



Security Council

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Letter of 9 May 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to the Security Council the seventh quarterly report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, pursuant to paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution [2692 \(2023\)](#), as reiterated by the Council in paragraph 19 of Security Council resolution [2743 \(2024\)](#). The report includes the requested updated information on the sources and routes of arms trafficking and illicit financial flows, and on relevant United Nations activities and recommendations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present document brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) António **Guterres**



Annex

Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime pursuant to paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution 2692 (2023)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution 2692 (2023) as renewed by paragraph 19 of Security Council resolution 2743 (2024). Specifically, the Security Council tasked the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with reporting to the Council every three months, concurrently with the reporting cycle of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH). UNODC submitted six reports to the Security Council from April 2023 to November 2024. The present report covers the period from January to March 2025, a period of deepening instability and intensifying violence in Haiti despite the partial deployment of the Multinational Security Support Mission authorized by the Security Council.

2. The present report evidences continued deterioration in security, with significant national and regional implications. The siege of Pétion-Ville marked a significant shift in the security landscape in Haiti, indicating a coordinated effort by organized criminal groups to consolidate political, economic and operational control. UNODC has observed the use of new technologies such as drones by public security forces to target organized criminal groups' strongholds. Despite measures to reinforce public security institutions such as the Haitian National Police and the General Customs Administration (Administration générale des douanes – AGD), the country's borders remained vulnerable to arms and ammunition trafficking. Nevertheless, several weapons seizures were noted during the reporting period in border areas between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, including with support from the customs administrations of both countries. Large sums of undeclared cash flowing from The Bahamas to Haiti were also identified by authorities in both countries, underscoring concerns over illicit financial flows. Criminal networks operating throughout the Caribbean in connection with Haitian organized criminal groups are a threat to maritime traffic, crucial to the flow of goods and services. There is also evidence of supply of drugs transited through Haiti to markets in the United States of America and Europe.

3. Authorities in Haiti and multiple countries have enhanced their action to tackle organized crime. Haitian and Dominican authorities increased operations targeting weapons traffickers. The Dominican Republic recently enacted legislation to designate certain Haitian organized criminal groups as “terrorist organizations” and is also strengthening its response to address trafficking in persons¹. Since 2022, Canada has likewise increased its focus on Haitian organized criminal groups and

¹ Presidential Decree no. 104-25, signed by the President, Luis Abinader, on 4 March 2025. The response refers to reinforced national and cross-border efforts such as the following:
Enhanced border surveillance and migrant screening at key crossings such as Dajabón and Elías Piña to detect trafficking patterns and prevent exploitation;
Increased law enforcement operations targeting trafficking rings, including joint patrols and raids in known smuggling zones;
Training and capacity-building for immigration officials, police and prosecutors to improve victim identification and legal case handling;
Closer cooperation with international partners, including the United Nations and neighbouring countries, to dismantle trafficking routes;
Victim assistance mechanisms, such as temporary shelters, legal aid and repatriation support, in particular for women and unaccompanied minors.

related criminal interests domestically. The United States justice system initiated at least nine prosecutions against arms traffickers in Haiti.

Expanding influence of organized criminal groups

4. The security situation in Haiti remains dire, as armed criminal groups – in particular those affiliated with the Viv Ansanm coalition – have intensified their operations throughout the capital and beyond (see map I). The coalition’s territorial expansion continues, with violent clashes erupting in high-density areas such as Delmas, Kenscoff and Pétion-Ville. These confrontations are exacerbating widespread displacement, triggering attacks on critical infrastructure. The organized criminal groups’ increasing control of strategic urban territories poses a significant challenge for the authorities and the civilian population, who struggle to regain control in these areas.²

5. Particularly concerning is the rise of organized criminal group activity in neighbourhoods such as Carrefour Feuilles, where the Gran Ravine organized criminal groups continue to assert dominance. Large-scale assaults have cemented their territorial hold, thwarting government efforts to combat organized violence by criminal groups. The organized criminal groups have fortified their positions despite drone strikes attributed to public security forces, suggesting a growing adaptability to State interventions. In Kenscoff, criminal groups also entrenched themselves, subjecting residents to widespread terror. This expansion is particularly troubling in the South-East Department, where towns such as Seguin – strategically located near the southern border of Haiti with the Dominican Republic – are becoming key points for trafficking routes and criminal consolidation.³

6. The “103 Zombie” group is also actively extending its reach along the southern corridor, facing resistance from both residents and law enforcement. Further complicating efforts to curb violence is the rise of self-defence or vigilante groups, such as the “Bwa Kale” in Saut-d’Eau, as a direct response to the failure of law enforcement to protect communities. The Government of Haiti introduced loitering munitions⁴ to disrupt organized criminal groups strongholds in areas such as Village de Dieu and Bas Delmas.⁵

7. Meanwhile, leaders of criminal groups, such as Jimmy Chérizier (“Barbecue”) and Wilson Joseph (“Izo”), demonstrate no willingness to de-escalate, suggesting that the situation could escalate further with more sophisticated weaponry and coordinated attacks.⁶ The crisis in Haiti is deeply rooted, with criminal networks evolving faster than the State’s responses. Law enforcement operations from July 2024 to February 2025 resulted in more than 2,000 people killed or injured (compared with 1,253 from February to July 2024). Almost three quarters of the victims killed by law enforcement were reportedly members of organized criminal groups.⁷

² See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), “Restoring dignity: a global call to end the violence in Haiti”, 7 April 2025, available at www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2025/04/restoring-dignity-global-call-end-violence-haiti.

³ Key informant K1, interviewed on 27 February 2025.

⁴ Known as “Kamikaze drones” in Haiti.

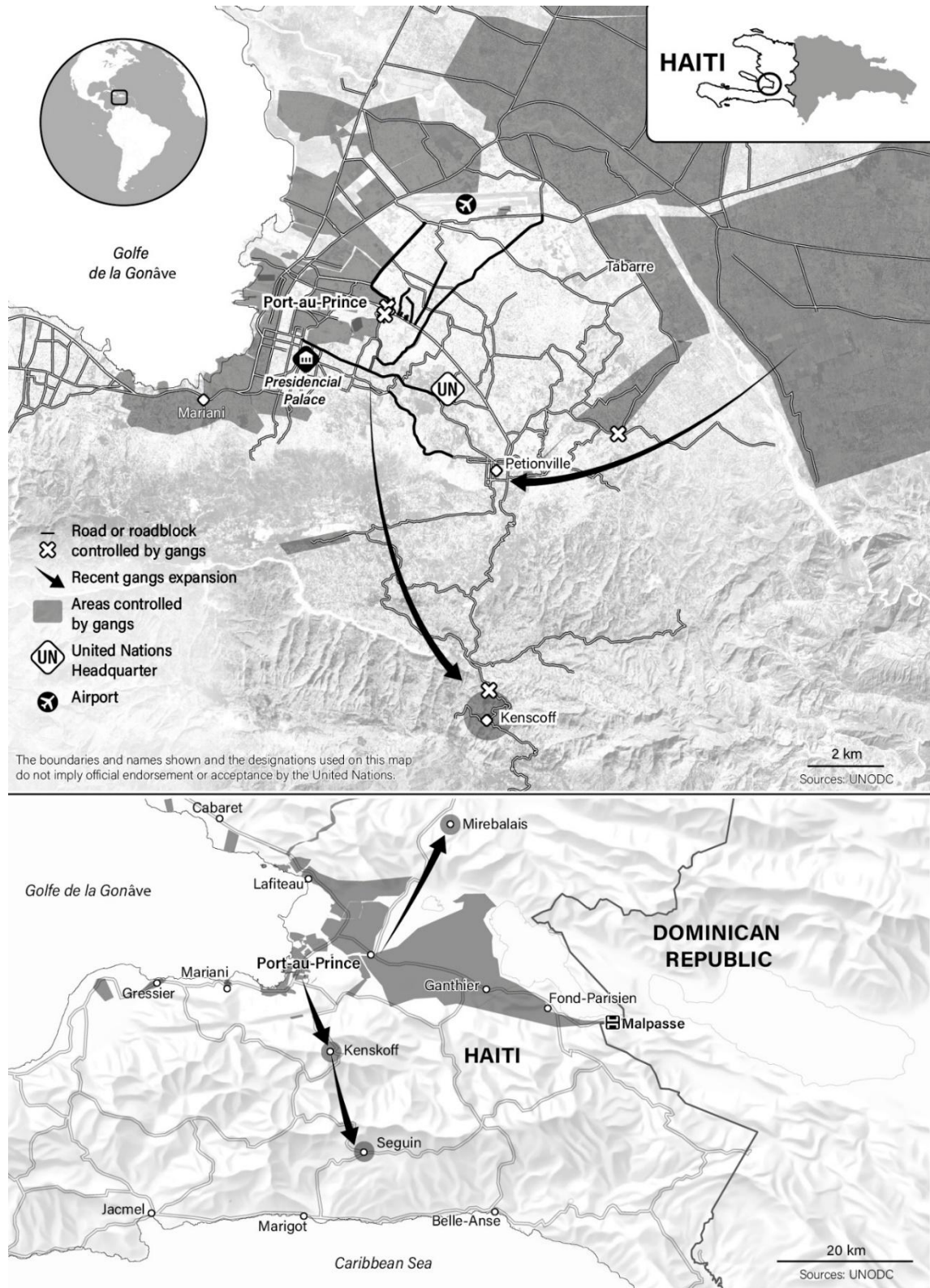
⁵ See <https://insightcrime.org/news/drones-fuel-criminal-arms-race-latin-america/>.

⁶ As noted in previous United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports, M4A1, AK-47, Galil, FN FAL and other similar types of weapons are now commonly used by gang members. Some gangs also obtained Barrett M82.

⁷ See UN News, “Haiti reaches ‘yet another crisis point’ as gangs tighten their grip”, 28 March 2025, available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/03/1161696>.

Map I

Map showing areas controlled by organized criminal groups- in Port au Prince, March 2025



Source: UNODC.

Organized criminal groups lay siege to Pétion-Ville and beyond

8. A significant development in the crisis in Haiti is the ongoing coordinated assault on Pétion-Ville. The Viv Ansanm coalition recently launched a methodical, multi-front offensive in Port au Prince. Criminal groups such as Kraze Barye and Delmas 6 are surrounding and moving towards Pétion-Ville. Their advance has included securing strategic neighbourhoods such as Delmas, Kenscoff, Thomassin and Laboule and occupying Jalousie for concealment and control of supply routes. They are also extending influence into Gérardreau and Meyotte. The latest offensive is supported by other criminal groups, including those led by Chérizier, Wilson Joseph and Renel Destina, who are preparing attacks via Canapé Vert and Bourdon.⁸

9. The siege of Pétion-Ville illustrates how organized criminal groups violence in Haiti is both entrenched and strategic, intended to destabilize social cohesion and State institutions. Indiscriminate violence, targeted attacks and arson are used to undermine State authority and establish parallel power structures. The expansion into Delmas has already disrupted essential services, raising concerns over the closure of Haitian airspace.⁹

10. There are disturbing signs of increasingly brazen attacks by criminal groups in and outside the capital, most recently in the town of Mirebalais. On 31 March 2025, heavily armed members of the Viv Ansanm coalition launched a violent assault on Mirebalais.¹⁰ Led by the Baz Taliban and 400 Mawozo groups, the attack involved the killing and wounding of civilians and destructions of homes and vehicles. Vigilante groups, alongside the Haitian National Police, were unable to push back the attackers. The assailants overran the police station, the National Old-Age Insurance Office (Office national d'assurance-vieillesse – ONA) and NATCOM S.A., forcing officers to retreat, before storming the civil prison and freeing approximately 516 inmates. The attack came shortly after a police raid in the border town of Belladère, which led to several arrests and confiscation of firearms.¹¹ Inmates reportedly involved in drug and arms trafficking at Belladère were incarcerated in the Mirebalais prison.¹²

11. This March attack echoes similar attacks in 2024 against two of the largest Haitian prisons when more than 4,000 inmates, including organized criminal group members, were freed by criminal groups, increasing their numbers.

Rising maritime threats from organized crime networks

12. The consolidation of organized criminal networks in Haiti is fuelling complex maritime risks (see Map 2).¹³ For example, the 5 Segond and Warf Jérémie criminal groups have developed maritime capabilities, exploiting weak coastal surveillance. On 8 October 2022, 5 Segond launched a seaborne assault on Port Lafito using armed men in small boats. Although repelled by private and public security forces, the attack

⁸ Key informant K6, interviewed on 22 March 2025. See also the examples under section II, “Dynamics of firearms and ammunition trafficking”.

⁹ Key informant K1, interviewed on 27 February 2025. The airspace has been closed and reopened on several occasions.

¹⁰ *Haiti Libre*, “Mirebalais under attack, numerous victims, more than 500 escapees on the run...” 1 April 2025, available at www.haitilibre.com/en/news-44597-haiti-flash-mirebalais-under-attack-numerous-victims-more-than-500-escapees-on-the-run-video.html; and Jacqueline Charles “Gangs attack police station, prison in central Haiti town, more than 500 inmates escape”, *Miami Herald*, 31 March, available at www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article303164291.html.

¹¹ See Charles, “Gangs attack police station”. See also paragraphs 25 and 26 of the present report.

¹² From the Haitian human rights group, Fondasyon Je Klere/Eyes Wide Open Foundation. According to the group, only 65 of the inmates had received a formal sentence. The rest were in pretrial detention.

¹³ All the information in paragraphs 12 to 19 was gathered by UNODC staff on the ground working on capacity-building with Haitian coast guard and Ports security operators.

triggered increased security measures, including perimeter walls at the port.¹⁴ The organized criminal groups seized key sites such as Moulins d'Haïti and Cimenterie Nationale, securing maritime access and storage capacity.¹⁵ They also targeted the Haitian coast guard Base Admiral Killick and commercial vessels linked to the National Port Authority (Autorité portuaire nationale – APN). Limited resources severely hinder the Haitian coast guard's ability to respond. However, it is important to note a recent donation of four boats to the Haitian coast guard. These will help the Haitian police force's capacity to intervene at sea.

13. The 5 Second organized criminal groups, based in the Village de Dieu area, now operate at least five motorized dinghies. These serve to transport soldiers, weapons, ammunition, food and other supplies. The dinghies routinely traverse local maritime trade corridors, from Village de Dieu, Les Moulins d'Haïti and Cité Soleil, to other contested coastal areas controlled by organized criminal groups. The group has also formed alliances with other factions, including Gran Ravine, and extends its reach along the coastline, deploying members to locations such as Arcahaie, Cabaret, Mariani and Gressier.

14. Organized criminal groups' control over these locations has enabled the establishment of a fluid domestic trafficking network. According to information received by UNODC, boats regularly dock at Les Moulins d'Haïti to offload goods from the western and northern coasts of Haiti.¹⁶ In addition, goods from the southern coast are transported by sea to Village de Dieu and then rerouted through Les Moulins d'Haïti. The Warf Jérémie group, a former member of the G9 alliance, operates on a smaller scale and also has maritime capacity.

15. There has also been a rise in armed robberies targeting commercial vessels.¹⁷ Before the reporting period, but important, for it concerns maritime criminality, on 4 April 2024, the cargo ship *Magalie* departed from the port of Varreux carrying a shipment of rice. The ship was intercepted by armed members of 5 Second and the Baz Taliban who stole approximately 10,000 sacks of rice and kidnapped the crew and passengers. The Haitian National Police conducted an operation on 6 April, recovering the vessel after a five-hour gun battle that resulted in injuries to two officers and the deaths of several criminals. Despite regaining control of the ship, the hostages remained in captivity.¹⁸

16. Still outside the reporting period, but important for explanation of the broader picture of Haitian maritime criminality, in a separate incident during the same month, the Gran Ravine organized criminal groups hijacked a boat travelling between Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien, kidnapping 42 passengers and crew members. Risks are particularly articulated in areas where monitoring by law enforcement institutions is limited, such as the Île de la Gonâve, which has become a key transit point for trafficking. Similarly, domestic maritime trafficking routes connecting Gonaïves, Saint-Marc and Île de la Gonâve often overlap with zones controlled by organized criminal groups, further compounding the challenges facing Haitian maritime security.¹⁹ More recently, another vessel was attacked in the bay of Port au Prince and two crew captured.²⁰

¹⁴ Key informant K2, interviewed on 11 February 2025.

¹⁵ See <https://lenouvelliste.com/article/238466/apres-la-sortie-sud-le-gang-dizo-attaque-la-sortie-nord-etend-son-emprise-sur-port-au-prince>.

¹⁶ Key informant K2, interviewed on 12 February 2024, 20 September 2024 and 11 February 2025.

¹⁷ These are not acts of piracy but armed robbery at sea. See United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, art. 101.

¹⁸ Information received by UNODC from the Haitian coast guard and National Port Authority (Autorité portuaire nationale).

¹⁹ Information received from the Haitian coast guard and Port First Security Officers.

²⁰ See www.tradewindsnews.com/bulkers/crew-members-injured-as-raiders-board-bulker-in-haitian-port/2-1-1802122.

HAITI

5 second

Moulins d'Haïti

Lafiteau

Croix-des-Bouquets

Port-au-Prince

Warf Jérémie

Village de Dieu

5 second

Gressier

Mariani

Arcahaie

Cabaret

To île de la Gonâve

3

Golfe de la Gonâve

2

1

5

1 Supply route from Village de Dieu to Les Moulins d'Haïti and Cité Soleil (gangs' members, weapons, ammunition)

2 Deployment of armed men to assert territorial control

3 Supply route from Warf Jérémie to Ile de la Gonâve (weapons)

4 A passenger ship (MV Kanpe Tann Letènèl) has been assaulted by heavily armed man, kidnapping 50 people

5 A vessel (MV Magalie) was hijacked and a part of its cargo stolen (rice)

10 km

HAITI

Canal de Saint-Marc

Etroits

Ile de la Gonâve

4

Canal de la Gonâve

Cabaret

3

Warf Jérémie

Port-au-Prince

25 km

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Sources: UNODC

25-06521

smuggle firearms and ammunition from the United States into Haiti.²¹ In northern Haiti, Île de la Tortue has long served as a hub for trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, with Haitian nationals seeking maritime passage to the Turks and Caicos Islands.²²

18. Recent evidence underscores the scale of this phenomenon, including an interception in February 2025 by the United States Coast Guard of a sailboat carrying 132 Haitian nationals – 95 of whom were children – between Cuba and The Bahamas. All passengers were repatriated, although the incident highlights the continuing vulnerability of the maritime coasts of Haiti to irregular movements of refugees and migrants.

19. A reduction in northbound sea traffic – due to the complete blockage of roads from the north to Port-au-Prince and escalating violence in the Plateau Central region – may shift trafficking routes toward southern Haiti. This area has long served as a hub for maritime drug trafficking, in particular of Colombian-origin cocaine. Notably, criminal networks such as the Gran Ravine and Village de Dieu groups have been implicated in facilitating drug shipments through southern coastal corridors, often in coordination with transnational actors. These ties date back more than a decade and underscore the entrenched role of southern Haiti in regional narco-trafficking dynamics. This region has also shown signs that some Haitian organized criminal groups may be forming ties with Colombian cartels, further intensifying the flow of narcotics through the country.²³ The ongoing nexus of narcotics, arms and trafficking in persons has made Haiti a node in broader regional security concerns, where criminal networks are using maritime routes to further entrench their control and influence.

II. Dynamics of firearms and ammunition trafficking

20. Border security in Haiti remains limited, facilitating the steady flow of arms that has fuelled the rise of powerful criminal groups throughout the country. Despite significant investments in security – including the deployment of armoured vehicles, surveillance systems and capacity-building initiatives for the Haitian National Police and the Armed Forces of Haiti (Forces armées d’Haïti – FAD’H) – weapons and ammunition continue to cross into Haiti at a high rate.²⁴ High-powered firearms, including .50 calibre rifles, have become increasingly common in organized criminal groups’ arsenals, enhancing their capacity to outgun security forces.²⁵

21. Faced with escalating violence, law enforcement agencies in Haiti and several neighbouring countries have increased efforts to disrupt illicit flows. Despite resource constraints and political instability, national and regional authorities have dismantled several trafficking networks, seized large weapons caches and are prosecuting key players in line with international obligations, including the enforcement of the United Nations arms embargo on Haiti.²⁶ Major weapons seizures in Haiti and the Dominican

²¹ See S/2025/85; and Robert Muggah, “Haiti’s criminal markets: mapping trends in firearms and drug trafficking” (UNODC, 2023), available at https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/toc/Haiti_assessment_UNODC.pdf.

²² See S/2024/752.

²³ Semana, “Gustavo Petro told the council of ministers that ‘el Catatumbo está financiando la descomposición de la República de Haití’”.

²⁴ See S/2025/85, annex.

²⁵ David C. Adams and Frances Robles, “Haiti doesn’t make guns. So how are gangs awash in them?” *New York Times*, 30 March 2025, Available at www.nytimes.com/2025/03/30/us/haiti-gangs-guns-smuggling.html.

²⁶ Security Council resolutions 2700 (2023) and 2752 (2024).

Republic and ongoing federal cases in the United States reflect a coordinated push to dismantle transnational supply chains that sustain armed groups in Haiti.

Firearms and ammunition seizures involving Haiti and the Dominican Republic

22. Haitian and Dominican authorities have made a string of high-profile seizures in recent months, suggesting that both trafficking activity and law enforcement efforts are intensifying (see figures I-III).²⁷ The rise in interceptions does not necessarily indicate a surge in smuggling; improved border surveillance and enforcement measures have likely contributed to the uptick in confiscations. Nonetheless, the scale and sophistication of the seized shipments reflect shifting dynamics in both trafficking operations and State responses.²⁸

Figure I

Firearms intercepted in the Dominican Republic on 22 January 2025



Source: www.aduanas.gob.do/noticias/aduanas-propina-duro-golpe-al-contrabando-de-armas-con-hallazgo-en-haina/.

23. Two recent interdictions illustrate the scale of the challenge. On 22 January 2025, the General Customs Administration of the Dominican Republic intercepted a shipment of 37 firearms at the port of Haina. The weapons were concealed inside two compressor tanks within a container shipped from New York, United States, and destined for Barahona in the Dominican Republic. The haul included 30 rifles of various calibres, six Glock Gen5 pistols (9mm), one Smith & Wesson SD9 VE pistol (9mm) and 37 rifle magazines. X-ray scanning technology enabled the discovery, highlighting the growing role of enhanced screening in anti-trafficking efforts.²⁹

24. Other notable seizures in the Dominican Republic point to the scale of the cross-border trafficking problem. On 25 February 2025, the General Customs Administration intercepted a cache of weapons and ammunition during an X-ray inspection of a shipment transiting through the Dominican Republic from Miami,

²⁷ See www.lenouvelliste.com/article/253942/quand-les-frontieres-dhaiti-sont-livrees-aux-trafiquants-darmes.

²⁸ See Adams, “Haiti doesn’t make guns. So how are gangs awash in them?” *New York Times*, 30 March 2025. See footnote 25.

²⁹ Ibid.

United States, and bound for Haiti.³⁰ The confiscated weapons included a Barrett .50 calibre rifle, 17 VSKA and WASR-10 rifles (7.62 mm), a WASR-M rifle (9 mm), several Glock pistols and an Uzi submachine gun. Authorities also seized more than 36,000 rounds of various calibres, 18 rifle magazines, 13 pistol magazines, a .50 calibre rifle magazine, a silencer and a pistol case. The sophistication and volume of the shipment suggest that well-established supply chains are sustaining Haitian organized criminal groups.

Figure II

Firearms intercepted in the Dominican Republic on 25 February 2025



Source: *Diario Libre*, www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/nacional/2025/03/04/aduanas-detecta-contrabando-de-armas-iba-a-haiti/3020857?utm_source=relacionadas&utm_medium=nota&utm_campaign=relacionadas.

25. Dominican authorities have increased measures against trafficking networks. In Elías Piña, a key border zone, security forces raided a commercial establishment, and a private residence linked to arms trafficking. One employee was arrested, and the owners of a transportation company with ties to the United States were placed under preventive detention. Shipping documents showed that the intercepted weapons were intended for a resident of Belladère, Haiti, suspected of being a key figure in the cross-border trade. Additional investigations revealed that one of the suspects was an inspector at the Directorate for the Control of Alcoholic Beverages (COBA) under the Ministry of Interior and Police of the Dominican Republic. The suspect was arrested on 28 February 2025 and was reportedly responsible for receiving the shipment in the Dominican Republic before its transit to Haiti.³¹ On 15 March 2025, the Haitian

³⁰ See *Diario Libre*, www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/nacional/2025/03/04/investigacion-hallazgo-de-arsenal-de-armas-con-destino-final-a-haiti/3021129; and www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/nacional/2025/03/04/aduanas-detecta-contrabando-de-armas-iba-a-haiti/3020857.

³¹ See www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/nacional/2025/03/07/era-inspector-del-coba-implicado-en-arsenal-de-armas-que-iba-a-haiti/3025415.

National Police arrested two individuals at Cap-Haïtien International Airport connected to the shipment.³²

26. The Government of the Dominican Republic also achieved a significant breakthrough against arms smuggling with the dismantling of a transnational network based in Baní, Peravia Province, on 22 March 2025.³³ The operation, led by the Attorney General's Office and the Specialized Prosecutor's Office Against Illicit Arms Trafficking, uncovered a scheme in which *mulas* (couriers) transported weapons in concealed compartments within suitcases and personal luggage from the United States to the Dominican Republic. According to the Dominican authorities, the network was under surveillance for months and reportedly had ties to organized criminal groups in Haiti. The operation resulted in multiple arrests and the seizure of firearms and ammunition, with authorities pledging to pursue additional leads in order to dismantle the supply chain.

Figure III

Firearms intercepted in the Dominican Republic on 22 March 2025



Source: https://listindiario.com/la-republica/20250323/desmantelan-bani-red-trafico-armas-vinculos-internacionales_850674.html.

27. While official links between the recent arms seizures in the Dominican Republic and Haitian organized criminal groups have not been publicly confirmed, the geographic proximity of Barahona and Baní to the Haitian border – combined with known trafficking patterns – raises concerns about cross-border smuggling. This concern is reinforced by the testimony of Haitian gang leader Joé Pascal Clergé (alias

³² See <https://lenouvelliste.com/en/article/254318/crackdown-on-alleged-arms-smugglers-in-belladere-intensifies>.

³³ See https://listindiario.com/la-republica/20250323/desmantelan-bani-red-trafico-armas-vinculos-internacionales_850674.html.

“Dilou”), recently arrested by the Haitian National Police, who confessed to using routes going through Anse-à-Pitres, Pedernales, Plaisance and Marigot to smuggle ammunition. Clergé, a reported supplier to the Kraze Barye and Bel Air criminal groups,³⁴ operated from the Dominican Republic under a false identity until his apprehension, underscoring the transnational reach of Haitian criminal networks.

28. Further investigations have uncovered links between arms traffickers in the Dominican Republic and the 400 Mawozo organized criminal groups in Haiti, one of the country’s most powerful and violent criminal organizations.³⁵ The organized criminal groups, known for large-scale kidnappings, attacks on law enforcement and extortion, are believed to have established direct connections with Dominican traffickers to secure a steady supply of firearms and ammunition. The strategic alignment between Haitian and Dominican criminal networks suggests that arms trafficking into Haiti has evolved into a more structured and coordinated operation, reinforcing the capacity of organized criminal groups to mount increasingly sophisticated and lethal campaigns.

29. In the context of enhanced trade control measures between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the General Directorate of the General Customs Administration issued an official notice on 28 March 2025 introducing new restrictions on imports transiting through the Haitian-Dominican land border.³⁶ Issued under the directive of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, this measure is intended to strengthen the regulation of cross-border trade and prevent unauthorized entries into Haitian territory, including illegal consignments of weapons, as seen in recent cases in the port of Haina.

United States federal prosecutions involving firearms trafficking to Haiti

30. As indicated in previous UNODC reports to the Security Council, United States authorities are prosecuting several cases involving the illegal purchase and export of firearms to Haiti.³⁷ These cases highlight the transnational dimensions of arms trafficking and the dominant role of United States-based networks in supplying weapons that ultimately fuel violence by organized criminal groups and insecurity in Haiti. The following three ongoing cases provide insights into the dynamics of these trafficking arrangements.

31. The first case is *United States v. Michael Adrian Nieto* (Middle District of Florida – Orlando Division).³⁸ The case involves a 31-year-old former police officer from St. Cloud, Florida, who pleaded guilty to one count of dealing in firearms without a licence. From 6 June 2022 to 4 September 2024, the individual purchased at least 58 firearms, many of which were resold to individuals involved in international trafficking networks. Among his clients was a central figure who previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to trafficking firearms to the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Puerto Rico. The defendant abused his position as a sworn law enforcement officer by accessing police databases to provide confidential information to the client. Having entered a guilty plea, he has been formally convicted and is currently awaiting sentencing. The offence carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

³⁴ See <https://lefiletinfo.com/le-fournisseur-de-minutions-aux-gangs-kraze-barye-et-kempes-finalement-arrete>.

³⁵ See <https://lenouvelliste.com/article/254123/de-la-connexion-des-trafiquants-darmes-de-belladere-avec-le-gang-des-400-mawozo-et-consort>.

³⁶ See <https://lenouvelliste.com/en/article/254594/haiti-strengthens-customs-control-at-the-border-with-the-dominican-republic>.

³⁷ See S/2023/780; S/2024/79; S/2024/320; S/2024/554; S/2024/752; and S/2025/85.

³⁸ See www.justice.gov/usao-mdfl/pr/police-officer-pleads-guilty-gun-trafficking-offense.

32. A second case is *United States v. Jean Robert Casimir* (Federal District Court – Jurisdiction Not Specified). The accused in question is a former Haitian National Police officer, who faces federal charges in the United States for the illegal purchase and smuggling of firearms. According to the criminal complaint, the accused acquired more than 87 firearms from October 2021 to May 2024. Some of these weapons were illegally trafficked to Haiti, where they reportedly ended up in the hands of armed groups and criminal organizations.

33. The third case is *United States v. Samuel Pierre, Reginald Louis Chosson, and Joseph Jules Plancher* (Southern District of Florida – Case No. 24-CR-20168).³⁹ In April 2024, a federal grand jury indicted three individuals in connection with a conspiracy to acquire firearms through false statements and smuggle them to Haiti. From May to July 2022, the defendants coordinated the purchase and shipment of weapons and ammunition to Haiti. On 12 July 2022, United States authorities intercepted a cargo shipment in Miami destined for Miragoâne, Haiti, which contained 8 rifles, a belt-fed machine gun, 14 pistols and approximately 4,000 rounds of ammunition. The case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations Miami. Two of the defendants pleaded guilty and the trial of the co-defendant, who entered a not-guilty plea, began on 15 January 2025. On 3 February 2025, the parties entered into an agreement for pretrial diversion and the case was closed.

III. Countering illicit financial flows

34. The borders of Haiti are not only vulnerable to illegal arms and ammunition trafficking but also serve as conduits for large sums of undeclared cash, underscoring the financial underpinnings of organized crime in the region. Reports of significant cash seizures point to the presence of possible money-laundering schemes, as criminal entities seek to move illicit proceeds across borders while evading financial oversight. Authorities in Haiti and The Bahamas have intensified efforts to track and disrupt illicit financial flows, reflecting growing recognition of the nexus between arms trafficking, drug smuggling and illicit finance.

35. Recent cases suggest a coordinated effort to exploit vulnerabilities in air travel to shuttle large amounts of undeclared cash. On 1 March 2025, investigators from the counter-narcotics bureau of the Haitian National Police (Bureau de lutte contre le trafic de stupéfiants (BLTS)) intercepted a package at Cap-Haïtien International Airport. The shipment, arranged by two Haitian individuals, had been sent from Nassau to a Bahamian national residing in Haiti. Upon inspection, authorities discovered \$106,260 in cash concealed within the package. The suspects were arrested on suspicion of money-laundering and financing terrorism.⁴⁰

36. A week later, on 8 March 2025, Bahamian police detained another suspect at Lynden Pindling International Airport in Nassau.⁴¹ Acting on intelligence from airport authorities, officers approached the individual as he prepared to board a charter flight to Cap-Haïtien. A search of his personal belongings uncovered more than \$60,000 in cash. The suspect was taken into custody, and the Financial Crimes Investigation Branch of the Bahamian police has since launched an inquiry into the origin and

³⁹ See www.justice.gov/usao-sdfl/pr/thirteen-defendants-charged-firearms-trafficking-related-offenses-over-one-hundred; and <https://www.docketbird.com/court-cases/USA-v-Pierre-et-al/flsd-1:2024-cr-20168-666541>.

⁴⁰ Received from officers of the counter-narcotics bureau of the Haitian National Police (BLTS) in Haiti.

⁴¹ Ibid.

intended use of the funds. Authorities have yet to confirm whether the cash was linked to organized crime in Haiti.

37. These incidents reveal a pattern of substantial cash transfers between The Bahamas and Haiti, raising concerns about money-laundering and the financing of illicit activities. Further analysis or investigations of the cases will provide important details on the sources and possible smuggling processes.

38. The arrests in both Haiti and The Bahamas reflect heightened scrutiny of illicit financial flows in the region. Law enforcement agencies are working to determine whether these cases are part of a larger, coordinated operation involving internationally connected criminal organizations. Intelligence-sharing between financial crime units, customs agencies and law enforcement authorities in Haiti, The Bahamas and the United States will be critical in dismantling the financial networks underpinning criminal activity.

Figure IV

Confiscated United States dollars seized in Cap Haitien on 1 March 2025



Note: Received from the counter-narcotics bureau of the Haitian National Police officers in Haiti.

Recent operations against illicit activities

39. Haitian law enforcement agencies have stepped up efforts to intercept a range of illicit goods, from contraband to narcotics, as criminal networks grow more sophisticated (see figure IV). The cases presented below do not involve weapons or drugs, but it is important to note that the same networks, the same routes and the same people are involved in these trades. They generate large sums of money from the trafficking of legal, illegally imported products. These sums are then used to finance the purchase of illicit products. In January 2025, the Haitian National Police Land Border Police Unit (Police Frontalière d'Haïti – POLIFRONT) conducted a targeted operation that uncovered five trucks illegally transporting frozen meat from the

Dominican Republic. The interception took place on Gérald Bataille Road, near the communes of Delmas and Tabarre. POLIFRONT units secured the vehicles and handed them over to the Customs Anti-Smuggling Brigade, which oversaw their transfer to a customs warehouse. The General Customs Administration reported seizing more than 8 million gourdes (approximately \$61,000) in connection with the operation – a substantial haul in the fight against cross-border smuggling.

40. Authorities have also tightened scrutiny over the use of drones, which have become a potent tool for both law enforcement and organized criminal groups. On 20 March 2025, Haitian police arrested an individual in Port-au-Prince found in possession of eight drones.^{50F} The case has been referred to judicial authorities, and investigators are probing whether the drones were intended for criminal use. Their dual-use nature – capable of both legitimate surveillance and illicit activities – has made their regulation increasingly relevant for Haitian authorities. The Haitian National Police, for its part, has begun developing a specialized drone unit trained to deploy explosive-equipped drones for tactical operations. On 1 March 2025, during an operation in Bas Delmas, the Haitian National Police used drones to strike at an organized criminal groups stronghold controlled by Jimmy Chérizier (“Barbecue”). The deployment marks a significant shift in Haitian policing strategy in leveraging the use of technologies for tactical surveillance and strike capabilities. This technological edge has added a layer of complexity to the security environment, underscoring the need for clearer regulations, counter-drone strategies and improved surveillance infrastructure.

41. Criminal groups have likewise adapted, integrating drones into their operations. Over the past year, criminal groups have increasingly used commercial drones to track police movements, gather intelligence and coordinate activities. As a reminder, although outside of the reporting period, on 2 March 2024, Wilson Joseph’s (“Izo”) organized criminal group, Baz 5 Segond, used drones to monitor police positions during a prison break. The drones tracked the movements of armoured police vehicles, allowing the organized criminal groups to anticipate and evade security responses. Such incidents highlight how organized crime in Haiti is adapting to technological change, indicating the need for Haitian authorities to modernize their tactics and capabilities in an increasingly asymmetric conflict.

42. Governments in the region are increasing political and legal measures to confront the worsening security situation in Haiti. In early March 2025, the Dominican Republic formally designated 26 Haitian organized criminal groups as “terrorist organizations” under Decree 104-25.⁴² The measure, announced by the President of the Dominican Republic, Luis Abinader, is aimed at intensifying efforts against criminal groups responsible for driving violence in Haiti and threatening the security of the Dominican Republic. Dominican officials have also called for greater international backing, including increased support for the Multinational Security Support Mission.⁴³ The legal basis for Decree 104-25 rests on Law No. 155-17, enacted on 1 June 2017, which provides a comprehensive framework for combating money laundering and terrorism financing in the Dominican Republic. It defines and criminalizes money-laundering and terrorism financing as distinct offences and broadens the list of predicate crimes that can lead to money-laundering and financing of terrorism charges. The law extends its reach beyond traditional financial institutions to cover a wide range of designated non-financial businesses and

⁴² “Presidente Abinader declara a las bandas criminales haitianas como organizaciones terroristas y ordena la activación del Consejo Nacional Antiterrorista y la Dirección Nacional Antiterrorista”, available at <https://presidencia.gob.do/noticias/presidente-abinader-declara-las-bandas-criminales-haitianas-como-organizaciones>.

⁴³ See the address by Roberto Álvarez Gil, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, at the Security Council on 22 January 2025 (see [S/PV.9844](#)).

professions – including real estate firms, law offices, notaries and accounting firms – requiring them to adopt internal controls to prevent and detect illicit activities.

43. The classification by the Government of the Dominican Republic of Haitian organized criminal groups as terrorist organizations strengthens its legal footing to target financial and logistical networks linked to these groups. It grants authorities expanded powers to seize assets, disrupt supply chains and prosecute those providing material support to organized criminal groups. The move reflects growing regional concern over the destabilizing spillover effects of violence by Haitian organized criminal groups and signals a more proactive stance against transnational organized crime. While the designation of Haitian organized criminal groups as terrorist organizations may enhance law enforcement capabilities, it also raises concerns about potential human rights violations, including the risk of arbitrary detention, lack of due process and disproportionate targeting of the vulnerable Haitian population.

Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants

44. Trafficking in persons and smuggling remain acute challenges, intersecting with border security and organized crime throughout the region. A high-profile case of trafficking in persons emerged on 29 January 2025, when the Haitian National Police raided a nightclub in Tabarre following reports of sexual exploitation of women and girls. The club's owner, a Dominican national known as "La Patrona," was arrested. Victims were found in inhumane conditions, deprived of food and water and showing signs of physical abuse linked to sexual exploitation. The investigation began in the Dominican Republic after a minor escaped to Santo Domingo and alerted authorities. A joint operation involving Dominican and Haitian law enforcement, with support from the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), led to an international arrest warrant, arrests and the release of the victims.⁴⁴

45. Smuggling operations involving Haitian nationals have also drawn increased attention. In March 2025, Dominican authorities investigated several cases of smuggling of persons. In one incident, the Dominican army arrested a Dominican citizen in Santiago Rodríguez for transporting 19 Haitians – 9 men, 8 women and 2 minors – in an irregular situation. Military patrols in Valverde detained six Haitians without a legal stay arrangement, travelling on two motorcycles, while a separate operation, but for the same reason, in Los Llanos de Bulla led to the arrest of three men and three women⁴⁵ in an irregular situation. In March 2025, the General Directorate of Migration brought to justice 17 individuals for trafficking in persons, migrant smuggling, document forgery and identity theft.⁴⁶

46. Reports have emerged of members of Haitian organized criminal groups infiltrating the Dominican Republic, often using the same routes as migrants and trafficking victims. On 26 February 2025, General Directorate of Migration agents arrested a Haitian national in Dajabón suspected of affiliation with organized criminal groups and criminal activity. The individual crossed the border illegally aboard a bus after allegedly paying a trafficker 15,000 pesos (\$236). The trafficker fled as authorities detained the suspect. Preliminary investigations revealed that the individual had a criminal record in Haiti. The incident underscores the entanglement

⁴⁴ Informe – operación la patrona, 7 February 2025, Centro especializado de combate al tráfico de migrantes y trata de personas, Comunidad de policía de América, Río de Janeiro.

⁴⁵ *Juno 7*, Arrestation d'un Dominicain transportant 19 Haïtiens en situation irrégulière, 9 March 2025, available at <https://www.juno7.ht/arrestation-dominicain-transportant-haitiens/>.

⁴⁶ General Directorate of Migration of the Dominican Republic, "DGM brings 17 people to justice for violating immigration regulations", 4 March 2025, available at <https://migracion.gob.do/en/dgm-brings-17-people-to-justice-for-violating-immigration-regulations/>.

between organized criminal groups activity and smuggling of persons along the porous border.⁴⁷

47. Deportations of Haitians from the Dominican Republic have surged. In January 2025, the General Directorate of Migration arrested seven individuals for attempting to smuggle undocumented people into the Dominican Republic. The Legal Department of the General Directorate of Migration, working with the Public Prosecutor's Office, secured preventive measures against three suspects in Baní, three in Azua and one in Pedernales for violating immigration laws and the Dominican Penal Code. In February 2025, the General Directorate of Migration conducted 266 operations and deported 31,204 Haitians.⁴⁸ A further 255 operations in March resulted in 26,659 deportations – bringing the total number of expulsions over the past five months to 151,883.⁴⁹

48. These expulsions include the deportation of minors. In 2024, the Dominican Republic deported 1,099 unaccompanied children – of whom 786 were eventually reunited with their families, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).⁵⁰ In January 2025, five unaccompanied teenagers were deported, including a 15-year-old. Upon arrival in Haiti, they were interviewed by officials in Belladère tasked with locating their families. In Ouanaminthe, a 10-year-old girl was deported without accompanying relatives.⁵¹ These deportations raise serious concerns regarding procedural safeguards and compliance with international standards, in particular regarding the best interests of the child, non-refoulement obligations, and the right to seek asylum. The deportation of unaccompanied minors without an individual assessment or legal representation may constitute a violation of due process and places children with international protection needs at heightened risk. Unaccompanied minors remain especially vulnerable to exploitation, as they are often targeted for recruitment or trafficked by armed groups operating along the border.

49. The United States has also started expelling Haitian nationals under new executive orders. In February 2025, the United States deported its first group of Haitians under the new rules,⁵² followed by the removal of 46 individuals a month later. Up to 500,000 Haitians face risk of deportation after August 2025 when the

⁴⁷ *Diario Libre*, “Arrestan a pandillero haitiano mientras intentaba entrar a República Dominicana por Dajabón”, 26 February 2025, available at www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/sucesos/2025/02/26/arrestan-a-presunto-pandillero-haitiano-en-dajabon/3013162.

⁴⁸ General Directorate of Migration of the Dominican Republic, “DGM exceeds 151 thousand people rerouted to Haiti since Abinader expanded the interdiction plan”, 3 March 2025, available at <https://migracion.gob.do/en/dgm-exceeds-151-thousand-people-rerouted-to-haiti-since-abinader-expanded-the-interdiction-plan/>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) country office annual report 2023 for the Dominican Republic, available at <https://www.unicef.org/media/152381/file/Dominican-Republic-2023-COAR.pdf>.

⁵¹ Associated Press News, “Haitian migrants share harrowing stories of abuse as Dominican Republic ramps up deportations”, 11 February 2025, available at <https://apnews.com/article/deportations-dominican-republic-haiti-abuses-dde6322cd255d9b41a11028863ed900e>.

⁵² United States Department of Homeland Security, “Secretary Noem rescinds previous administration's extension of Haiti's temporary protected status”, 20 February 2025, available at www.dhs.gov/news/2025/02/20/secretary-noem-rescinds-extension-haitis-temporary-protected-status. See also, Executive Order 14159, 20 January 2025; and The White House, “President Donald J. Trump ends taxpayer subsidization of open borders”, fact sheet, 19 February 2025, available at www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/02/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-ends-taxpayer-subsidization-of-open-borders/.

changes under the Temporary Protected Status for Haiti programme take effect.⁵³ Many returnees confront extreme dangers upon their return, including the threat of recruitment by organized criminal groups and trafficking in persons. The lack of comprehensive reintegration measures for deported individuals remains an urgent challenge requiring coordinated efforts from both national Governments and international agencies.

50. Human mobility patterns involving Haitians in the Americas also appear to be shifting and are likely to undergo dramatic transformations in the months ahead. From January to March 2025, the number of Haitians crossing the Darién Gap between Colombia and Panama – a dangerous human mobility route – has declined.⁵⁴ In January 2025, according to data from the Panamanian Migration Service,⁵⁵ only 32 Haitians crossed the gap, followed by just 9 in February.⁵⁶ This represents a significant drop as compared with the same period in 2023, when more than 1,300 Haitians crossed in January alone.⁵⁷ This marked decrease is likely due to strengthened border control measures implemented by Panamanian authorities, which have been documented to significantly curb irregular entries.⁵⁸ While deteriorating security conditions in Haiti might generally be expected to drive outflows of refugees and migrants, they may also be constraining individuals' ability to leave the country owing to gang violence, insecurity along exit routes or economic barriers. Moreover, Haitians continue to move as part of broader multinational mixed flows of refugees and migrants in the region, alongside Venezuelans, Cubans, Ecuadorians and Colombians. The changing flow of Haitians underscores the complex and evolving nature of the regional human mobility crisis.

Revelations of high-level corruption

51. The anti-corruption drive in Haiti has gained momentum since January 2025, largely driven by reports produced by the Anti-Corruption Unit (Unité de lutte contre la corruption – ULCC) and the efforts of the Haitian National Police. However, the impact of these efforts hinges on the strength, independence and security of the judicial system – whose institutions are plagued by structural and operational weaknesses. Magistrates handling corruption cases operate under intense pressure, with scant resources and frequent threats to their safety. Meanwhile, the deepening crisis in Haiti – marked by violence by organized criminal groups, strikes and political instability – has stalled judicial proceedings, delayed trials and obstructed follow-ups.⁵⁹

⁵³ United States Citizen and Immigration Services, “Temporary Protected Status Designated Country: Haiti”, 20 February 2025, available at www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status-temporary-protected-status-designated-country-haiti. These changes are being challenged in court, so the status remains uncertain. See <https://www.aclusocal.org/en/press-releases/tps-holders-challenge-shortening-humanitarian-relief-500000-haitians>.

⁵⁴ Axios, “Migrant traffic through the Darién Gap plummets”, 13 March 2025, available at www.axios.com/2025/03/13/migrant-traffic-darien-gap-falls-pandemic-levels?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

⁵⁵ *Estadísticas de personas migrantes en tránsito por el Darién*, Servicio Nacional de Migración de Panamá, available at www.migracion.gob.pa.

⁵⁶ See <https://www.migracion.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/IRREGULARES-POR-DARIEN-FEBRERO.pdf>.

⁵⁷ See <https://www.migracion.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/MOVIMIENTO-MIGRATORIO-2023.pdf>.

⁵⁸ See <https://panorama.onl/mundo/operacion-choco-ii-panama-busca-controlar-migracion-por-el-darien-20240118-1453.html>. See also Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants (R4V), situational report on Darién flows (forthcoming).

⁵⁹ This analysis is informed by ongoing UNODC engagement with justice actors in Port-au-Prince and across the regions of Haiti, including direct consultations with magistrates, prosecutors and law enforcement officials as part of efforts to strengthen judicial responses to corruption and financial crimes.

52. Nevertheless, several notable judicial achievements have been reported. On 19 November 2024, a correctional court in Hinche, sitting without a jury, convicted and sentenced an inspector from the General Directorate of Taxes (Direction générale des impôts – DGI) to four years in prison for embezzling public funds – only the second conviction for corruption in 20 years.⁶⁰ On 9 January 2025, the Central Directorate of the Criminal Investigation Police (Direction centrale de la police judiciaire – DCPJ) arrested the former director-general of the National Solid Waste Management Service (SNGRS) on charges of criminal conspiracy and financing of criminal groups.⁶¹ The former Chief of the Service had previously been embroiled in legal entanglements: in 2021, the Superior Court of Auditors and Administrative Disputes (Cour supérieure des comptes et du contentieux administratif – CSC/CA) had recommended her prosecution for mismanagement of public funds, ordering her and several collaborators to repay nearly 39 million gourdes to the Haitian Treasury.⁶²

53. On 12 January 2025, the judicial police arrested a former member of the Haitian parliament in connection with an ongoing investigation into corruption and organized crime. The politician had previously been sanctioned by Canada and the United States and by the Security Council under resolution 2653 (2022) for allegedly supporting criminal groups and human rights violations. Later that month, the Central Directorate of the Judicial Criminal Investigation Police arrested the director-general of the Social Assistance Fund (Caisse d’assistance sociale – CAS), who had been named in an Anti-Corruption Unit report for corruption and suspected ties to organized crime within the Haitian social assistance sector. In addition, in late January and early February, the Central Directorate, acting on orders from investigative judges, detained the former director-general of the National Old-Age Insurance Office and the former coordinator of the National School Canteen Programme (Programme national de cantines scolaires – PNCS) for embezzling social protection funds intended for vulnerable populations.⁶³ These detentions followed an Anti-Corruption Unit investigation that exposed large-scale mismanagement in the social protection sector.

54. On 17 February 2025, a judge issued an arrest warrant, a travel ban and an asset freeze across multiple financial institutions against a former Minister of Planning and External Cooperation. The Minister had refused to appear before a magistrate to answer charges of illicit enrichment and false declarations of assets outlined in an Anti-Corruption Unit report.⁶⁴ On 19 February 2025, the Port-au-Prince Court of Appeal ruled in a corruption case involving three members of the Transitional

⁶⁰ See *Le Nouvelliste*, “Haitian judiciary delivers second corruption conviction in two decades”, 25 November 2024, available at <https://lenouvelliste.com/en/article/251624/haitian-judiciary-delivers-second-corruption-conviction-in-two-decades>.

⁶¹ See *Le Nouvelliste*, « Authorities arrest Magalie Habitant and her driver », 9 January 2025, available at <https://lenouvelliste.com/en/article/252398/authorities-arrest-magalie-habitant-and-her-driver>.

⁶² Approximately \$300,000. See *Le Nouvelliste*, « Condamnée par la Cour des comptes pour « faute administrative et détournement de fonds », Magalie Habitant attendue au parquet de Port-au-Prince », 3 February 2022, available at <https://lenouvelliste.com/article/234042/condamnee-par-la-cour-des-comptes-pour-faute-administrative-et-detournement-de-fonds-magalie-habitant-attendue-au-parquet-de-port-au-prince>. See also, *IciHaiti.com*, « The CSC/CA condemns 4 SMCRS officials to repay nearly 39 million to the Public Treasury », 1 August 2021, available at www.icihaiti.com/en/news-34375-icihaiti-justice-the-csc-ca-condemns-4-smcrs-officials-to-repay-nearly-39-million-to-the-public-treasury.html.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ See *Le Nouvelliste*, “Corruption probe: former minister Aviol Fleurant faces arrest warrant”, 17 February 2025, available at <https://lenouvelliste.com/en/article/253395/corruption-probe-former-minister-aviol-fleurant-faces-arrest-warrant>.

Presidential Council (Conseil présidentiel de transition – CPT).⁶⁵ The court annulled subpoenas issued by the judge in December 2024, arguing that high-ranking officials cannot be judged by ordinary courts. The ruling has raised concerns over political interference and judicial independence. Civil society groups, including the National Human Rights Defence Network (Réseau national de défense des droits humains – RNDDH), have condemned the decision, warning that it risks shielding powerful figures from accountability.

55. Lastly, in March 2025, the Anti-Corruption Unit issued a wanted notice for a former Ombudsman (Protecteur du citoyen) after he ignored multiple summonses. He stands accused of illegally awarding public contracts, misappropriating State assets, abusing his position and obstructing justice during his tenure at the Office of the Ombudsman (Office de la protection du citoyen – OPC).⁶⁶ The wave of arrests and investigations signals a shift in the Haitian anti-corruption landscape. Nonetheless, fragile institutions, political interference and pervasive insecurity mean that consolidating these gains remains a significant challenge.

IV. Recommendations

56. UNODC recommends that Haiti establish and equip regional offices of the Anti-Corruption Unit to improve the detection and prevention of corruption in remote areas. Decentralization would enhance collaboration with local law enforcement, judicial actors and civil society.

57. Given the risks faced by anti-corruption actors, UNODC urges national authorities to implement comprehensive protection measures for magistrates, law enforcement officers and control authorities, as well as for persons who communicate information related to corruption and organized crime. Measures should include secure working conditions, risk protocols and confidentiality guarantees.

58. UNODC further recommends creating specialized judicial chambers (*pôles judiciaires*) focused on financial crimes (including corruption) and mass crimes (including sexual violence), with full independence. Recruitment should be transparent and merit-based, and chambers must operate free from political interference.

59. To improve coordination, UNODC recommends that the Haiti Anti-Corruption Task Force, formed of the Anti-Corruption Unit, the Financial and Economic Affairs Bureau (Bureau des affaires financières et économiques – BAFE), the Central Financial Intelligence Unit (Unité centrale de renseignements financiers – UCREF), the General Inspectorate of Finance (Inspection générale des finances – IGF) and the National Public Procurement Commission (Commission nationale des marchés publics – CNMP), be closely linked to the judiciary (including to the specialized chambers when created). This should include, inter alia, formal information-sharing protocols, access to financial and criminal intelligence databases and legal authority to seize assets and impose sanctions.

60. The Dominican Republic designated several Haitian organized criminal groups as “terrorist organizations”. In this context, UNODC recommends the adoption of mechanisms that ensure the effective and human rights-compliant application of

⁶⁵ See Reuters, “Haiti court throws out summons for top leaders in corruption case”, 20 February 2025, available at www.reuters.com/world/americas/haiti-court-throws-out-summons-top-leaders-corruption-case-newspaper-reports-2025-02-20/.

⁶⁶ See *Le Nouvelliste*, « L’ULCC émet un avis de recherche contre l’ex-protecteur du citoyen Renan Hédouville », 14 March 2025, available at <https://lenouvelliste.com/article/254215/lulcc-emet-un-avis-de-recherche-contre-lex-protecteur-du-citoyen-renan-hedouville>.

relevant international standards in such designation processes and consequences attached to these designations including the role of financiers and facilitators supporting these organized criminal groups. Strengthened cross-border coordination and cooperation in criminal matters between both countries is recommended to enhance accountability efforts while respecting human rights.

61. UNODC suggests that Haiti adopt effective, rule of law-based legal and operational frameworks to investigate and prosecute organized crime facilitators, freeze assets and strengthen financial crime penalties as well as international cooperation mechanisms in line with international standards.

62. UNODC also recommends intensified investigations into companies and individuals involved in arms trafficking, improved border control and expanded regional cooperation, in particular with the Dominican Republic.

63. To strengthen the response of Haiti to organized crime, UNODC advises establishing a dedicated criminal intelligence capacity within the Haitian National Police or another agency, thereby improving analysis and coordination on arms smuggling, financial crimes and trafficking.

64. Lastly, UNODC recommends strengthening the current concept of operations of the Multinational Security Support Mission to reinforce border control and support Haitian National Police efforts against transnational organized crime.
