

SECURITY REPORT

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Lockdown in Downtown Port-au-Prince

TAs of 0800 on February 3, 2025, some barricades have been constructed in downtown Port-au-Prince, but most areas remain quiet with minimal traffic.

On February 2, 2025, prolonged clashes between armed gangs and the Haitian National Police (PNH) were reported throughout the downtown area of Port-au-Prince. In response, local Defense Brigades have expressed concerns that gangs may attempt to advance further into their neighborhoods. As a precautionary measure, the brigades have announced plans to shut down access to the downtown area to prevent any potential incursions.

Community leaders have advised individuals to retrieve any essential items from their offices today, as they intend to implement a lockdown through Wednesday. Additionally, several schools have preemptively announced closures for Monday, February 3. While it remains uncertain whether the proposed lockdown will fully materialize, many businesses and organizations are taking precautions to ensure the safety of their staff.



Haiti's Leadership Pushes for Elections Amid Security Challenges

Haiti's Transitional Presidential Council, led by Leslie Voltaire, is moving forward with plans to hold general elections before the end of 2025, despite the country's deteriorating security situation. Voltaire has outlined a roadmap that includes a constitutional referendum by April and presidential, parliamentary, and municipal elections on November 15. The goal is to restore democratic governance, with runoff elections scheduled for mid-January 2026 and a newly elected government taking office by February 7, 2026. Voltaire reaffirmed his commitment to this timeline during a recent European tour, where he met with French President Emmanuel Macron and Pope Francis to discuss Haiti's political crisis.

The Provisional Electoral Council, responsible for organizing the vote, is prioritizing elections in areas not controlled by gangs. According to Voltaire, elections could take place in eight gang-free departments, parts of Artibonite, and half of Port-au-Prince. However, he acknowledged the challenges of executing such a plan, given the ongoing gang violence and humanitarian crisis. While electoral officials have proposed May 11 for the constitutional referendum, they have yet to confirm an exact date for the general elections. Officials stress that while they are technically prepared, the government must ensure adequate security for the voting process to proceed.

Despite the government's determination, the United Nations has cast doubt on whether elections can realistically take place within the proposed timeframe. Last week, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres expressed concerns to the U.N. Security Council, warning that political instability and corruption allegations against three council members were exacerbating gang violence and threatening the election timeline. He cautioned that the objective of restoring democratic institutions by February 2026 is increasingly uncertain.

With Haiti facing escalating violence and governance challenges, the feasibility of holding elections remains in question. While Voltaire and his administration are pushing forward, the success of their plan will depend on whether they can secure voting locations, restore public confidence, and manage political instability. The coming months will be critical in determining whether Haiti can take concrete steps toward a return to democratic rule.



ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN KENSCOFF: SECURITY CHALLENGES AND TERRITORIAL STRUGGLES

Since Monday, January 27, 2025, the town of Kenscoff has been under relentless assault by heavily armed gangs, spreading terror across several localities. The attacks, primarily orchestrated by the Viv Ansanm gang coalition, have resulted in significant loss of life, destruction of property, and mass displacement. According to interim municipal executive agent Massillon Jean, the situation remains critical, and local authorities have struggled to assess the full extent of the violence. Reports from neighborhood committees, vigilance brigades, and the Haitian National Police (PNH) indicate a potential risk of attacks targeting the commune of Kenscoff and areas south of Pétiön-Ville. In response, the PNH has deployed significant resources to these areas. As a precautionary measure, traffic restrictions will be enforced in certain neighborhoods, with roadblocks in place starting at 8:00 PM on February 2, 2025.

While these threats have not been fully confirmed, they are persistent enough to warrant heightened vigilance. Some areas that have experienced frequent clashes and attacks in recent months are not specifically mentioned in this update but remain affected. Additionally, other locations not explicitly listed could still be at risk due to the ongoing and widespread insecurity in the capital.

The attacks have been particularly devastating in Kafou Bèt. Armed gangs have killed multiple civilians, set homes ablaze, and even slaughtered livestock. These assaults have driven approximately 3,500 residents from their homes, forcing them to seek shelter in Kenscoff's town hall, the national school of Furcy, and Place Saint-Pierre in Pétiön-Ville. The humanitarian situation is dire, with displaced families lacking resources, medical aid, and emergency assistance.

In Kenscoff, the attack was not an isolated incident but a coordinated effort by multiple criminal groups. Many have identified the gangs of Ti Lapli, Kris la, and Izo as key players in the onslaught against Kenscoff. Initially, it was believed that the attacks were led by a gang leader known as Didi, but most believe Didi lacked the operational capacity for such a large-scale offensive. Rumors continue to circulate that Dimitri Hérard, a fugitive and former head of the USGPN (Haiti's Presidential Guard), is the primary instigator. Hérard, who escaped from prison following the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, is allegedly leading a group of 75 armed men in the Belo area. The gangs are employing classic guerrilla warfare tactics, keeping the Haitian National Police (HNP) constantly on edge. Each time the HNP scrambles to set up defensive positions in anticipation of an attack, nothing happens. But the moment they reposition or let their guard down, the gangs strike. This level of tactical coordination is raising serious concerns making many observers to question whether Dimitri Hérard could be involved. Having spent four years at the Ecuadorian Military Academy, he is believed to have undergone their Special Operations course, which would have provided him with the strategic expertise to orchestrate such maneuvers.

Many analysts suggest that the ultimate goal of these attacks is to encircle and control the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, consolidating gang power in preparation for future territorial expansion.

The Haitian National Police (PNH) and Kenyan security forces deployed under the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSSM) continue to make concerted efforts to counter escalating gang violence. While their interventions have faced challenges due to the gangs' firepower and tactical coordination, their presence remains a crucial factor in stabilizing the region.

On January 28, 2025, two Kenyan armored vehicles patrolled the Furcy area, deterring criminal activity throughout the day. However, as soon as they withdrew, gangs attempted to regain lost ground. Local authorities, including interim mayor Massillon Jean, have since called for a permanent security deployment to prevent further incursions. Responding to these concerns, a military contingent was deployed on January 29 to the former Téléco structures in Kenscoff, with the objective of establishing a sustained security presence. This marks a significant step toward long-term stability in an area of strategic importance for both state authorities and criminal organizations.



ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN KENSCOFF: SECURITY CHALLENGES AND TERRITORIAL STRUGGLES (CONTINUED)



In a press briefing, Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé acknowledged that government intelligence had prior knowledge of the planned attack on Kenscoff. While this revelation has sparked debate about the need for more proactive security measures, it also underscores the importance of improved coordination between intelligence services and field operations. Analysts have pointed out that sporadic operations in Solino, Artibonite, and Kenscoff are insufficient to counter gangs effectively. Instead, a cohesive and sustained strategy is required to prevent further gang advances.

The Viv Ansanm gang coalition has been attempting to expand its foothold into the mountainous regions above Pétion-Ville for months. Their goal is to reclaim lost ground and install a new leader to replace Ti-Makak, who was killed in 2023 in Laboule. Kenscoff's geographic and strategic significance makes it a prime target for gang expansion, as securing this area would allow criminal groups to control access routes, disrupt supply lines, and increase their leverage over the government.

Additionally, Kenscoff serves as a gateway to Jacmel, a vital smuggling corridor for weapons, drugs, and illicit goods. A previous gang assault on January 1, 2025, was successfully repelled by security forces, resulting in significant casualties among gang members. This latest offensive appears to be both a retaliation and another attempt to establish a foothold in the region.

As the conflict continues, medical facilities in Port-au-Prince are struggling to cope. Hôpital de Fermathe has become a primary treatment center for those injured in the clashes, receiving 14 gunshot and stab wound victims in less than 24 hours, according to Dr. Lesly Archer. Despite limited resources, hospital staff are working tirelessly to provide emergency care. Dr. Archer has urged the Ministry of Public Health (MSPP) and international organizations to provide urgent medical aid.

As of February 2nd, 2025, Kenscoff remains contested, but efforts to secure the area have intensified. Reports from Halo Solutions Firm S.A. confirm the deployment of four MRAPs (Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles) alongside Haitian and Kenyan security forces, signaling a strong commitment to defending the region. However, without continuous reinforcements and a long-term military strategy, there remains a risk that gangs could attempt to regain control.

Multiple sources suggest that preparations for the operation are actively underway. While no exact date has been confirmed, intelligence indicates that the Viv Ansanm Gang Coalition is organizing for another offensive targeting Kenscoff and Pétion-Ville. However, the timing and execution of this assault may shift depending on the posture of the Haitian National Police (HNP). As observed last week and in recent days, gang movements in the mountainous areas above Pétion-Ville have adapted in response to security force deployments.

Beyond official security forces, local resistance is likely to grow. Historically, rural communities in Haiti have shown strong resistance to gang rule, and if attacks persist, there is potential for self-defense militias to emerge, further complicating the security landscape.

The ongoing battle for Kenscoff is not just another gang assault—it is a strategic fight for control of critical highlands and supply routes. The Viv Ansanm coalition remains determined to seize Kenscoff, using it as a launching pad for territorial expansion. Despite the challenges faced by security forces, their continued presence and growing operational efforts represent a step forward in containing gang influence. However, sustained engagement, stronger coordination, and a comprehensive security strategy will be essential to ensure long-term stability in the region.



Haiti's major gangs and their territories of operation have evolved significantly over time, transforming from small neighborhood-based groups into large, interconnected alliances. One of the most prominent alliances, the G-9, was established as a way for smaller neighborhood gangs to pool their resources, including funding, weapons, and members. Led by Jimmy "Barbecue" Cherizier, a former police officer, the G-9 alliance was initially portrayed as a revolutionary organization committed to challenging Haiti's elite. However, internal conflicts have demonstrated that the alliance is more of a convenience for its members rather than a structured confederation bound by ideology. The G-9 and its affiliated groups collectively control a significant number of soldiers and dominate key areas of Port-au-Prince, particularly important points of commerce and trade. Their primary sources of revenue come from extortion, illegal toll collection, vehicle hijacking, and levying protection payments within their territories.

The security landscape in Haiti has become increasingly complex, with alliances shifting as gangs fight for control of territory and resources. With the departure of international peacekeeping forces, gangs expanded their reach beyond their original neighborhoods and into rural and agrarian areas. The creation of the G-9 marked an effort to centralize power among allied gangs, but the opposing G-Pèp alliance emerged shortly after, bringing together other criminal organizations that were seeking access to more weapons and funding. Sub-groups within these alliances often send reinforcements to assist in conflicts in other parts of the city, yet neither of these alliances has ever been airtight. Internal struggles, betrayals, and changing objectives frequently lead to clashes between factions within and across alliances, making the security situation highly volatile.

The G-9 alliance originally consisted of various neighborhood gangs from downtown and waterfront areas, including groups from Cité Soleil, Fort Dimanche, Wharf Jérémie, Simon Pele, Martissant, Village de Dieu, Grand-Ravine, 2nd Avenue, Nan Tibois, Pont Rouge, La Saline, Bas Delmas, and Lycee Martin. Over time, evidence surfaced suggesting that elements within the government may have supported the G-9, potentially providing financial and material backing in exchange for political support. Some reports indicate that government entities facilitated cooperation among the gangs, enabling them to consolidate their power and form a united front. Despite its public image as a revolutionary movement advocating for justice for the impoverished, the G-9 primarily focused on economic control rather than ideological objectives. The leader of the G-9, Jimmy "Barbecue" Cherizier, became well known for his public statements, claiming credit for economic blockades and expressing political ambitions.

The G-9's structure allowed its affiliates to control significant trade and financial corridors within Port-au-Prince. They leveraged this control to generate revenue through extortion, smuggling, and illegal taxation. However, while most G-9 groups focused on economic crimes, a few factions engaged in kidnappings as well. The shifting nature of these affiliations led to significant infighting within the alliance, with some groups breaking away or being forced out. The alliance weakened as internal rivalries escalated into open conflict, leading some to joke that it should be called a much smaller coalition instead.

The commune of Cité Soleil became one of the most contested areas under the G-9, as multiple factions operated within its densely populated neighborhoods. Within this commune, gangs such as Belekou, led by Andrice "Iska" Iscar, Fort Dimanche, Wharf Jérémie, led by Felix "Micano" Monel, Chancerelles, Simon Pele, Boston, Carrefour Drouillard, and Terre Noire maintained control, engaging in a mixture of extortion, violence, and territorial disputes. Some gangs in La Saline also remained active, although information about their leadership and internal dynamics was scarce. Reports surfaced of extreme human rights violations committed by gang members, including acts of sexual violence and the systematic targeting of civilians.

HAITI'S GANG EVOLUTION: THE RISE OF VIV ANSANM (CONTINUED)



The Belekou gang controlled a strategically valuable area near the Varreux fuel terminal and generated revenue primarily through extortion. Leadership disputes and rivalries often led to outbreaks of violence, sometimes involving neighboring gangs affiliated with the opposing G-Pèp alliance. The Wharf Jérémie gang dominated another critical economic zone, running an extortion racket on goods passing through the International Port of Port-au-Prince. In cases where businesses resisted their demands, gang members resorted to violence, including shutting down port operations through intimidation and gunfire. Other factions within the G-9 alliance operated in similarly lucrative zones, such as Carrefour Drouillard, which profited from extorting businesses and seizing shipments. The Nan Chabon and Krache Dife gangs, sometimes treated as a single entity, maintained control over La Saline, where they focused on illegal taxation and looting.

Another major player within the G-9 structure was the leader of the Bas Delmas gang, Jimmy "Barbecue" Cherizier, a former police officer who became the public face of the alliance. Although he frequently spoke on behalf of the entire organization, his actual territorial control was relatively small, as he relied on the broader network of gangs to maintain influence. The Krache Dife faction, led by Jean "Pece Pim" Gardy, operated in downtown Port-au-Prince, engaging in more direct criminal activities, including kidnappings and hijackings, in addition to their extortion rackets.

The most significant development in Haiti's gang landscape came in September 2023 with the formation of Viv Ansanm, an alliance that merged the G-9, G-Pèp, and other independent factions under one banner. The coalition, led by Jimmy "Barbecue" Cherizier, Jean-Pierre "Ti Gabriel" Gabriel, and Vitel'Homme Innocent, was created to consolidate power and counter external threats, particularly the anticipated deployment of the United Nations-backed Multinational Security Support Mission (MSSM) led by Kenyan police forces.

By early 2024, Viv Ansanm had gained control over approximately 80% of metropolitan Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas. This consolidation led to a significant decrease in armed clashes between gangs, with reports indicating a 78% reduction in such incidents from March to August 2024 compared to the previous six months. However, the coalition's dominance also resulted in increased violence against civilians. In December 2024, Viv Ansanm was implicated in a massacre in Haiti's capital, leading to nearly 200 deaths.

THE FUTURE OF THE VIV ANSANM IN HAITI

The Viv Ansanm gang alliance has been a formidable force in Haiti's security landscape, significantly impacting the Haitian National Police (PNH) and government stability. Composed of multiple gangs and criminal figures, the alliance has played a crucial role in undermining law enforcement and controlling strategic areas. However, with the ongoing deployment of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSSM) and the gradual reinforcement of the PNH, the future of Viv Ansanm faces significant challenges.

This coalition, which pledged to protect civilians and called on the population living in gang-controlled neighborhoods to resume their daily activities, which are often disrupted by gang conflicts. The coalition faced skepticism at its inception, as many doubted its durability due to long-standing rivalries and differences among its members. However, the coordinated Viv Ansanm incursions launched on state institutions on 29 February 2024, which aimed to force Prime Minister Ariel Henry to resign, marked a turning point and demonstrated the coalition's ability to adapt, negotiate, and work cohesively toward shared goals. This series of attacks led to Henry announcing on 11 March that he would resign. It showcased Viv Ansanm's capacity to act as a unified front as violence persisted in the subsequent months. Furthermore, the attacks came amid advanced negotiations on the deployment of the (MSSM) mission, created to stabilize the country's security. Gangs obviously perceive the MSSM and the PNH Specialized Units mission as a credible threat, prompting them to join forces and adapt their operations.

Viv Ansanm has operated primarily in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, using a combination of territorial control, economic extortion, and violent intimidation to maintain dominance. The gang alliance has been responsible for significant disruptions, including attacks on police facilities, kidnappings, and roadblocks that have paralyzed movement and trade. Recent developments indicate that the alliance has suffered setbacks. The resumption of training at the PNH police academy, previously under constant targeting by the Kraze Baryé gang, a member of the Viv Ansanm coalition, signifies a loss of a strategic objective. The MSSM and PNH have also initiated operations in gang-controlled neighborhoods, reclaiming some territories.

With the establishment of a Forward Operating Base in Delmas 2 and increased operations in areas once dominated by gang elements, Viv Ansanm faces mounting pressure. The PNH's recruitment and training efforts have resumed, with 739 new officers graduating and expected to reinforce law enforcement efforts. If MSSM forces expand their operational footprint, Viv Ansanm will struggle to maintain its current level of influence. Additionally, gang alliances often face internal rivalries, especially under sustained pressure. If leaders are arrested, killed, or lose control over their factions, the alliance could fracture. Resource shortages, particularly access to weapons and financial support, could weaken unity within the coalition.

As businesses and international organizations push for stability, economic initiatives could undermine the financial power of the gangs. Community resistance may increase if alternative economic opportunities become available, reducing the reliance on gangs for income. Haiti's political landscape remains volatile, and some gang leaders may attempt to negotiate surrender or amnesty agreements to secure their survival. The possibility of some gangs seeking negotiations with the government adds another layer of uncertainty. Gangs have publicly expressed openness to negotiations after the former transitional Prime Minister Garry Conille called on gangs to drop their weapons. However, if this were to become a reality, the potential exclusion of some groups or their reluctance to enter into an agreement with the government will likely create fissures within existing alliances. Some observers view the Viv Ansanm alliance as a contradiction; while it poses the greatest threat to the Haitian state, it also serves as the first unified platform that could facilitate engagement and dialogue. The alliance's consolidation has brought a measure of stability to Haiti's historically volatile gang landscape by reducing inter-gang conflicts. However, this unification has also strengthened the gangs' control over the communities they dominate, with reports indicating that civilians suspected of cooperating with state security have been executed.

Public backlash against negotiations between the Haitian government and gangs would likely be intense, driven by widespread anger and frustration over years of unchecked violence, kidnappings, and economic devastation inflicted by these criminal groups. Many Haitian citizens view gangs as the primary force destabilizing the country, and any effort to engage them in dialogue could be perceived as legitimizing their actions and rewarding criminal behavior. Victims of gang violence, including those who have lost family members or been displaced from their homes, may strongly oppose any deal that allows gang leaders to evade justice. Civil society organizations, business leaders, and political opponents could also condemn negotiations as a sign of government weakness, arguing that PNH and MSSM action should be prioritized instead. Furthermore, past experiences in other countries have shown that such deals can embolden gangs, leading to cycles of violence when factions break agreements or use negotiations as a cover to strengthen their operations. The risk of public protests, increased distrust in government institutions, and potential international criticism could make negotiations a politically costly decision for Haitian authorities.

The future of Viv Ansanm could take several paths. If MSSM forces aggressively target gang strongholds and dismantle leadership structures, the alliance could dissolve or become a fractured collection of weaker gangs. Should gang leaders find ways to evade security forces, they may regroup in new locations, adopting guerrilla-style tactics or shifting focus to cybercrime and financial crimes. If key figures within the alliance seek political legitimacy, they may attempt to broker deals with the Haitian government, similar to past efforts where criminal elements have been absorbed into official structures. Alternatively, if security efforts are inconsistent or international support dwindles, Viv Ansanm could transition into a long-term insurgent movement, continuing to destabilize Haiti for years to come.

The future of Viv Ansanm is uncertain but largely dependent on the effectiveness of the MSSM and PNH operations, internal gang dynamics, and broader political and economic developments. While the alliance remains a major threat, ongoing security measures have begun to erode its power. If sustained pressure continues and Haiti's government strengthens its institutions, Viv Ansanm may fragment or be significantly weakened. However, without long-term commitment to law enforcement and economic development, remnants of the alliance could persist in various forms, continuing to challenge stability in Haiti.

POTENTIAL POLITICAL REBRANDING OF THE VIV ANSANM GANG ALLIANCE: A HYPOTHETICAL ANALYSIS



On the evening of February 2, 2025, gang leader Jeff Gwo Lwa (alias "General Jeff") organized pre-Carnival celebrations in areas under Viv Ansanm's control. This event is seen as part of an ongoing effort to rebrand the Viv Ansanm Gang Alliance into the Viv Ansanm Political Party. While this remains a hypothetical scenario, some observers caution that if this initiative continues unchecked, the group could gain political traction and public support, particularly among disenfranchised communities.

The attempt to position a Viv Ansanm leader—not necessarily Jimmy "BBQ" Cherizier—as a political figure has drawn comparisons to the rise of former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Although Aristide was not a warlord, his political movements were closely tied to armed gangs, particularly the *chimères*, who acted as enforcers to maintain his influence. His appeal as a champion of the poor allowed him to harness frustration with the elite and past governments to build a strong political base. A similar strategy could be employed by Viv Ansanm if they successfully transform their criminal network into a political movement. By positioning themselves as defenders of marginalized communities and exploiting public grievances, they could attract a segment of the population that feels abandoned by the state. However, this effort faces significant obstacles, primarily the lack of a charismatic leader capable of uniting the movement and garnering widespread support.

Despite these concerns, most analysts believe that the prospect of widespread public support for gang-affiliated figures remains unlikely. The movement faces significant challenges, including a leadership deficiency, as the current figures within Viv Ansanm lack the charisma and political acumen needed to mobilize a legitimate political movement. Furthermore, the broader Haitian population continues to suffer from the violence, extortion, and instability caused by armed groups, making it difficult for gangs to shift public perception in their favor. Any overt attempt by known gang leaders to enter politics would also likely face resistance from the Haitian government, international partners, and the business elite. Unlike traditional political parties, gangs lack the institutional framework and policy platforms necessary to transition into a legitimate political entity. Without clear policy positions and governance strategies, they would struggle to gain credibility beyond their territorial strongholds.

While significant obstacles exist, the potential for Viv Ansanm to increase its influence should not be underestimated. If allowed to operate without interference, they may successfully shift public perception, particularly among younger and disenfranchised populations, further complicating efforts to restore security and stability. Some concerning trends include the potential erosion of political and social order, the expansion of gang influence into governance structures, and the legitimization of violence as a political tool. If gang leaders are perceived as viable political figures, it could further normalize the use of force in governance, making it even more difficult to reestablish the rule of law.

While the idea of Viv Ansanm evolving into a legitimate political movement remains speculative, it underscores the urgent need for proactive measures to prevent criminal elements from gaining further influence in Haitian society. Addressing the root causes of disenfranchisement—such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of government presence—will be essential in countering any efforts by gangs to position themselves as alternatives to traditional governance. Continued monitoring and strategic intervention will be necessary to ensure that armed groups do not gain the legitimacy needed to challenge state authority or further destabilize Haiti's already fragile political landscape.

URGENT NEED FOR THE RESUMPTION OF TACTICAL SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS IN HAITI'S ANTI-GANG OPERATIONS

Haitian police officers deployed in the fight against gangs continue to demonstrate resilience and dedication despite ongoing challenges. Officers from specialized units, such as the Departmental Unit for Law Enforcement (UDMO), have expressed concerns about the effectiveness of current tactics, particularly the reliance on Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs) as primary combat tools. While these armored vehicles provide essential protection, they are increasingly being used as stationary "tanks," limiting mobility and engagement.



Officers have described a recurring pattern in operations: the PNH engages gangs by firing through the MRAPs' gun ports, only to retreat shortly after, rather than dismounting and pursuing gang members in complex urban environments. This strategy, while minimizing risk, has allowed gangs to regroup and reclaim lost ground, perpetuating a cycle where law enforcement can push gangs back but struggles to hold territory. Gang members, well aware of these tactics, often hide in dilapidated homes and narrow alleyways, making them difficult to neutralize without a dismounted presence. The ability to maneuver and maintain pressure is critical, yet the PNH and MSSM forces are often forced to withdraw before fully securing gang-infested areas.

The issue is further exacerbated by the Trump Administration's "pause" on foreign aid, which has disrupted the deployment of embedded U.S. Tactical Subject Matter Experts who previously provided strategic and operational guidance in formulating anti-gang operations. These advisors played a crucial role in training and advising Haitian forces, particularly in urban combat, counterinsurgency tactics, and intelligence-led policing. Without this expertise, both the PNH and MSSM lack direct access to real-time tactical adjustments, leading to a defensive and reactionary posture instead of proactive gang eradication strategies.

Despite these challenges, the PNH remains committed to securing the country. Efforts are underway to strengthen coordination, improve training, and integrate advanced equipment such as drones for enhanced intelligence gathering. However, without the immediate resumption of support from Tactical Subject Matter Experts, Haitian security forces may continue to struggle in fully dismantling gang networks. Officers on the ground recognize the urgency of adapting their strategy and are advocating for immediate assistance, additional resources, and improved training to break the cycle of gang control in Haiti's most vulnerable areas.

DESTABILIZATION CONCERNS AND RESOURCE SHORTAGES THREATEN HAITI'S NATIONAL SECURITY



The Haitian National Police Union (SPNH-17) has issued a strong warning regarding an orchestrated effort by certain senior officials to destabilize the Haitian National Police (PNH) and facilitate the takeover of the capital by armed gangs. In a denunciation note dated January 31, 2025, the union reaffirmed its unwavering support for police officers who continue to risk their lives to ensure national security.

While commending the dedication and perseverance of officers working under precarious conditions, SPNH-17 strongly denounced the authorities' negligence in addressing the urgent needs of the PNH. The union has called on the Superior Council of the National Police (CSPN) and other relevant authorities to take immediate and decisive action to prevent any weakening of the police force, which could lead to widespread insecurity in the country.

Alleged Efforts to Undermine the PNH SPNH-17 has specifically pointed to recent events in Kenscoff as part of an orchestrated strategy to dismantle the security structures of West Zone 1 and West Zone 2. The union warned that such a situation could open the way for armed gangs to seize control of key areas, including Delmas and Pétion-Ville. Despite these threats, the police force remains steadfast in its commitment to defending its jurisdiction and maintaining law and order.

The union emphasized that national security is the direct responsibility of the CSPN, which is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes the Minister of Justice, the Minister of the Interior, the Director General of the PNH, and the Chief Inspector General. According to SPNH-17, it is imperative that the head of government ensures that the police are adequately equipped to fulfill their mission effectively.

Lack of Resources and the Kenscoff Incident SPNH-17 highlighted the lack of essential resources as a decisive factor in the Kenscoff incident, stressing that the absence of air support, armored vehicles suitable for rough terrain, and enhanced intelligence capabilities significantly hindered police operations. The union argued that with adequate resources—such as helicopters, specialized vehicles, and intelligence-gathering tools—these attacks could have been prevented.

In response to these concerns, the specialized units of the PNH, including SWAT, BOID, UTAG, UDMO, and CIMO, have jointly appealed to the Prime Minister and the Provisional Transitional Council (CPT) for additional resources. These units stressed the urgent need for enhanced operational capabilities to effectively combat the growing influence of gangs and restore public safety.

Support for Interim Director General Normil Rameau Furthermore, the specialized police units have expressed their unwavering support for the interim Director General of the PNH, Normil Rameau, whom they regard as a dedicated leader fully committed to his responsibilities. They have also issued warnings against certain factions that, according to them, are seeking to weaken the police institution by orchestrating efforts to remove Rameau from his position. These units underscored the critical importance of preserving the integrity and effectiveness of the PNH, particularly in the face of an increasingly complex and volatile security landscape.

In their closing statement, the SPNH-17 declared, "Attacking the PNH is attacking the Haitian people." The union reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to protecting the rights of police officers and ensuring national security amid the growing challenges faced by law enforcement in Haiti.

IMPROVISED WELDED STOP STICKS: A COMMON TACTIC IN HAITIAN GANG WARFARE



The use of welded improvised stop sticks by Haitian gangs is a common and effective tactic in their efforts to disrupt security operations, control territory, and ambush law enforcement and military forces. The device displayed above spotted by contacts and forwarded to Halo Solutions Firm team on January 30, 2025, in the area of Shodecosa through Simon Pelé, a known gang corridor for situational awareness. This method is not new to Haiti; gangs have been deploying similar tire-puncturing devices for years, refining their effectiveness and placement to maximize damage and slow down police and military forces.

These stop sticks are typically welded from sharpened rebar, steel rods, large nails, and metal fragments, creating crude yet highly effective tire-puncturing barriers. Unlike commercial police spike strips, these welded devices are designed for maximum durability, capable of puncturing both standard and reinforced tires, including some used by security forces. The placement of these devices is strategic, often deployed along high-traffic roads, bridges, and chokepoints to ambush police units, disrupt MSSM (Multinational Security Support Mission) operations, and control key smuggling routes. Additionally, gangs frequently deploy these stop sticks around gang-held toll areas, where they force passing vehicles to stop, extort money from drivers, and seize cargo or individuals for ransom. These makeshift roadblocks have been observed in Martissant, Cité Soleil, Croix-des-Bouquets, Delmas 2, and the Shodecosa-Simon Pelé corridor, among other known gang-controlled zones.

The impact on law enforcement has been significant. Police rapid response units, including UDMO, SWAT, and BRI, have experienced mobility issues during tactical operations, leaving officers vulnerable to gang ambushes. MSSM units have also been affected, with at least one documented case in late 2024 where Kenyan armored vehicles suffered tire damage during an attempted intervention in gang-held areas. Humanitarian organizations have also been targeted, with gangs using these devices to disable aid vehicles and hijack supply convoys.

Halo Solutions Firm S.A. stresses a practical response involves real-time intelligence tracking of stop stick locations, avoidance of high-risk routes, and the use of reconnaissance assets such as drones and scout teams to detect potential threats ahead of convoys. Security teams should also implement improved route-clearing tactics, utilizing mobile detection units capable of identifying and removing these devices before engaging in major operations. Emergency recovery planning is also essential, ensuring that every convoy or "protective movement" has a dedicated extraction plan, tire repair capabilities, and multiple alternative routes in case of an ambush.

LESLIE VOLTAIRE ACCUSES FORMER PRESIDENT MARTELLY OF EMPOWERING ARMED GANGS IN HAITI

In an interview with TV5 Monde on January 29, 2025, Leslie Voltaire, the current president of Haiti's Presidential Transitional Council, accused former President Michel Joseph Martelly of empowering armed gangs to maintain political control. Voltaire asserted that Martelly's actions have significantly contributed to the ongoing security crisis in Haiti. A United Nations report from October 2023 supports these claims, alleging that Martelly financed and armed gangs such as Base 257, Village de Dieu, and Gran Ravin during his tenure. The report indicates that Martelly provided these groups with funds and firearms, facilitating their criminal activities.

In August 2024, the United States imposed sanctions on Martelly, accusing him of facilitating drug trafficking, including cocaine shipments to the U.S., and sponsoring Haiti-based gangs. As a result, U.S. financial institutions are prohibited from providing loans or credit to him. Voltaire emphasized that while gangs were initially manipulated by powerful politicians and businessmen, they have since become autonomous criminal enterprises, engaging in drug trafficking, arms smuggling, organ trafficking, and the use of street children as human shields for their operations. Martelly, who served as Haiti's president from 2011 to 2016, has faced multiple allegations of corruption and illegal activities both domestically and internationally. In a past interview, he admitted to participating in cocaine trafficking.

These accusations matter because they underscore the deep entanglement between Haitian politicians and criminal networks, which has undermined governance and fueled the country's lawlessness. If a former head of state was involved in funding gangs and facilitating drug shipments, this represents a significant geopolitical and security issue extending beyond Haiti's borders, particularly for the United States and the Caribbean region. Furthermore, Haiti is currently experiencing widespread gang violence, economic instability, and political turmoil. If high-ranking politicians actively empowered these groups, dismantling them will require more than just police and military intervention demands accountability at the highest levels.

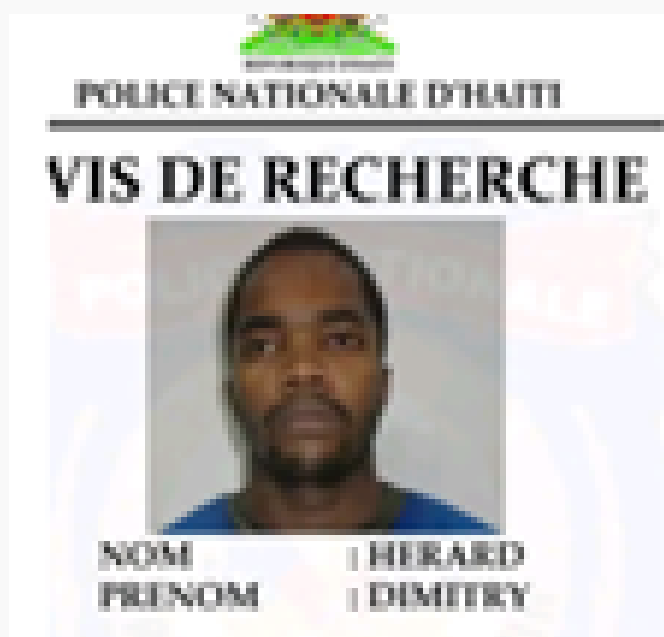
The U.S. sanctions against Martelly are a step toward holding political figures accountable, but more decisive action—such as legal consequences and broader international cooperation—may be required to dismantle the financial and political support behind Haiti's gangs. These revelations reinforce the urgent need for reforms, greater transparency in political leadership, and stronger law enforcement measures to combat organized crime in Haiti. The situation underscores why international actors—including the United Nations, the United States, and regional partners—must prioritize efforts to stabilize Haiti by addressing not only gang activity but also the political figures who enable it.

DIMITRI HÉRARD: ESCAPE FROM CUSTODY AND ALLEGED TIES TO THE VIV ANSANM GANG COALITION

Dimitri Hérard, former head of the General Security Unit of the National Palace (USGPN), was arrested in connection with the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021. He was detained at the National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince, awaiting trial. Hérard, known for his military background, previously studied at the Ecuadorian Military Academy, where he reportedly completed special operations training. His expertise in security operations made him a key figure within the government's protective forces before his arrest.



On March 2, 2024, a coordinated attack was launched on the National Penitentiary, leading to the escape of hundreds of inmates, including Dimitri Hérard. Armed gangs carried out a sophisticated assault using drones for surveillance, setting fires around the prison, and engaging in heavy gunfire with security forces. The breach resulted in a mass prison break, allowing high-profile detainees, including Hérard, to disappear. Reports indicate that elements of the Viv Ansanm Gang Coalition may have facilitated the escape, given the tactical precision of the operation.



The Viv Ansanm Gang Coalition was formed on February 29, 2024, uniting two of Haiti's most powerful gang alliances: G9 Family and Allies, led by Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier, and G-Pèp, a rival faction. This coalition currently exerts control over 80% of Port-au-Prince, carrying out coordinated attacks on government installations, police stations, and strategic locations. Their goal is to expand territorial control, challenge state authority, and secure critical supply routes.

Following his escape, speculation arose about Hérard's involvement with the gang coalition. Given his military expertise and past leadership role, analysts suggest that he could be providing tactical advice, operational planning, or direct support to criminal groups. However, concrete evidence linking him directly to gang operations remains scarce.

On December 31, 2024, Dimitri Hérard announced his decision to break his silence. Through his Bureau de Communication, he revealed plans to release a three-part documentary series titled, "Surviving the Storm – Dimitri Hérard on Politics, Accusations, and the Future." This documentary aims to address his past, the allegations against him, and his perspective on Haiti's future. Originally scheduled for release on January 31, 2025, at 11:59 PM, the launch was delayed due to technical difficulties. His team assured that the series would be published within hours of the intended release date.

As of February 2, 2025, Hérard's whereabouts remain unknown. Haitian authorities, along with international law enforcement agencies, have issued a wanted notice for his recapture. The Haitian National Police (PNH) is actively investigating possible connections between Hérard and criminal networks. Despite the ongoing search, his ability to evade capture suggests he may have high-level protection and logistical support.

The situation raises serious concerns about national security, the penetration of criminal organizations within government structures, and the overall capacity of the state to manage internal threats. Given Hérard's knowledge of military strategy and state security operations, his potential alignment with anti-government forces could further destabilize Haiti's fragile security landscape.

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