



Security Council

Distr.: General
27 February 2025

Original: English

Letter dated 24 February 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

In a letter dated 29 November 2024 from the President of the Security Council ([S/2024/868](#)), the members of the Council requested me to provide a comprehensive assessment of the current context and ongoing United Nations and international efforts in Haiti. Council members sought strategic-level recommendations with a full range of options for the possible role that the United Nations could play, considering lessons learned from past missions, political developments and the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti. The recommendations should take a long-term perspective to sustain security and stability, addressing the root causes of the country's multidimensional crisis. The request included a reference to the letter dated 21 October 2024 from the President of the Transitional Presidential Council addressed to the Secretary-General ([S/2024/765](#), annex) urging the transformation of the Mission into a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

The Secretariat conducted the assessment requested by the Security Council, with support from the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH). Extensive consultations were conducted with Haitian stakeholders, including members of the Transitional Presidential Council, the Prime Minister, political parties, civil society and the leadership of the Haitian National Police. Further consultations included Security Council members, regional Member States, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as well as the leadership of the Multinational Security Support Mission. The Secretariat heard a range of views regarding the potential future United Nations role in Haiti, including the possible transformation of the Mission into a United Nations peacekeeping operation that would facilitate immediate, robust and sustained international support in neutralizing armed gangs.

Current context

Haiti is still undergoing a fragile political transition following the assassination of the President, Jovenel Moïse, in July 2021. Progress on completing the road map for elections and the restoration of democratic institutions by February 2026, as foreseen in the governance arrangements of 11 March 2024, has been mixed. Transitional bodies have been established, including the Transitional Presidential Council, an interim Prime Minister, a Cabinet, the Provisional Electoral Council, and the steering committee for the National Conference, a mechanism to broaden citizen participation in identifying solutions to the crisis, including constitutional reform. However, disputes over power-sharing, although less frequent in the past three months, have slowed the implementation of the transition road map. Unresolved



allegations of corruption against three members of the Transitional Presidential Council contribute to the erosion of public trust.

The protracted political transition has created space for gangs to challenge State authority. As highlighted in various reports of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to the Security Council, gangs have increasingly leveraged profits from organized crime – such as kidnapping, extortion and drug trafficking – to gain financial independence. In some instances, many of them have moved beyond being mere proxies for economic and social elites. Gang attacks have also become more organized, reflecting greater planning, tactical sophistication and access to heavy weaponry. Major attacks in March and November 2024 across Port-au-Prince and the Artibonite Department illustrated this trend, as gangs exploited moments of political instability and showed ability to conduct large-scale, coordinated attacks. Violence is likely to escalate considerably during the upcoming electoral period, with gang leaders seeking to rebrand themselves as political actors to gain immunity and legitimacy.

Gangs primarily consist of boys and young men between 10 and 30 years of age and recruited from the most impoverished areas. Women and girls are coerced into relationships with gang members, and children serve as lookouts, couriers, human shields or fighters. Estimates suggest that children comprise between one third to one half of all gang members. Leaving gangs is rare, with defectors facing severe punishment and their families targeted in retaliation. No government or international partner currently supports children, young people and women seeking to leave.

Gang-related violence killed at least 5,601 people in 2024, over 1,000 more than in 2023. In December, a gang reportedly executed at least 207 people over several days, burning or dismembering bodies to destroy evidence. A massacre in Pont-Sondé, Artibonite, where 100 people were killed in a gang attack on 3 October, illustrates the scale of gang expansion outside the capital and the need for greater police mobility and capabilities.

Sexual violence by gangs remains alarming. Rape, including collective rape combined with mutilations or executions, is used to terrorize communities and expand the gangs' territorial control. Weak judicial enforcement has translated into widespread impunity for such atrocities.

The West and Artibonite Departments, which account for over 40 per cent of the electorate, are the most affected by the gangs. Most of the capital (West Department) is now beyond State control, with gangs enforcing roadblocks and acting as de facto authorities. Violence and coercion have disrupted the provision of public goods and services, deepening grievances between communities and the State. State authorities, including police, have been unable to access or maintain a permanent presence in multiple gang-controlled areas for years.

Strategic infrastructure – such as electrical plants, factories, fibre-optic cables and fuel facilities – is a frequent target of attacks. The Port-au-Prince metropolitan area has grown increasingly isolated, as commercial flights to and from the country's main international airport remain suspended following incidents of gunfire against aircraft in February and November 2024. Gangs also control all main roads into and out of the capital, effectively encircling the city.

The erosion of State authority is evident in the destruction of police infrastructure. As at 31 December 2024, Haiti had 412 police facilities, with 67 non-operational and of which nearly 70 per cent are in the West Department. Many are in gang-controlled areas or have been damaged by fire or demolished. Of the country's 21 prisons, seven are non-functional, including the three largest, all located in the West Department, due to extensive gang-related damage. The Port-au-Prince

and Croix-des-Bouquets courts of first instance have been rendered inoperable by gang attacks.

Hospitals and schools are also frequent targets of gang violence. Nationwide, only 28 per cent of in-patient health facilities remain fully operational, 54 per cent have closed, and 18 per cent operate at reduced capacity. In the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, 43 per cent of in-patient health facilities remain functional, but 38 per cent have shut down due to insecurity. Over 1,000 schools remain closed due to violence, depriving approximately 200,000 children of education as of January 2025. Since the assassination of President Moïse, internal displacement has surged, rising from 330,000 one year ago to over 1 million at present, as Haitians continue to flee gang violence. An additional challenge facing the country is the impending forced return of a significant number of Haitians, adding pressure to the volatile environment.

Escalating violence has severely hampered the international presence in Port-au-Prince. Security risks and inadequate mitigating measures have forced a significant temporary reduction in United Nations, diplomatic and non-governmental organization personnel. A single 14-passenger United Nations humanitarian air service helicopter remains the primary evacuation option, despite being struck by gunfire last October. Uncertain donor funding poses a major challenge to the continuation of this service. In January 2025, gangs opened fire on identified diplomatic vehicles, causing one fatality and injuring six.

Root causes

Gang violence is a manifestation of deeper causes of instability rooted in weak political structures, autocratic rule, corruption, human rights abuses and violations, inequality and underdevelopment. Fragile State institutions, plagued by widespread misuse of public funds and international aid, have failed to deliver essential services. The situation is exacerbated by political and economic interests that resist the building of a well-managed State governed by the rule of law with a view to monopolizing access to political power and markets. Common grievances include State corruption and impunity, highlighted by the outcry over allegations of the embezzlement of funds from the PetroCaribe oil programme, unresolved allegations of corruption against three Transitional Presidential Council members, and claims of a nefarious alliance between the criminal groups and economic and political elites.

Over the past two decades, and particularly since the assassination of President Moïse in July 2021, the illicit proliferation of firearms has escalated, fuelling instability and territorial control by gangs. In a 2020 report, the Haitian National Commission for Disarmament, Dismantlement and Reintegration estimated that up to 500,000 small arms were in circulation. According to UNODC, about 80 per cent of Haiti-bound firearms seized and submitted for tracing to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives of the United States of America between 2020 and 2022 were manufactured in or imported from the United States. Weapons trafficked primarily from the United States now include high-powered firearms. UNODC reported that some types of rifles in the hands of gangs suggested the existence of alternative routes of weapons trafficking from South America. Corruption within law enforcement, private security companies, customs and political circles has facilitated this arms trade.

The convergence of transnational criminal networks, weak governance and pervasive corruption has resulted in a firearms trafficking crisis. Despite the United Nations sanctions and arms embargo, gangs continue to access high-calibre weapons, drones and night vision equipment, outmatching the Haitian National Police and the Haitian Armed Forces. Arms seizures remain minimal, while trafficking routes adapt

to exploit corruption and weak enforcement. Poor stockpile management systems, lack of accountability and corruption have allowed the funnelling of weapons to gangs and private entities.

National security capacities

The Haitian National Police lead anti-gang operations with support from the Haitian Armed Forces and the Multinational Security Support Mission, which began deploying on 25 June 2024. However, the National Police lacks the capacity to maintain control after operations, allowing gangs to reclaim territory. Almost 30 years since its founding, the National Police is severely understaffed and ill-equipped, and is plagued by resource mismanagement, corruption and political interference. The abrupt shift in the security landscape of Haiti in recent years has strained the police force, requiring a transition from managing civil unrest to conducting complex anti-gang operations – demands that current recruitment, training and procurement efforts fail to meet. This is compounded by a sharp rise in police attrition.

Despite increased government funding – including \$227.16 million, or 9.27 per cent of the 2024–2025 national budget – the Haitian National Police remains underresourced. The appropriations for the National Police for 2024/25 increased by 32.94 per cent compared with the previous fiscal year. Bilateral donors provide equipment and training, while the United Nations offers strategic and advisory support and manages a police professionalization fund (known as the basket fund), now at \$25.9 million of its \$28 million target.

The weak border management and control of Haiti exacerbate security threats. Limited institutional capacities, inadequate infrastructure, corruption and resource constraints hinder customs enforcement at ports, airports and land border crossings. UNODC reports that the 391-km border with the Dominican Republic remains highly porous, with only four official crossings and over 80 known illegal routes, facilitating the illicit flow of weapons, munitions, contraband, drugs and persons.

The 1,771-km coastline of Haiti remains highly vulnerable due to the lack of patrol capabilities and surveillance mechanisms. The Haitian Coast Guard, under the National Police, operates with only three functional patrol boats and fewer than 150 personnel, leaving critical entry points exposed to trafficking and other criminal activities. Ports such as Port-de-Paix in the north-west and smaller southern ports are hotspots for illicit trafficking in weapons, drugs and persons. The recent surge in attacks on maritime assets by gangs in the bay of Port-au-Prince highlights growing security risks. Strengthening operational capacity, enhancing inter-agency coordination, sharing regional intelligence and investing in technology are essential to address cross-border crime.

The Haitian Armed Forces, reinstated in 2017 after being disbanded in 1995, have about 865 personnel, including 124 women, but remain poorly equipped. Since 2024, they have played a growing role in supporting police anti-gang operations and maintaining security in reclaimed areas. A recruitment drive for 1,500 cadets began in August 2024. In the 2024–2025 national budget, the Armed Forces were allocated a considerable budget increase of \$53 million (approximately 7 billion Haitian gourdes), compared with \$9.8 million (1.295 billion gourdes) in the previous budget. The Armed Forces receive training from bilateral partners, but BINUH is not mandated to engage with them.

Lessons learned

Previous United Nations missions made considerable investments in police development and capacity-building to restore State authority in areas affected by gang violence. In 2004, the Security Council authorized Member States to deploy the short-

term Multinational Interim Force in Haiti to help stabilize Port-au-Prince and other areas. This was followed by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which supported police capacity-building through training and infrastructure development, along with operational and logistical assistance. MINUSTAH helped to professionalize the Haitian National Police workforce, expanding it from 2,500 in 2004 to 14,800 by its closure in 2017.

During the period of deployment of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), National Police recruitment slowed, partially due to the lack of donor funding allocated to the strategic development plan of the Haitian National Police for 2017–2021, reaching a strength of 15,404 by 2019 when MINUJUSTH closed.

The success of MINUSTAH in tackling gang violence depended on joint operations of United Nations military and police personnel with the Haitian National Police, the robust use-of-force mandate and effective information collection. A peacekeeping intelligence network provided valuable information, enhancing situational awareness and planning precision. Community engagement by the United Nations forces and quick-impact projects to build trust were also key.

The transition from peacekeeping in October 2019 assumed continued police development and political stability. Lessons from the past underscore the need for sustained police development and long-term, nationally owned strategies to address the complex interconnections between political and economic interests, socioeconomic inequalities and the gang phenomenon in the country. Without national political commitment to these priorities and steady coordinated international support in the same direction, security gains will remain temporary.

International support

An overview is provided below of the three measures currently authorized by the Security Council to strengthen political stability, good offices and security in Haiti and the challenges that they face: (a) BINUH, a special political mission established in 2019; (b) a sanctions regime established in 2022; and (c) the Multinational Security Support Mission, authorized in 2023. For the latter two, the Council acted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and determined that the situation in Haiti continued to constitute a threat to international peace and security and to stability in the region. Since then, the multidimensional crisis in Haiti has significantly worsened.

United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti

In 2024, emboldened gangs overwhelmed the security infrastructure of BINUH, leading to two partial evacuations of personnel. The suspension of United States commercial flights to Port-au-Prince since November 2024 means that the limited number of BINUH staff that continue to operate in Port-au-Prince rely on the United Nations humanitarian air service to move in and out of the capital.

BINUH provides good offices and strategic and advisory support to the Government. It is mandated to promote and strengthen political stability and good governance, including the rule of law, to preserve and advance a peaceful and stable environment, including through inclusive inter-Haitian national dialogue, and to promote human rights. BINUH assists the Government in reinforcing the capacity of the police, planning and executing free and fair and transparent elections, reducing community violence, promoting human rights protection and accountability, strengthening penitentiary administration management and advancing reforms of the justice sector.

The role of BINUH in supporting peace and security remains essential in addressing root causes of instability. The mission's mandate is necessary to sustain security gains as it works to advance the institutional development of the Haitian National Police and to bolster the numbers and strengthen the integrity of the police force. Its advisory role in helping to implement a national strategy to reduce gang and community violence, including gender-based violence, is also necessary. The Office's support on human rights helps to strengthen human rights compliance by the National Police.

Beyond security, BINUH plays a key role in supporting the country's democratic transition. While elections are a priority, they are only a first step in a broader political process. BINUH worked for an expanded Haitian-led dialogue, and its good offices will be crucial in ensuring the implementation of commitments made under the transitional governance arrangements of 11 March 2024.

The first round of presidential elections is scheduled for 15 November 2025. The meaningful political participation of women and young people is essential, and BINUH is expected to continue its efforts in this area.

Sanctions regime

The United Nations sanctions regime, under which a targeted travel ban and asset freeze, as well as an arms embargo, were imposed, has considerable potential to help create conditions for addressing some of the root causes of the crisis. Currently, awareness around the United Nations sanctions among Haitian authorities and other stakeholders remains very limited. Lack of domestic implementation and reluctance to apply sanctions have resulted in low effectiveness of the sanctions regime, hampering its impact. Furthermore, only seven individuals have been designated under the sanctions, of whom six are gang members. Sanctions measures, especially if applied to a broader list of individuals, remain an integral element of a comprehensive strategy to stabilize Haiti.

Multinational Security Support Mission

The Multinational Security Support Mission is tasked with providing support, including operational support, to the Haitian National Police in re-establishing security, ensuring conditions for free and fair elections and securing critical infrastructure. Its robust rules of engagement are essential for achieving these objectives. However, the Mission remains in its deployment phase and lacks capabilities and equipment for sustained operations. It recently reached 1,000 personnel, hailing from the Bahamas, Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, and Kenya, the lead nation. The current number of staff is 40 per cent of the planned 2,500 personnel envisaged in its concept of operations. Given escalating gang violence, additional forces may be required (Security Council resolution [2699 \(2023\)](#) authorizing the Mission and resolution [2751 \(2024\)](#) extending its mandate until 2 October 2025 do not set a ceiling for uniformed personnel).

To isolate gangs and secure key areas, particularly in metropolitan Port-au-Prince and lower Artibonite, the Multinational Security Support Mission should be reinforced with specialized police units to protect critical infrastructure, such as seaports, airports, oil terminals and major roadways. The Mission should have a clear mandate to seize, collect, record and dispose of arms and ammunition and other illicit materiel, in coordination with the Haitian National Police, along with its mandate to support the redeployment of police and customs units at all ports of entry and conduct other border control activities.

The Multinational Security Support Mission has established its headquarters near the Port-au-Prince international airport. Three of the planned 12 forward

operating bases foreseen in its concept of operations have been established in other locations. Building the remaining bases is essential for the Mission and the Haitian National Police to secure areas reclaimed from gangs and accommodate additional personnel. The Mission has supported the National Police in anti-gang operations and patrols, protecting residents, retaking critical infrastructure and repelling gang attacks. However, critical gaps in mobility, self-sustainment and coordination limit its operational effectiveness.

The Multinational Security Support Mission is reliant on donors for essential equipment. Many of its armoured vehicles are ill-suited for the urban environment of Port-au-Prince. Shortages of spare parts have rendered 50 per cent of combat vehicles non-serviceable. Limitations in enabling capacities, including air support, medical support and communication systems, further constrain Mission effectiveness and raise concerns about personnel safety. The Mission requires stronger intelligence capabilities for effectively planning and conducting joint security support operations. Additional specialized units should be considered to provide actionable insights for operational planning.

The crucial position of Special Representative of the Multinational Security Support Mission, as provided for in its concept of operations, remains unfilled. The role is vital for providing strategic representation and coordination for the Mission, ensuring alignment between its operational needs and resource constraints. This gap has hindered the setting of common goals and the charting of a clear path for the countries contributing personnel, funding and equipment to the Mission.

With the extension of the mandate of the Multinational Security Support Mission to 2 October 2025, questions arise over the sustainability of financing, casting doubt on the continuity of its operations. Through its resolution [2699 \(2023\)](#), the Security Council authorized the deployment of the Mission on the understanding that the cost would be covered by voluntary contributions and support from individual Member States and regional organizations. The United Nations trust fund requested by the Security Council to facilitate voluntary contributions for the Mission has \$110.8 million in cash from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Türkiye and the United States, with an unallocated cash balance of \$48 million. However, much more is needed.

Goals, options and strategy

On the basis of the analysis of the context, two broad goals have been identified: (a) in the medium term, to substantially reduce gangs' territorial control in the capital and the Artibonite Department and over critical infrastructure – ports, airports and national roads; and (b) in the long term, to strengthen and consolidate security and governance structures to ensure lasting stability, uphold the rule of law and promote human rights for all. Protecting the population from gang violence is a key objective of both goals, requiring a comprehensive gender-responsive approach. Both should be pursued in parallel, with emphasis on the medium-term goal.

Medium-term goal

To achieve the medium-term goal, the following key objectives must be accomplished: (a) deprive gangs of control of key areas and infrastructure in Port-au-Prince and the Artibonite, the country's food basket, and prevent their relocation to other parts of Haiti with their weapons; (b) maintain a consistent law enforcement presence in reclaimed areas to ensure comprehensive security; (c) secure key ports, airports and national routes and render them fully operational; (d) restore community trust in law enforcement as human rights violations and corruption within the ranks of law enforcement decline; (e) create the conditions for progress on the political

process, including the holding of inclusive, participatory and credible elections; and (f) reduce the illegal trafficking of arms, drugs and other illicit goods into Haiti.

To achieve these objectives, the Haitian National Police will need the support of well-equipped police and military components, with a light footprint and high mobility units. A mission undertaking operations to neutralize armed gangs must have a robust mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter with potential use of force, not only as a last resort, while adhering strictly to agreed rules of engagement.

Options

The Secretariat conducted a thorough assessment of the full range of options for the United Nations role to meet the medium-term objective of substantially reducing gang territorial control.

At this stage, transitioning to a United Nations peacekeeping operation is not assessed as a feasible option. Such a transition could be considered once significant progress has been made in substantially reducing gang territorial control.

A realistic option is based on a dual-track strategy, with the United Nations assuming new roles to enable the Multinational Security Support Mission, the National Police and Haitian authorities to substantially reduce gang territorial control through peace enforcement. This would require a robust mandate for the use of force and the capacities to conduct targeted operations against gangs, as outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

1. Enable the Multinational Security Support Mission with United Nations logistical and operational support

In the first track, the United Nations can provide logistical and operational support to the Multinational Security Support Mission, enhancing its capacity to conduct effective anti-gang operations. When fully deployed and adequately resourced, the Mission represents the most viable solution to achieve the medium-term objective of reducing gang territorial control. The Mission's comparative advantage over a potential United Nations peacekeeping operation in the current context lies in its robust use-of-force mandate to undertake joint targeted operations with the Haitian National Police against gangs.

Central to the implementation of the proposed new strategy would be the establishment of a United Nations support office, funded by peacekeeping assessed contributions. The office would provide comprehensive United Nations logistical and operational support to the Multinational Security Support Mission, as well as a limited, non-lethal support package to the Haitian National Police when it participates in joint or coordinated operations with the Mission. The Mission would also need to be scaled up in numbers and strengthened with additional military-grade capabilities and lethal equipment provided bilaterally by Member States to address current gaps. This would transition the Mission's financing to a more stable and predictable hybrid model that incorporates significant peacekeeping assessment funding coupled with scaled-up voluntary contributions.

The support office would facilitate the provision of critical enabling capabilities to the Multinational Security Support Mission, providing a stable and predictable resourcing platform for the conduct of operations and any eventual expansion of the Mission strength. It is proposed that the support office would handle the following functions:

(a) Provide comprehensive logistic and operational support to the Multinational Security Support Mission, funded through a hybrid model of peacekeeping assessed funding for logistical and operational support and voluntary

contributions for other forms of support tailored to the needs of the Mission, such as the payment of stipends, providing stable and predictable funding and establishing a platform for the Mission to reach its full operating capability as defined in the current concept of operations. Such support could encompass the full suite of logistic, administrative and operational support typically delivered to a United Nations peacekeeping operation, although limited in scope by the anticipated size and geographical area of operations of the Mission. Areas of support might include accommodation, life support (food, fuel and water), mobility support (ground transportation, movement control, aviation), medical capability within and outside Haiti (including medical evacuation to higher levels of care), engineering and facility management support, general supply support, and communications, information technology and Geographic Information System support;

(i) The use of assessed funding would enable the provision of other support, including troop rotation, and local procurement. It would be tailored to the operational needs of the Mission, including through the establishment and provision of support to temporary operating bases and other temporary operational deployments. Support provided to the Mission would also need to be adjusted in response to changes in the operational model, personnel numbers or deployment footprint, or other major changes;

(ii) United Nations contingent-owned equipment processes could be used to guide the provision of support to the individual Member States contributing to the Mission. Support funded through assessed contributions would entail the application of the United Nations accountability framework, including the Financial Regulations and Rules and other policy frameworks. This would also have the benefit of improving the stability and predictability of support arrangements and strengthening accountability through established United Nations financial, contractual and reporting processes;

(b) Provide a limited, non-lethal support package and capacity-building for the Haitian National Police, mostly funded through voluntary contributions. In parallel, assessed funding could be used for the provision of support enabling the conduct of joint operations between the Multinational Security Support Mission and the National Police, by constructing operational facilities to support joint planning and oversight of operations between the Mission and the National Police and by providing the basis for gathering, storing and sharing sensitive operational information and enhancing interoperability between the Mission and the National Police;

(c) Strengthen the intelligence-gathering and analytical capabilities of the Multinational Security Support Mission and the Haitian National Police in conducting joint operations. Capabilities supporting joint operations, such as a joint operations centre, Geographic Information Systems support and surveillance by unmanned aerial vehicles financed by peacekeeping assessed funding, would enable the Mission and National Police to conduct effective operations, in a manner that is intelligence-based and gender-responsive and addresses multidimensional risks posed by armed gangs. They would enhance situational awareness and operational planning and support the enforcement of United Nations sanctions;

(d) Establish implementation capacity for the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. These capacities, funded through the peacekeeping assessed funds, will be necessary for the implementation of the support office's mandate and essential for monitoring and risk assessment to enable the application of the human rights due diligence policy as a precondition for any support to be provided by the United Nations to the Multinational Security Support Mission and the Haitian National Police. It remains the

responsibility of the Mission to establish and implement a compliance mechanism to prevent human rights violations and abuses, in particular, and sexual exploitation and abuse, as requested by the Security Council in resolution [2699 \(2023\)](#). This should be accompanied by robust preventive measures. A source of funding should also be identified for any eventual victim support.

Member State leadership

The success of the strategy to use a United Nations support office as an enabler for the Multinational Security Support Mission depends on strengthened Member State leadership. This could be achieved through a standing group of partners to provide the Mission with strategic direction, oversight and decision-making. Key functions of this group could include: (a) securing voluntary contributions required to procure the logistical and operational support that the United Nations cannot provide, including military-grade capabilities, lethal equipment and personnel stipends; (b) facilitating force generation and rotating contingents as necessary; and (c) providing strategic representation and coordination for the Mission. The standing group would work closely with the Special Representative of the Mission.

2. Enable the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti to better implement its mandate and assume new responsibilities

In the second track, BINUH should be enabled to better implement its political mandate, facilitating political stability and governance reforms. The good offices, support to political dialogue and electoral assistance of BINUH are central to international efforts to complete the transition and establish legitimate elected State institutions.

In the medium term, beyond the support for political dialogue and preparations for the electoral process, BINUH would focus on the following priorities, which are key to the success of the enforcement action against gangs. Implementation would be guided by priorities and resource availability:

(a) Design and support defection and safe exit programmes, including for children, young people and women forcibly recruited by gangs. Establishing a safe, secure, credible, structured and gender-responsive pathway for those willing to leave gang life behind is an essential complement of police and justice operations. This approach provides sustainability to operational successes, as it interrupts recruitment. Through targeted community-based interventions, such as awareness-raising campaigns, and scaled-up community violence reduction interventions, such programmes would target gangs exhibiting internal tensions or disillusionment, communities where State presence can be reinforced to prevent gang resurgence, and neighbourhoods providing viable economic alternatives to absorb defectors into sustainable livelihoods. Accountability would remain central, ensuring that defection does not equate to impunity;

(b) Support Haitian authorities in their handling of the detention of high-risk individuals. This includes measures to ensure the secure and humane detention of individuals in a high-risk facility. Managed by the Directorate of Penitentiary Administration and supported by BINUH, the facility would be established as part of existing bilateral initiatives in support of the Multinational Security Support Mission, with additional oversight from international corrections officers;

(c) Support the authorities in the prosecution of arrested high-risk individuals. Significant support to the authorities is also needed for investigating, prosecuting and detaining high-risk individuals arrested by the Multinational Security Support Mission. The support should be provided to the judiciary in Port-au-Prince, through a BINUH prosecution support cell, comprising experts in forensics, criminal analysis,

financial investigations, the field of sexual and gender-based violence, and other key specialties;

(d) Enable Haitian authorities to effectively implement United Nations sanctions, notably the arms embargo. A dedicated United Nations integrated sanctions support unit could be created within BINUH to raise awareness of the sanctions regime, train and assist relevant authorities and the Multinational Security Support Mission in implementing sanctions and serve as a focal point for sanctions implementation-related technical capacity-building for the Haitian authorities, including support to the development of domestic regulatory processes to implement the arms embargo, the asset freeze and the travel ban. As armed violence, organized crime and illicit trafficking are not confined to Port-au-Prince, the unit should have the capacity to operate across the country. This would require an increase in the security of BINUH and its access to air assets to implement its mandate across all departments. Increasing technical support and resources to implement an expanded mandate may be enhanced by specialized units focused on weapons and ammunition management, to help Haiti manage its stockpiles of arms and ammunition, and on border management support to the implementation of the asset freeze, the arms embargo and the travel ban. Lastly, United Nations engagement should also support the development of a domestic process to implement and report on the asset freeze;

(e) Establish a joint mechanism with the Government to coordinate and verify the management of specific equipment provided to the Haitian National Police by partners, such as tactical vehicles, firearms and ammunition. The joint mechanism, supported by and closely coordinated with BINUH police, would also be responsible for verifying the control of illegal firearms and ammunition seized from gangs and self-defence groups.

It is equally important to enable BINUH to implement its mandate without further temporary evacuations during spikes in gang violence, which are likely to continue. This operational priority can be achieved in 2025 through adequate and cost-effective security resources, cost-shared with those of the new support office as needed. It would also likely require a substantial increase in the regular budget of BINUH in 2026. A better-protected BINUH, working closely with UNODC, will be able to deliver on the priorities outlined above.

Assumptions and requirements

The proposals for these United Nations roles in Haiti are based on the following assumptions.

Haiti

- Haiti will lead in restoring State authority and the rule of law, with strong national ownership and an inclusive political process.
- BINUH needs additional security enablers, which will affect its budget.
- The Haitian National Police will lead the fight against criminal gangs, with support from the Multinational Security Support Mission and the United Nations.

Multinational Security Support Mission

- A robust use-of-force mandate will continue to be authorized by the Security Council until current protection challenges and security threats are addressed. The Multinational Security Support Mission mandate and full deployment remain crucial until gangs no longer control key areas and law enforcement maintains a consistent capacity and presence.

- A comprehensive United Nations support package for the Mission requires significant investment from the peacekeeping budget.
- Key Member States will provide the Mission with strategic direction, accountability and essential capabilities, including lethal and non-lethal assets and stipends, through scaled-up voluntary contributions.
- Member States will increase personnel contributions to meet the required number to effectively execute the Mission's mandate.

Support office

- The support office relationship with the Multinational Security Support Mission will need to be formalized, including allowing for a process to agree on changes to the Mission staffing, structure, operational footprint and other support requirements.
- Agreements between the United Nations and those countries contributing personnel to the Mission will be required to maintain appropriate accountability for the use of peacekeeping assessed funding.
- Prevailing security conditions, infrastructure constraints and limited available commercial services will pose considerable challenges to the establishment of the Support Office and necessitate a phased approach to the provision of support.
- The viability of United Nations logistical and operational support depends on whether Member States provide sufficient voluntary contributions to address the Mission's gaps in personnel, military-grade equipment and lethal assets.

United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti

- Additional regular budget resources would be needed for the provision of adequate security assets to allow the return of all BINUH personnel.
- Further resources to support a defection programme, sanctions enforcement, information-gathering and analysis, and management of National Police capabilities would have to be phased in from 2026. These additional requirements could be included in the proposed programme budget for 2026 if the Security Council takes a decision in March or April.

Long-term goal

To achieve the long-term goal of consolidating the security and governance structures of Haiti to ensure lasting stability, uphold the rule of law and promote human rights for all, the Security Council will need to consider changes in the United Nations footprint in the lead-up to the conclusion of the work of the Multinational Security Support Mission.

The key objectives for achieving the long-term goal include ensuring that the security forces of Haiti, including the National Police and the Armed Forces, are well trained and equipped to counter gang violence and enforce the law effectively, that human rights for all are better protected and promoted, that democratically elected State institutions and governance structures are increasingly transparent and accountable, that the rule of law is upheld with a more effective judicial and corrections system and that political stability supports sustainable development.

It is premature to anticipate the mandate, scope and structure of a United Nations mission to achieve this long-term goal, including the potential need for military and police components. These decisions will depend on the impact of the Multinational

Security Support Mission on security conditions, the sustainability of these gains and the progress achieved in the political process.

Conclusion

Each new wave of criminal attacks against the communities and institutions of Haiti is a distressing sign that time is running out. We must act quickly. I am convinced that the phased approach of United Nations support detailed above can reverse the shocking and rising trend in gang violence evidenced throughout 2024 and the start of 2025. The Multinational Security Support Mission is slowly assuming the shape of a real multinational effort to support Haiti. We must all stand behind it as an immediate and credible effort to help the Haitian National Police combat armed gangs, prevent their territorial expansion and protect the people of Haiti.

Using the peacekeeping assessed contributions to provide United Nations logistical and operational support to the Multinational Security Support Mission will be critical. Contributing Member States must come together to back the operational leadership of Kenya with political and strategic direction and decision-making. I call upon all Member States to remain committed to the Mission by providing the needed funding and personnel. I also urge Member States to bolster efforts to stem the illicit flow of arms and ammunition fuelling violence in Haiti, including through prevention and enhanced enforcement of the arms embargo.

The calls for peacekeeping have not gone unheard. The Secretariat has carefully examined this as an option, and we stand ready to do so again after the Mission reaches a stabilization phase in the implementation of its mandate.

Furthermore, a successful political transition in Haiti is central to stronger international engagement. Ultimately, international efforts to improve security conditions must be matched by national efforts to end the political crisis. These are the two indispensable and mutually dependent tracks to move the country forward towards the restoration of the rule of law, strengthened institutions and conditions conducive to holding elections.

(Signed) António **Guterres**
