations. Most incidents occurred in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince and the South Department.

43. No progress was made in the investigations into the massacres in La Saline (2018) and Bel Air (2019), and the assassinations of Monferrier Dorval (2020) and President Moïse (2021).

44. In late November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship and the Office of the National Ombudsman condemned “the inhuman and degrading treatment” inflicted on Haitian migrants by authorities in the Dominican Republic. Although the exact figure is difficult to ascertain, reports indicate that more than 18,000 people were forced across the border from the Dominican Republic during the month of November. In a single day, on 14 November, 4,582 migrants were arrested for deportation. Since 20 November, approximately 1,000 migrants have been deported per day, according to information collected by IOM. In addition, according to IOM and civil society organizations at the border, among those expelled were numerous pregnant and lactating women and accompanied and unaccompanied children, as well as Haitians holding valid visas and Dominican citizens of Haitian origin. The United Nations provided assistance in transportation, food, hygiene items, mental health and psychosocial support and facilitation for family reunification, according to individuals’ specific needs. The United Nations and civil society also reported increased hate speech against Haitians on social media and elsewhere over the period.

45. In addition, 21,987 Haitian migrants were repatriated by air and sea as of November compared with 19,629 in 2021. In November alone, IOM provided assistance to 684 migrants repatriated to Haiti by air and sea to Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien, including from the Bahamas (327) and Turks and Caicos (170), while 187 migrants, including several unaccompanied migrant children, were returned by boat after having been intercepted at sea by the United States Coast Guard.

#### *Sexual violence*

46. Gangs continued to use sexual violence, including rape, as a strategy to instil fear in communities, with the ultimate goal of extending their control. During gang clashes in Croix-des-Bouquets, in October, at least 40 women were subjected to rape, including collective rape, by heavily armed gang elements. The women were deliberately targeted because they lived in an area controlled by a rival gang. Women and girls also continued to be highly exposed to rape while travelling along roads controlled by gangs.

47. On 14 October, BINUH and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a report on sexual violence perpetrated by armed gangs. The report established how armed gang members use mass rape and other acts of sexual violence against women, girls, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, and, to a lesser extent, men and boys, as a weapon to inflict terror and to punish and humiliate local populations. BINUH and

OHCHR identify weaknesses in prevention and protection responses in the report, which includes a set of recommendations addressed to national authorities, medical and psychosocial service providers and international actors.

48. The United Nations has continued to work with civil society to coordinate an enhanced multisectoral response for survivors of sexual violence. Following the documentation by BINUH of 52 cases of sexual violence in August perpetrated during gang clashes in Cité Soleil, the United Nations country team coordinated efforts with national institutions and civil society organizations and, together, provided medical, psychological and socioeconomic support for all survivors.

## **VI. Unemployment, youth and vulnerable groups**

49. Haitians continue to suffer the negative impact of the prevailing socioeconomic and security crises, which are deepening systemic and widespread inequalities. While poverty levels were already high, the continued supply shortages have increased the proportion of individuals living under the poverty line to 58 per cent.

50. Despite the efforts of State authorities and the humanitarian community to respond to the massive displacement and protection problems, the situation remains particularly worrisome considering the significant increase of internally displaced persons due to rising insecurity, notably in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince. Internally displaced persons experience high levels of vulnerability, including in relation to acute forms of poverty, health, socioeconomic exploitation and gender-based violence. While 25 per cent of the internally displaced persons live at spontaneous internally displaced person sites, most without any access to basic services, such as treated water, adequate hygiene and sanitation, 75 per cent live within host communities sharing already scarce resources and weak social services, hence increasing the overall needs of already vulnerable communities. This also increases the vulnerability of local social safety nets, as the host communities take on the role of first, and sometimes only, responder to humanitarian needs. Local host communities also play a vital role in ensuring access for humanitarian partners to respond to the increasing needs of the communities of internally displaced persons.

### *Socioeconomic developments*

51. The deterioration of the macroeconomic environment increases the likelihood of a fifth consecutive year of negative growth for the Haitian economy. The 2021/22 fiscal year was once again marked by a decline in economic activity, a depreciation of the exchange rate and an acceleration in inflation. In October 2022, year-on-year inflation reached 47.2 per cent, a level not seen in nearly two decades. Owing to escalating inflation and rising cost of living, combined with the weakness of the local supply chain, the number of food-insecure people in Haiti increased by 48 per cent.

52. The ability of the Government to increase much-needed investment in the agricultural sector – with the goal of decreasing dependence on imported products, boosting local employment and improving the food security situation – is limited, owing in part to weak levels of government revenue. In September 2022, when the fiscal year ended, tax and customs revenues were 8.3 per cent below targets, while budgetary expenditures increased by 7.8 per cent compared with 2021.

53. The dire economic situation was further exacerbated by a 5.5 per cent decline in remittances in the 2021/22 fiscal year. The decline is significant, given that remittances are estimated to represent 23 per cent of gross domestic product. The decline may be due in part to a portion of the transfers previously destined for Haiti

now being sent to countries that have received increased Haitian migration owing to deteriorating security conditions.

54. A staff-monitored programme designed by the International Monetary Fund and Haitian authorities, approved on 17 June 2022 and ending on 31 May 2023, is aimed at helping the Government to identify approaches to restore macroeconomic stability and lower inflation. It prioritizes structural reforms, such as enhancing public sector governance, mobilizing domestic revenues, building capacity and boosting social spending.

55. The security crisis has also negatively affected the development of human capital because of the population's severely limited access to education and employment. The United Nations has been active in assisting the education sector, offering technical and logistical support for the opening of schools by supplying school kits, textbooks and furniture to some of the 66 per cent of schools open in Haiti as of 12 December. However, the situation remains grave. Only 17 per cent and 27 per cent of schools are open in the North and North-East departments, respectively. Of the 10 departments of Haiti, only 2 have at least 90 per cent of their schools open, namely the Nippes and South departments, with the latter having 97 per cent of schools open.

*Social protection and food security*

56. Since 2021, Haiti has experienced a significantly deteriorating situation with regard to food and nutrition, as inflation has continued to rise, with the average cost of a food basket having increased by nearly 63 per cent. As ever, the deteriorating situation has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable. The unpredictable security situation has hampered agricultural activities, prevented the supplying of markets and slowed down ongoing investment, especially in small-scale trade, the main source of income for a large part of the population. People's livelihoods continue to erode, and humanitarian partners face great difficulty in gaining access to the most vulnerable populations.

57. According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis published on 14 October 2022, 4.7 million people are acutely food-insecure (phase 3 and above). In the period from September 2022 to February 2023, as many as 19,200 people are estimated to be in catastrophic situation, living under famine-like conditions (phase 5), 1.8 million in an emergency situation (phase 4) and 2.9 million in a crisis situation (phase 3). The number of people in an emergency situation (phase 4) rose by more than 35.5 per cent. These trends are likely to continue if the level of humanitarian assistance does not increase.

58. Food insecurity is now compounded by cholera, doubling the level of vulnerability. Cité Soleil and Port-au-Prince, which have some of the highest numbers of suspected and confirmed cases of cholera, are also the most affected by catastrophic food insecurity, with 1 in 20 residents of Cité Soleil living in famine-like conditions (phase 5).

59. The situation is further exacerbated by weak social protection systems and a lack of decent employment opportunities. Agriculture and agribusiness continue to offer the most immediate potential to address high unemployment, especially among young people and women, and to improve resilience to economic shocks. The United Nations country team, with others, has led calls for an adaptive social protection system that helps vulnerable households build resilience by investing in their capacity to prepare for, cope with and adapt to shocks. Working in coordination with the National Commission for Food Security, the United Nations country team supported the development of a multisectoral plan to operationalize the national policy for food sovereignty, food security and nutrition. The United Nations is also supporting the

drafting of an action plan for the national social protection and promotion policy (June 2020), covering health care, cash transfers, education, employment, job training, social services and institutional reforms, to create a rights-based social protection system and help to foster a more just and inclusive society. In support of the action plan, the Government allocated \$30 million in the 2021/22 national budget and committed to prioritizing the plan by re-allocating \$30 million in the 2022/23 national budget (covering the period from October 2022 to September 2023). In addition, the World Bank provided a grant of \$75 million, which will substantially increase the number of households registered in the social registry of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour.

## **VII. Basic social service delivery and resilience**

60. Widespread insecurity continued to disrupt basic social service delivery in the capital and across the country. National road 2, linking the capital to the southern peninsula, has been blocked by gangs since June 2021, cutting off at least 3 million people from Port-au-Prince, the country's economic centre. The blockade undermines freedom of movement and further contributes to inflation and jeopardizes livelihoods. More recently, the northern departments have also become increasingly isolated from the capital.

61. Access to fuel remained a major problem for the population. Although the supply of fuel to the capital resumed, the regular supply of fuel to other departments has yet to recommence. The United Nations and international and national humanitarian partners are facing increasing difficulties in reaching beneficiaries throughout the country, including at spontaneous internally displaced persons sites, to provide water, food and health care. In addition, the costs of operations are increasing. To mitigate the impact of the fuel crisis on humanitarian efforts, as of 3 November, the United Nations provided humanitarian partners with 40,000 gallons of fuel to ensure continued delivery of services.

62. Amid the ongoing cholera outbreak, the lack of fuel has further undermined access to health services owing to restrictions on movement and to the impact of fluctuations in the supply of water and electricity on the functioning of medical facilities. Activities critical to the cholera response have been hampered, including epidemiological surveillance, installation of oral rehydration points, the operation of, and transportation of patients to, cholera treatment centres, and awareness-raising activities at the community level. In addition, the closure of ports is a major challenge for the import of medical supplies.

### *Cholera update*

63. Since the first reported case of cholera in 2022, on 2 October, the country has seen a rapid increase in suspected 23,044 as of January 2023) and confirmed cases (1,576 as of January 2023). The disease has also spread beyond the initial epicentre of Port-au Prince, with suspected cases reported in all 10 departments. Children represent a significant proportion of cases; as of 8 January, 40 per cent of suspected cases were among children under the age of 15. The Government has taken on commendable leadership of the coordination of response efforts, and the United Nations continues to work with government, national and international partners to address the outbreak and implement lessons learned for an efficient response.

64. The support of the United Nations and other partners for national authorities also included the provision of medical supplies and assistance to the Ministry of Public Health and Population with regard to surveillance, case management and the establishment of 94 cholera treatment centres throughout the country. The United

Nations also assisted health authorities with the training and deployment of 900 community health workers to conduct risk communication and community engagement activities. Mobile health clinics have been deployed to Cité Soleil, which has been marred by the recent spike in gang violence and among the hardest hit by the cholera outbreak. With rapidly increasing needs and current access challenges, United Nations logistics support and United Nations Humanitarian Air Service transport ensured that aid reached the most vulnerable.

65. Access to clean drinking water and sanitation is vital to both the treatment and prevention of cholera. In 2022, it is estimated that only 55 per cent of the population had regular access to clean drinking water (48 per cent in rural areas and 68 per cent in urban areas), according to the National Directorate for Potable Water and Sanitation of Haiti. The situation was particularly dire at spontaneous internally displaced persons sites throughout the capital and the southern peninsula. The United Nations provided access to treated water to vulnerable populations, installing water points in the most at-risk areas and distributing purification tablets and chlorine.

66. Haiti already had the highest maternal mortality rate in Latin America and the Caribbean. The latest violence, civil unrest and the cholera outbreak have put the lives of thousands of pregnant and lactating women at risk, in particular women living at internally displaced persons sites. If severely dehydrated, pregnant women are nine times more likely to lose their baby. A provisional protocol for the management of cholera cases, in particular during pregnancy, has been approved and is currently being distributed to those involved in maternal care and case management.

67. Against this backdrop, the 2022 humanitarian response plan for Haiti remains severely underfunded; only 43 per cent of requirements were funded by the end of the year. On 15 November, the 2022 cholera flash appeal was launched with the participation of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Planning and External Cooperation, the Minister of Public Health and Population, the Directors General of Civil Protection, Potable Water and Sanitation, and Public Health and Population, the United Nations, humanitarian partners and donors.

68. The flash appeal calls for the provision of rapid financial support to contain the spread of cholera through activities focused on water, sanitation and health and to respond to humanitarian needs, in particular food security, nutrition and protection needs in the most affected areas. In total, the response strategy targets 1.4 million of the 1.6 million people in need, with financial requirements of \$145.6 million. The appeal simultaneously seeks to help to address the root causes of instability and long-term development gaps in the country.

## **VIII. Sexual exploitation and abuse**

69. During the period from 1 September to 31 December, BINUH registered one new allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse and a related paternity claim involving personnel from a present mission.

70. The resurgence of cholera, coupled with the security situation, has exacerbated the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse during the humanitarian response, especially for internally displaced women and children. In this context, the United Nations country team has scaled up its vetting of staff and partners, its risk-mitigation programming, including the preparation of child-friendly awareness-raising materials, and its reporting and referral pathways for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. The interim Coordinator of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse led the completion of the relevant action plan. He also led discussions on the adoption

of a high-level declaration to restate the commitment of the United Nations system and its implementing partners in Haiti to eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse.

71. The project financed by the trust fund in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse to provide support to mothers who were victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by former personnel of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, and to children born of that sexual exploitation and abuse, came to an end in September 2022. IOM has submitted a new project proposal to the trust fund that is pending approval. In the interim, and within the constraints imposed by the worsening situation in Haiti, the Senior Victims' Rights Officer, with support from BINUH and the United Nations country team, continued to provide life-saving assistance to mothers and children.

72. The Senior Victims' Rights Officer, supported by the Victims' Rights Advocate and the Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance, also continued to engage with Member States to expedite the resolution of paternity and child support claims and to facilitate legal assistance for mothers and children in fathers' countries of jurisdiction.

## **IX. Observations**

73. In the 18 months since the assassination of President Moïse, the urgent need for decisive steps to restore democratic functioning and respect for human rights and the rule of law has never been more pressing. I urge all stakeholders to work together for the implementation of inclusive transitional arrangements to help to create the necessary conditions to restore democratic institutions. I welcome the clear and strong support from across the international community for a Haitian-owned and Haitian-led solution. A meaningful and inclusive dialogue among Haitians will continue to be essential to charting a path towards a more stable and sustainable future. I also reiterate my call for every effort to be made to investigate the assassinations of President Moïse and other public figures and to ensure that perpetrators face justice.

74. National authorities have taken steps to improve the performance of State institutions, most notably efforts to better equip the national police. Nonetheless, the country's institutions continue to operate under strain. In this regard, I am grateful to those donors who have engaged early with the basket fund, and I appeal to the international community to demonstrate solidarity with Haiti at this precarious moment, including by following through on additional contributions in support of the Haitian National Police.

75. Despite the end of the siege of the Varreux oil terminal, I reiterate the urgent need for the deployment of an international specialized armed force, as articulated in my letter dated 8 October addressed to the President of the Security Council. While public opinion has broadly welcomed progress on targeted sanctions measures decided by the Council, the restoration of the rule of law is crucial for the people of Haiti to exercise their political and civil rights, including to safely vote in a general election. It is vital that major roads and key facilities remain unobstructed to enable the State to function and protect the people of Haiti so that they may safely go about their daily lives.

76. In addition to enhancing capacities for police development and operations, Haiti must take steps to ensure the effective functioning of the criminal justice system. While the Government has committed to revitalizing efforts to reduce the staggering rate of pretrial detention, crucial reforms are still needed to address structural deficiencies within the justice system. The recent nomination of the new President of the Court of Cassation, and his consequent role in presiding over the Superior Council

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of the Judiciary, will allow the judiciary to remain operational during this period of institutional instability. I encourage all judicial stakeholders to work together constructively to ensure that the courts are able to carry out their responsibilities. National authorities, with international support, must also consider new measures for the investigation and prosecution of serious crimes, including through the establishment of dedicated specialized judicial units. Consensus is needed to determine how to bring new penal and criminal procedure codes into force.

77. The people of Haiti are suffering the worst human rights and humanitarian emergency in decades. Gang violence has fuelled a cholera outbreak, increased food insecurity, displaced thousands of people and kept children out of school. Women and girls continue to be targets of gender-based violence. I commend national and international humanitarian partners who deliver life-saving assistance to vulnerable communities. More must be done to enable humanitarian access, protect civilians throughout the country, bring perpetrators to justice and ensure that adequate resources are made available for humanitarian response.

78. Human rights violations have reached a critical level. In gang-controlled areas, people are deprived of their most fundamental rights, including the rights to life, water, food and health care. I call upon partners to support the work of BINUH and OHCHR in documenting human rights violations and abuses with a view to contributing to justice and accountability. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has repeatedly called upon national, regional and international actors to address the situation. Furthermore, considering that the prevailing violence and ensuing humanitarian situation do not allow for a safe and sustainable return of Haitians to the country, I urge countries in the region to consider halting the deportation of Haitians until the human rights and humanitarian crises have been adequately addressed.

79. The disproportionate impact of gang violence on women and girls in Haiti has to be urgently addressed. I condemn in the strongest terms the reports of the widespread sexual violence used by armed gangs as a weapon to instil fear in communities. The victims of these heinous crimes deserve justice. I call for an accountable justice system to take immediate action against the current state of widespread impunity for perpetrators. The United Nations will continue to provide support to women and girls living in gang-controlled communities.

80. Although the engagement of the Senior Victims' Rights Officer on the ground to champion the rights of victims of sexual abuse and exploitation has resulted in some progress for victims, significant barriers to achieving justice remain. The United Nations is committed to intensifying engagement with Member States to improve the access of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse to relevant judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.

81. At this grave moment, I reiterate my solidarity with the people of Haiti, in particular the young, who deserve a future which is safer, brighter and more equitable. I also acknowledge the continuing efforts and dedication of United Nations personnel in Haiti, under the leadership of my Special Representative and Deputy Special Representative. The United Nations will continue to stand with Haiti in support of a sustainable and nationally owned solution to this devastating crisis.