DCAF 25 YEARS

Backing from the brink: assessing Haiti's security sector and opportunities for future security sector governance and reform programming

2025

Backing from the brink: assessing Haiti's security sector and opportunities for future security sector governance and reform programming

SUMMARY REPORT

This document provides an overview of the contents of the assessment of the security sector in Haiti carried out by DCAF, at the request of Switzerland, France and Germany. The original assessment offers a security threat profile, an analysis of the security ecosystem and its challenges, a brief examination of the Multinational Security Support Mission transition into the Gang Suppression Force, a mapping of the security assistance provided by international partners and recommendations with potential entry-points towards improved governance and effectiveness of the security sector. The assessment took place from November 2024 to November 2025.

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ABOUT DCAF

DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is dedicated to improving the security of states and their people within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and gender equality. Since its founding in 2000, DCAF has contributed to making peace and development more sustainable by assisting partner states, and international actors supporting these states, to improve the governance of their security sector through inclusive and participatory reforms. It creates innovative knowledge products, promotes norms and good practices, provides legal and policy advice and supports capacity-building of both state and non-state security sector stakeholders.

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Cite as: DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, "SUMMARY OF THE REPORT. Backing from the Brink: Assessing Haiti's Security Sector and Opportunities for Future Security Sector Governance and Reform Programming" (Geneva: DCAF, 2025).

Design: Camilo Medina

Publishing: Published in 2025 by DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance DCAF Geneva

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Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data
BINUH	United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti
BSAP	Protected Areas Surveillance Brigade
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CVR	Community Violence Reduction
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FAd'H	Haitian Armed Forces
FY	Fiscal Year
GSF	Gang Suppression Force
HQ	Headquarters
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IGPNH	Inspector General of the National Police of Haiti
ISACG	International Security Assistance Coordination Group
MD	Haiti's Ministry of Defense
MSS	Multinational Security Support Mission
OAS	Organization of American States
OCAG	Government Action Control Body
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPC	Office of Citizen Protection
PMSCs	Private military and security companies
PNH	Haitian National Police
RNDDH	National Human Rights Network
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SSG/R	Security Sector Governance/Reform
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
TPC	Transitional Presidential Council
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSOH	UN Support Office in Haiti
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar

1. Introduction

Haiti is currently living through another dark period of its history, ravaged by armed violence perpetrated by organised criminal gangs[1] responsible for egregious violations of human rights of its population, in the face of a depleted state capacity to provide protection and redress. A fragmented polity eroded by power quests by political actors, weak security institutions, general lack of public service delivery, and institutionalised corruption, in tandem with the absence of elections since 2016, plunged the country into a deep governance and security crisis. The resulting erosion of state legitimacy created the ripe opportunity for gangs to capitalise on and to consolidate power, denoting that lasting solutions go beyond immediate security to encompass the creation of jobs, the end of impunity, and the delivery of justice. The country is therefore facing another litmus test of refoundation of its social contract or risking collapse.

A critical event in the recent history of Haiti was the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse on 7 July 2021, which left the interim management of the country in the hands of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who in turn resigned in the wake of pressure from the intensification of gang violence and growing unrest in early 2024. This prompted negotiations between political actors, culminating in the Kingston Agreement of 11 March 2024, brokered by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The agreement enabled a governance set-up for a transitional period until elections, including the creation of a nine-member Transitional Presidential Council (TPC). This body subsequently appointed a Prime Minister to lead an interim government predicated on restoration of security, initiation of constitutional reform, and conduct of elections. Thus far, Mr Gary Conille and subsequently Mr Alix Didier Fils-Aime served as Prime Ministers, during this political transition.

The Government Action Control Body (OCAG) was also part of the interim governance set-up, but was not established, opening a key oversight and accountability gap in the absence of an elected parliament.[2] The TPC has seen its legitimacy and authority questioned through calls for leadership change or disbandment, and street demonstrations against perceived inactivity in light of the surge of gang violence (Blaise, 2025a), but also of suspected engagement of some of its members in corruption practices.[3] At the time of writing, the elections that originally were due to take place in November 2025 to enable a transfer of power to elect leadership by February 2026, have now been rescheduled for August 2026 and December 2026 (second round), with a new President due in post by January

1 Estimates point to about 200 gangs operating in Haiti. A robust characterisation of Haitian gangs, including their composition and their action can be found in 'Gangs of Haiti: Expansion, power and an escalating crisis' Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, October 2022.

2 Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains (RNDDH). (2025, April 28). Poor governance, insecurity, corruption, and impunity: in one year, the CPT has worsened the already concerning situation in the country. RNDDH. https://web.rnddh.org/poor-governance-insecurity-corruption-and-impunity-in-one-year-the-cpt-has-worsened-the-already-concerning-situation-in-the-country/?lang=en

3 This has been uncovered by an investigation carried out by the Anti-Corruption Unit and the case is allegedly on hold on judicial competence and procedural grounds as well as on account of entitlement to immunity as members of this Council (Mérancourt, 2024). Rapport d'enquête conduit par l'ULCC sur les allégations de sollicitation de cent millions de gourdes par trois membres du Conseil Présidentiel de Transition (CPT) : Smith AUGUSTIN, Emmanuel VERTILAIRE et Louis Gerald GILLES pour la reconduction de Monsieur Raoul Pascal PIERRE LOUIS à la présidence du Conseil d'Administration de la Banque Nationale de Crédit (BNC). https://www.haitilibre.com/docs/ULCC-Resume-Executif_241002_130345.pdf, Mérancourt, W. (2024, October 4). The hidden 'corruption pact' between presidential council members and bank chief. AyiboPost. https://ayibopost.com/the-hidden-corruption-pact-between-presidential-council-members-and-bank-chief/

2027.

When considering the history of previous foreign interventions in Haiti in the wake of security crises, it is evident that despite the temporary stabilisation achieved, their legacy of institutional reforms has not met sufficient follow-up and leadership to use the newfound opportunity to consolidate the state security institutions. Haiti's police, being the key security institution, have been unable to address the gang menace and face allegations of human rights violations and extrajudicial killings, whilst the still embryonic armed forces lack the numbers and capacities. This exposes the strategic and operational weaknesses as well as the legitimacy gaps deriving from the scarcity of state investment in these institutions.

The scale of violence, both systemic and direct, and the terror being inflicted upon Haitians by way of kidnappings, raids, killings, sexual violence and cyclical displacement, has led to the establishment and deployment of a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) approved and Kenyan-led Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) in Haiti, in October 2023. Entrusted with the mission to support the Haitian National Police (PNH) to restore security and build security conditions conducive to holding free and fair elections, the problematic mandate and insufficient resources allocated to the MSS denoted a mismatch considering the gang threat, thereby putting results to the test in the face of limited gains.

Alongside the MSS deployment in early 2024, the gangs coalesced into a functional and rather stable alliance, known as Viv Ansanm. Criminal gangs with different levels of power, strength and territorial reach[4] halted mutual in-fighting, shifting into a common goal of exerting violence over state institutions and their representatives.[5] The estimates pointed to gang control of over 85% of Port-au-Prince (Blaise, 2024), through the ability to carry out coordinated attacks, including on previously safe areas of Port-au-Prince.

Whilst the existence of the Haitian gangs lies in the exploitation of state weakness, their resilience is strongly anchored in the regional and transnational criminal economy. Hence, their level of organisation, engagement in systematic destruction of public infrastructure, coordinated take-over of strategic territory, and military-grade weaponry warranted the question of whether the current security threat had been properly assessed and classified, and an adequate national and international response devised. An intended recalibration of the international response was provided on 30 September 2025 through the UNSC approval of a resolution establishing the Gang Suppression Force (GSF) as the successor to the MSS (S/RES/2793). The resolution sponsored by the United States (US) was enacted six months after an urgent proposal for reconfiguration had been presented by the United Nations Secretary-General to the UNSC. The GSF will benefit from enhanced logistic support through the creation of a UN Support Office in Haiti (UNSOH) and from financing through assessed contributions of the regular peacekeeping budget, and will count on an executive

4 Estimates point to about 200 gangs operating in Haiti. A robust characterisation of Haitian gangs, including their composition and their action can be found in 'Gangs of Haiti: Expansion, power and an escalating crisis' Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, October 2022.

5 According to International Crisis Group analysis, the Viv Ansanm cooperation agreement first emerged in September 2023, when gang leaders in Port-au-Prince declared they would stop fighting one another. This move was widely seen as a response to UN Security Council negotiations over a resolution authorising the multinational mission, and gang leaders continued to communicate in the following months about the possibility of joining forces against a foreign security mission. Crisis Group Briefing, Haiti's Gangs: Can a Foreign Mission Break Their Stranglehold? Crisis Group Latin America and Caribbean Briefing N°49, 5 January 2024.

mandate to carry out operations on its own and in support of the PNH and Haitian armed forces.

In the meantime, responses by non-state and hybrid security actors have proliferated, deepening the predicament of (in)security governance. Haitian communities have organised themselves through the constitution of self-defence groups applying in return violent measures in dealing indiscriminately with gang members and criminal suspects alike. Non-statutory security forces such as the Protected Areas Surveillance Brigade (BSAP) were officially called to arms, a Security Task Force was formed and activated, and international Private Military and Security Companies began operations.

Against this background, DCAF—the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance was asked by Switzerland to carry out a preliminary assessment of the security sector in Haiti to identify entry points for potential additional support to that already existing but focusing on bridging the short- to medium-term requirements. France and Germany joined this initiative, which includes a mapping of the support by the international community to the security sector in the last five years, with the intent to strengthen coordination. Due to time and resource limitations, the justice sector remained outside the scope of this study, despite mention of key linkages to the security sector, as pertinent. The following objectives and key research questions were set-up for the assessment:

1.1 Objectives

1. To improve International Partners' knowledge and awareness about challenges and opportunities of Security Sector Governance/Reform (SSG/R) in Haiti, through the identification of specific entry points for provision of strategic and operational support to the country.
2. To reinforce the strategic advisory capacity of international partners for improved decision-making on future SSG/R opportunities in Haiti, as a result of increased awareness and discussion of the assessment findings.
3. To foster international partners' agreement on improved coordination mechanisms and joint programming initiatives for supporting better performance and governance of the security sector in Haiti.

1.2 General research questions

1. Beyond the urgent intervention of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) and parallel humanitarian assistance efforts, how can international partners provide support to strengthen the effectiveness and governance of Haiti's legitimately established security and defence institutions?
2. Given past interventions and current support to Haitian security and defence institutions, what additional support is needed for the national security and defence strategy and institutional strategic planning? What other potential gaps remain or have recently emerged that need to be addressed?
3. How could increased coordination among Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs) enhance the effectiveness of current and future international assistance? How can collaboration between national authorities and international partners be strengthened regarding support for the security sector?

4. How can assistance to the security and defence sector be better aligned with strategies to support a democratic political transition and be consistent with the creation, in the medium and long term, of a more inclusive and socially cohesive society?
5. Given the experience of previous external security stabilisation interventions in Haiti, what measures are needed to improve the performance of the MSS and its coordination with the Haitian authorities?

1.3 Methodological considerations

Produced through the adoption of combined methods, this assessment relied on a literature review based on open-source data and analysis, and over 50 online interviews with key informants, in-country exchanges, and focus groups. The latter were carried out in late July 2025, after fieldwork postponements given the dire security situation. As a strategy to cope with the different engagement and logistical challenges, but also as general good practice, the DCAF team included a national consultant working in Haiti. Collaboration between the DCAF team and the mandators was essential to the data collection process, and for that we express gratitude. We are also thankful to all national and international actors who generously contributed their time and information to this study. Detailed information about the terms of reference and the methodology can be accessed upon request.

2. Findings

A dynamic national security ecosystem

Haiti's dynamic national security ecosystem is currently characterised by the interplay of a panoply of actors operating de facto in the security domain, with two key constitutionally mandated security forces taking centre stage, namely the national police of Haiti (PNH), and Haiti's armed forces (FAd'H). Both, however, remain the epitome of the state's contested monopoly of force, given their lack of capacity to effectively tackle national criminality and transnational organised crime in the shape of drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illicit financial flows, and human and organ trafficking.

The PNH was developed anew as the key security force in 1995, upon the demise of the armed forces, and although expected to become the cornerstone of public security provision and professional law enforcement, never reached the expected numbers, technical capacity, and degree of professionalism to proficiently fulfil its mission of ensuring the safety and security of Haitians.

A key structural factor concerns the force strength, which most interviewees put at 12,000 at most, with a much lower figure than that representing readily available operational staff, given the considerable number posted in bureaucratic functions, but also a significant rate of attrition, including defections, dismissals, fatalities in the line of duty, resignations and retirements. With Haiti's population estimated at around 12 million, the country displays a ratio of **1 police officer per 1000 inhabitants**, which is much lower than the internationally recognised standard of 2.2 and the ratio of nearby countries as shown in Figure 1. Moreover, the bulk of this force is concentrated in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, leaving the remainder of the country even more exposed to threats.

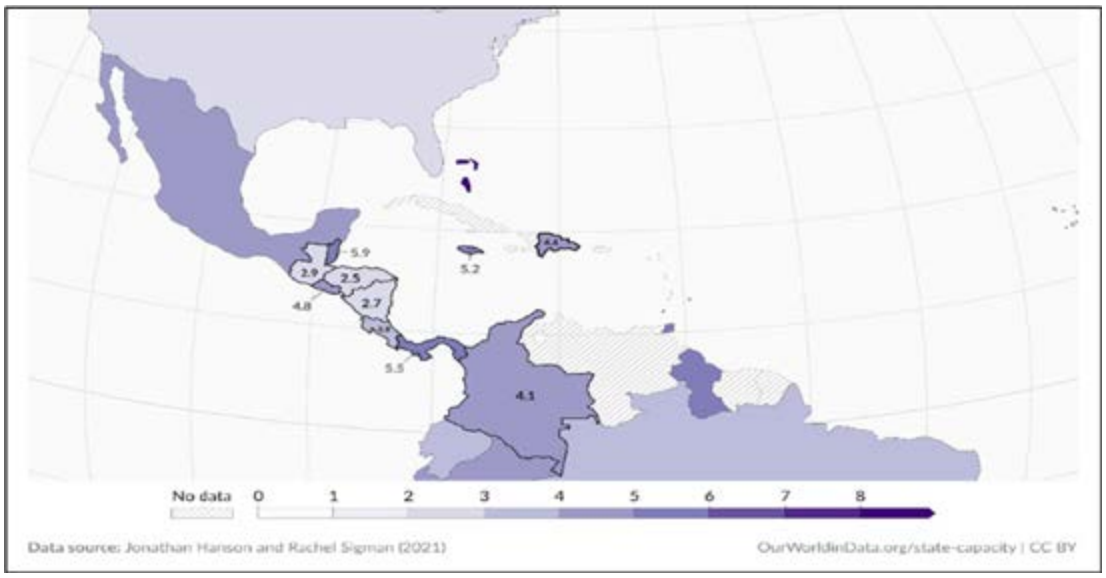


Figure 1 – Police officers per 1'000 people, 2015
Source: OurWorldinData

Therefore, the Government of Haiti sees an immediate requirement to address this weakness by increasing the number to at least 20,000 personnel. Whilst growing the force is an indisputable need, the pace and the method should not be overlooked. Important concerns arise about the envisaged reduction of the duration of core training—from 6 to 3 months—when juxtaposed to low salary levels, and against the background of no compulsory vetting system being incorporated in the recruitment process (Interview 21, 2025). On the one hand, poorly trained recruits can become more of a liability than strength when it comes to real-life operations. On the other hand, the combination of low salaries and no vetting may lead to producing corrupt officers resorting to extortion of populations, or engaging in unlawful activity, if faced with an enticing structure of incentives to integrate criminal information networks, or even joining the ranks of gangs. This bears potential to aggravate a current vulnerability of the PNH concerning the infiltration of its ranks by criminal actors, and the collusion of certain personnel with select gang leadership, which results in undermining the effectiveness of intelligence-led operations. The need to introduce a solid vetting system is therefore underscored by these developments.

Haiti's embryonic armed forces (Fad'H) navigate the fine balance of building a newly founded corporation, established in 2017, on values of non-interference, professionalism and ethos, and the weight of the legacy of recidivism in political interventionism through coups d'état and systematic human rights abuses, which led to the armed forces previously being disbanded in 1995. It is composed of 1,000 personnel, of which women could potentially amount to 10% of the total (Interviews 24, 45 & 47, 2025). In the short term and with training support from international partners, the numbers should soon amount to 1,300, with the aim of reaching 5,000–10,000 in the medium term (5 years), across the army, air force, and navy. Therefore, currently, and considering also their limited equipment, their capacity to contribute to the restoration of safety and security through reinforcement of the Police remains extremely low.

The Government of Haiti has been taking steps to increase the budget allocated to the operations of the PNH and the FAd'H; however, concerns have been emerging related to absorption capacity whilst being able to comply with the precepts of state financial management. It remains unclear if those pertain to a lack of management and governance capabilities on the part of the PNH, if it is a case of poor communication with the Ministry of Finance, or both. More generally this is a symptom of the need to devote attention to financial management of the security sector, since both state and international partners' resources will keep inflowing.

Efforts carried out throughout time by international partners to assist in building the capacity of the PNH, whilst relegating all other security sector institutions, contributed to significant imbalances in the security architecture. The latter has been deprived from institutional complementarities, mutual intra-sectoral checks and balances, and resilience. Furthermore, an unintended consequence has been that in the absence of robust government investments in the statutory security forces, and with weak institutional control and external oversight mechanisms in place, these imbalances generated breeding grounds for certain unrestrained state and non-state armed actors. Such is the case of the Protected Areas Surveillance Brigade (BSAP) and of the self-defence groups, locally titled 'Bwa Kalé', which will require considerable attention and attuned strategies of disengagement once rampant insecurity has been quelled.

Not least protruding are the dynamics of train-and-equip type assistance as well as executive action by non-statutory security actors engaged by national authorities in view of its 'security-first' approach to combat gangs more effectively. This includes the establishment of a Security Task Force and the contracting of Global Vectus, an international private military and security company (PMSC), by the Government. Coexisting alongside it are the associated risks linked to inadequate coordination across the security sector, and, importantly, the relegation of human rights considerations, loss of life as collateral damage, amplification of violence, and outsourcing of core state responsibilities.

The Security Task Force congregates elements from different elite security forces, allegedly drawn from units mandated to protect state assets in the past. However, not much information exists in the public space about this actor, or about its modus operandi. From what has been relayed to the assessment team by interviewees, risks present themselves on at least three accounts. The first is that apparently this new Security Task Force did not include members from the statutory security providers—out of fears of gang infiltration in these forces—nor did it provide for any coordination between them, raising effectiveness questions. The second is that this Security Task Force started using armed drones as a new instrument in the fight against the gangs, whilst ambiguity around gang membership prevails, considering forced recruitment and the high percentage of minors within these gangs (Vyas, 2025). The third is that oversight and accountability over the management and activity of this body are unclear, concerning both its institutional set-up, conditions of payment and reporting lines to state authorities, currently represented only by the executive branch—the Prime Minister's office.

With the current level of threat, it is not to be expected that the Government will release operational details about this Security Task Force; however public communication about its constitution, set-up, management and oversight would go some way to bridge the transparency and legitimacy gaps, particularly for a society with heightened expectations about safety and security results that long to arrive in the immediacy.

From a programming but also pragmatic perspective, there is a necessity to support greater efficiency of national state authorities' control over PMSCs—both national and international—given that these are likely to remain an important actor of security provision in Haiti, at least in the short-term, whilst state capacity to curb insecurity remains feeble. This should include the implementation of transparency and disclosure of contracts entered with foreign PMSCs; adoption of limited time-bound contracts and licence renewal based on monitoring of incidents and after action reviews and regular assessment of results-based performance; as well as robust measures for **oversight of compliance** concerning legal provisions for the use of force—including employment of surveillance and lethal technologies and equipment, ensuring accountability for potential human rights abuses, and financial transparency.

The current security ecosystem—See Figure 2 below—is therefore typical of hybrid security settings, where myriad connections between the security actors with varying degrees of legitimacy amongst different political, economic, and societal constituencies, maintain and reproduce themselves through fluidity of informal and transactional relations. The latter ultimately reign over institutional development and consolidation of state security institutions (DCAF, 2024a).

Even if refashioned with the introduction of 'newer' elements like the PMSCs, Haiti's longer historical development of the security sector shows a resurface of practices of popular resistance, violent conquest of power, including the use of militias and paramilitary groups, and securitisation of political and economic power struggles as adaptation of control strategies. Fully accounting for them is key to measuring and accepting that a degree of risk accompanies the provision of security sector assistance to Haiti. Skewed institutional development efforts of state security institutions will recurrently fail in the absence of oversight, of broader nationally driven peacebuilding strategies, and if change towards a more inclusive polity and redistribution of the country's opportunities and resources does not materialise alongside.

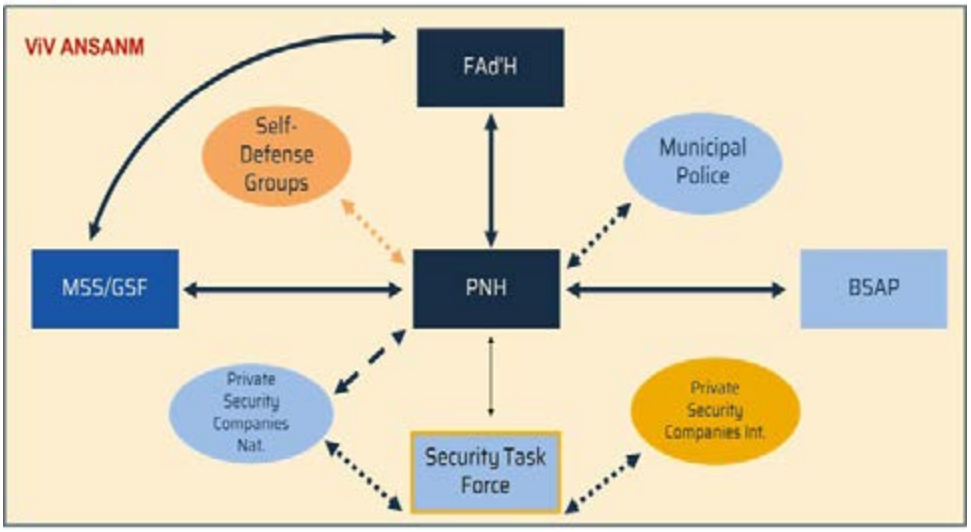


Figure 2. National Security Ecosystem Diagram
Source: Author Illustration

Exploring alternative investments: from short-term to medium-term

The opportunity to do things differently this time around presents itself, should there be openness to bridge short-term security assistance, based on the essential but insufficient tactic-operational security-first approach, with at least medium-term institutional support. This would materialise through investing security assistance on building management and leadership capacities, as well as on governance and accountability of the security sector. Investments in operational and strategic capabilities do not need to be mutually exclusive, since both stand to benefit from transversal elements imparted such as institutional integrity and sustainability. Both enable improved delivery on mandates, as well as responsiveness in the provision of public security as a service delivery to communities. This is of utmost importance given the context of Haiti, whereby the search for reliable leadership has been tarnished by the pursuit of self-centred personal gain and corruption, discrediting a significant number of past and present leaders, including from the security sector. The deep mistrust among leaders, between them and the rank-and-file, and between them and the communities, hinders the legitimacy of the security institutions and the rebuilding of social cohesion.

There are two levels at which international partners may intervene in the short-term. The first concerns the partnership between the GSF and the Haitian security and defence

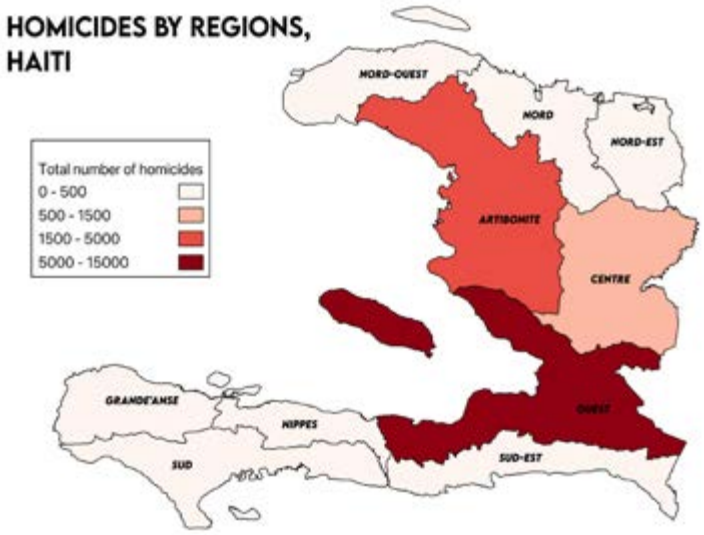
forces to fight the gangs, and which should contemplate an on-the-job training approach in joint operations, in addition to deliberate imparting of knowledge through peer learning and mentoring. This would build up the operational capacity of the PNH and of the FAd'H to take over security responsibilities in a sustained manner, once the foreign intervention force exits the country.

The second comprises essential complementary efforts by bilateral and multilateral partners on increasing security sector governance assistance through programs dedicated to instilling an institutional culture, know-how and regularity of processes on security policymaking. This includes enhancing capabilities in strategic planning, development and update of regulatory frameworks, institutional reviews, and mainstreaming of anti-corruption strategies, mechanisms and methods. Such endeavours must incorporate support to Inspectorate-General entities of security and defence institutions, but also to strengthen external oversight to be carried out by the Parliament, the ombuds institution (OPC), the judicial institutions, CSOs and media.

Within the PNH and the FAd'H, Inspectorate-General entities have been open to support, and the BINUH, through OHCHR, has recently started assisting. Support to the PNH has focused on improving regulatory controls, internal policies, and investigations to ensure compliance with international human rights standards, which are relevant concerning proportionality and fulfilment of legality in the use of force. Assistance to the FAd'H has been in the form of training sessions on human rights, ethics, and deontology. This type of support deserves to be further investigated for consolidation and expansion, but on its own is also insufficient. Additional investments in external oversight are crucial, promoting positive practices, transparency and accountability, and should be planned considering a networked approach between the OPC, CSOs and media, as well as in view of a newly elected Parliament in sight for 2026.

Strategic planning as a pathway from reactiveness to prevention

A culture of strategic planning is insufficiently established in Haitian security and defence institutions—despite example of previous strategic plans of the PNH (2017–2021)—with the adoption of this practice happening in an ad hoc fashion and often determined by the leadership of the day rather than by regular instituted processes. Consequently, the lack of consistency affects operational performance due to non-existent or poor prioritisation of human resources management, financial allocations, and logistic resources. Ultimately, this hinders the quality of decision-making and impacts negatively on operational effectiveness, in detriment of engagement in prevention efforts and in preparedness for potential security crises. It is illustrative that only three in ten geographical departments that compose Haiti have been severely affected by the scourge of gangs' threats, as shown in the Figure 3 below, yet all responses have been focused on the immediacy of the security crisis in them. Preserving the territorial integrity of the 'gang-free' areas through preventative measures and actively addressing vulnerabilities deriving from structural and conjunctural social, economic and rule of law shortcomings is not being actively carried out by Haitian security sector institutions and their international partners. An overdue assessment intended to lead to a Strategic Plan of the PNH for the upcoming five years could have encompassed the missing prevention approach and engagement, without relegating the urgency of action.



Department	Number of deaths
Ouest	14'751
Artibonite	2'574
Centre	618
Nord	248
Grande'Anse	212
Sud	198
Nord-Ouest	136
Nippes	118
Sud-Est	64
Nord-Est	31
Total	**18'950**

Figure 3. Fatalities in violent events - 1.01.20-10.05.25, by Departments
Source: DCAF, based on ACLED data

Contributing to the lack of policy, strategy and planning is the absence of a collegial entity bringing together the leaders of the relevant security and defence institutions, and which should function as a decision-making/coordination and/or consultative body for security guidance, and which could be addressed by instituting/reactivating the National Security Council. Beyond crisis management, this entity encompasses the potential to work from a foresight and planning stance, providing, for example, guidance and anchor to the required process of Review of Haiti's National Security and Defence System, not least because a decade has elapsed since the country's last White Paper was produced, geopolitics are fast changing, and the country faces a major internal security crisis, amidst a troublesome context of regional transnational organised crime.

A Review of Haiti's National Security and Defence System should not be understood as a performative exercise, but as a process with real consequences for the reorganisation and operational effectiveness of the security sector. Besides updating a SWOT analysis (*strength, weakness, opportunity, threat*) this process allows us to question the configuration of the security sector and to interrogate the role and contribution of each actor to the attainment of security, stability and peace. Outdated missions and roles, overlapping mandates, grey areas, complementarities and gaps, and territorial distribution of forces are scrutinised, allowing for streamlining and dispelling ambiguities, for example concerning public security provision and law enforcement. For example, not only potential overlaps between the FAd'H and the PNH would be analysed, particularly in view of the expansion of both forces, but also the fragmentation of the intelligence function and services would be addressed. In addition, there is real value in terms of efficiency, with current, emerging, and projected needs defined to understand how they match available financial resources and growth potential, given the expected fiscal space of the state to invest in the security and defence sector.

An opportunity to address the strategic gaps related to the National Security Council and

the Review of National Security and Defence, is to sequentially align the latter with a wider and potentially upcoming process of **Constitutional Review**. This would allow the update of the Constitution, addressing the current mismatch with the reality of a hybrid and fragmented security ecosystem, whilst also anchoring new security-related provisions on deeper substantive analysis, legal review and inclusive discussion processes involving state actors such as security institutions, civil service, judiciary, academia, think tanks, civil society, religious groups, women and youth associations, and the private sector. In this way assistance to the security and defence sector would be further aligned with strategies of support for democratic political transition and consolidation.

Complementary investments in peacebuilding

The latter requires peacebuilding commitments in the interface with security-related processes, as is the case of **Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration** (DDR) **and Community Violence Reduction** (CVR) programmes, targeting different groups, but prioritising that of children and youth defecting or rescued from gang subjugation. Offering professional training opportunities and gainful employment as part of reintegration programmes into society will be key, and there are options to explore, comprising projects led by national civil society organisations (CSO), as well as opportunities to develop such programmes fostering coalitions between the state, CSOs and eventually the private sector, to implement constitutionally established processes such as the **Service Civique Mixte** and the Military Service.

Another entry point concerns **societal dialogue for reconciliation**. The Haitian society has lived through cyclical periods of extreme violence, encompassing serious abuses and violations of human rights perpetrated by the military, paramilitary, and militia groups, which have gone collectively unacknowledged, and which still linger under a veil of impunity. The reproduction of those cycles, fuelled by a militarised mindset fed by not only direct violence and structural conditions of inequality, but also the cult of violence that prevails in the media needs to be interrupted by the agency of Haitians, many of whom remain undecided on a pathway towards dialogue with gangs. In the meantime, work towards **demilitarising minds** and improving **civil-military relations** could start through support for dedicated projects, or for lines of activity within broader international assistance programmes, aiming towards a more peaceful and resilient society and social cohesion.

Transitioning the MSS into a gang suppression force

The transition of the MSS into the GSF provides a renewed opportunity for the international community to support Haiti in the restoration of security and safety of its inhabitants and pave the way to elections. The quintessential question of whether a 2,500 personnel mission was enough to quell a gang force estimated at about 12,000 has been partially answered through the GSF now envisaging a personnel ceiling of 5,550, including police, military and (50) civilians (S/RES/2793, 2025, para. 4).

Mandate-wise the GSF has been authorized to play a stronger operational and offensive role, meaning that it can now conduct targeted anti-gang operations independently or in cooperation with the PNH and with the FAd'H, to neutralize, isolate and deter gangs that threaten civilian populations, abuse human rights, destroy key infrastructure and undermine institutional stability. Ensuring that the Rules of Engagement and its application follow

UN standards and legal obligations concerning respect for human rights, international law, and international humanitarian law, as well as the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP), where applicable, will be key for successful results and the legitimacy of the GSF.

From a logistic and operational vantage point the creation of UNSOH encompassing coverage of costs of food, medical care and evacuation, transportation and vehicle maintenance, strategic communications and troop rotation, is a plus, especially considering that not only the GSF will benefit, but also the PNH and FAd'H, when engaged along, boosting conditions of service and morale. An outstanding feature is that UNSOH is tasked with providing technical support to the Organisation of American States (OAS), to assume the full logistical support responsibility of the GSF within six months of adoption (S/RES/2793, 2025, para. 10). Seemingly an ambitious timeframe yet providing greater clarity on the expected growing role by the OAS in terms of taking over key responsibilities from the UN, which is consentaneous with the logic of regional organizations playing a more prominent role on peace and security, beyond political good offices and programmatic support to rule of law. This is an encouraging prospect if matched by suitable allocation of financial resources.

The litmus test of what is a comprehensive UNSC resolution will reside in how it will be implemented, translating into performance and legitimacy vis-à-vis the Haitian society. Four outstanding strategic questions will be determinant. The first is more immediate and concerns the need to operationalize the GSF through force generation and commitment of additional financial resources to the GSF Trust Fund. The second concerns the implementation of all components of coordination envisaged by the S/RES/2793 namely: between different UN entities, between the GSF and different UN entities and OAS, between the GSF and the national security and defence forces, and between all the previous and bilateral partners. The third refers to how the GSF will operate juxtaposed to the activities of Global Vectus and potentially other private military and security contractors. And finally, the ultimate question refers to the real investment required not only in present delivery, but also in consciously strengthening the capacities and governance of Haiti's security and defence forces to play effectively their constitutionally mandated roles. This will require effort by the GSF leadership in ensuring that learning-by-doing and mentoring approaches are mainstreamed across all levels of joint operations' work. Complementary efforts by bilateral and multilateral partners on increasing both the efficiency and governance of the security sector will be essential, contributing both to a responsible phase-out and exit strategy of the GSF once the situation is stabilised, and to finally seizing the opportunity to invest in sustainable peace.

Mapping of international partners' assistance

Transversal to the different entry points and pathways presented for security sector assistance, a key finding for international partners concerns the fine-tuning of their **own aid processes**, not necessarily to do more, but to do better with the resources at hand. At the level of existing practices, the mapping of the international assistance provided to Haiti between 2020-2025 revealed four key trends, namely:

1. The reporting of technical and financial partners' (TFP) programming on the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), analysed according to the Organisation

of Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) codes, shows that security system management and reform occupies the third position amongst the most supported categories of aid, demonstrating that significant resources are being devoted to this domain. In contrast, assistance to areas that strengthen governance and accountability such as national audit, ombudsman and media remains at the low end, as does support for national authorities' coordination of incoming aid. This confirms the **space for balancing effort** towards supporting governance and accountability of the security sector in Haiti.

2. Coordination among international partners comes predominantly in the form of joint funding for multilateral programmes supporting security-related activities, as is the case with UNDP's Programme of Support to the Haitian National Police; trust funds such as that created to support the MSS, and technical coordination groups, such as the International Security Assistance Coordination Group (ISACG) led by Canada. Whilst the assistance provided varies at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, the latter two prevail, mostly focused on **provision of equipment and training** to the security forces. This is attested by the activity of ISACG that provides an effective platform for positive communication and sharing of information, as well as to find solutions to emerging logistic obstacles, with the resulting awareness helping to prevent duplication of TFP assistance, particularly around provision of equipment. However, this has been revealed as insufficient in terms of pursuing full alignment and complementarity of TFP priorities, as new projects emerge (Interview 5, 2025). While tactical and operational activities provide critical immediate security support, gaps in assistance at the strategic level point to challenges to attain the institutionalisation of efforts within existing security systems to ensure sustainability, and shift from reactive to proactive programming. Hence, besides greater investment in enhancement of Haiti's security sector leadership and strategic management; for improvement of alignment between TFP security assistance, it would be advisable to scale up the effort through upstream processes of defining joint problem statements and joint assessments.

3. The security assistance provided to Haiti remains anchored on a predominantly **reactive and short-term** approach. A rapidly shifting context discourages an overarching strategy, and where longer plans exist, they tend to quickly become outdated due to changing conditions inevitably affecting viability and prioritisation (Interview 12, 2025). Shifting focus from the short term to the long term is easier said than done, and not a problem unique to Haiti, but a more reasonable step could be to evolve towards the medium term. For example, this could include creating alternative employment opportunities for both youth at risk of joining gangs and for current gang members looking to exit for another path through DDR initiatives. A greater alignment of TFP prioritisation of security assistance areas from short to medium term would favour reduction of duplication, and improvement of knowledge of gaps and of required complementarities.

4. Coordination between the TFPs and national actors is generally geared around respect for national ownership, allowing space for the Haitian government to take the lead in determining its needs. However, deficits in coordination within the national authorities pose challenges to the assistance provided by international partners, given the formation of multiple entities, which tend to lead to proliferation of national

state interlocutors, risking the dispersion of the security assistance provided (Interview 2, 2025). Hence, apart from intra-national coordination efforts within the purview of national authorities, a more strategic direction could be adopted through, for example, adopting the practice of carrying out joint assessments, which would lead to commonly endorsed recommendations and prioritisation.

It was further noted that concerning programming related to the security sector, consultation by international stakeholders of civil society and communities, including their leadership, has been limited. The consultations are furthermore typically focused on the national actors, in detriment of department-level and local actors. This happens partially as a by-product of the two groups not interacting given the deteriorated security situation, which currently restricts the circulation of internationals. Upon improvement of the security situation, the TFPs stand to benefit from diversifying their outreach to include input from local leaders, youth groups, and gender advocates. In the meantime, opportunities should be seized to incorporate their input through making use of the already existing forums and network groups, as TFP design or review support to the security sector.

The outstanding conclusion, with regards to striking a balance between doing the right things and doing things right, speaks to the requisite **to improve coordination between TFPs**, through creating a forum, or elevating the exchanges on existing platforms, to discuss policy and strategic alignment of international support to the security and justice sectors in Haiti. Equally indispensable is the need to activate a coordination platform, whereby the main international partners supporting these fields would hold regular collective high-level discussions with Haiti's national government on their short-, medium-, and long-term priorities. An opportunity exists to implement this dialogue as a regularly instituted practice, from the start of official business of the upcoming Government to be elected in mid-2026. This would be a step in the right direction to address the vacuum of strategic coordination and alignment of security assistance, by anchoring discussions through political engagement around governance of the security sector, for impactful results.

3. Recommendations

The recommendations provided below encapsulate proposals for improved courses of action towards better governance and effectiveness of the security sector in Haiti. They have been divided into two main categories, namely those concerning more directly the improvement of current security sector assistance, and those relative to the enablers of the wider national security eco-system. Underneath these categories, they have been presented according to prioritisation along the short term and the medium term, and as much as possible, placed in sequenced order.

SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE
SHORT TERM

1. International coordination for impact

a. Elevate the debate / create a **high-level discussion platform amongst top leadership of international partners to discuss policy and strategic alignment of support to the security and justice sectors in Haiti**. This platform, with specialised groups operating underneath it, would ideally be convened by a multilateral partner or by key bilateral partners supporting security and justice on a rotating basis. The OAS could be well-placed to play such a role, given its recently approved Roadmap for Stability and Peace, whose first pillar is Security Stabilisation and Peace Restoration, comprising both an Emergency Phase and a phase dedicated to Rebuilding of Security and Justice institutions. It is, however, unclear whether Defence has been incorporated into this pillar, and it would be important to also cover this dimension. The existing International Security Assistance Coordination Group (ISACG), an operational-level mechanism, could continue under a Canada/OAS partnership, as the technical coordination group for support to security institutions. Another sub-group would be created to discuss and coordinate assistance related to the justice sector, and a similar third one to coordinate defence assistance.

   Additional considerations should be considered by international partners when deciding to rethink/improve modalities of coordination:

   i. At the level of tools, the development of a **project matrix accompanied by systematic gap analysis and recommendations** to be regularly updated by the ISACG and shared between TFPs could better support international coordination. The existing spreadsheet produced by ISACG is detailed, comprising the listing of training, equipment, and infrastructure, but lacks the accompanying analysis and recommendations that would assist in enhancing the complementarity of effort. This could be through the purchase of further compatible equipment and materials, as much as possible **ensuring interoperability**, and exploring joint investment in **maintenance capabilities** for enhanced durability, and if possible, sustainability. In addition, for example, the training needs and offers identified in the matrix could be complemented with human resource management advisory to improve the linkages between training, performance management, and adequacy on intra-institutional rotation in posts.

ii. Developing a **strategic results framework for international assistance on security sector development**. This could be done through jointly articulating the different international security assistance efforts comprising those of the OAS, of the ISAGC members and eventually of others, into a theory of change, which would now be facilitated through the existing Roadmap for Stability and Peace. Regularly monitoring progress against expected results would enable better understanding and **management of risk, balancing of short-, medium-, and long-term priorities**, as well as shifting from a reactive to a proactive mode of designing and implementing assistance. In addition, this would enable a better understanding of whether adaptation measures are required, thereby improving discussion among international partners, but also between the latter and the national authorities.

iii. Coordination can be advanced by mandating efforts like **joint assessments and more frequent joint programming**, not least since that enables pooling of resources, sharing of risks, and coherent monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes.

iv. Consistency should be adopted in processes of **assessment, design, and implementation** of security sector programmes and projects insofar as regards **consultations at the department and local levels**, as well as including traditionally marginalised groups such as **women and youth**. This would ensure responsiveness to needs, relevance, and effectiveness of TFP interventions, as well as shore up trust and confidence-building, prompting the legitimacy and sustainability of such programmes and projects. Special attention should be devoted to better enshrining the principle and practices of national ownership and localisation.

v. Processes for **comparative learning** from relevant experiences elsewhere, as well as from **shortcomings from previous interventions in Haiti**, should inform discussions on current security and justice sector programming. Hence, consideration should be given to systematising such lessons, including those captured from evaluations of previous programmes and projects.

b. Create/re-establish/reinvigorate a **coordination platform**, where the main international partners supporting the security and justice sectors, under the umbrella of the UN (BINUH or UN Resident Coordinator should BINUH cease to exist), the OAS, or the OAS/bilateral TFP partnership, hold **regular collective high-level discussions with the national government on the short-, medium-, and long-term priorities** for the development of security and justice institutions. Institute a shared process of agenda-setting and co-chairship of this mechanism to contribute towards national ownership. Upon discussion, and likely in the short to medium term, as per good practice, hand over the co-chairship of this body to the Government authorities and build upon ongoing processes to strengthen the capacity of national institutions to lead the coordination of development cooperation.

c. Consider funding **SSG/R advisory capacities** to be posted in the Prime Minister's office, Defence Ministry, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Armed Forces, and

PNH. This could be addressed on a two-tier basis. The first concerns recruiting, training, and posting of national advisors who, in the initial phase, could be mentored by international counterparts. The second would see OAS and ISACG partners collectively creating a joint programme to post such international advisors, which should operate under clear, harmonised strategic, operational, and technical guidance of the programme.

2. Reconfiguration of the MSS into a gang suppression force

a. Support the implementation of the United Nations S/RES/2793, establishing the transition of the MSS into the GSF, to translate the comprehensive resolution into performance and legitimacy vis-à-vis the Haitian society.

b. Assist, facilitate and contribute to the different components of coordination envisaged namely: between different UN entities, between the GSF and different UN entities and OAS, between the GSF and the national security and defence forces, and between all the previous and bilateral partners. This should be done in alignment with recommendations 1.a and 1.b.

c. Complement the short-term efforts of stabilisation of the GSF with investments to reinforce the capacity of the Haitian security and defence forces to partner in these operations, and, in the medium-term, take over security and protection responsibilities as the GSF enters a mission transition phase and subsequently full exit.

d. Provide support and monitoring to ensure that mechanisms for preventing, investigating, addressing, and publicly reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are effectively implemented, as well as ethics and professional deontology observed by mission personnel.

3. Strategic planning and operational effectiveness

a. Improving effectiveness of the PNH in the current crisis context, where defeating the gangs and regaining territorial control from them is essential, requires investment in **strengthening the operational command capabilities** of the police force, which would provide concrete benefits in the short term.

b. Support the carrying out of a thorough **assessment of the PNH** looking into its institutional culture, decision-making, strategic management and governance processes, structure, regulations and norms, infrastructure, equipment and human resources, including gender policies. Such assessment should analyse instituted procedures in view of real-life practice and of the mandate and responsiveness of the police corporation to the security threats with which it is confronted. Its tactical and operational performance need to be appraised with regards to response and prevention capacities, including elements of command, control, communications and intelligence-based operations. In addition, coordination mechanisms and practices of de-concentration and decentralisation need to be factored in. Not least important are the conditions of service of the PNH personnel, including psychosocial support services. An additional

key component of this assessment should be a thorough review of the use of force by the PNH, including practice and procedure, training, and internal control measures. Also crucial is the question of vetting given the impact both at the level of operational effectiveness and for rebuilding a positive institutional image. Linked to this is engagement and trust-building with communities, as well as the policing strategies adopted to attain this goal. Furthermore, consideration needs to be awarded to strategic communications and the capacity of the PNH to monitor social media to identify risks of violence and ensure a timely response.

The PNH will receive assistance from the current UNDP programme of support to the Haitian Police for such assessment, but it will be important to:

i. Advocate with the political leadership and with the leadership of the PNH to ensure ownership of the assessment/review process and of its results across the institution.

ii. Enable genuine ownership rather than superficial statements of commitment, through the methodology to be adopted. This assessment team is unaware of the methodology employed by UNDP, but it is worthwhile mentioning DCAF's **institutional self-assessment tool** which could be potentially useful to employ through a facilitated exercise.

iii. Accompany such a process closely, including through the provision of additional expertise to the assessment team, should the UN (UNDP and BINUH) face insufficiency of *in-loco* human resource capacities.

iv. Invest in the **development, renewal, and activation of managerial and administrative capacities**. This could be done through initiatives drawing inspiration from other more advanced Haitian public institutions and facilitating peer exchange of experiences, and/or by seeking support from international partners in the form of **advice and mentoring on strategic planning capacities and human and financial resource management** across the PNH through the secondment/embedding of further police advisors.

c. Support programming that strengthens linkages and **horizontal coordination** across different national security institutions' forces and services, as well as improved **vertical integration** of the different administrative levels, namely central, department, arrondissement, communes, and communal section. This will strengthen strategic coordination and operational effectiveness, whilst encouraging **bottom-up contributions** and feedback from the **decentralised** levels of government. In this regard, it is worth having a better understanding of the structure and liaison between the central level authorities and the recently enacted **Municipal Security Councils**, particularly in view of much-needed work to prevent insecurity from reaching untenable levels in departments not yet encircled by gang control.

4. Internal control and external oversight of the security sector

Internal Control

a. **Strengthen the capacities and resources of the general inspectorates of the security institutions** to enable them to identify structural and cyclical obstacles, propose appropriate solutions, and ensure the consistent implementation of defined strategies. Strengthening these bodies would also allow for the establishment of a transparent and systematic framework for evaluating performance and compliance with professional and ethical obligations.

b. **Concerning** the PNH, support to enhance operational effectiveness of the Inspector General of the PNH (IGPNH) is advisable. This could come in two forms, or include a combination of both:

i. In-depth **assessment of the IGPNH** comprising: i) analysis of its location within the institutional architecture and understanding the impact of dual reporting lines; ii) assessing performance on the different strands of work, including understanding the causes of the current slow progress on investigations of misconduct; iii) assessing human and technical capacity and material gaps; iv) verifying its suitability (legally and operationally) to be involved in implementation of security vetting, or at least in verification of compliance and oversight over security vetting processes of existing and incoming PNH personnel; v) understanding the extent to which it effectively carries out independent reviews. Upon such assessment, specifically tailored support should be envisaged, ideally through one core programme/project owned by the IGPNH, and to which different international partners could contribute, according to their specialised capacities.

ii. Upon the result of the assessment, and following discussion and agreement of the IGPNH and superior instances, create a **pool of international staff with specialisation on inspection** to be embedded into the IGPNH to provide advisory support to the leadership and mentoring to the staff, including taking on operational roles alongside national IGPNH inspectors during a previously agreed limited period of time in the short to mid-term.

External Oversight

c. Enhance the capacity of the **Office of Citizen Protection (OPC)**, to detect and play an early warning role towards likely violations of human rights, to carry out independent and impartial investigations of complaints of violations and abuses perpetrated by all state and non-state security actors, as well as to issue pertinent recommendations towards prevention or redress of abuses and violations carried out by state security institutions.

d. Strengthen the **media** and **civil society** to engage in external oversight of the security sector and play a stronger watchdog role. Investing in the reinforcement of their capacities for external control of the security sector would enhance the quality of in-

formation in the public space, foster robust societal debate and constructive dialogue. Support to the media on SSR, particularly on strengthening responsible and ethical journalism, as well as developing capacities for investigative journalism, would lower risks of irresponsible communication on sensitive security issues, whilst *per se* this would contribute to counter social media messaging which promotes armed violence, criminal acts, and recruitment into criminal armed groups.

e. To ensure broader societal outreach of the positive practices mentioned above, support should be envisaged for media and civil society to develop **broader media literacy programs** targeting particularly the youth and covering issues such as disinformation and misinformation, as well as the responsible use of social media with awareness-raising for its potential impact on violence.

5. DDR and CVR

a. Support the establishment of a new **National Commission for Disarmament, Dismantling, and Reintegration** (CNDDR), following the CPT's dissolution of the previous Commission on May 2, 2025. This Commission would be established with a more representative (and security-vetted) membership, a strengthened mandate and with funding and logistical resources for independent functioning. The mandate and structure of the Commission should be specified in an official framework document. However, this Commission should be separate from the body responsible for initiating an eventual dialogue and peace process. To avoid political interference, the mandate of the Commission should be irrevocable for a period of two years, with clear objectives, measurable benchmarks, and a periodic evaluation mechanism. It would be advisable that the Commission institute a platform for debating the social, political, and economic implications of DDR/CVR process—moving beyond technical solutions which, while important, are insufficient on their own. In this sense it might be useful to draw on lessons from such previous engagement in Haiti as well as elsewhere.

b. As part of the response to root causes of violence, consider wide support for strong civic education within school programmes (aimed at promoting responsible citizenship, political participation, non-violent behaviour) and funding **vocational training** and other activities for youth as part of prevention and reintegration strategies, which needs to include **prevention** of school abandonment, promotion of community safe spaces and sport/cultural activities, job posting opportunities and financing for small private business and revenue generation initiatives.

c. Consider the **specificities of each potential target group of DDR** projects, especially as regards different segments of the gangs as well as of the self-defence groups and of the environmental brigade (BSAP), which could eventually exit the system once hostilities are over, or after an eventual national security review.

d. Provide support for **tailoring and implementation** of the Mixed Civic Service (***Service Civique Mixte***) by the Ministry of Defence, with assistance from the FAd'H, both as a mechanism of prevention of youth adhering to criminal groups, but also in the immediate term as a response to reintegration of young people who have been recovered from gang subjugation. The tailoring and implementation of such a mechanism foreseen in the Constitution could count on close collaboration with CSOs and inter-

national organisations specialised in community reintegration initiatives.

6. Psychosocial support and trauma healing

a. Embed provision of psycho-social support for **professionals dealing with direct violence** daily, especially those within the **security sector**, with particular attention to the PNH and the FAd'H, and prioritising personnel from special units which are regularly deployed on kinetic operations.

b. Invest in emergency challenges with a long-term impact for social fabric recovery by ensuring the provision of sufficient support for victims of violence in the form of **psychosocial rehabilitation and trauma healing within communities**, with dedicated attention to targeted children, men, and women. Psycho-social service delivery at the community level should receive sustained support to attend to the needs of those displaced by violence or returning to their neighbourhoods after they have been retaken from the gangs. This support is crucial for the rehabilitation and reintegration of affected communities, for preserving Haiti's social fabric and for rebuilding its human capital. The return to a safe and healthy life is key to the prevention of future cycles of violence and to deter them from becoming future perpetrators of mass-scale brutalities.

7. Gender and security assistance

a. **Gender inclusivity and gender sensitivity:** It will be important to support a cultural institutional shift within the Haitian defence and security forces towards an understanding that gender inclusivity needs to **go beyond principles** and an increase of women's representation, to comprise also their spread across the force and professional mobility, including within leadership ranks. The **mainstreaming of gender principles, indicators and targets** within programmes supported by international partners in the security sector merits improvement. It should evolve from being an add-on or an afterthought, to becoming a central dimension of consideration and design, not least given its operational impact towards police responsiveness to the needs of different segments of the public and engagement with communities.

b. **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** Support the creation of specialised **police units dedicated to response to SGBV within the PNH**, including the following: i) trust-building campaigns between this unit and communities; ii) specialised and technical training of staff in various areas, including dedicated training on trauma-sensitive assistance for survivors; iii) improvement of procedures that ensure investigation and prosecution whilst preserving safety of and effective communication with survivors; iv) provision of adequate forensic, medical, and other supplies and resources for performing related investigations and prosecutions; v) effective mechanisms to report SGBV within police force or involving its representatives as perpetrators; and vi) effective monitoring, gender disaggregated data collection, and adjustment of policies where necessary in close consultation with survivor advocates and other relevant representatives of the women's movement.

8. Maritime security

Support an in-depth **maritime security assessment**, which is fundamental given Haiti's status as a Small Island Development State facing both risks and opportunities. An assessment is fundamental for understanding precisely the current capabilities (doctrine, organisation, training, material, leadership, personnel, facilities, interoperability) available with respect to surveillance and intervention at sea. In this context, examining threats and risks would allow the international community to better identify capability gaps. This appraisal would not only look at the protection of the maritime border by the combination of security and defence services, but also the protection of the maritime domain rich in resources. The **protection and exploitation of the Economic Exclusive Zone** would be critical and offer important income opportunities, contributing to the island's economic development.

Following from such an assessment, sufficient design, institutional and material support should be considered, including prioritisation of interventions in the security domain, with a view to enhancing maritime law enforcement, including integrated solutions to mobilise and coordinate different institutional actors engaged in the fight against **transnational organised crime**. In this area, operational cooperation with other bilateral and multilateral partners would help curb the various trafficking markets and would provide authorities with some capacity to act in support to populations in case of natural disaster.

SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE
MEDIUM-TERM

9. Coordination of Haitian national security: strategic vision for informed decision-making

a. **Creation or reactivation of a National Security Council** in the short to medium term, paving the way for a culture of strategic and collective thinking among security and defence decision-makers. Although the absence of such an organ is not unique to Haiti, it is quite striking that the **country has no comprehensive national security strategy**, no defence policy, no public security policy, no strategy or policy to combat organised crime, and not even an anti-gang strategy or policy, given the recurring nature of the problem in Haiti. This prevents the adoption of carefully considered, coordinated, and coherent responses.

b. A **Review of Haiti's National Security and Defence System** is timely and required, given that a decade has elapsed since the country's last White Paper *on the Security and National Defence for a durable social and economic development in Haiti*, launched in 2015. Revisiting the vision, mission, and strategic outlook for the security sector is important at a time when geopolitics are fast changing, and the country is faced with a major internal security crisis, amidst a troublesome context of regional transnational organised crime. Devising a national security policy or strategy and a corresponding action plan would be advisable to assist in obtaining clarity on the required national security architecture, the mandates of the different security and defence institutions and forces, prioritisation and sequencing of intended institutional

development and resource allocation to meet current and projected threats. There is a dire need to address the fragmentation of the intelligence apparatus and to clarify the attributions of the different institutions with a role to play, including to devise internal controls and external oversight mechanisms.

Ideally, the Review would take place under the leadership of the Secretary-General of the National Security Council, or of a National Security Adviser, should such a position be envisaged, or alternatively of a dedicated Commissioner appointed to the effect. The process would encompass a consultation of a broad range of societal stakeholders, as well as of other branches of the Haitian state, such as the upcoming elected parliament and the judiciary. Whilst elections do not take place, process design could start, and such engagement, contrarily to a zero-sum rationale, does not need to detract from ongoing operational responses being provided to immediate defence and security needs.

c. A **Defence Review** or, at a minimum, a **defence sector assessment** should complement the overarching National Security and Defence System comprising both an appraisal of the Ministry of Defence and of the FAd'H, which, as recently created institutions, require additional support concerning institutional development, the interface between the two, as well as between them and the remaining security sector institutions and forces, particularly those with overlapping mandates, in order to clarify roles and responsibilities.

d. Should an upcoming **constitutional review** process be re-engaged by a legitimately elected Government and Parliament, the opportunity should be seized to **include updated and improved clauses on defence and security**, including stronger provisions on security sector governance. This process should be used to identify and carry out a review of the existing security legislation, which seems to be scattered, and trigger/test consultations on the legality and relevance of the current and potentially upcoming security provisions within Haiti's legal framework. This process should involve in the consultations and discussions security sector institutions, national human rights organisations, the bar association, specialised national legal experts, international organisations supporting security reforms and specialised international think tanks. Submitting laws and government revision proposals for review by a constitutional court, or the supreme court in this case (since a constitutional court has never been enacted), ensures their compliance with the fundamental rights and principles set out in the constitution, not only, but particularly, during states of emergency.

10. Leadership and change management

In the security and defence sectors, leadership requires a combination of strategic thinking, technical expertise, personnel management, and the ability to address complex security challenges within and outside organisations, making it a specific skill set. This requires investment over time, but in the short to mid-term targeting both current, mid-level and upcoming leadership with specialised and tailored capacity-building programmes would be advised.

a. Invest in the development of **leadership skills among current high- and mid-level security and defence officials**, alongside tailored capacity-building in this field for youth cohorts within defence and security institutions. These efforts should include management and governance institutions, and not only the operational forces, as well as targeting both civilians and uniformed personnel. These efforts should be complemented by associating mentoring for the newly trained leaders as well for those in mid-career stages.

b. Leadership training should be more broadly considered for other fields of public service and, indeed, society.

c. Specialised training in **defence management** should be provided to **civilian personnel working at the Ministry of Defence**, comprising not only the general functions of planning, organisation, budgeting, leadership and control of segments of defence organisation that contribute to maximising the operational performance of the armed forces, but also specialised policy, strategy and planning development.

NATIONAL SECURITY ECO-SYSTEM ENABLERS
SHORT TERM

11. Curbing illegal weapons trafficking and transnational organised crime

a. Support the implementation and regular revision of **Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment** (SOCTA) with close involvement of the relevant intelligence apparatus and support from international partners, particularly those dedicated to issues related to organised crime (OAS, CARICOM/IMPACS, UNODC, AMERIPOL).

b. Reinforce support against **arms trafficking and illegal transfer of ammunition** including diversion risks originating from private security entities through combined operational, judicial, political and sanction enforcement solutions. Consider development/strengthening of legislation on purchasing and possession of firearms, development of weapons control programmes and adequate storage and management within the state apparatus, as well as societal campaigns of collection of illegal arms in the mid-term. Work on strengthening pragmatic collaboration on the issue with key partners, including the U.S. and the Dominican Republic.

c. Continue to provide **reinforcement of capacities** (training, technical and operational, equipment) to the specialised agencies and security forces for combatting **all types of transnational organised crime**.

12. Regulation and monitoring of private security companies

a. Support **greater efficiency of national state authorities' control over PMSCs** given that these are likely to remain an important actor of security provision in Haiti, at least in the short term, whilst state capacity to curb insecurity remains feeble. This should include the implementation of transparency and disclosure of contracts

entered with foreign PMSCs; adoption of limited time-bound contracts and licence renewal based on monitoring of incidents and after action reviews and regular assessment of results-based performance; and robust measures for **oversight of compliance** concerning legal provisions for the use of force—including employment of surveillance and lethal technologies and equipment, ensuring accountability for potential human rights abuses, and financial transparency.

b. Carry out an in-depth assessment of private security / hybrid security dynamics, including a **mapping of the different national and international private security companies** operating in the security domain and the effects of their activities, a review of the applicable legislation and key strengths and gaps, and recommendations for enhancement of oversight and alignment with international norms and good practices, such as the Montreux Document and the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers, as well as the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights for implementation of the UN 'Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework'.

c. Support the development and/or **update of the private security regulatory**, oversight and accountability frameworks according to the recommendations of the assessment, and in parallel assist the PNH to improve its effectiveness in supervision of the functioning of the national private security industry, including the **development of specific codes of conduct** and delivery of respective **training** to the personnel of the private security companies.

13. Enhancing coordination and public communication

Support the Government in improving coordination mechanisms between the different security forces in the fight against the criminal groups, including between the Security Task Force and the state statutory security forces. In the same vein, accompany the Haitian authorities in the process of developing effective communication with the public on the constitution, financing, management and oversight of the Security Task Force, as well as on the periodical release of results.

14. Fighting impunity and corruption

a. Reinforce support to enable the operationalisation of the recently created **Specialised Judicial Poles** (*poles judiciaires*) with a mandate on complex financial crimes (corruption, money laundering, embezzlement) and on mass crimes (massacres, sexual violence, crimes against humanity). This includes the recruitment of specialised magistrates and the organisation of continuous training, as well as the accompaniment of the establishment of a monitoring body. Consider the actual architecture of the hubs and assess through an evidence-based study of comparative cases from experience elsewhere and from Haiti's own justice system, whether the creation of a special national court to expedite these cases in the continuum of short to medium term would be a more efficient and sustainable option.

b. Invest in **building technical knowledge and enabling operational capacities**,

as well as in the protection of the agencies mandated to engage in the prevention of and response to corruption, given its exponential impact over political instability and cycles of reproduction of insecurity. Reinforce support for inter-institutional coordination arrangements such as the **Anti-Corruption Task Force** that aggregates the Financial Inspection Authority, the Anti-Corruption Unit, the Public Procurement Commission, the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Economic and Financial Crimes Bureau of the PNH to enable them to enhance monitoring, investigation and tackling of complex economic criminality, including that harming the public purse.

15. Coordination across the criminal justice system

a. Consider, if it has not been carried out recently, a review of the criminal justice system. In the context of the present study, an evident requirement is the need to invest in one specific component, particularly an **assessment of the penitentiary administration** and its placement within the current architecture. The appraisal would include looking at prison security components, not least given massive escapes through gang action and likely recruitment amongst prisoners, but also at respect for minimum standards of treatment and conditions, as well as respect for judicial guarantees.

b. Ensure accompaniment and assistance for the follow-up and creation of conditions for the **implementation of the new criminal code** and code of criminal procedure that will enter into force in December 2025, including support for training of the criminal justice system operators and adaptation of procedural rules.

c. Provide targeted assistance to facilitate processing of **overdue pre-trial detention cases** amounting potentially to arbitrary detention (and feeding into the perception of injustice and impunity) and deliver support to ensure respect for judicial guarantees in future apprehensions.

16. Sanctions regime

Complete and **consolidate the multilateral and bilateral sanctions** regime including the full implementation of the UN sanctions as renewed by S/RES/2794 (2025) by national authorities and international partners, given the key contribution of the Arms Embargo and of the Travel Ban and Asset Freeze to combating insecurity and restoring the rule of law in Haiti.

NATIONAL SECURITY ECO-SYSTEM ENABLERS
MEDIUM TERM

17. Peace dialogue, dealing with the past and non-recurrence

a. Provide key support to the development of a **structured dialogue** once the national actors decide to advance on a process of Dealing with the Past. The modalities,

steps and agenda, including the temporal horizon, are likely to take a long time to agree given the polarisation of Haitian society on this issue. Dealing with the Past, whether through an initial national conference to set-up the process, a transitional justice route, or another modality, will be essential for the collective catharsis and healing of the Haitian society vis-à-vis the egregious violations of human rights and for the rebuilding of social cohesion.

b. Assist organically grown processes through promoting and supporting the set-up of **an independent national entity** specialised in dialogue and reconciliation. Such an entity should be endorsed by the Government that would appoint its representative, but the composition ought to reflect wider representativity from across different societal groups. With a clear mandate and operational independence, such an entity would be well-placed to ensure that dialogue and pacification can be carried out to completion and have a lasting impact on Haitian society.

c. Invest in **peace education** at two levels, namely:

   i. Through the promotion of improvement in **civil-military relations**, including initiatives of direct exchanges between society and the FAd'H. For this, experience could be drawn from similar processes in other Latin American countries.

   ii. Through investment in curriculum development at the school level and teaching topics such as **civic education** and **conflict resolution**; but also, more broadly through societal campaigns to demilitarise the minds of Haitian society.

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