

The Haitian Political Crisis: International Mediation and the Current Circumstances

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Abstract - Haiti has been going through a political, humanitarian and security crisis and the state machinery is unable to handle this crisis by itself. This crisis is a result of multiple elements related to Haitian politics, the history of its constitution and the nature of the conditions of Haitians prior to this crisis. Multiple international organisations and countries have attempted to help the country by providing aid through diplomatic, military, and humanitarian means, however, there have been some blind spots which have resulted into the prolonging of the crisis. Haiti for now is dealing with violent gangs which have caused blockade of trade routes, hardship in administration, and displacement of Haitian citizens. This crisis needs immediate attention on an international level in order to help the official government regain its control and conduct an election to bring back safety and security to its citizens.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past decade the Caribbean country, Haiti has gone through some significant changes in the relation to its administration, law and order situation and humanitarian conditions. In this paper I will provide a brief account of the Haitian political crisis starting from the 2016 Presidential election which can be posited as the earliest event which has directly pushed the country into these circumstances. For the background of the political crisis, this paper will cover the issues of popularity and corruption relating to the Former President Jovenel Moise, the dissolution of the Haitian parliament and how it had long lasting impact on the electoral procedure and transition of power, the leaders which emerged after the assassination of President Moise. Furthermore, this paper will provide analysis of the assistance provided by different actors in international politics, including nations such as the United States of America, Canada, France, etc. and regional and international organisations such as the United Nations, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), etc. This analysis will focus on the diplomatic, financial, and military aid provided and give a brief summary of the domestic conditions of Haiti. Using this

analysis I will argue that the international community, while providing helpful assistance, has failed the country by not scrutinizing or dealing with the transitional government in an appropriate manner.

II. METHODOLOGY

For this paper, I have used certain primary sources such as public documents from the United Nations, CARICOM, United States, France, etc. Furthermore, I have used articles from mass media outlets. The main subject matter of this analysis are the causes of the Haitian crisis, and the diplomatic means used by the international community to stabilise the country which includes international organisations such as the United Nations and countries such as France and the United States. The sources which I have used include UN Security Council Resolutions, statements from various regional bodies such as CARICOM and verified journalism outlets such as the Miami Herald. In this paper, I will not attempt to resolve conflicting political claims in relation to political events like the arrests made due to the allegations of coup plots in 2021 but rather use the aforementioned sources to describe the diplomatic actions taken by each political actor and the results of those deliberations.

Historical Background

1.2 Protests Against Moise's Administration

Around 2018-2019, the Haitian crisis' immediate or the most earliest cause had emerged. There were protests against the elected President Jovenel Moise. While Moise was elected in accordance to the Haitian constitution, his domestic power was questionable and fragile; the voter turnout was alarmingly low (21 percent) and he had won by 55.67 percent of voters; one should also consider the fact that in the year 2000, the voter turnout was nearly 70%. It can be deduced from this data that Moise won the presidential elections by the support of only 10% of the voting population. The other element to be noted

here is the material conditions of Haitians during this crucial moment: the poverty rate was about 60%, 15% inflation rate, and that there was anger among the citizens over corruption.

While this protest had begun as a reaction to fuel price hike in July of 2018, it quickly became one which represented the general public's frustration over multiple social and economic issues. The situation worsened with the discovery of a corruption scandal involving nearly \$2 billion in Venezuelan aid funds.

In January of 2020, President Moise had dissolved the Haitian parliament after no elections were held, leaving himself as the sole decision maker in the executive branch of Haitian government.

1.3 Arrests Relating to the Allegations of Coup Plots

In February 2021, the authorities had announced that they had arrested 23 persons involved in the plotting of a coup to overthrow President Moise. The arrested persons included a Supreme Court Justice, Yvickel Dabresil and a prominent figure from the opposition, John Joel Joseph. Justice Minister Rockefeller Vincent stated that the group was planning to infiltrate the National Palace and install a judge as the provisional president of Haiti. Since the announcement of the arrest was made following the heightening of tensions between Moise and the opposition, it invited skeptical speculations from Haitians and the international observers.

Dabresil on the day of the arrest had denied the allegations and had stated that the allegations relating to his involvement in plotting a coup were false and that these arrests were made in order to discredit the opposition, which included a senior police inspector.

A judge of the Supreme Court could only be charged of such crimes if two thirds of the parliament decided to do so via voting. However, it was an impossibility in this situation since the parliament had been dissolved in 2020 by Moise and no elections were held since.

Following the arrests, President Moise had retired three Supreme Court Justices by issuing an executive order, including the one who was arrested earlier for allegedly plotting a coup. The two others were

previously approached by the opposition to act as interim leaders.

The United States' administration stated that it was 'deeply concerned about any actions that risk damaging Haiti's democratic institutions', avoiding any direct criticism of Moise or his administration and other parties involved.

1.4 The Assassination of Jovenel Moise

On the night of July 7, 2021, about a dozen foreign mercenaries had launched an attack on President Moise's private residence near Port-au-Prince. Moise was shot multiple times and died at the scene. Moise's wife was wounded, however, she was able to survive the attack. Majority of the assassins were Colombians. This assassination immediately created a power vacuum and plunged Haiti into chaos.

1.5 The Power Vacuum

Immediately after the assassination of the President, Claude Joseph remained as the de facto leader of the country as he was the transitional Prime Minister before the assassination. On July 5, 2021, President Moise had appointed Ariel Henry, a neurosurgeon, as the Prime Minister; Henry argued that Moise's last official act should be honored. The issues with Henry's claim were the fact that his appointment was not ratified by the parliament since the Haitian parliament had been dissolved and was not re-elected since, although his claim was recognized by the international community regardless.

Another claim to power was made by Senate President, Joseph Lambert who claimed the presidency; however, the claim made by him for presidency was sidelined by the international community and was largely seen as a power grab, lacking any precedent.

Prime Minister Claude Joseph stepped aside, a decision which he took, in his own words 'for the good of the country'. After this, Ariel Henry was sworn in as the Haitian Prime Minister. Ariel Henry's tenure was full of social and political catastrophe as gangs had taken over 90% of the country's capital, Port-au-Prince. In February 2024, violent gangs took over two of the largest prisons in the country which resulted in the fleeing of great numbers of prisoners.

In the same year, the Transitional Presidential Council (CPT) was installed, and it consisted of nine members; it was tasked with helping Haiti conduct an election—its first election since the year 2016. This council had first appointed Garry Conille as Prime Minister, however, he was dismissed in only five months, largely due to political infighting in the council. In November 2024, the Council appointed Alix Didier Fils-Aimé as the new Haitian Prime Minister; he was sworn in on 11th November, and still remains the Haitian Prime Minister (2026, April).

2. Assistance Provided by the International Community and the Failure of its Deliberations

2.1 The United Nations

In January of 2026, the United Nations Security Council renewed the mandate for political mission BINUH, which was initiated in the year 2019; this mission fulfils the role of tasking the Special Representative of UN with a 'good offices and coordination' role in order to facilitate Haitian dialogue (UNSC Res. 2743, 2025). In the month of February, UN's Independent Expert on the Human Rights Situation in Haiti, William O'Neill, stated that "I saw glimmers of hope: some territory liberated from gang control, a motivated and more visible police presence and a determined and more unified political leadership" and also, "around half of all gang members are children, under the age of 18". This briefing can be interpreted as a clear sign of motivation for further deliberations in relation to the crisis and some improvement in the handling of the situation relative to the past; but also with a clear admission of concerning state of affairs when it comes to the conditions of general populace.

2.2 The MSS and the GSF

MSS in the year of 2023 was authorised as a non-UN mission and was led by Kenya, funded by the voluntary contributions by the member states rather than the UN peacekeeping budget. In the year 2025, the UN Security Council adopted a new resolution (2793) which replaced the MSS with Gang Suppression Force (GSF). This transition was due to the failure of MSS to show notable material results.

The new Gang Suppression Force had the authority capacity of 5,500 personnel, which was a significant

advancement from the MSS. A UN support office was established in order to provide logistical support to GSF. This marked a notable development in international intervention in Haiti. GSF acts as an armed body and its presence shows the international community's involvement in the efforts to stabilise Haitian domestic security.

2.3 CARICOM

As compared to the other partners, CARICOM has played an exclusively diplomatic role; it acted as the mediator between different partners of Haitian politics and attempted to resolve the related conflicts in order to stabilise the political landscape of the country when other partners could not do the same.

Since CARICOM is made up of small developing countries, it lacks the ability to assist Haiti through strong financial contributions and military means, however, this organisation has been responsible for mobilising resources provided by other partners. For example, it helped facilitate \$24.1 million provided by Canada, a package for humanitarian and security efforts.

CARICOM was the earliest advocate for the deployment of a security mission in Haiti on the international level. It warned the international community of the increasing gang violence in the country. It also supported the transition of MSS to GSF.

2.4 France

As a country with deep historical ties with Haiti, France has played a major role in the international attempt to stabilise the country's politics. France has employed high level diplomacy, has supported international organisations acting directly on ground such as MSS and GSF, and has provided notable financial backing to the country. However, France's approach has been a secondary one as compared to the United States.

France is the leading nation when it comes to financial backing of security efforts; it has supported deliberations on the UN platform in order to provide a more able fund for MSS and GSF. It was also responsible for pushing the transition of MSS to a more robust organisation, the Gang Suppression Force. In 2025, France contributed €45 million for

the efforts of stabilising security in Haiti, providing humanitarian aid, and development projects in the country. In 2025, the French embassy in Port-au-Prince delivered about 4 tons of equipment to the Haitian police; this delivery included tactical gear which would be helpful in dealing with gang suppression operations.

While France has not imposed unilateral sanctions like the United States, it has voiced its opinions regarding the scope of the international sanctions; France has argued that the sanctions should not only target gang leaders but also other political and economic personalities who support them or have ties with them.

2.5 The United States of America

The United States has played a distinctive role in the international efforts concerning Haitian crisis; while it has engaged in specific deliberations regarding UN's assistance in this crisis, it has not constrained its diplomacy to what some other nations have used. The diplomacy deployed by the U.S. is also coercive in nature and at times, it has been in direct conflict with the CPT.

The U.S. not only viewed the Haitian crisis as a humanitarian concern but also a case related to its own security which needed to be resolved for the safety of the region. It backed the UNSC resolution 2699 which was authorised in the year 2023 which gave way for the establishment of MSS.

U.S. had initially pledged \$200 million to gang suppression efforts in 2023; by 2024 this commitment was increased to \$300 million, making the USA the primary financier of this mission. In addition to this, the USA had also pushed for the transition of MSS to GSF, and secured Chapter VII mandate for the GSF which enabled it to carry out more offensive operations against gangs, hold territory, and secure infrastructure independent of the Haitian police.

The USA has adopted coercive measures such as imposing unilateral sanctions like visa restrictions. In 2026, the CPT was dealing with infighting and some members were accused of gang ties; this resulted in a number of sanctions on the members of the council. Marco Rubio, the Secretary of State of the US, publicly accused the sanctioned individuals of

fueling 'systematic collapse in Haiti'. The U.S. also sent a warship and coast guard ships to Port-au-Prince, directly involving its armed forces with the crisis, showing its increasing concern on the matter.

3. Transitional Presidential Council (CPT), a Blind Spot

3.1 The Emergence of the Council and the Responsibility of the International Community

While one can give many instances of financial and military assistance provided by various partners from the international community, we must also consider the elements which have not been scrutinized thoroughly. While Haiti is a sovereign nation, it must be noted that this body's emergence was not isolated from international deliberation. Haiti's Transitional Presidential Council was a result of mediations conducted by CARICOM in March of 2024 in Jamaica. The international community had also played a major role in legitimising the structure of this council; the US, France, Canada, UN, and OAS publicly endorsed the outcome.

3.2 Issues with the Nature of the Council and Cases of Paralysis

The members of this council were not elected; rather, they were nominated by a coalition of political parties and civil groups from Haiti.

The council consisted of 9 members in total, out of which 7 are voting members and 2 are observers. It features a rotating presidency which lasts for five months. To pass any resolution, five out of seven votes were required and for major decisions in particular, the vote of the sitting president was needed. This meant that out of 7 members of the council, a coalition of any 3 members was enough to stop the passing of any resolution. This voting system had resulted in cases of paralysis during the occurrence of some significant events.

3.2.1

In the year 2025, when gangs took over a great part of the country's capital, Prime Minister Fils-Aimé and security officials had made a proposal for several security measures to be taken which included curfew and emergency powers. This proposal was presented to the CPT, however, due to internal conflict this resolution did not pass immediately.

3.2.2

In January of 2026, some members of the TPC had held a press conference stating that they had decided to oust the sitting Prime Minister, Alix Didier Fils-Aimé. They had secured five votes, however, they were lacking the approval of the sitting president of the TPC, whose vote was needed for such a major deliberation.

The US played an important role in stopping any further development in this case by showing its clear support for Prime Minister Fils-Aimé to hold his office, believing that such drastic measures like removing the current Prime Minister would likely cause more chaos. Following this event, the US State Department issued visa restrictions on two members of the council, their children and their spouses due to their involvement or ties with gang operations. While such announcements do not share the names of the persons on whom the restrictions are imposed, Fritz Alphonse Jean confirmed that he was one of the members whose visa was restricted, albeit denying his involvement with gangs.

These cases show the inability of this council to operate without major hurdles even in critical cases where time is of great importance.

In February of 2026, the TPC was dissolved as it had exhausted its mandate which was to last for 22 months without succeeding in its objective of conducting elections in the country, thus, a failure.

The Domestic Conditions of Haiti

As the state apparatus is struggling to perform its elementary tasks related to security, violent gangs have gained control of Haiti's capital city. In this case, these gangs are not only acting as unorganised bodies operating under an anarchy; these gangs operate under the coalition of Viv Ansanm, this body has created a quasi state system, i.e., it has resulted in a parallel government which engages in activities such as taxing businesses, etc.

For the overall economy, Haiti has faced seven years of consecutive contraction, a cumulative GDP loss of over 16 percent between the years 2018 and 2025. In January of 2026, the inflation rate had reached 23.5 percent. Paul Magik, a Haitian economist, compared the country's circumstances to a "seriously ill patient".

Due to the occupation and other activities carried out by violent gangs, the number of displaced persons has reached over 1.45 million. In 2025, UNICEF had reported that among the internally displaced persons, about 680,000 were children. The UN has reported that nearly half of the Haitian population needs humanitarian assistance.

As of now, the Haitian Prime Minister Fils-Aimé remains in power under his transitional government.

III. CONCLUSION

Though international partners including organisations such as the UN, CARICOM, etc. and countries such as the United States of America, France, etc. have tried to help Haiti in order to stabilise itself and have aided the country through humanitarian, military, and diplomatic means, the conditions of Haitian people and its official administration is still not a healthy one. And while the assistance by these partners has been notable and further continuation would certainly be helpful, Haiti needs immediate attention of the international community in relation to its political landscape and machinery. Haiti requires diplomatic deliberations; the deliberations which would help in installing a more able body capable of efficiently dealing with critical events with some level of approval from the general Haitian population in order to avoid greater degree of conflict with operations on the ground. This body would operate with the mission of carrying out elections, improving the security situation in the country, and aiding the state in renewing its organs which are effectively lost during this longstanding crisis.

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