



# ***Haiti's criminal markets:***

**MAPPING TRENDS IN FIREARMS  
AND DRUG TRAFFICKING**



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



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# INTRODUCTION

## KEY FINDINGS

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- ◆ Increasingly sophisticated and high-calibre firearms and ammunition are being trafficked into Haiti amid an unprecedented and rapidly deteriorating security situation.
  - ◆ Haiti remains a trans-shipment country for drugs, primarily cocaine and cannabis, which mostly enter the country via boat or plane, arriving through public, private and informal ports as well as clandestine runways.
  - ◆ Haiti's borders are essentially porous, and the challenges of patrolling 1,771 kilometres of coastline and a 392-kilometre land border with the Dominican Republic are overwhelming the capacities of Haiti's national police, customs, border patrols and coast guard, who are severely under-staffed and under-resourced, and increasingly targeted by gangs.
  - ◆ Heavily armed criminal gangs are targeting ports, highways, critical infrastructure, customs offices, police stations, court houses, prisons, businesses and neighbourhoods.
  - ◆ Virtually every metric of insecurity, from homicide, sexual violence and kidnapping to the killing of police and migration out of the country – is trending upward.
  - ◆ International, regional and national responses have underscored the importance of increasing support to law enforcement and border management. Comprehensive approaches encompassing investments in community policing, criminal justice reform and anti-corruption measures are crucial to delivering sustainable peace and stability in Haiti.
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Haiti is in the grip of multiple, interlocking, and cascading crises. If unattended, there are serious risks of further destabilization from a myriad of increasingly powerful criminal armed groups. The risks of regional spill-over and contagion are widely acknowledged: The United Nations Security Council has repeatedly raised concerns about the country's "protracted and deteriorating political, economic, security, human rights, humanitarian and food security crises" and "extremely high levels of gang violence and other criminal activities".<sup>1</sup> A particular preoccupation relates to the contribution of illegal firearms and drug trafficking in fuelling Haiti's deepening security dilemmas.

This assessment provides an overview of the scope, scale and dynamics of firearms and drug trafficking in Haiti, including sources, routes, vectors and destinations. It is based on published and unpublished information and 45 interviews conducted by UNODC with representatives of the Haitian government, bilateral and multilateral agencies, subject matter experts, and Haitian civil society.<sup>2</sup> The situation in the country is deteriorating rapidly, and this assessment has drawn upon

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<sup>1</sup> See UN Security Council (UNSC) (2022) S/RES/2645, 15 July. See also UNSC (2022) S/RES/2600, 15 October; UNSC (2022) S/RES/2653, 21 October; and UNSC (2023) S/2023/41, 17 January.

<sup>2</sup> The report was drafted between 20 November and 31 December 2022. It was not possible to visit Haiti during this period, and all interviews were conducted remotely. The identity of the respondents was anonymized in the interview references.

a variety of sources with their attendant limitations, including unverified media reports, to take account of recent developments. It opens with a cursory overview of the criminal context in which firearms and drug trafficking are occurring. The second section considers the basic infrastructure that facilitates trafficking, especially seaports, roads and airstrips. Sections three and four examine patterns of trafficking of both firearms and drugs into and out of Haiti. The final section summarizes global, regional and national measures to address related challenges, alongside knowledge gaps warranting deeper investigation.

Given the evolving circumstances, any attempt to document firearms and drug trafficking trends in Haiti will be fragmented and partial. Even so, certain tendencies and patterns can be discerned. Very generally, firearms and ammunition typically enter Haiti via land and sea, and drugs usually transit Haiti from seaports, airports and across poorly monitored border points. Most weapons are sourced in the US and make their way to gang members and private residents through intermediaries, often through public and private ports and porous checkpoints. Whether they are interdicted or not, most drugs passing through Haiti are produced in Colombia (cocaine) or Jamaica (cannabis) and shipped directly from source, or pass via Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, and Venezuela. From Haiti they are shipped onward to the Dominican Republic, Western Europe and, primarily, the US.



## CRIMINAL CONTEXT

Haiti's prolonged security crisis took an alarming turn for the worse since 2021. Even before the high-profile assassination of former President Jovenel Moïse by suspected foreign and domestic mercenaries in July 2021, Haiti's cities and towns registered deteriorating economic conditions, rising social unrest, the targeting of human rights defenders<sup>3</sup>, and the growing menace of heavily armed gangs and organized criminal organizations.<sup>4</sup> Today, violent gangs have effectively seized control of large swathes of the country, contributing to a deepening humanitarian crisis. A recent assessment estimates that close to 100,000 Haitians have been physically displaced by insecurity in Port-au-Prince alone.<sup>5</sup> Chronic instability is contributing to rising food prices, surging hunger, dangerous cholera outbreaks, deepening poverty and the potential for a major migration exodus (see Table 1).<sup>6</sup>

**TABLE 1** Haiti's security situation (2019-2022)

	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Homicides</b>	1,141	1,380	1,615	2,183
<b>Kidnappings</b>	78	234	664	1,359
<b>Police killed</b>	42	30	49	54
<b>Haitian migrants detained by US</b>	932	418	1,527	7,175

Source: UNODC, UNPOL, and US Coast Guard (2022)

Confronted with escalating insecurity, Haiti's Council of Ministers authorized the Prime Minister in late 2022 to take the unusual step of requesting the deployment of a "specialized armed force" by the international community.<sup>7</sup> For its part, the UN Security Council issued a sanctions regime freezing assets, establishing travel bans and embargoing arms flows targeting actors deemed responsible for, complicit in, or having engaged directly or indirectly in actions that threaten the peace, security or stability of Haiti.<sup>8</sup> Some Member States and prominent non-governmental organizations have called for more muscular intervention, including the deployment of a multinational police force.<sup>9</sup> The US, for example, has worked with partner Member States on a draft Security Council resolution to deploy a rapid action force, or a "non-UN international security

<sup>3</sup> See International Human Rights Clinic – Harvard Law School, Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic – Yale Law School, Global Justice Clinic – NYU Law School, Joint statement from U.S. human rights clinics in solidarity with human rights defenders in Haiti, 27 June 2022.

<sup>4</sup> See US Department of Justice, Third Man Charged in Connection with Plot to Kill Haitian President, U.S. Attorney's Office Southern District of Florida, May 9 2022, available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdfl/pr/third-man-charged-connection-plot-kill-haitian-president> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

<sup>5</sup> See IOM, Information sheet on forced displacement (June - August 2022), available at <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/haiti-information-sheet-forced-displacement-june-august-2022> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>6</sup> See UN News, "'Catastrophic' hunger recorded in Haiti for first time, UN warns," 14 October 2022.

<sup>7</sup> See UN News, "UN chief calls for enhanced security support for Haiti, as crisis worsens; cholera deaths mount", 10 October 2022; Hauteville, J. (Le Monde), "Haiti requests military help to curb crises, despite public backlash", 12 October 2022.

<sup>8</sup> See UNSC (2022) S/RES/2653.

<sup>9</sup> See Security Council Report, "Haiti: UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) Mandate Renewal", 15 July 2022. See also International Crisis Group, Haiti's last resort: Gangs and the prospect of foreign intervention, Briefing No. 48, 14 December 2022.

assistance mission".<sup>10</sup> And while Haitians have previously bristled at foreign intervention, a recent survey claimed that as much as 70 percent of the population currently supports external security assistance, particularly people residing in gang-controlled areas.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, lawlessness is worsening across Haiti (see Table 1 and Annexes). It is also growing increasingly violent. US law enforcement and intelligence authorities detected a sharp uptick in the quantity and calibre of firearms and ammunition destined for Haiti in 2022.<sup>12</sup> Haiti's National Police (HNP), along with the international and domestic human rights groups, have also documented rising levels of killings, sexual violence, protest and kidnapping between 2020 and 2023.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, the US Coast Guard registered a fourfold increase in intercepted Haitian migrants between 2021 and 2022.<sup>14</sup> And 43,900 Haitians, including as many as 1,800 children, were reportedly deported on the border with the Dominican Republic between July and October 2022 alone.<sup>15</sup>

Observers are especially concerned with the evolution, expansion, and intensification of gang activity across Haiti.<sup>16</sup> Many of the country's estimated 150-200 gangs are deeply enmeshed in complex patronage networks aligned with a constellation of political and economic elites.<sup>17</sup> Open-source research and interviews with specialists in Haiti indicate that a small number of gang federations in and around the capital are expanding their territorial influence over urban neighbourhoods. They are also targeting critical infrastructure, including access to sea ports, fuel terminals, airports and key roads in and out of major cities.<sup>18</sup> Gangs have blocked access to fuel reserves, triggering a "humanitarian catastrophe" according to the World Food Programme (WFP).<sup>19</sup> In the absence of an international security mission or equivalent, the practical focus of international support is on delivering humanitarian aid and bolstering the HNP's capacities to deter and suppress armed gangs, including the trafficking of firearms.<sup>20</sup> There is also growing attention to border security, albeit not at a scale that can meaningfully deter and reduce the flow of weapons, drugs, and other contraband.

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<sup>10</sup> See Price, N., "Department press briefing", US Department of State, 28 October 2022, <https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-october-28-2022/> (accessed on 2 February 2023) and US Mission to the UN, "Remarks by Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield at a UN Security Council Briefing on Haiti", 17 October 2022.

<sup>11</sup> See Reuters, "Around 70% of Haitians back international force to fight gangs, survey says", 3 February 2023.

<sup>12</sup> See US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, "HIS announces crackdown on firearms, ammunition smuggling to Haiti, the Caribbean", 19 April 2022.

<sup>13</sup> See Human Rights Watch, "Haiti: Wave of violence deepens", July 22, 2022., UNOHCHR and BINUH (2022), "Gangs use sexual violence to instill fear", 14 October 2022 and Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains (RNDDH) at <https://web.rnddh.org/2022/?lang=en> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>14</sup> See Coast Guard News, "Coast Guard repatriates 66 people to Haiti", 23 December 2022.

<sup>15</sup> See Janetzky, M. (AP News) "Dominican Republic cracks down at border amid Haiti chaos", 11 October 2022.

<sup>16</sup> Interviews with key informant KI10, KI11, KI24, KI38 and KI39 as well as multiple Haitian sources from government and the civil society sectors between November and December 2022. See also UNSC (2022) S/RES/2653 and Cotton, J., Hammel, M. and L. Noofoory (2023) Haiti fragility brief, Carleton University.

<sup>17</sup> The RNDDH estimated in 2021 that there were at least 164 gangs in Haiti. Haitian specialists dispute the numbers claiming there could be as many as 200. For example, a report authored by The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) determined there were an estimated 200 gangs in 2022. See GI-TOC, *Gangs of Haiti* (Geneva, 2022). See also RNDHH, *Violent clashes between armed gangs* (2022, Report/A22/No6).

<sup>18</sup> See GI-TOC (2022)

<sup>19</sup> See Reuters, "Haitians hope for fuel supplies after police break up gang blockade at terminal", November 5, 2022. See also WFP, "Catastrophic hunger levels recorded for the first time in Haiti", 14 October 2022.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with key informant KI10, KI11 and KI24, 5 December 2022.



Throughout 2022 and early 2023, emboldened Haitian gangs steadily expanded their control over key access points to cities, including the capital Port-au-Prince. Some have also focused on controlling key supply lines connected to public and private ports and international border crossings with the Dominican Republic.<sup>21</sup> Several gangs and gang coalitions, notably the G9, G-Pep, 400 Mawozo, Baz Galil, Vilaj de Dye, Vitelhomme, and Ti Mkak have targeted public and private institutions.<sup>22</sup> Many are also engaged in predatory behaviour in communities under their control contributing to rising levels of extortion, sexual violence, kidnapping and fatal violence (see Annex 1-9).<sup>23</sup> Some UN Members States are determined to ramp-up pressure on the gangs and their backers, including in the wake of egregious acts of violence involving their citizens.<sup>24</sup> The US and Canada have also delivered “vital security equipment” including tactical and armoured vehicles to the HNP on at least two occasions, in October 2022 and January 2023.<sup>25</sup>

The Security Council sanctions, which target individuals and entities engaging in or supporting criminal activities and violence involving armed groups and criminal networks, among other actions, have so far designated one person under the regime, namely Jimmy Cherizier, who the text identifies as one of Haiti's most influential gang leaders and who leads an alliance of gangs known as the “G9 Family and Allies”.<sup>26</sup> The EU has further transposed the UN sanctions into legislation.<sup>27</sup> Unilateral sanctions, meanwhile, implicate at least eight former Haitian presidents, prime ministers, senators and businesspeople suspected of involvement in illegal activities such firearms and drug trafficking, among other crimes.<sup>28</sup>

Haiti's political system has been described by the World Bank as “driven by capture, rent-seeking and clientelism”, leading to widespread abuses of powers and corruption.<sup>29</sup> Elected and appointed officials at all levels of government and across multiple sectors have been implicated in illicit activities ranging from corruption, fraud and money laundering to supporting gangs to bolster their political power and capacity to influence elections.<sup>30</sup>

As detailed in the unilateral sanctions announcements, several members of Haiti's economic elite are suspected of involvement in criminal rackets, including influential Haitian families and members

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<sup>21</sup> Interviews with key informant KI36 and KI37, 19 December 2022.

<sup>22</sup> For a useful overview of G9, G-Pep and 400 Mawozo, among other groups, see InSight Crime, “G9 and Family”, 18 July 2022; Mistler-Ferguson, S., (InSight Crime), “G9 vs. G-PEP- The two gang alliances tearing apart”, 21 July 2022; and InSight Crime, “400 Mawozo”, 23 March 2022.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, UNOHCHR, *Sexual violence in Port-au-Prince: A weapon used by gangs to install fear*, 14 October 2022.

<sup>24</sup> See Blinken, Anthony, Secretary of State, “U.S. Department of State announces reward offers for information leading to the arrests and/or convictions of three Haitian gang leaders”, 7 November 2022. and US Department of Justice, “Criminal charges unsealed against Haitian gang leaders for kidnappings of US citizens”, 7 November 2022.

<sup>25</sup> See US Southern Command, “US air force delivers Haitian National Police equipment to Haiti”, Press Release, 15 October 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Also targeted by sanctions are criminal actors and armed groups involved in forcible recruitment of children, kidnapping, trafficking in persons, smuggling of persons and wider forms of violence. See UNSC (2022) sanctions measures at <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/2653>.

<sup>27</sup> See EU, Council Regulations 2022/2309, 25 November 2022.

<sup>28</sup> See Muggah, R. “Haiti is on the brink of state failure”, *Foreign Policy*, 17 February 2023.

<sup>29</sup> See International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, *Haiti Pathways to responding to recurrent crises and chronic fragility: Systematic Country Diagnostic Update*, June 2022, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/709131656602892706/pdf/Haiti-Systematic-Country-Diagnostic-Update-Pathways-to-Responding-to-Recurrent-Crises-and-Chronic-Fragility.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> See Olivier, D., (2021) “The political anatomy of Haiti's armed gangs”, *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Volume 53(1), pp. 83-87. .

of the diaspora in the US and the Dominican Republic.<sup>31</sup> The announcements highlight the concentration of political and economic power in the country. A handful of Haitian family dynasties account for the vast majority of the country's overall wealth.<sup>32</sup> Some of them are involved in the agricultural, manufacturing, shipping and logistics sectors, while others oversee import-export operations.<sup>33</sup> Several prominent Haitian businesspeople have also acquired honorific diplomatic titles conferring a level of immunity and reductions in import and export tax.<sup>34</sup> Individuals involved in industrial parks warehousing imports<sup>35</sup> and private ports have typically encountered limited oversight from government authorities.<sup>36</sup>

Due to mounting concerns with crime and insecurity, private security companies have expanded across Haiti in recent decades (see Box 1). Many provide close protection services for the country's political and economic elite as well as protection for public facilities, critical infrastructure and small and medium businesses. Significant numbers of such companies also recruit directly from the HNP, with officers either moonlighting or leaving law enforcement altogether to work in the more lucrative private sector. Some of these entities have been implicated in firearms trafficking. The growth of private security in Haiti coincides with similar patterns of private security expansion across Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>37</sup>, alongside a deepening security crisis following the 2010 earthquake<sup>38</sup> and particularly since the departure of UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in 2017.

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<sup>31</sup> See GOC (2022) and US Department of the Treasury, "US sanctions additional corrupt Haitian politicians for drug trafficking", 2 December 2022., <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1137>. See also Segura, R. (Foreign Affairs), "Haiti's state of paralysis", 20 April 2022.

<sup>32</sup> See Burt, G. et al (2015) *Deportation, circulation migration and organized crime – Haiti case study*, Research Report, (Canada Public Safety, Ontario).

<sup>33</sup> See Hauge, W. (2018) *Haiti: A political economy analysis* (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo).

<sup>34</sup> Interview with key informant KI02, KI03 and KI08, 5-10 December 2022.

<sup>35</sup> See AP News, "In Haiti, the difficult relationship of gangs and business", 27 October 2022.

<sup>36</sup> Several of Haiti's business elite own private ports and have entered into coalitions to manage services, including the Caribbean Port Services (CPS). Interview with key informant KI02, KI03, KI08, KI36, KI37 and KI45 in December 2022.

<sup>37</sup> See UNLIREC and DCAF, *Armed private security in Latin America and the Caribbean*, DCAF and UNLIREC (DCAF and United Nations 2016).

<sup>38</sup> Burt, G. (2012), *From private security to public good: Regulating the private security industry in Haiti*, SSR Issue Paper No. 9.

## BOX 1. PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES IN HAITI

The suspects in the assassination of Haiti's President Moïse inside his home in the early hours of 7 July, 2021 include a team of mercenaries connected to a small US firm,<sup>39</sup> which reportedly offered close protection support, training in firearms, and access to military-style equipment.<sup>40</sup> This is not the first time US-owned private security companies have been implicated in murky ventures in Haiti. In February 2019, for example, several US contractors were reportedly arrested in Port-au-Prince with a cache of weapons and military equipment.<sup>41</sup> They claimed to be providing security to both the government and private security details for local business elites. According to accounts given to media, they were released by Haiti's Justice Ministry following US intervention, repatriated and freed without charge.<sup>42</sup>

Private security firms officially emerged in Haiti following the end of the Duvalier dictatorship in the late 1980s.<sup>43</sup> Haiti's 1987 Constitution did not originally include provisions for such enterprises. In fact, Article 263 specified that the armed forces and police were the only armed groups permitted to operate in the country. However, a 1988 decree and 1989 amendment legalized private security companies. In 1994, oversight passed from the disbanded armed forces to the HNP via a Presidential decree.<sup>44</sup>

Today, private security companies are permitted to acquire and hold firearms in Haiti. The 1988 and 1989 legislation permit firearm licences for up to half of the registered personnel of a private security firm.<sup>45</sup> Only certain categories of weapons – handguns and shotguns – are permitted. All licence applications must be made to the Minister of the Interior and Territorial Collectives (MICT) and the HNP is responsible for delivery and oversight of firearms through a registry managed by the Central Department for Administrative Police (DCPA). Although analysts believe that local private security companies oversee a far larger arsenal than what is legally permitted,<sup>46</sup> information on the scope and scale of their arsenals is unavailable.

In 2012, the most recent year for which public records are available, the MICT reported just 40 separate private security companies licenced to operate in the country.<sup>47</sup> Firms reportedly varied in size from 50 to 2,000 personnel, with a total of 12,000 individuals in total. Roughly half of their clients at the time were foreign embassies and non-governmental organizations and the remainder consisted of banks, businesses and schools. While not possible to independently verify, specialists speculate that there could be 75,000 to 90,000 individuals working with roughly 100 private security companies across the country, at least five times the number of registered police officers.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>39</sup> See BBC, "Haiti's president's assassination: What we know so far", 20 January 2022.

<sup>40</sup> See Dreisbach, T. (NPR), "Mystery surrounds Florida company suspected in Assassination of Haiti's President", 16 July 2021.

<sup>41</sup> See Chappell, B. (NPR), "Arrest of heavily armed former US military members in Haiti sparks many questions", 20 February 2022.

<sup>42</sup> See Cotto, D. and Weissenstein, M. (AP News) "US military vet recounts arrests in Haiti to AP", March 21 March 2019.

<sup>43</sup> See Burt, G., *From private security to public good: regulating the private security industry in Haiti*, SSR Issues Paper 9 (2012, the Centre for International Governance Innovation).

<sup>44</sup> See Republic of Haiti (1994) HNP Act.

<sup>45</sup> This ratio is reportedly similar to that of other countries in the region. Interview with key informant KI38, 15 December 2022. For more on private security and weapons ownership see Small Arms Survey (2012) *A booming business: Private security and small arms*, Small Arms Survey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

<sup>46</sup> Interview with key informant KI36, 19 December 2022 and KI38 on 15 December 2022. See also Burt et al (2012).

<sup>47</sup> See Burt (2012).

<sup>48</sup> Interview with key informant KI01, KI27, KI28 and KI32, 1 December 2022.

US-based private security companies contracted by foreign governments such as Haiti to provide specialized services are subject to a range of domestic oversight mechanisms.<sup>49</sup> For example, when they are recruited to provide essential defence services, including military or law enforcement training, such companies must obtain arms exports licences from the US Department of State and undergo a review that also involves the US Department of Defense.<sup>50</sup> Although the State Department forbids combat services under International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), some private security companies have reportedly pursued unauthorized services.<sup>51</sup>

The formation of the HNP in 1994 coincided with the disbanding of the country's armed forces. Police reform experts believe that the absence of a coherent framework for policing and the rushed formation, recruitment and training of new officers hobbled the force from the start.<sup>52</sup> Despite successive UN missions in Haiti and repeated efforts to exact security system reform, HNP performance has been hampered by mandate, leadership, capacity and budgetary constraints.<sup>53</sup> One persistent deficiency relates to the management and accountability over existing firearms holdings of law enforcement officers and stores of seized weapons.<sup>54</sup> Another long-standing impediment relates to the weak government coordination across agencies – including entities charged with addressing weapons and drug trafficking, customs, migration and anti-corruption efforts.<sup>55</sup>

Arguably the most significant challenge facing the HNP is its limited force strength and modest resourcing. As of late 2022, there were an estimated 14,161 HNP personnel, though BINUH assessed that its operational strength was closer to 13,000 and fewer than 9,000 are on active duty.<sup>56</sup> Specialized police units face chronic staffing shortages. For example, the HNP's border patrol (POLIFRONT) has just 294 officers<sup>57</sup>, an order of magnitude fewer than the Dominican

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<sup>49</sup> See Jones, S. (ProPublica), "US private security firms head to Haiti", 21 January 2010; and Picard, M. (Transparency International), "In Haiti, a glimpse of a mercenary industry enabled by weak regulation, Transparency International", 23 July 2021.

<sup>50</sup> See Federal Register, "Private security contractors (PSCs) operating in contingency operations, humanitarian or peace operations, or other military operations and exercises", 9 September 2022. See also US Department of State (2022) Director of Defense Trade Controls, available at <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-arms-control-and-international-security-affairs/bureau-of-political-military-affairs/directorate-of-defense-trade-controls-pm-ddtc/> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>51</sup> See Dreisbach, T. (NPR), "Mystery surrounds Florida company suspected in assassination of Haiti's president", 16 July 2021.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with key informant KI01, KI27, KI28, KI32 and KI38 on 1 December 2022 and with KI38 on 15 December 2022.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with key informant KI36 and KI30, 19 December 2022.

<sup>54</sup> For example, the HNP's Service de Port d'Arme à Feux (SPAF) has a limited mandate focused on issuing permits and monitoring statistics. It does not undertake due diligence of firearms holders, conduct traces, or safeguard the storage of firearms. Interview with key informant KI36, 19 December 2022.

<sup>55</sup> Between 1994 and 2015 there was no clear framework for border control. That changed in 2015 when the HNP created the first official border police spanning four entry points into the Dominican Republic. Meanwhile, Haiti's coast guard was also placed under the HNP after 1994, generating difficulties related to command and control, effective budgeting, and overall capacity. Interview, 1 December, with key informant KI01, KI27, KI28 and KI32 and 30 November with key informant KI09 and KI15.

<sup>56</sup> See S/2022/747, Letter dated 8 October 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the president of the Security Council and BINUH, "Security Council Open briefing on Haiti", 22 December 2022.

<sup>57</sup> POLIFRONT officers are distributed at headquarters, Morne Cass, Capotile, Ounaminthe, Malpasse and Anse-a-Pitre. Border experts believe Haiti should have at least 7,000 to 8,000 border patrol officers to provide adequate security. Review of POLIFRONT statistics provided by HNP. Interview with key informant KI42 on 10 December 2022.

Republic.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, the Haitian Coast Guard (HCG) has just 181 officers and a single operational vessel (since others are either undergoing repairs in the US or simply non-functioning).<sup>59</sup> Likewise, the country's anti-narcotics brigade (BLTS) has just 317 personnel and is severely under-resourced and over-stretched.<sup>60</sup> These capacity shortfalls are contributing to weak chain of custody over seized contraband, including drugs and firearms.

Another factor hampering the effectiveness of the HNP is its uneven operational presence across the country. A sizeable share of officers within the HNP and its specialized units are stationed in the capital, Port-au-Prince, with the remainder sparsely distributed across Haiti's cities, towns and border areas.<sup>61</sup> One reason for this is that many HNP officers are often placed on duties unrelated to their core responsibilities, including the provision of close protection for senior government officials. The misallocation of police further degrades their effectiveness.<sup>62</sup> With the exception of a handful of staff stationed at Haiti's two international airports and selected border crossings, there are virtually none policing key air, land and maritime entry and exit points.<sup>63</sup> The HNP also struggles to manage, share and analyse data within the organization, much less across government agencies.<sup>64</sup>

Notwithstanding the controversial legacy of Haiti's armed forces during the dictatorship era, there is a persistent chorus for it to be reconstituted. Pressure to rebuild Haiti's military has been applied since it was disbanded by former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1994. For example, former President Rene Preval (1996-2001) established a commission to review the necessity of the armed forces, though faced with foreign and domestic opposition, opted to reinforce the HNP instead.<sup>65</sup> A decade later, former President Michel Martelly (2011-2016) advocated for the return of the armed forces, but ultimately also demurred.<sup>66</sup> The late President Moïse (2017-2021) took the decision early in his administration to reconstitute the armed forces, announcing the allocation of \$8.5 million of defence spending in 2018 and appointment of a high command under the Ministry of Defence.<sup>67</sup> At

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<sup>58</sup> By way of comparison, the Dominican Republic fields 32,000 police officers, including an estimated 15,000 border patrol officials. What is more, the Dominican Republic has also started building a 164-kilometre-long border wall with Haiti, ostensibly to reduce drug trafficking, arms smuggling and illegal migrant crossings. Interview with key informant KI42 on 10 December 2022. See also Interpol, Dominican Republic, available at <https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/Member-countries/Americas/DOMINICAN-REPUBLIC> (accessed on 2 February 2023) and Janetsky, M. (AP News), "Dominican Republic cracks down at border amidst Haiti chaos", 11 October 2022, and Reuters "Dominican Republic begins building border wall with Haiti", 20 February 2022.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with key informant KI10, KI11, KI24, 5 December 2022.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with key informant KI30, 19 December 2022. See also US State Department, International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume 1 (March 2022).

<sup>61</sup> Interview with key informant KI36, 19 December 2022.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with key informant KI39, KI40, KI14, KI29, KI36 and KI38, November-December 2022.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with key informant KI42 on 10 December 2022 as well as consultations with key informant KI36 on 19 December 2022.

<sup>64</sup> The HNP, along with specialized agencies such as POLIFRONT and BLTS generate data on a range of crimes including homicide, injuries, police deaths and seized contraband though it is affected by considerable reporting gaps. Interview with key informant KI30 and KI36, 19 December 2022.

<sup>65</sup> See Boutellis, A. (2011) *What army for Haiti*, International Peace Academy, [https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09486#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09486#metadata_info_tab_contents).

<sup>66</sup> See Latin News, "The Haitian armed forces (Fad'H) restored: An historic perspective", *Security and Strategic Review*, December 2018.

<sup>67</sup> See Delva, J. (Reuters), "Haiti installs new high command for 5,000-strong army", 27 March 2018 h. For background, see Casares, A. and Delva, J. (Reuters) "Haitian army set to make controversial return after two decades", 18 November 2017, and Jasmin, Y. (Voa News) "Haiti prepares to introduce its revived military", 15 November 2017.

the time, there was reportedly a plan to recruit 5,000 soldiers to expand national security and civil protection capacities.<sup>68</sup> Today, there are an estimated 500 members of the armed forces, several of whom have received training in Ecuador and Mexico.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See Delva, J. (2018).

<sup>69</sup> The nascent armed forces are expected to play a role in civil protection, border protection and civic engineering projects. Ecuador was the first country to provide training for middle-level recruits for approximately nine months, though these activities ended with the change of government. Mexico signed a protocol to provide training support in 2018, though these efforts were disrupted by COVID19. Brazil has been approached to provide support but postponed its decision until early 2023, after the October 2022 election. Interview with key informant KI01, KI27, KI28, KI32, 1 December 2022, as well as key informant KI43, KI44, 10 December 2022. See also Salmon, S. (Caribbean National Weekly), "Contingent of Haitian soldiers to be trained in Central America", 5 September 2022.



## TRAFFICKING INFRASTRUCTURE

There are multiple factors compounding Haiti's criminal markets for drugs and firearms. Most obviously, Haiti features extensive land and maritime borders that are poorly monitored, guarded and defended. Indeed, Haiti has 1,771 kilometres of coastline and a 392-kilometre terrestrial border with the Dominican Republic. Yet the country's major seaports, border crossings and airports have a modest police and customs presence and virtually no air, sea or land surveillance capabilities.

There are also many public and private ports, irregular roads and clandestine airstrips that are poorly monitored and rarely patrolled (see Map 1). As a result, large portions of Haiti's frontier are porous and susceptible to transshipment of all manner of contraband, including narcotics and firearms.<sup>70</sup>

**MAP 1** Mapping airport, seaport, and road infrastructure in Haiti



Source: United Nations Geospatial. Interviews with officials from UNODC in Caribbean regional office and Port-au-Prince, INL, UNPOL, HNP and Haitian customs.

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

<sup>70</sup> Haiti's borders are described as completely porous by multiple relevant specialists. Interviews conducted with key informant KI10, KI11, KI24, KI36 and KI42 in December 2022.

Another factor that influences Haiti's criminal economy are its extensive dependencies on imports. Indeed, every facet of the country's formal and informal economy is connected to goods imported from abroad. For example, approximately 80 percent of all rice and cooking oil and roughly 50 percent of all food products used by Haitians are imported.<sup>71</sup>

As a result, there is extensive exchange of goods and services across Haiti's borders, particularly ports and border crossings, very little of which is subject to scrutiny by POLIFRONT, customs and the HCG. Notwithstanding changes in customs leadership in 2022 and extensive support from countries such as the US, France and Canada, Haiti's policing and customs authorities are struggling to staff and resource their agencies, especially in frontier areas of the country. They are not only unable to monitor the inflow of contraband but are themselves a frequent target of gangs.<sup>72</sup>

Corruption and patronage networks also incubate thriving black markets. Haiti has frequently been included among the world's most corrupt countries.<sup>73</sup> In 2020, the World Bank scored Haiti 179 out of 190 economies in the ease of doing business.<sup>74</sup> Despite these challenges, the country's anti-corruption unit (ULCC) has made tentative inroads, including investigations into embezzlement of public property, the illegal award of contracts, misappropriation of funds and abuse of funds from the national to the local levels. The ULCC has reportedly issued over 70 requests to the judicial authorities of political figures failing to declare assets.<sup>75</sup> However, deeply entrenched corruption in the criminal justice sector means that convictions are exceedingly rare.<sup>76</sup>

A majority of the legal and illegal products entering Haiti are offloaded from the country's public and private seaports. There are several public and private ports spread out across Haiti, with the largest cluster in Port-au-Prince<sup>77</sup> and others in Cap-Haïtien, Les Cayes, Miragoâne, Port-de-Paix, Petit Goave and Corai (see Map 1).<sup>78</sup> With some exceptions, these ports are in poor condition, intermittently operational and several are closed down indefinitely.<sup>79</sup>

There are a significant number of private ports distributed across Haiti, including Gonaïves, Jacmel, Jérémie and Saint Marc, some of them involved in handling international shortsea shipments.<sup>80</sup> There are also large numbers of unmonitored, unmarked and informal landing areas on western

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<sup>71</sup> See *Haiti Price Bulletin*, *Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS Net*, September 2021).

<sup>72</sup> Interview with key informant KI36 and KI37 19 December 2022.

<sup>73</sup> See the World Bank *Worldwide Governance Indicators*, which in 2021 gave Haiti a percentile rank of 5.29 out of 100 for control of corruption, <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports> (accessed on 3 February 2023).

<sup>74</sup> The World Bank discontinued the 'ease of doing business' rankings in 2021. See World Bank (2022) *Doing Business Legacy*, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/business-enabling-environment/doing-business-legacy> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

<sup>75</sup> See *Haiti Libre*, "L'ULCC remet des preuves de corruption, représentant 500 millions de pertes pour l'Etat", 26 August 2022.

<sup>76</sup> See US State (2022) *Major corruption cases in Haiti and Government of Haiti efforts to address corruption*, Appendix C, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Appendix-C-Developments-in-Haiti-004977.pdf> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

<sup>77</sup> There are several key facilities in Port-au-Prince - APN, Varreux and Latifeau which is 30km north of Port-au-Prince and home to fuel terminals. See [https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/logcluster-production-files/public/documents/ports\\_overview\\_guide](https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/logcluster-production-files/public/documents/ports_overview_guide).

<sup>78</sup> See <https://www.seabaycargo.com/seaport/HaitiCountry.html?type=3> and <https://www.nepia.com/industry-news/haiti-civil-unrest-affecting-port-operations-update/>.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with key informant KI03, 15 December 2022.

<sup>80</sup> Other ports include Carriers, Anse-a-Galets, La Saline, Anse-d'Hainault, Corail, and Port-a-Piment. Both Baraderes and Cite Soleil are non-operational. See <http://portfocus.com/haiti/> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

and southern Haiti's coasts, including docks, wharves and beaches that facilitate easy access for firearms and drugs shipments.

Owing to both the security situation and the derelict state of many ports, container traffic is primarily from major hubs such as Miami-Dade and Port Everglade<sup>81</sup> in the US and routed to Haiti via neighbouring ports such as Freeport (Bahamas), Kingston (Jamaica), Manzanillo (Panama) and Colon (Panama).<sup>82</sup> In many cases, consignments are shipped to Haiti not by large container ships but rather via smaller feeder vessels.

According to Haitian customs officials, different Haitian ports are associated with different types of contraband. For example, firearms and ammunition seizures are common on the western and north-western coasts including Port-au-Prince and Port-de-Paix, whereas drug interdiction is a more common occurrence on the northern and southern coasts of Haiti, notably Les Cayes, Jacmel and Jérémie.<sup>83</sup>

Haiti's primary and secondary road networks are also critical vectors for the movement of legal and illicit goods from the coasts to the Dominican Republic and from Dominican Republic into Haiti. The principal road corridors consist of the RN1 running north-south from Cap Haitien to Port-au-Prince; the RN2 that connects Port-au-Prince to Les Cayes in the south of the country; and the RN3 that stretches west to east from Port-au-Prince through Mirebalais and Hinche to the frontier with Dominican Republic (see Map 1). Haiti also has many secondary road corridors of variable condition and more seldom, if ever, monitored by authorities. Several gangs presently control key access points to the RN1, RN2, and RN3, particularly junctures connected to Port-au-Prince. From there they can control territory, conduct kidnapping operations and extract illegal rents from passing vehicles.

Haitian and international authorities are preoccupied with how gangs have expanded their influence over access points to critical infrastructure and public facilities, presumably to strengthen their negotiating position with government authorities.<sup>84</sup> Gang federations such as the G9, for example, blockaded access to ports and restricted access to gasoline and diesel supplies, while calling for the resignation of high-level public officials.<sup>85</sup> Other groups such as the 5 Seconds gang have periodically controlled sections of the RN1, blocked port Latifo, Cimenterie and Moulins d'Haiti,

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<sup>81</sup> See Charles, J. and Weaver, C. (Miami Herald), "How US gun laws and South Florida ports help fuel Haiti's escalating gang violence", 19 August 2022. See also WPLG Local 10 (2022) Gangs in Haiti get weapons from South Florida, feds say, WPLG Local 10, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hftmxz6vUOE> (accessed on 28 February 2023).

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Atlasaian, Haiti Port Assessment, available at <https://dlca.logcluster.org/display/public/DLCA/2.1+Haiti+Port+Assessment> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

<sup>83</sup> Interview with key informant KI36 and KI30 on 19 December 2022. Interviews with key informant KI10, KI11, KI24, KI37 and KI45 in November and December 2022.

<sup>84</sup> A widely reported example is the blockade of the Terminal Varreux in Port-au-Prince between 2021 and 2022 by gangs associated with the G9 and its UN-sanctioned leader, Jimmy Cherizier (aka Barbecue). Following a truce between the gangs and local authorities, the G9 was reportedly paid \$100,000 to lift the siege. See Shuldiner, H. and Ford, A., Highways and mills – Haiti gangs battle for control of key infrastructure, *InSight Crime*, 13 October 2022.

<sup>85</sup> See Geffrard, P. (Le Nouvelliste), "Reprise de la livraison de carburant a Varreux apres l'annonce d'une treve des gangs armees", 12 November 2021 and Thomas, G. (Reuters), "Haiti's streets slowly return to life as gangs ease fuel blockade", 15 November 2022.

occupied Haiti's main courthouse, and even freed inmates from Titanyen prison.<sup>86</sup> Meanwhile, large gangs such as 400 Mawozo have controlled key sections of the RN3 on route to the Dominican Republic, while also facilitating drugs and firearms shipments, robbing merchandise, selling black market fuel and choking local economies.<sup>87</sup>

Airports and clandestine runways are another means of shifting legal and illegal products in and out of Haiti. Haiti has long served as a transit hub for the movement of cocaine, cannabis and to a lesser extent, heroin and amphetamines to the US and Dominican Republic. Haiti's official airport hubs are Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien, with intermittent airline services available for Hinche, Jacmel, Jérémie, Les Cayes and Port-au-Paix (see Map 1). There are several other runways located from Anse-à-Galets and L'île de la Gonâve to Port-Salut, though few of these are currently operational.<sup>88</sup>

Following Haiti's devastating 2010 earthquake, makeshift airstrips were hastily constructed to facilitate humanitarian assistance.<sup>89</sup> While not officially monitored by the Haitian government, clandestine runways were reportedly widespread across Haiti, though several strips were destroyed over the years by UN peace support operations in partnership with foreign and domestic authorities.<sup>90</sup> There are also indications that roads themselves have sometimes served as illegal runways for unregistered flights.<sup>91</sup> Although data on clandestine airstrips is limited, the case of Savane Diane in Arbonite is instructive (see Box 2).

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<sup>86</sup> See Geffrard, P (Le Nouvelliste), "Le palais de justice envahi et controle par gang de Village-de-Dieu, Le Nouvelliste", 6 June 2021. See also HaitiLibre "The women's prison attacked, dozens of inmates escape", 23 September 2022.

<sup>87</sup> See Shuldiner and Ford (2022).

<sup>88</sup> See Our Airports (ND), <https://ourairports.com/countries/HT/> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

<sup>89</sup> See Dewan, S. (The New York Times), "Volunteers fly supplies into hard-to-reach areas", 4 February 2010.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with key informant KI01, KI27, KI28 and KI32, 1 December 2022.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with key informant KI36, 19 December 2022.

## BOX 2. HAITI'S CLANDESTINE AIRSTRIPS

A share of the cocaine shipped through Haiti and onward to foreign markets is transferred by air, including via illegal runways. Since the 1990s, for example, Cessna aircraft flew laden with cocaine from Colombia destined for the US and landed on clandestine strips built in the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. With the expansion of Haitian cities over the past three decades, landing strips were gradually surrounded and in some cases overrun by new settlements. During the 2000s, drug traffickers moved illegal airstrips northward to more isolated areas, including Savane Diane in the Department of Arbonite, roughly 50 miles north of Port-au-Prince.<sup>92</sup>

The scale of drug shipments moving via planes in Haiti allegedly expanded during the 2000s and 2010s. During this period the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) benefitted from reconnaissance and logistics to disrupt the building of such illegal runways, though these capabilities reportedly declined due to a lack of intelligence and resources.<sup>93</sup>

Over time, the Savane Diane area, which since 2021 was designated a “free agro-industrial export zone”<sup>94</sup>, has benefited from several major development projects, including some that are a few miles from airstrips known for cocaine and heroin deliveries.<sup>95</sup> According to HNP officials, many locals are aware of drug trafficking, and the area is littered with the wreckage of abandoned or destroyed planes, some purported to be discarded after transferring their cargo.

Savane Diane is suspected of having experienced an uptick in air traffic in May and June 2021, with thousands of kilos of drugs allegedly changing hands.<sup>96</sup> According to the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), some planes also stopped and refuelled in Port-au-Prince even when the international airport was closed.<sup>97</sup> When President Moïse ordered the destruction of suspected clandestine airstrips in June 2021, including in Savane Diane, local authorities refused. A week later, President Moïse was assassinated.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Interview with key informant KI36, 19 December 2022. See also Abi-Habib, M. (New York Times) “Haiti’s leader kept a list of drug traffickers. His assassins came for it”, 12 December 2021a.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with key informant KI01, KI27, KI28 and KI32 on 1 December 2022. See also UN (2012), Haiti drug destruction (multimedia), <https://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/unifeed/asset/U120/U120818a/>.

<sup>94</sup> See HaitiLibre “New agro-industrial export free zone”, 12 February 2021.

<sup>95</sup> See Abi-Habib (2021a).

<sup>96</sup> See Abi-Habib (2021a).

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> See Paultre, A. (Reuters) “Top security official for slain Haitian president arrested by police”, 27 July 2021. See also Abi-Habib, M. (New York Times) “He guarded Haiti’s slain president. And he was a suspect in a drug enquiry”, 21 August 2021b.

## THE DYNAMICS OF FIREARMS SMUGGLING

There are no official statistics documenting the number or types of firearms in circulation in Haiti. A 2020 report of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (CNDDR) estimated that there could be as many as 500,000 small arms in the country.<sup>99</sup> The CNDDR projection is double the estimate rendered by the UN in 2020 and HNP in 2015.<sup>100</sup> While the absolute number of weapons in Haiti may never be known, the vast majority in circulation are believed to be illegal. According to the Superior Council of the National Police, the HNP registered just 38,000 “legal” firearms in 2015, less than 15 percent of the estimated national stock at the time.<sup>101</sup> Assuming these figures are remotely accurate, Haiti’s law enforcement agents are outgunned by Haitian residents, private security company personnel and armed gangs.

Firearms and ammunition enter Haiti in multiple ways. Since Haiti does not officially manufacture firearms or ammunition, virtually all new rifles, handguns, magazines and bullets entering the country are imported either legally or illegally (see Map 2). Very generally, several categories and calibre of firearms and ammunition are transferred lawfully to public and private authorities through licensed dealers and authorized transactions. According to multiple ICE and DEA reports, however, a larger share of weapons, munitions, parts and components are trafficked into the country through networks of diaspora and brokers either in shipping containers, in air freight consignments, hidden in trucks and cars or carried by individuals.<sup>102</sup> Weapons that are trafficked from the US to Haiti may first move through a variety of intermediaries, including Caribbean ports or middlemen in the Dominican Republic, before reaching their intended users.<sup>103</sup>

Haitians legally import firearms, ammunition and parts for both public security agencies and private security companies. Although Haiti is subject to a US embargo, several amendments allow for export of certain firearms and munitions to Haitian security forces.<sup>104</sup> For example, in 2019, the US International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) awarded contracts for provisions of riot

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<sup>99</sup> See *Commission Nationale de Desarmement, Demantèlement et de Reinsertion (CNDDR) (2020) Strategie Nationale de Desarmement, Demantèlement et de Reinsertion et de Reduction de la Violence Communautaire (SNDDR-RVC) en Haiti, 2021-2024*.

<sup>100</sup> The UN estimated that there were roughly 270,000 firearms in civilian possession in 2020. The HNP estimated that the number was around 250,000 in 2015. See *HaitiLibre* “More than 270,000 weapons in the hands of Haitians, the UN concerned”, 9 February 2020, and *HaitiLibre*, “Of over 250,000 illegal weapons in Haiti, only 15% are legalized”, 19 September 2022.

<sup>101</sup> See *HaitiLibre* (2020).

<sup>102</sup> See ICE (2022), DEA (2022) and ATF (2020) *Firearms trafficker attempts to smuggle guns to Haiti*, Department of Justice, September 29, see <https://www.atf.gov/news/pr/firearms-trafficker-attempts-smuggle-guns-haiti> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

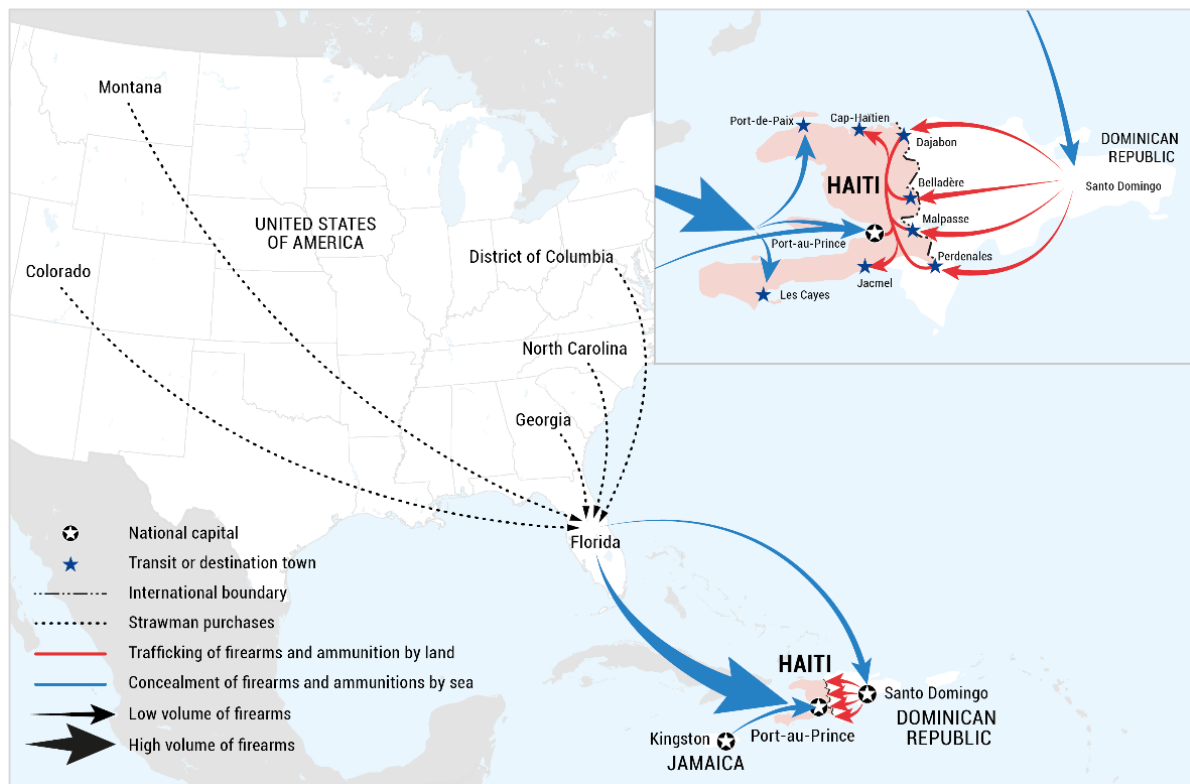
<sup>103</sup> While there is a modest, if persistent, craft industry producing “artisanal” or home-made firearms in the country, it is not a focus of this report. For a review of the craft industry, see Muggah, R. (2005) *Securing Haiti’s transition: Reviewing human insecurity and prospects for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration*, Occasional Paper 14 (Small Arms Survey, Geneva).

<sup>104</sup> The US imposed a partial embargo on Haiti in 1994. It eased the embargo in 2006 to allow for firearms, body armor and other equipment to be purchased for HNP and UN peacekeepers. All legal shipments must be approved by the US State Department. See Title 22, Chapter 1, Subchapter M and Part 126 of ECPR Code of Federal Regulations (2022), available at [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-22/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-126/section-126.1#p-126.1\(j\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-22/chapter-I/subchapter-M/part-126/section-126.1#p-126.1(j)) (accessed on 1 February 2023).



gear kits to the HNP.<sup>105</sup> The US also increased its support for the HNP from \$2.8 million in 2016 to over \$12.4 million by 2020. Direct assistance and training support is often delivered through intermediaries and established vendors.<sup>106</sup> And in 2022, the US and Canada expanded new commitments, including military and policing supplies, to the HNP.<sup>107</sup> Owing to weak oversight and controls, however, weapons and ammunition are periodically diverted and recirculated into civilian markets.<sup>108</sup>

**MAP 2** Indicative volume of firearms seized by source in Haiti (2020-2022)



Source: UNODC, based on responses to the UN-IAFQ. Strawman purchases flows based on US Justice/Attorney General records. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Owing to weak oversight and poor record-keeping, the dimensions of diversion of lawfully acquired firearms and ammunition are difficult to estimate.<sup>109</sup> Specifically, firearms and munitions managed

<sup>105</sup> See USA Spending (2022) Contract Summary for X-International, LCC, [https://www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT\\_AWD\\_19HA7020P0005\\_1900\\_-NONE\\_-NONE](https://www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_19HA7020P0005_1900_-NONE_-NONE). See also Geffrard, P. (Le Nouvelliste), "Dimitri Herard et Jean Laguel Civil, responsable de securite du president Jovenal Moise, sous enquête", 9 July 2021.

<sup>106</sup> See for example <https://www.tetrattech.com/en/projects/haitian-national-police-capacity-building> (accessed on 6 February 2023).

<sup>107</sup> See US State Department (2022) <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-united-states-and-canada-coordinate-delivery-of-haitian-national-police-hnp-equipment/> and Government of Canada, (2022) <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2022/10/canada-and-united-states-coordinate-delivery-of-haitian-national-police-equipment.html> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>108</sup> See McDougal, T., Kolbe, A., Muggah, R. and N. Marsh (2018) "Ammunition leakage from military to civilian markets; market price evidence from Haiti 2004-2012", *Defense and Peace Economics*, Vol. 30 (7), pp. 799-812.

<sup>109</sup> See McDougal et al (2018) for a model estimating diversion of ammunition from UN and HPN sources into civilian markets between 2004 and 2021.

by the HNP – whether procured for police officers or seized arms that are held in storage – can end up being resold into secondary markets or passed on to friends and family. Likewise, handguns and shotguns legally acquired by registered private security companies and licensed users can be resold to unregistered users.<sup>110</sup>

According to multiple sources, most new firearms and ammunition entering Haiti are smuggled into the country illegally by land, air and most frequently, sea.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, many firearms and ammunition seizures by Haitian customs officials are a result of inspecting containers heralding from the US and docked in Haiti's public and private ports, particularly in Port-au-Prince.<sup>112</sup> A modest number of companies and private interests with access to ports and transportation logistics are often implicated in weapons and ammunition trafficking.<sup>113</sup>

The principal source of firearms and munitions in Haiti is in the US, and in particular Florida. Popular handguns selling for \$400-500 at federally licensed firearms outlets or private gun shows in the US can be resold for as much as \$10,000 in Haiti, though prices vary depending on local preferences and international supply.<sup>114</sup> Higher-powered rifles such as AK47s, AR15s and Galils are typically in higher demand from gangs, commanding correspondingly higher prices. A network of criminal actors, including members of the Haitian diaspora, often source firearms from across the US (see Map 2).<sup>115</sup>

Analysts speak of an "iron pipeline" that not only spans the US, but also shuttles firearms and ammunition to countries across the Americas, including Haiti.<sup>116</sup> Weapons are frequently procured through straw man purchases in US states with looser gun laws and fewer purchasing restrictions.<sup>117</sup> Once acquired, firearms and ammunition are then transported to Florida where they are concealed and shipped to Haiti. Consignments may be assembled and delivered in containers directly from ports in South Florida, with items hidden inside consumer products, electronic equipment, garment linings, frozen food items or even the hulls of freighters.<sup>118</sup> On arrival in Haiti, including major hubs such as Port-de-Paix and Port-au-Prince, cargo is offloaded and passed on to end-users via a host of intermediaries.

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<sup>110</sup> See Muggah (2005).

<sup>111</sup> Interviews with key informant KI02, KI03, KI16, KI17, KI36, KI37 and KI45 between November and December 2022.

<sup>112</sup> See Gorder, G., "US guns flow into Haiti, fuel gang violence", *InSight Crime*, 30 November 2021.

<sup>113</sup> The mark-up for illegally sourced arms was estimated in 2021 to be four to six times the original sale price. Interview with key informant KI22 in November 2022.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> See US District Court for the District of Columbia, *United States of America v. Eliande Tunis, Jocelyn Dor and Wlader St Louis*, 31 October 2021, available at <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/21096739-tunis-et-al> for an example of an arrest warrant for Haitians accused of being involved in straw man purchases (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>116</sup> See, for example, DEA, "Alleged 'iron pipeline' gun trafficking network shut down, Press Release", 30 June 2022, Aisch, G. and Keller, J. (New York Times) "How gun traffickers get around state laws", 13 November 2015, and Susman, T. (Los Angeles Times) "Iron pipeline a conduit for illegal weapons to New York", 28 October 2015.

<sup>117</sup> For example, in 2022, a Haitian national pleaded guilty to purchasing 77 firearms in Colorado to be shipped first in 13 cars to Florida and then to Haiti in violation of the Arms Export Controls Act and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations. See US Attorney's Office for District of Colorado, "Haitian national pleads guilty to firearms trafficking", 22 September 2022.

<sup>118</sup> See Muggah (2015).

Another means by which firearms and ammunition are shipped to Haiti is via the Dominican Republic and to a lesser extent Jamaica.<sup>119</sup> Media reports and interviews with Haitian customs officials suggest that weapons may first transit through key ports in Santo Domingo such as Haina, before being shipped across border crossings into Haiti, including from Jimani, Comendador and Elias Pina.<sup>120</sup> Officials at the Haina port alone reportedly seized over 112,000 “units of firearms and ammunition” in the first six months of 2022,<sup>121</sup> most of them heralding from the US.<sup>122</sup>

Haitian customs officials also periodically intercept contraband at the border – including firearms – intermingled with food products such as beans, flour and rice.<sup>123</sup> Firearms and ammunition have been seized at border crossings including Pedernales and Dajabon in Dominican Republic and Belladère, Malpasse and the Codevi tax free zone in Ouanaminthe in Haiti.<sup>124</sup> The extent of cross-border trafficking appears to be linked to the extent of police and customs presence as well as the extent of gang control. For example, Malpasse recently registered a decline in the volume of cross-border transactions due to gang activity, resulting in a surge of illicit goods diverted through Belladère instead.<sup>125</sup>

Haiti's customs agents are operating in a context of extreme insecurity. According to the director general of customs, multiple offices have been sacked and forced to close since September 2022, with several officials forced to abandon their posts. For example, customs offices in Port-au-Prince, Saint-Marc and Gonaïves together with the Léogâne road checkpoint have all been vandalized. Customs authorities also claim that Port Latifeau, the Malasse and Belladère customs offices and the Gantier road checkpoints are essentially “inoperative”. Media have reported that a customs officer in Belladère was doused with gasoline by a purported smuggler in late December 2022.<sup>126</sup> The threat of kidnapping and ransom is ever present.

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<sup>119</sup> Jamaica has also experienced a surge in firearm seizures in recent years. According to the Jamaican police, there was a 37 percent increase in firearm seizures in the first 6 months of 2022 compared to 2021. Specifically, the Jamaica police claimed to have seized 163 firearms compared to 44 in 2021, including a 100 percent increase in rifles and a 26 percent increase in pistols. According to Jamaica's UN Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire for 2022, there are non-verified reports of concealment of firearms in small vessels. Specialists noted that there were ‘frequent’ interceptions of firearms coming via fishermen's boats through local ports, but these allegations could not be independently verified as of December 2022. See Jamaica Constabulary Force, “Firearms Seizures 2022”, <https://jcf.gov.jm/significant-increase-in-firearms-seizures-since-january/> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>120</sup> Several large weapons seizures were reported in Dominican Republic's Haina port in March 2022. On 15 March 2022, a large consignment of rifles, pistols and explosives were seized and on 26 May a sting by customs and police collected 11 rifles and 6 pistols. See den Held, “US guns fuel arms trafficking in the Dominican Republic”, *InSight Crime*, 3 June 2022.

<sup>121</sup> According to the Dominican Republic police authorities, over 401,000 military artifacts were seized by the middle of 2022 (August) compared to just over 300,000 in all of 2021 and 175,000 in 2000. See Petrov, L. (Prensa Latina) “Arms and ammunition seizures in the Dominican Republic on the rise” 22 August 2022, / and *Dominican Today* (Dominican Today) “DGA seizes more than 400,000 weapons and ammunition in eight months”, 22 August 2022.

<sup>122</sup> In 2020, the US ATF found that roughly 75% of the guns traced from the Dominican Republic were produced in or first imported to the US. See ATF “Firearms Trace Data: the Caribbean 2020”, <https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/firearms-trace-data-caribbean-2020#table-1> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>123</sup> Interview with key informant KI37, 19 December 2022.

<sup>124</sup> The Codevi Free Zone is a tax-free area (founded in 2003) employing some 14,000 people. See Dixon, R. (2021) “The Codevi free zone”, *Adrianople Group*, <https://www.adrianoplegroup.com/post/the-codevi-free-zone> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>125</sup> Interview with key informant KI02, KI03, KI08, KI18 and KI33, 30 November 2022.

<sup>126</sup> Similar attacks had resulted in the deaths of several agents from the Malpasse office in 2018. See *HaitiLibre*, “Une foule en colere attaque la douane de Malpasse au moins 6 morts”, 25 November 2018.

Meanwhile, in the US, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), a unit of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has reported a surge in firearms trafficking from Florida to Haiti between 2021 and 2022.<sup>127</sup> A spokesperson described the recovery of increasingly sophisticated arms including .50 calibre sniper rifles, .308 rifles, and even belt-fed machine guns destined for Haitian ports.<sup>128</sup> The US has linked the increased pace of purchases to gang activities in and around Port-au-Prince. For example, in May 2022, one of the leaders of the 400 Mawozo gang was extradited to the US under an arrest warrant connected to firearms trafficking.<sup>129</sup> The HSI has also launched a series of operations to scale-up interdiction measures in partnership with the ATF, the Department of Commerce, the Miami-Dade Police Department and the Attorney for the Southern District of Florida.<sup>130</sup>

Growing international attention to firearms trafficking may be contributing to an increase in publicized seizures in Haiti. On 1 July 2022, for example, 157 cases of munitions totalling over 120,000 rounds were seized in Port-de-Paix.<sup>131</sup> News reports indicated that vehicles with police plates were reportedly waiting nearby to transport the cargo via routes controlled by local gangs.<sup>132</sup> Another consignment of more than 25,000 cartridges was intercepted between 12 and 13 July 2022 while being transported on a public bus.<sup>133</sup> Meanwhile, on 13 and 14 July 2022, customs officials in Port-au-Prince reportedly intercepted several containers containing assault rifles, pistols, ammunition, and cash on a boat from Miami (See Box 3).<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> See AP News "US officials warn of uptick in weapons smuggled to Haiti", 17 August 2022.

<sup>128</sup> See US Immigration and Customs Enforcement "HIS announces crackdown on firearms, ammunition smuggling to Haiti, the Caribbean", 19 August 2022.

<sup>129</sup> The leader of 400 Mawazo was accused of illegally importing dozens of rifles, shotguns and pistols from the US as well as kidnapping in 2021. See US Attorney's Office District of Columbia (2022).

<sup>130</sup> See US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, "HSI announces crackdown on firearms, ammunition smuggling to Haiti, the Caribbean", Press Release, 19 August 2022.

<sup>131</sup> The seized ammunition included 114,000 5.56, 2,000 9mm and 4,000 7.62 rounds, all appropriate for semi and automatic rifles. The cargo was stored on a ship called Miss Lili One coming from Florida. See Charles and Weaver (2022). See also RNDDH "Communiqué de presse", July 2022, available at <https://web.rnddh.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/The-Judiciary-Police-Investigations-related-to-Trafficking-in-Firearms-and-Ammunition-The-RNDDH-welcomes-the-efforts-of-the-DCPJ%5EJ-Com-P-A22-No3.pdf> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> The cargo was discovered after a search of suspicious containers that arrived the day before in the Saline area at Port services. See AlterPresse "Saisie d'environ 15 mille cartouches, de 18 armes de guerre et de plus d'une centaine de chargeurs au wharf de Port-au-Prince", 15 July 2022.

### BOX 3. FIREARMS TRAFFICKING AND THE CHURCH

Haiti was recently rocked by a controversy involving a sophisticated arms trafficking network and the Episcopal Church. In July 2022, Haitian customs authorities in Port-au-Prince intercepted containers addressed to the Episcopal Church and labelled as relief supplies containing semi-automatic weapons, handguns, and cash in Port-au-Prince. The Church itself is not under investigation and has denied any direct involvement in arms trafficking.<sup>135</sup>

The scandal shines a light on the privileged tax exemption status enjoyed by religious, non-governmental, and certain commercial institutions in Haiti.<sup>136</sup> The 1989 amendment to Haiti's Investment Code allows certain customs privileges for non-governmental organizations and companies operating in designated sectors. However, as rules were increasingly abused by those provided with exemptions, customs officials started more closely scrutinizing bills of lading.

An investigation led by an established human rights organization in Haiti, Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains (RNDDH), offers a detailed timeline of the alleged weapons trafficking incident.<sup>137</sup> According to the report, three containers reportedly sent by the Episcopal Church arrived at Haitian customs in April 2022; after several attempts to verify their contents were blocked, rumours began circulating of possible malfeasance.<sup>138</sup>

On 14 July 2022, Haitian customs authorities inspected the three containers that had been shipped by a Florida-based company. While the first container did not raise suspicions, in the second container customs officials uncovered 17 5.56 and 7.62 semi-automatic rifles, four 3 and 40mm pistols, a shotgun, 12,779 rounds of 7.72 ammunition, thousands of rounds of 5.56, 9mm and 12-gauge ammunition, and at least \$50,000 in counterfeit bills.<sup>139</sup>

According to local news reports, Haiti's BLTS and its Research and Intervention Brigade (BRI) were immediately involved in the inspection.<sup>140</sup> At least 12 people were identified as suspects in the smuggling of weapons, though just six were later arrested. Among those charged by the police were church employees and a customs commissioner.<sup>141</sup>

The latest uptick in firearm seizures together with intelligence and law enforcement reporting suggests that firearms trafficking between the US and Haiti is surging. That said, it is important to be cautious with inferring trends from the limited data that is available. The HNP do not yet have a capability to collate data or conduct traces on seized firearms. For its part, UNODC has received

<sup>135</sup> See Isaac, H. and Ellsworth, B. (Reuters) "Anger grows in Haiti over weapons trafficking from US after guns shipped as church donation", 28 July 2022.

<sup>136</sup> See Mistler-Ferguson, S. "Episcopal church embroiled in arms trafficking accusations in Haiti", InSight Crime, 20 October 2022.

<sup>137</sup> See RNDDH, Seizure of illicit objects at the customs of Port-au-Prince: RNDDH demands a full investigation of this issue, Report, 14 October 2022, available at <https://web.rnddh.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/11-Rap-Eglise-e%CC%81piscopale-Saisies-14Oct2022-ENG.pdf> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> See HaitiLibre "Mandat d'amener contre le Président de l'église épiscopale d'Haiti dans l'affaire du trafic d'armes", 24 September 2022.

no official information from the Haitian government on firearms trafficking in Haiti.<sup>142</sup> While the UNPOL office in Haiti collects statistics on firearms seizures from HNP, customs and other agencies, these datasets are incomplete. Nevertheless, the data available do provide indicative trends on both categories of firepower and the volume in circulation (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2** Reported firearm seizures in 2021 and 2022

FIREARMS SEIZED							
		Pistol	Revolver	Rifle	Shotgun	Artisanal firearm	Total
2021	Jan	30	2	8	1	9	50
	Feb	27	1	8	5	0	41
	Mar	8	2	3	1	5	19
	Apr	23	4	2	2	8	39
	May	15	5	3	1	3	27
	Jun	3	1	2	0	6	12
	Jul	17	1	13	7	7	45
	Aug	25	3	2	3	4	37
	Sep	16	6	6	0	12	40
	Oct	18	1	3	2	2	26
	Nov	16	0	6	4	3	29
	Dec	24	3	3	5	1	36
	<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>401</b>

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)

FIREARMS SEIZED							
		Pistol	Revolver	Rifle	Shotgun	Artisanal weapon	Total
2022	Jan	19	0	4	1	1	25
	Feb.	10	2	2	1	6	21
	Mar	26	5	2	3	5	41
	Apr	15	5	4	3	5	32
	May	29	6	7	0	6	48
	Jun	13	1	3	0	2	19
	Jul	30	3	23	2	1	59
	Aug	11	0	4	2	2	19
	Sep	4	1	5	3	4	17
	Oct	9	2	5	0	6	22
	Nov	16	2	6	1	1	26
	Dec	10	1	1	1	0	13
	<b>Total (provisional)</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>342</b>

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)

A review of seized firearms reported by HNP and UNPOL from 2021-2022 provides some insight into the categories of weapons being used, the numbers in circulation and the location of their use. Specifically, the largest share of firearms intercepted by the Haitian authorities during this

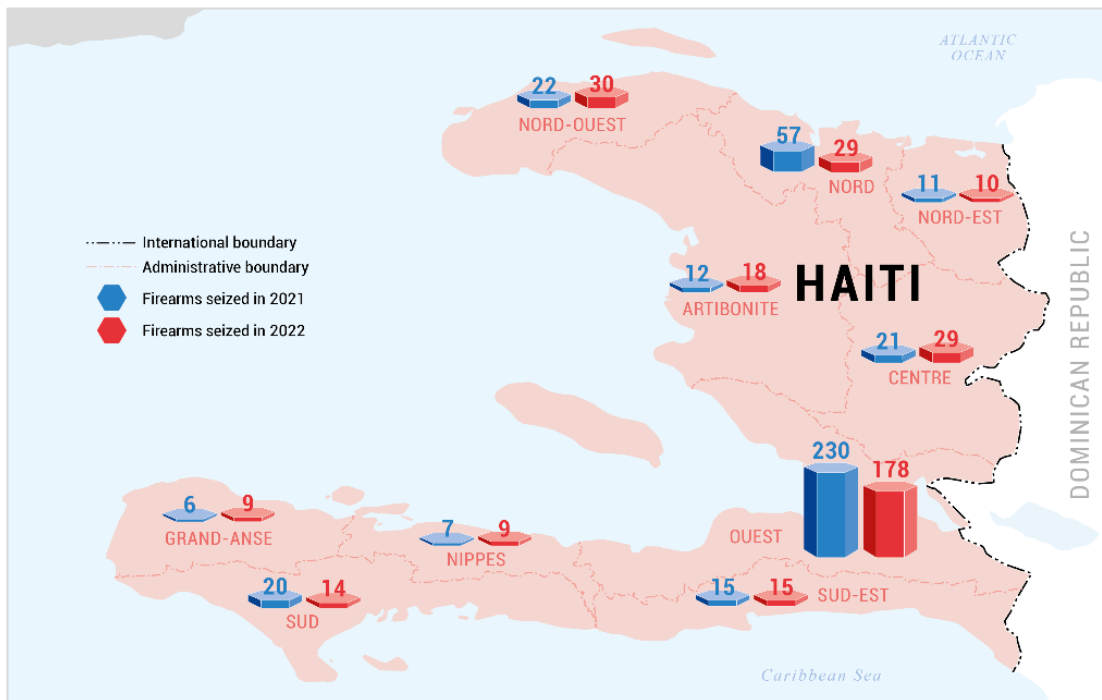
<sup>142</sup> UNODC's 2018 illicit arms flow questionnaire (UN-IAFQ) sent to over 200 countries generated no responses from the Haitian government.



period appear to be pistols, rifles and home-made weapons, including pipe guns, followed by revolvers and shotguns (Table 2).

Most reported seizures between 2021 and 2022 occurred in the West Department, where Port-au-Prince is located (Map 3). The next highest cluster of seizures occurred in the North Department, including Cap-Haitien, followed by the Northwest, Center, and South Departments. The breakdown of seizures also corresponds roughly with population concentration across Haiti but may also be correlated with policing priorities and capabilities.

**MAP 3** Firearms seized by department in 2021 and 2022 in Haiti



Source: HNP and UNPOL (2022).

Note: the seizures on this map represent the total number of firearms seized and can include: pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, and homemade firearms.

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

## DRUG TRAFFICKING DYNAMICS

Haiti has a long history of involvement in the international drugs trade. The country emerged as a transit hub for cocaine heading to the US, courtesy of the Medellín Cartel in the late 1980s. According to early media reports, Colombian criminal organizations moved dozens of tons of cocaine a year.<sup>143</sup> Powerful politicians and local business elites were allegedly involved for decades.<sup>144</sup> Over the years, at least a dozen countries have been connected to the drugs trade in Haiti and prominent nationals from Honduras, Mexico and Venezuela were arrested in Haiti by the DEA for their involvement in drug trafficking.<sup>145</sup> Most of the cocaine passing through Haiti appears to be sourced from Colombia and the cannabis from Jamaica. Drugs may transit a range of countries and territories before and after arriving in Haiti, including Venezuela, Bahamas, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Turks and Caicos.

Different drugs take different routes both getting to and leaving Haiti. Haiti is primarily a transit country for the movement of cocaine and cannabis. While there are periodic seizures of crack, heroin, fentanyl, amphetamines and local products<sup>146</sup>, these are widely regarded as a comparatively low priority by international and domestic law enforcement. An analysis of official data<sup>147</sup> on drug routing, seizures and related offences involving cannabis and cocaine in Haiti between 2020 and 2022 is revealing. With respect to drug routing, the vast majority of cannabis herb and cannabis-type drugs arriving to Haiti were from Jamaica. Likewise, the majority of cannabis herb and other cannabis-type drugs leaving Haiti were destined for the Dominican Republic, supposedly to feed tourist demand. Destination countries for cocaine include the US, along with Canada, France and Switzerland, among others (see Map 4).

There are multiple reported sources, entry points, and vectors for transshipment of cocaine and cannabis in Haiti. For one, cocaine is believed to be sourced primarily from Colombia, including via Venezuela.<sup>148</sup> Owing to a lack of laboratory testing, there is limited insight into whether cocaine seized in Haiti comes from production in other countries such as Bolivia or Peru. Cannabis is sourced from Jamaica, though Haiti has limited domestic production of poorer quality herb. The most common entry points for drugs include Hanche and Jacmel, Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien to the north. Key border crossings for the transit of drugs out of the country include Malpasse as well as less monitored secondary routes across the mountainous terrain of southern Haiti into the Dominican Republic.<sup>149</sup> Product enters Haiti directly on containers or via GPS-tagged parcels

<sup>143</sup> Pablo Escobar, former leader of the Medellín Cartel, reportedly used Haiti as one of several transit hubs in the late 1980s. He is alleged to have shipped tons of cocaine by building clandestine airstrips and bribing local officials. According to early news reports, former Haitian military leaders such as Raoul Cedras and Michel François protected shipments from Colombia to the US via Haiti. See Weiner, T. (New York Times) "2 Haiti leaders are focus of drug inquiry", 23 July 1994.

<sup>144</sup> See Shuldiner, H. "Haiti resurfaces as transit hub for US-bound cocaine", *InSight Crime*, 18 April 2022.

<sup>145</sup> See for example, US Attorney's Office Southern District of New York (2017) *Nephews of Venezuela first lady each sentenced to 18 years in prison for conspiring to import cocaine into the United States*, 14 December 2017.

<sup>146</sup> One substance, called 'boz' or 'bikoul' is a local drink that combines alcohol and marijuana. See Francisque, J. (Ayibo Post) "Bòz, bikoul, kérosène... la jeunesse haïtienne se réfugie dans la drogue", 14 September 2019.

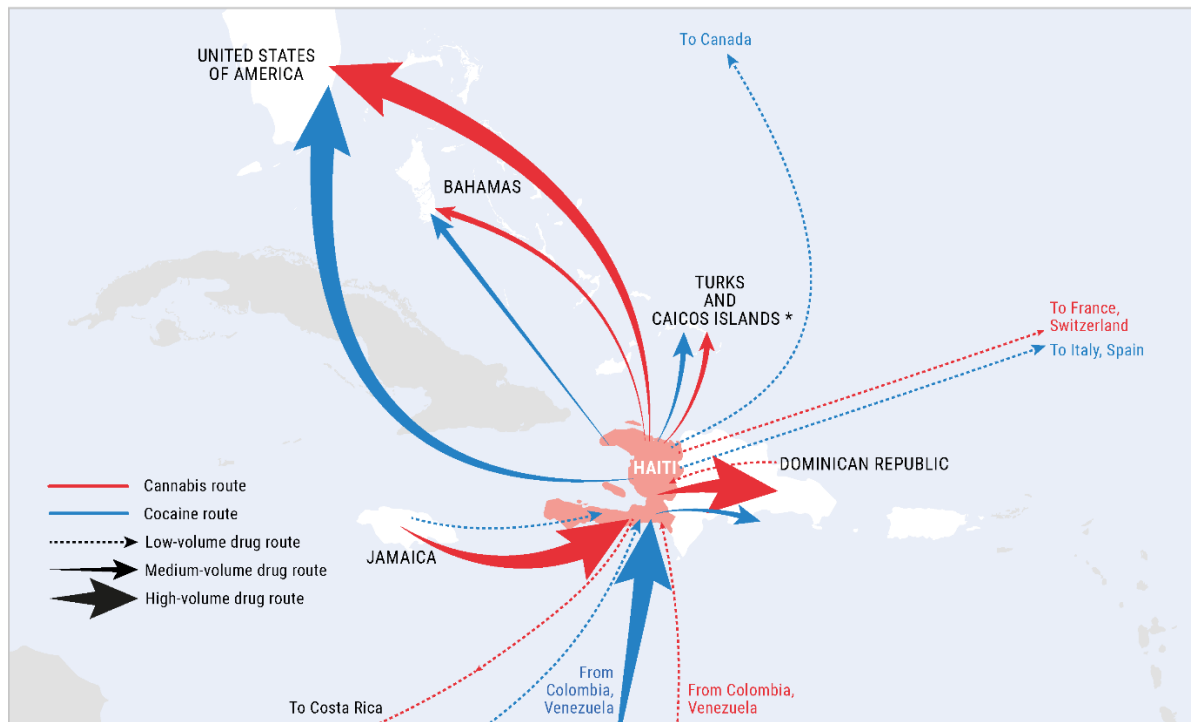
<sup>147</sup> See UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

<sup>148</sup> See *InSight Crime* "Dominican Republic and Venezuela: Cocaine across the Caribbean", 24 May 2018. See also *Dialogo Americas* (2021) "Nearly 24 percent of global cocaine production passes through Venezuela", 13 April 2021.

<sup>149</sup> Interviews with key informant KI30 on 19 December 2022 and with key informant KI37 and KI45 on 15 December 2022.

retrieved offshore by go-fast boats and then offloaded in private ports or coastal areas to be shipped by land to the Dominican Republic border.<sup>150</sup>

**MAP 4** Cumulative drug routes involving Haiti (2020-2022)



Source: UNODC, based on responses to the annual report questionnaire in the past five years.

\* Non-Self-Governing Territory

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

Although most cocaine, cannabis and heroin transiting Haiti are reportedly destined from US and Western European consumers, including in the Dominican Republic to supply foreign tourists, there are anecdotal reports that narcotics are also integrated into domestic criminal markets. In a country suffering from extreme poverty and inequality, there are significant pay-outs for political and economic elites, customs officials, law enforcement agents, gang leaders and a host of other intermediaries in the physical retrieval, shipment and storage of drugs and protection of illegal networks.<sup>151</sup> What is more, cocaine itself may be used as a medium of exchange among criminal groups, including for acquiring firearms and ammunition.<sup>152</sup> In addition to being consumed by local

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> See, for example, US Embassy (2022) Treasury sanctions corrupt Haitian politicians for narcotics trafficking, <https://cl.usembassy.gov/treasury-sanctions-corrupt-haitian-politicians-for-narcotics-trafficking/> (accessed on 28 February 2022).

<sup>152</sup> The domestic barter exchange of drugs and firearms was confirmed by the deputy commander of the HNP on 19 December 2022. See also Robbins, S., "Jamaica and Haiti swap drug and guns", *InSight Crime*, 21 June 2020.

elites, drugs are also shared among the rank and file of gangs and serve a modest demand in larger Haitian cities.<sup>153</sup>

Notwithstanding the dearth of published studies on drug use in Haiti, national authorities contend that there is comparatively low domestic drug consumption in Haiti. The head of the Haitian drug observatory (OSV) for the national commission for the fight against drugs (CONALD), reported in 2020 that there were modest increases in the consumption of locally produced drugs among youth and women.<sup>154</sup> Given the comparatively low incomes of most Haitian residents, it stands to reason that there may be only modest consumption of cocaine, most likely restricted to wealthier residents. The Haitian authorities oversee small-scale public awareness initiatives and demand reduction services funded through CONALD, though the impacts are unknown.<sup>155</sup>

While Haiti has long served as a transshipment hub, increased instability may be influencing its attractiveness to traffickers. There are several attributes that continue to make Haiti a magnet for the transshipment of drugs. For one, it lacks an effective maritime control capability. The HCG consists of fewer than 200 officers and oversees a fleet of a dozen vessels, though only one is reportedly operational, four require repairs, and seven are no longer functioning.<sup>156</sup> The country's drug enforcement agency, BLTS, has just one functioning boat for maritime interdiction.<sup>157</sup> Customs officials lack remote scanning and X-ray facilities, reducing the scrutiny of incoming cargo.<sup>158</sup> And while countries such as the US, Canada and France have invested in strengthening local customs and police capacities, particularly in the north of the country, Haiti lacks meaningful surveillance and patrol infrastructure at the border. The continued high levels of cocaine production in source countries<sup>159</sup> and increased gang influence in Haiti are additional factors that suggest that the HNP may only be capturing a modest share of the drugs passing through the country.<sup>160</sup>

A review of UNPOL and HNP trend data on drug seizures between 2021 and 2022 sheds some light on the dynamics of drug transshipment in Haiti (see Table 3). Both the information and the analysis should be treated as inferential given the uneven nature of data collection. As in the case of firearm seizures, it is not possible to specify empirically whether Haiti is experiencing changes in the scale or prevalence of drug transshipment. For example, an increase in reported drug seizures on its own can be interpreted in multiple ways – signalling that drug enforcement capacities have increased, that drug shipments expanded, some combination of the two, or another independent variable. Even so, the assessment offers temporal insights into the types of drugs being seized, a generic overview of the volume being captured and the locations over time. The high level of seizures over the past

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<sup>153</sup> Interview with key informant KI30, 19 December 2022.

<sup>154</sup> See *Alter Presse*, "La Conald exhorte les jeunes à s'informer sur les méfaits de la drogue", 26 June 2021,

<sup>155</sup> See US State Department, *International narcotics control strategy report volume 1* (March 2022). See also Dorsinville, H. (Ayibo Post) "Des spécialistes travaillant avec des jeunes haïtiens addités à la drogue témoignent", 22 December 2019.

<sup>156</sup> Even some of Haiti's gangs have more vessels with stronger horsepower than the HCG. Interview with key informant KI01, KI27, KI28 and KI32, 10 December 2022.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> UNODC is exploring opportunities to stand-up scanning facilities in selected ports. Interview with key informant KI02, KI03, KI07 and KI08, 26 November 2022.

<sup>159</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report 2022* (Vienna, 2022).

<sup>160</sup> In an interview with the key informant KI36 on 19 December 2022; it was estimated that no more than 20 percent of contraband passing through Haiti was interdicted by domestic security and customs officials.

two years in a context of diminished HNP capacity may indicate that drug flows are relatively stable, though more research is needed.<sup>161</sup>

**TABLE 3** Reported cannabis herb and cocaine seizures in Haiti in kg (2021 and 2022)

DRUG SEIZED MONTHLY (KILOGRAMS) IN 2021				
	Cannabis herb	Cocaine	Total	Percentage distribution (12 months)
Jan	12.5	0.7	13.3	0.4
Feb	0.9	3.2	4.1	0.1
Mar	33.5	0	33.5	1.1
Apr	12.5	0	12.5	0.4
May	2,108.7	0	2,108.7	67.8
Jun	0	0	0	0.0
Jul	0	0	0	0.0
Aug	0	0	0	0.0
Sep	68.2	2.1	70.3	2.3
Oct	836.8	4.3	841.1	27.0
Nov	3.38	6.8	10.2	0.3
Dec	1.6	15	16.7	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,078.3</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>3,110.8</b>	<b>100</b>

DRUG SEIZED MONTHLY (KILOGRAMS) IN 2022				
	Cannabis herb	Cocaine	Total	Percentage distribution (10 months only)
Jan	10.5	2.1	12.7	0.7
Feb	0.9	1	1.9	0.1
Mar	4.4	0	4.4	0.2
Apr	0	0	0	0.0
May	352	0	352	19.0
Jun	4.4	8.3	12.7	0.7
Jul	354.4	15.2	369.6	20.0
Aug	1,040.7	3.8	1,044.5	56.4
Sep	24.4	1.4	25.8	1.4
Oct	27.2	1.2	28.4	1.5
Nov	0	0	0	0
Dec.	241.8	0.8	242.6	11.5
<b>Total (provisional)</b>	<b>2,070.1</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>2,105.2</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)

<sup>161</sup> Interview with key informant KI10, KI11 and KI24 on 5 December 2022.

A review of 2021-2022 drug seizures suggests that, compared to the longer-time series, quantities of intercepted drugs declined (see Table 4). A relatively small number of major cannabis seizures account for the overwhelming share of all drugs intercepted (by quantity). Cocaine seizures are stable, with just a scattering of low yield seizures between 2021-2022. All told, there were five metric tons of cannabis herb seized in total and a little over 67 kilograms of cocaine (from January 2021 to December 2022), though it is not clear to what extent this may be an undercount.<sup>162</sup>

**TABLE 4** Drug seizures (kg), 2000-2020

	Cannabis herb	Cocaine	Crack	Heroin	Amphetamines
2000	401	594			
2001	1705	414			
2002	149	272			
2003	31	45		1	
2004	385	75	0.01		
2005	228	86	0.05		
2006	824	394	4.3		
2007					
2008		68			
2009	2,191	18	18		
2010	2,962	32			
2011	501	12			
2012	2,799	335			
2013	1,830	26			
2014	4,321	5	0.01		0.13
2015	2,702	160		15	0.4
2016	176	35			
2017					
2018					
2019	1,322	10			
2020	2,718	111			
2021*	3,078	32			
2022*	2,070	35			

\*Data for 2021 and 2022 from UNPOL/HNP.

Source: UNODC ARQ (2022) Routing data

<sup>162</sup> A 2022 International Narcotics Control Strategy report claims that Haitian authorities seized 2.6 metric tons of marijuana and 94 kg of cocaine in all of 2021. See US INL (2022).

As noted, it is not advisable to infer trends from the data featured in this report, including whether the overall extent of drug transshipment is rising or declining.

Seizure data also provides some insight into the scale of product that transits through Haiti. For example, between 2000 and 2022, the extent of cannabis herb and cocaine intercepted varied from year to year, although there was negligible interception of crack, heroin or amphetamines (see Table 4). Cannabis herb seizures oscillated from a few hundred kilos to several thousand kilos, with a peak in 2014 of some 4,321 kilos. Cocaine seizures vary from single digits to several hundred kilos, with a high point of 335 kilos seized in 2012. The extent of seizures over the past few years would suggest that Haiti's role as a transit country has not necessarily diminished, nor has it increased dramatically. However, unverified reports of major drug shipments via Haiti in 2021, for example, warrant further examination.<sup>163</sup>

The relative importance of Haiti as a hub for cocaine shifts when accounting for seizures destined for Haiti or arriving to separate ports from Haiti. Indeed, some experts believe that cocaine trafficking to and from Haiti may have peaked in the 1990s and early 2000s and has steadily declined since then.<sup>164</sup> In 1999, for example, the DEA estimated that approximately one fifth of all Colombian cocaine consumed in the US transited Haiti, as much as 67 tons a year.<sup>165</sup> In 2015, it was reported that authorities failed to seize an estimated 700-kilogram cocaine and 300-kilogram heroin shipment in Port-au-Prince's Varreux port, an incident that continues to be shrouded in mystery.<sup>166</sup> Another 907-kilogram shipment of cocaine was reportedly seized from a Haitian vessel by US authorities in Miami in 2016.<sup>167</sup> And in 2017, a 410-kilogram shipment of cocaine headed to Haiti was intercepted in Colombia.<sup>168</sup> These large intercepted shipments are in stark contrast to the modest cocaine seizures in Haiti proper with approximately 32 kilograms seized in 2021 and 35 kilograms in 2022 (see Table 4).<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> A 2021 New York Times investigation reported that as much as 4,000 kilos cocaine may have passed through Savane Diane between May and June 2021, but an official investigation has not been initiated. See *Abi-Habib* (2021). See also *Schiffrin, N. and Till, M.* "Moise assassination may be linked to what he knew about Haitian drugs, arms trafficking", PBS News Hour, 13 December 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/moise-assassination-may-be-linked-to-what-he-knew-about-haitian-drugs-arms-trafficking> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

<sup>164</sup> Interview with key informant KI22, 12 December 2022.

<sup>165</sup> See *Farah, D.* (Washington Post) "Flow of Colombia cocaine through Haiti turns to flood", 4 May 1999.

<sup>166</sup> See *Charles, J. and Weaver, J.* (Miami Herald) "How the DEA let one of Haiti's biggest drug busts slip through its fingers", Miami Herald, 21 August 2018.

<sup>167</sup> See *HaitiLibre*, "2,000 pounds (907kg) of cocaine from Haiti", 3 June 2016. See also *Koltun, R.* (Miami Herald) "2,000 pounds of cocaine found on freighter from Haiti in Miami River", 8 February 2018.

<sup>168</sup> See *IciHaiti*, "Saisie de 410 kg de cocaine a destination d'Haiti", 14 February 2017.

<sup>169</sup> See *INL* (2021) *International narcotics control strategy report, Volume 1*, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/International-Narcotics-Control-Strategy-Report-Volume-I-FINAL-1.pdf> (accessed on 2 February 2023).



## IMPLICATIONS AND RESPONSES TO FIREARMS AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

Haiti's worsening national security crisis has the potential to generate regional contagion with global implications. If the country's security and development institutions disintegrate, a significant international response will be required, including large-scale relief assistance and a stabilization or peace support operation. At a minimum, years of recovery and development investment are unravelling. Organized violence is being deployed as a well-defined strategy on the part of gangs and their backers to subdue populations and expand territorial control. According to Haiti's UN Special Representative, at least five million Haitians are facing acute hunger and education and health services, already faltering, are on the verge of collapse.<sup>170</sup>

### International

Against a rapidly deteriorating security situation, the UN Security Council has demanded an immediate cessation of violence and urged all political actors to engage in meaningful negotiations and hold free and fair elections.<sup>171</sup> The UN Mission, BINUH, has urged political dialogue<sup>172</sup> while several civil society groups produced a "national consensus document" to recommend practical steps toward an election within 18 months. The National Consensus Agreement for an Inclusive Transition and Transparent Election was signed on 21 December 2022 and called for elections by February 2024.<sup>173</sup>

The Haitian government has signalled its inability to stabilize the country on its own, as evidenced by the request for the deployment of an international specialized security force. The Security Council has said it would "welcome" the force<sup>174</sup> and the UN Secretary-General has likewise urged support for a multinational rapid reaction force that would "support the HNP", primarily in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area<sup>175</sup>.

A fundamental priority in Haiti is the restoration of security and stability, including in relation to the control of firearms availability and transshipment of drugs.<sup>176</sup> The Security Council has repeatedly expressed concerns about the illicit trafficking and diversion of arms and related material that are undermining human rights and the provision of assistance. It has also underlined the need to prohibit the transfer of weapons to non-state actors and urged Member States to provide and exchange timely and up-to-date information on illicit trafficking supply chains. Moreover, the Security Council has stressed the need to disrupt the links between political and economic actors and gangs, as well as ensure more access of the HNP to areas controlled by armed groups.

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<sup>170</sup> See BINUH, "Remarks of the Special Representative Helen La Lime, Security Council Open Briefing on Haiti", 24 January 2023.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> See BINUH, "Security Council open briefing on Haiti, 21 December", 22 December 2022. See also BINUH website at <https://binuh.unmissions.org/en>.

<sup>173</sup> See HaitiLibre "The PM signed an 'historic' consensus for an inclusive transition", 22 December 2022.

<sup>174</sup> See S/RES/2645.

<sup>175</sup> See UNSC (2022) Letter dated 8 October 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the president of the Security Council, 10 October and UNSC (2023) Bureau intégré des Nations Unies en Haïti, Rapport du Secrétaire général, S/2023/41, 17 January

<sup>176</sup> See S/RES/2653 (2022).

To this end, the Security Council has established a sanction regime with travel bans, freezes on funds and financial assets and targeted arms embargoes for key individuals and entities associated with criminal activities, including those benefiting from the proceeds of illicit production and trafficking in drugs. Resolution 2653 also established a Panel of Experts to gather, examine and analyse information on the sanctions measures, including the source and routes of arms trafficking to Haiti and incidents undermining the political transition.<sup>177</sup>

Sanctions were also issued in late 2022 by some Member States targeting Haitian political and economic elites<sup>178</sup> believed to be directly and indirectly assisting Haitian gangs acquiring drugs, firearms and ammunition, though the extent to which these will be enforced remains to be seen.<sup>179</sup>

## Regional

Regional measures to control firearms and drug trafficking must accompany in-country support. To this end, Caribbean countries are scaling-up operations to seize illicit firearms and drugs across the region. A recent example is Operation Trigger VII in September 2022 led by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and INTERPOL together with US agencies such as HSI, ATF, the Joint Regional Communications Center and law enforcement agencies from at least 19 countries. The week-long operation seized 350 firearms, 3,300 rounds of ammunition and “record” hauls of illegal drugs.<sup>180</sup> Police reportedly arrested over 510 people and seized more than 10.1 metric tons of cocaine and over 2.5 metric tons of cannabis.<sup>181</sup>

Notwithstanding the recent operation, regional organizations have yet to craft a coherent strategy with Haiti. CARICOM IMPACS is exploring proposals to support stockpile management and destruction measures and investigations, but a more comprehensive and sustained engagement is needed.<sup>182</sup>

Amid reports of increased trafficking of firearms from Florida to Haiti and after designating Haiti a “major drug transit” country, the US increased interdiction efforts on the mainland and in Haiti.<sup>183</sup> In the US, agencies such as HSI, ATF and others established a Border Enforcement Security Task Force in order to “ramp up efforts to stem the flow of illicit weapons in Haiti and the Caribbean”.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> See S/RES/2653 (2022).

<sup>178</sup> The US Treasury claims that its sanctions are targeting politicians who are abusing their power to further drug trafficking. Among other measures, the US sanctions block property and interests in the US as well as entities owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by one of the blocked parties.

<sup>179</sup> See Government of Canada “Canada imposes sanctions against Haitian political elites”, 4 November 2022; US Department of State, “US sanctions additional corrupt Haitian politicians for drug trafficking”, Press Release, 2 December 2022.

<sup>180</sup> See Interpol, “Hundreds of firearms and 12.6 tonnes of drugs seized in Caribbean operation,” Press Release, 13 October 2022.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> IMPACS recently signed a cooperation agreement with Mines Advisory Group to provide assistance to CARICOM member states in these areas. Interview with key informant KI18, 5 December 2022.

<sup>183</sup> A 1997 bilateral agreement to suppress illicit maritime drug traffic permits US law enforcement agencies to enter Haitian territorial waters and airspace, board and search suspect vessels, patrol Haitian airspace, and carry members of the HCG on US vessels. See US INL (2022).

<sup>184</sup> See ICE, “HSI announces crackdown on firearms, ammunition smuggling to Haiti, the Caribbean”, 19 August 2022

ICE also opened an office in Port-au-Prince to coordinate efforts, and committed extra resources to close down smuggling routes, confiscate funds and disrupt money laundering.<sup>185</sup>

Meanwhile, the Organization for American States (OAS) has also affirmed its concern with the deteriorating situation in Haiti. The OAS Secretariat has urged Member States and permanent observers to urgently offer direct support to the Haitian authorities to improve training of port security agents, particularly with respect to the fight against firearms trafficking.<sup>186</sup> The OAS has underlined the importance of devoting more resources to strengthening the capacities and means of the HNP to restore order in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Moreover, the OAS has set up a working group on Haiti, taking note of measures adopted by the Security Council, in particular the provisions of resolutions 2645 regarding arms and ammunition trafficking and 2653 on sanctions.<sup>187</sup>

Ultimately, regional cooperation must extend beyond a narrow focus on interdicting firearms and confiscating drugs. Indeed, the CARICOM region must also engage with a range of issues that shape Haiti's security challenges, including criminal networks and migration and human trafficking. To this end, a priority for the region is the reinforcement of early warning mechanisms and rapid coordination measures to support preventive strategies and operational activities. A greater emphasis is needed to promote the sharing and exchange of experiences among member states across the region, as well as with other counterparts.

## National

The principal focus of international and national efforts to promote stability is on reinforcing the capabilities of the HNP.<sup>188</sup>

Haitian authorities have emphasized the importance of practical support for anti-gang operations and the prevention of sexual violence, including the deployment of international police advisers embedded in specialized HNP units. Other areas of focus include expanding the number of trained officers, continued vetting of recruits, expanded community-focused policing capabilities and the restoration of police stations destroyed in gang-controlled areas. Governments have been urged to provide equipment, including tactical vehicles, as well firearms and ammunition. Any such actions must be accompanied with stringent oversight and management measures to avoid diversion, as well as efforts to strengthen the capacities of the Haitian government, including the HNP, to stem the trafficking of firearms and ammunition.

The UN Security Council has repeatedly stressed the importance of reinforcing the capacities of HNP and its specialized units focused on borders, drugs, firearms, sexual crimes, the protection of minors and the anti-kidnapping cell.<sup>189</sup> UN representatives have also underlined that efforts must

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<sup>185</sup> See Border Security Report "HIS announces crackdown on firearms, ammunition smuggling to Haiti, the Caribbean", 23 August 2022.

<sup>186</sup> See US Mission to the OAS (2022) "Remarks before the Canada-hosted meeting on Haiti/OASGA Resolution", 6 October 2022.

<sup>187</sup> See OAS, "OAS adopts resolution on Haiti", 10 February 2023, available at <https://usoas.usmission.gov/oas-adopts-resolution-on-haiti/> (accessed on 27 February 2023).

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.* See also Dujarric, S. (United Nations) "Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary General on Haiti", 9 October 2022.

<sup>189</sup> See S/RES/2645.

be Haitian-led and that additional measures to prevent and reduce armed violence, including in “hot spots” near critical infrastructure, are warranted.<sup>190</sup> These calls are not without precedent. Security system reform has been a priority in Haiti for years. For almost three decades, international partners have sought to strengthen police leadership; improve recruiting, vetting and training opportunities; provide equipment and build facilities; and improve overall operational capabilities.<sup>191</sup> Although Haiti has registered progress, its police, customs and coast guard agencies remain far too small in size, unevenly trained and under-resourced. For example, the HNP has a ratio of 1.06 officers per 1,000 residents, well below the 2.2 per 1,000 recommended by the UN.<sup>192</sup>

Owing to the deteriorating security environment in 2022, several efforts are underway to rapidly expand support to the HNP and associated border and customs agencies. For example, several Member States transported several armoured vehicles to Haiti in 2022 and 2023 to support counter-gang operations. Meanwhile, international partners launched a new multi-donor security basket fund to mobilize support for the HNP and have raised \$17.8 million by the end of 2022.<sup>193</sup>

Several Member States are also focused on ensuring continued support to the HNP academy and HNP school to ensure ongoing professional training and development of new recruits and serving officers. A concern expressed by several experts was the risk of the de-professionalization of the HNP and the dangers of deteriorating morale. The challenges are formidable: at the end of January 2023, media reported that HNP officers had taken to the streets in protest of recent killings of police officers by armed gangs, and in the process blocked roads, attempted to break into the residence of the Prime Minister and temporarily trapped the Prime Minister himself at the airport<sup>194</sup>. The HNP leadership subsequently announced the launch of a counter-offensive against the gangs, Operation Tornado 1.<sup>195</sup>

Assistance is also needed to expand HNP numbers and capabilities, including in relation to counter-narcotics, with support provided to BLTS, POLIFRONT and the HCG.<sup>196</sup> For their part, US officials

<sup>190</sup> See BINUH, “Security Council session on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) / Statement of the Special Representative Helen La Lime”, 16 June 2022.

<sup>191</sup> The US alone has committed at least \$300 million toward strengthening Haitian law enforcement and criminal justice institutions over the past decade. Canada and France have also contributed significant resources toward HNP training and reform. Interviews with key informant KI10, KI11, KI24, KI38, KI39 and KI40 in November and December 2022. See also Baranyi, S. (2019) "Second generation SSR or unending violence in Haiti", *Stability International Journal of Security and Development*, Vol. 8 (1), pp. 1-19; and Pinche, G. (2017) "Security sector reform in Haiti since 2004", *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* Vol. 23(3), pp. 292-306.

<sup>192</sup> See S/2022/747.

<sup>193</sup> See US Department of State "United States and Canada joint statement on support for the Haiti security basket fund", Media Note, 23 September 2022.

<sup>194</sup> Taylor, L. (The Guardian UK), "Haitian cops are poorly paid and outgunned – and part of the problem", 2 February 2023.

<sup>195</sup> Police Nationale d'Haïti – PNH, *Opération Tornado I – Appel au calme et à la sérénité* (Facebook page) 29 January 2023, available at [https://www.facebook.com/pnh.ht/videos/990675648482372/?extid=WA-UNK-UNK-UNK-IOS\\_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=F44Fru](https://www.facebook.com/pnh.ht/videos/990675648482372/?extid=WA-UNK-UNK-UNK-IOS_GK0T-GK1C&mibextid=F44Fru) (accessed on 3 February 2023).

<sup>196</sup> The US has a tradition of providing support to Haiti's police and security institutions, including specialized units to fight drug trafficking and money laundering and support judicial and prison reform. INL and other agencies have supported HNP agencies such as BLTS, HCG and POLIFRONT, including in partnership with Colombia's national police. NAS also supports an annual program of providing NYPD police officers of Haitian origin to carry out 90-day missions with HNP. According to INL support in 2021-2022 was roughly \$90 million, with the majority spent on countering gangs and channeled through US contractors, OAS,

contend that the HNP needs to expand to at least 22,000 officers and address persistently low operational capacity, insufficient funding, fuel shortages and management shortfalls.<sup>197</sup> Likewise, greater investment is required in strengthening SWAT capabilities, community- and place-based policing, improving investigations and chain of custody, criminal justice sector reform and modernizing data collection, analysis and sharing (including laboratory capacities) across agencies.<sup>198</sup> An essential priority in the short- to- medium-term is the reinforcement of Haiti's justice and penal systems that have been degraded by gang-related violence and chronic funding gaps.<sup>199</sup>

Haitian authorities are stepping-up action to bolster legislation to control firearms. For one, the HNP has reportedly suspended all firearms licences amid concerns about rising unrest, though it is not clear how this act is being enforced.<sup>200</sup> Haiti is the twelfth country to commit to adopting the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap (signed in 2020), an initiative of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic.<sup>201</sup> As part of its commitment, Haiti drafted a National Action Plan (NAP) to address illegal firearms in the country in 2022.<sup>202</sup> In line with the Roadmap, the NAP updates the regulatory framework for governing firearms and ammunition, outlines a strategy for reducing illicit flows across Haiti's borders and calls for the reinforcement of law enforcement capacities to fight trafficking and decrease diversion from state and non-state arsenals. The NAP was prepared in partnership with the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) and awaits approval by the Prime Minister.<sup>203</sup>

There is an urgent need to centralize the regulation and management of firearms. The NAP could help Haiti evolve a single focal point for managing firearms control issues across government. Likewise, strengthened firearm legislation could usefully clarify rules and responsibilities. Firearm control measures are currently managed under the Central Division of the Administrative Police (DCPA). But the DCPA's carry permit service (Service de Porte d'Armes à Feu, or SAF) lacks a clear

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*IOM and UNDP, among others. INL also helped stand-up the construction of canine compounds, canine training and checkpoints at land borders and maritime facilities. Interview with key informant KI10, KI11 and KI24 on 5 December 2022. See, also, See US Department of State "Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs: Haiti Summary", available at <https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-international-narcotics-and-law-enforcement-affairs-work-by-country/haiti-summary/> (accessed on 2 February 2023).*

<sup>197</sup> Interview with key informant KI10, KI11 and KI24 on 5 December 2022.

<sup>198</sup> The US INL described having several basic objectives in Haiti in the short-term. These are to retrain and expand HNP Swat capacities, continue place-based crime prevention strategies in Port-au-Prince, strengthen POLIFRONT with boats and fuel, stand-up a transnational criminal investigative capability with support of HSI, maintain support to the Police Academy and School, and sustain health and safety program with Haitian corrections. Interview with key informant KI10, KI11 and KI24 on 5 December 2022.

<sup>199</sup> See S/2022/747.

<sup>200</sup> See Caribbean National Weekly (Caribbean National Weekly) "Haiti police suspend all firearm licenses amidst protest", 16 September 2022.

<sup>201</sup> In July 2022, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2645 (S/RES/2645) welcomed the Roadmap and requested relevant UN agencies, such as UNLIREC, to support Haitian national authorities in combating the illicit trafficking and diversion of arms and related material.

<sup>202</sup> The Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition Across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Matter 2030 was launched by CARICOM Impacts in 2019. Haiti was the 12th state to commit to concrete actions. See UNLIREC, "UNLIREC and CARICOM IMPACS hold executive seminar for the advancement of Haiti's national action plan for the implementation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap", Press Release, 15 February 2022.

<sup>203</sup> UNLIREC, "Haiti finalizes National Action Plan on Firearms after welcoming second in-person mission from UNLIREC", 15 July 2022.

mandate, personnel and material resources. Support to strengthen the SAF could also include a functional civilian firearms database as recommended in the draft NAP. Moreover, stockpile management processes could be usefully reinforced, a theme raised in prior UN evaluations.<sup>204</sup> Additional assistance could be directed toward standardizing procedures for investigating (e.g. handling and tracing) seized firearms, tasks currently managed by the Central Direction of the Judicial Police.

Any measures to control weapons and seize drugs must be further accompanied by improved transparency and accountability over political and economic actors who may be involved in trafficking, illicit financial flows and supporting armed groups with financial resources and material. International partners are determined to prioritize anti-corruption measures in the medium-term. Haiti only recently classified corruption as a crime in 2014, after which penalties were established for bribery and illegal procurement<sup>205</sup> Strengthening Haiti's Unit for Combating Corruption is essential to curb drug and firearms trafficking. So too is upgrading the country's judicial system, including to address outdated penal and criminal codes, inadequate judicial oversight and reported widespread systemic corruption<sup>206</sup>. As of 2022, there have been just five successful convictions of drug trafficking and one corruption conviction in Haiti.<sup>207</sup>

Moreover, there are several longer-term challenges related to drugs and illicit firearms that will also require careful attention after Haiti's security situation is stabilized. For one, there are risks that local drug consumption, particularly among younger Haitians, could increase, and public services are under-funded and ill-prepared to address the consequences. Other priorities include investments in community violence prevention and reduction, including through integrated programmes emphasizing the restoration of territorial control and resumption of services for young at-risk residents. Even if an immediate focus of support to Haiti is on law and order, these longer-term priorities cannot be neglected. Ultimately, sustained assistance and institutional reforms will be required to restore basic public security, criminal justice, border control and customs institutions, to support Haiti's path out of crisis.

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<sup>204</sup> See UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Mission on weapons and ammunition management assessment in Haiti", 12 September 2019.

<sup>205</sup> US State Department, *2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Haiti* (Washington DC, 2017); and HaitiLibre, "Promulgation of the Law on the Prevention and Suppression of Corruption", 8 May 2014.

<sup>206</sup> Blaise, J (the Haitian Times), "Haiti's highest court expels 30 judges over corruption, seeks to prosecute", 25 January 2023.

<sup>207</sup> According to US INL (2022), the Haitian Unit for the Combating of Corruption has advanced 32 corruption-related cases to the justice system since 2005 without any concrete outcomes.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1. Reported homicides by sex in Haiti (2020-2022)

		Male	Male minor	Female	Female minor	Total
2020-I	Jan	90	4	5	4	103
	Feb	115	3	7	0	125
	Mar	99	0	5	0	104
	Apr	109	6	2	0	117
	May	114	4	2	0	120
	Jun	148	0	13	5	166
2020-II	Jul	58	3	6	0	67
	Aug	63	1	5	0	69
	Sep	80	2	7	0	89
	Oct	91	1	4	2	98
	Nov	90	3	8	0	101
	Dec	105	4	12	0	121
2021-I	Jan	92	2	11	2	107
	Feb	108	1	6	1	116
	Mar	83	5	12	3	103
	Apr	128	0	10	1	139
	May	109	2	7	2	120
	Jun	135	0	7	5	147
2021-II	Jul	126	2	5	2	135
	Aug	110	3	3	1	117
	Sep	127	1	5	0	133
	Oct	121	3	3	0	127
	Nov	98	2	9	0	109
	Dec	121	2	12	1	136
2022-I	Jan	111	0	9	2	122
	Feb	121	2	4	2	129
	Mar	118	1	10	0	129
	Apr	156	7	15	4	182
	May	159	6	22	6	193
	Jun	130	3	10	1	144
2022-II	Jul	234	14	21	0	269
	Aug	147	6	11	2	166
	Sep	113	1	11	2	127
	Oct	163	3	10	0	176
	Nov	228	6	21	2	257
	Dec	176	2	15	1	194

Source: HNP (2022)



## Annex 2. Proportion of reported homicides by department (2021 and 2022)

2021		
	Total	Percentage
Artibonite	58	3.9
Centre	19	1.28
Grand' Anse	26	1.75
North	79	5.31
North East	28	1.88
North West	27	1.81
Nippes	23	1.54
South	50	3.36
South East	25	1.68
West	1154	77.5
Total	1489	100

2022		
	Total	Percentage
Artibonite	101	4.83
Centre	27	1.29
Grand' Anse	13	0.62
North	73	3.49
North East	17	0.77
North West	34	1.63
Nippes	29	1.39
South	33	1.58
South East	28	1.34
West	1735	83
Total	2089	77.5

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)

## Annex 3. Reported weapon-related injuries in Haiti (2019-2022)

Injuries disaggregated by weapon, monthly					
		Firearm	Sharp weapon	Other	Total
2020	Jan	52	2	0	54
	Feb	52	36	11	99
	Mar	44	3	2	49
	Apr	42	4	1	47
	May	34	3	0	37
	Jun	36	4	7	47
	Jul	45	2	3	50
	Aug	28	2	4	34
	Sep	55	2	1	58
	Oct	43	0	3	46
	Nov	72	1	1	74
	Dec	42	1	2	45
2021	Jan	56	8	11	75
	Feb	87	41	49	177
	Mar	49	2	0	51
	Apr	63	4	5	72
	May	65	4	6	75
	Jun	68	5	1	74
	Jul	49	2	1	52
	Aug	63	1	3	67
	Sep	70	3	1	74
	Oct	48	2	6	56
	Nov	90	4	3	97
	Dec	93	3	0	96
2022	Jan	102	4	2	108
	Feb	90	20	34	144
	Mar	61	9	26	96
	Apr	105	1	2	108
	May	147	2	1	150
	Jun	78	1	0	79
	Jul	299	3	1	303
	Aug	94	5	16	115
	Sep	203	6	2	211
	Oct	217	1	8	226
	Nov	224	11	3	238
	Dec	198	2	6	206

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)

## Annex 4. Reported kidnappings (2019-2022)

2019	Jan	12
	Feb	2
	Mar	15
	Apr	7
	May	5
	Jun	2
	Jul	5
	Aug	2
	Sep	0
	Oct	9
	Nov	9
	Dec	10
2020	Jan	17
	Feb	50
	Mar	16
	Apr	6
	May	3
	Jun	4
	Jul	19
	Aug	9
	Sep	17
	Oct	21
	Nov	32
	Dec	40
2021	Jan	38
	Feb	37
	Mar	35
	Apr	63
	May	32
	Jun	40
	Jul	23
	Aug	60
	Sep	54
	Oct	71
	Nov	98
	Dec	113
2022	Jan	80
	Feb	110
	Mar	88
	Apr	64
	May	198
	Jun	141
	Jul	132
	Aug	72
	Sep	83
	Oct	139
	Nov	135
	Dec	117

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)

## Annex 5. Proportion of reported kidnappings by department (2021 and 2022)

	2021	2022
Arbonite	12.3	11.4
Centre	2.11	0.3
Grand d'Anse	0.3	0
North	0.9	0.37
North East	0.15	0.07
North West	2.26	2.8
Nippes	0.3	0
South	1.5	0.07
South East	1.3	0.15
West	78.7	84.69

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)

## Annex 6. Killings of police officers (2019-2022)

		On duty	Off duty	Total
2019	Jan	0	6	6
	Feb	3	1	4
	Mar	1	2	3
	Apr	2	1	3
	May	0	5	5
	Jun	0	2	2
	Jul	4	0	4
	Aug	2	1	3
	Sep	0	3	3
	Oct	0	4	4
	Nov	1	2	3
	Dec	1	1	2
2020	Jan	1	2	3
	Feb	1	2	3
	Mar	0	4	4
	Apr	1	0	1
	May	0	2	2
	Jun	0	1	1
	Jul	1	1	2
	Aug	0	2	2
	Sep	0	2	2
	Oct	0	4	4
	Nov	0	1	1
	Dec	0	5	5
2021	Jan	0	1	1
	Feb	2	1	3
	Mar	7	4	11
	Apr	0	3	3
	May	0	3	3
	Jun	5	1	6

	Jul	1	5	6
	Aug	0	3	3
	Sep	0	0	0
	Oct	2	1	3
	Nov	0	2	2
	Dec	1	4	5
2022	Jan	2	3	5
	Feb	1	3	4
	Mar	1	4	5
	Apr	0	0	0
	May	2	2	4
	Jun	2	2	4
	Jul	1	2	3
	Aug	4	0	4
	Sep	4	1	5
	Oct	1	3	4
	Nov	0	2	2
	Dec	0	4	4
	Total	19	26	45

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)

## Annex 7. Wounded police officers on and off duty (2019-2022)

		On duty	Off duty	Total
2019	Jan	14	5	19
	Feb	12	5	17
	Mar	4	4	8
	Apr	15	4	19
	May	0	6	6
	Jun	12	5	17
	Jul	2	0	2
	Aug	1	5	6
	Sep	3	5	8
	Oct	7	15	22
	Nov	4	10	14
	Dec	5	3	8
2020	Jan	5	8	13
	Feb	8	5	13
	Mar	2	6	8
	Apr	1	5	6
	May	1	1	2
	Jun	4	1	5
	Jul	2	2	4
	Aug	6	2	8
	Sep	3	5	8
	Oct	2	4	6
	Nov	7	3	10

	Dec	4	3	7
2021	Jan	6	2	8
	Feb	8	2	10
	Mar	11	0	11
	Apr	5	1	6
	May	1	2	3
	Jun	5	4	9
	Jul	0	3	3
	Aug	6	2	8
	Sep	4	1	5
	Oct	3	2	5
	Nov	4	4	8
	Dec	4	6	10
2022	Jan	3	1	4
	Feb	7	0	7
	Mar	4	2	6
	Apr	4	1	5
	May	0	2	2
	Jun	10	5	15
	Jul	9	4	13
	Aug	9	3	12
	Sep	7	1	8
	Oct	10	2	12
	Nov	9	1	10
	Dec	0	1	1
		72	23	95

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)

## Annex 8. Civic protests in Haiti (2018-2022)

		Peaceful	Violent	Total
2019	Jan	21	31	52
	Feb	36	150	186
	Mar	8	27	35
	Apr	11	20	31
	May	16	28	44
	Jun	33	87	120
	Jul	4	22	26
	Aug	2	29	31
	Sep	2	31	33
	Oct	22	124	146
	Nov	17	89	106
	Dec	6	20	26
2020	Jan	2	2	4
	Feb	4	11	15
	Mar	1	6	7
	Apr	3	9	12
	May	7	15	22
	Jun	12	27	39

	Jul	17	100	117
	Aug	20	57	77
	Sep	42	59	101
	Oct	30	55	85
	Nov	27	60	87
	Dec	11	35	46
2021	Jan	22	92	114
	Feb	24	124	148
	Mar	18	120	138
	Apr	12	74	86
	May	7	50	57
	Jun	2	65	67
	Jul	9	40	49
	Aug	4	41	45
	Sep	4	67	71
	Oct	13	147	160
	Nov	5	48	53
	Dec	4	124	128
2022	Jan	7	54	61
	Feb	5	78	83
	Mar	13	102	115
	Apr	14	51	65
	May	2	64	66
	Jun	10	67	77
	Jul	10	118	128
	Aug	12	118	130
	Sep	11	323	334
	Oct	8	256	264
	Nov	13	94	107
	Dec	3	57	60
		108	1382	1490

Source: HNP/UNPOL (2022)