

## **APPENDIX E: U.S. Security Assistance to Haiti, Government of Haiti Efforts to Support Displaced Survivors of Urban and Gang Violence, and U.S. Interagency Efforts to Counter Kidnapping and Armed Violence in Haiti**

### **U.S. Security Assistance to Haiti**

Instability in Haiti, just 650 miles from Florida and home to 100,000 U.S. citizens, directly impacts U.S. national security. Haitian gangs remain the primary source of instability in Haiti and pose an increasing threat to the country as they expand their influence and geographic presence, including control over large portions of Port-au-Prince. Destabilization in the wake of the July 2021 assassination of President Moïse and the August 2021 earthquake created additional opportunities for gangs to extend control of geographic territories and infrastructure, facilitate the trafficking of illicit narcotics through Haiti, and create conditions that drive migration to the United States. The Department of State, through its Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), continues to prioritize supporting the Haitian National Police's (HNP) development as a professional, accountable, and gender-diverse institution capable of managing Haiti's internal security.

In the aftermath of Haiti's 2010 earthquake, INL managed a \$96 million, one-time supplemental increase in funding to help rebuild the HNP's facilities and force strength, as well as \$42 million towards justice sector support. INL invested significant resources to construct six police stations, two prisons, and requisite facilities; support the HNP's force expansion; and strengthen capacity of basic and specialized units. As a direct result of INL financial and material support, HNP ranks grew from fewer than 10,000 officers in 2010 to 13,700 in 2021. To strengthen HNP effectiveness, INL's support includes the funding and deployment of 16 subject-matter experts (SMEs) to key positions in the HNP, such as the offices of the HNP Director General, Inspector General, Director of Central Administration, and the Director of Prisons. INL also supports two UN police advisor positions in Haiti: an executive officer who functions as the second-in-command for the UN's police and corrections support mission, and an anti-gang advisor who helps the HNP coordinate its anti-gang and violent crime initiatives.

In addition, INL has supported 26 promising police leaders to attend the year-long executive leadership course at the Inter-American Defense College over the last 12 years. Nine of these graduates hold important HNP leadership positions, including the current director general. The first two female HNP officers

graduated from the program in 2017. Finally, INL has supported the expansion of the counternarcotics unit and border police, and the creation of joint specialized units to strengthen public order, election security, and deter trafficking and irregular migration.

INL provides equipment, technical assistance, and nutritional assessments to the HNP to better manage its prison population, including prisoner health and safety. Over 82 percent of inmates in Haiti have yet to stand trial, many of whom have served beyond their potential maximum sentence as nonviolent offenders. Addressing overcrowding will become even more important as the HNP begins to apprehend high-value gang targets. INL currently conducts feasibility studies for improvements to Haiti's decrepit and overcrowded prison infrastructure and plans to support penitentiary construction to provide humane conditions for detainees.

In 2022, INL began implementing its near-term anti-gang initiatives to train the HNP SWAT team and provide community-led solutions for citizens to reject gangs. The SWAT training will increase the unit's members from 50 to 200 and provide the logistics and enhanced vetting needed for the unit to conduct high-risk arrests of gang members and reduce gangs' influence across Haiti. INL's pilot community policing project in a Port-au-Prince neighborhood resulted from a joint USAID-INL Place Based Strategy (PBS) approach. The program will award approximately 30 small grants to community organizations for social improvements and will train the HNP's community policing unit to rebuild citizen trust in the police.

In implementing its security assistance to Haiti, INL complies with the State Leahy law (section 620M of the Foreign Service Act of 1961). All security force units receiving INL-supported training, equipment, or advising are vetted through the Department to ensure no units credibly implicated in a gross violation of human rights receive assistance. INL also provides human rights training to HNP leadership and specialized HNP units in Haiti and at the Inter-American Defense College and the International Law Enforcement Academy. These efforts represent concrete steps to ensure human rights abusers do not receive U.S. government support.

## **Government of Haiti Efforts to Support Displaced Survivors of Urban and Gang Violence**

As of August 4, 2022, the International Organization for Migration estimated that more than 43,300 individuals were displaced throughout the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area between April 23 and July 22, 2022, largely due to urban and gang violence. Although Haitian government officials stress their concern for Haitians displaced by violence and recognize the grave security situation, the Haitian government has limited capacity to address victims' needs or provide social services. Human rights contacts report that many victims of gang violence and related destruction never received any government support. Many displaced people shelter informally with extended family or friends throughout the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, and far more cannot leave the neighborhoods where the violence initially occurred.

Incidents of gang violence in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area add increased pressure on an already limited social services system. The government agency Institute of Social Well-Being and Research (IBESR) provides limited but quality support to families who surrender their children or to children whose parents were killed in violence; however, a lack of resources constrains their services. *Le Nouvelliste*, a prominent Haitian newspaper, reported July 18 that the prime minister and minister of the Interior intended to provide "humanitarian support" to Haitians in the Brooklyn area of Cité Soleil following the inter-gang violence that began on July 8, but did not share the specifics of such support.

## **U.S. Interagency Efforts to Counter Kidnapping and Armed Violence in Haiti**

The Department of State continues to coordinate with interagency partners to combat the surge of kidnappings and armed violence in Haiti. Kidnappings for ransom (KFR), gang control of key transportation infrastructure and corresponding fuel shortages, and lack of government services and presence in geographic areas, are major social grievances and cause for protests, civil unrest, and labor and government strikes. Over the past year, the U.S. embassy, U.S. law enforcement, and Haitian authorities maintained regular operational contact to manage active kidnappings and kidnapping threats against U.S. citizens. INL has continued to support capacity-building of the HNP's anti-kidnapping capabilities through training and cooperation with U.S. law enforcement agencies.

In October 2021, INL experts conducted an anti-gang assessment in response to an HNP Director General request for support to develop anti-gang capabilities. Based

on the results of the assessment, INL committed to providing intensive training, equipment, and technical assistance to expand the HNP SWAT from 50 to 200 officers capable of conducting safe and effective anti-gang operations. In February 2022, INL awarded a contract to provide temporary duty/rotational trainers for urban tactical training and is currently soliciting contracts for barracks and training facilities, maintenance services, as well as logistics and polygraphing for enhanced vetting of unit members. Other near-term support includes protective and crowd control equipment; four new personal services contractors and five additional SME advisors (for a total of 16 to be embedded within the HNP); and a donation of 60 vehicles to improve HNP mobility.

To counter gang influence and improve citizen security, INL and USAID collaborate to implement community violence prevention programs. In 2022, INL and USAID initiated a PBS informed by successful PBS programs in Central America to deepen coordination at the community level. The cornerstone of the PBS is a new anti-gang project to improve police-community relations, increase police presence, and enhance service delivery by community-based organizations in Cité Soleil and other at-risk areas. INL helped the HNP to stand up a community policing unit in 2013 and works with the HNP to expand the unit nationwide using INL-trained HNP community policing officers in the West Department, which incorporates Port-au-Prince.

INL is also working with the Department of Homeland Security/Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) to establish a Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (TCIU) in Haiti. This highly vetted unit will enhance the U.S. government's ability to target transnational crime in Haiti, while also supporting the HNP's continued fight against gangs. In addition, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) sent four Crisis Negotiators to train the HNP's anti-kidnapping unit in August 2022. The 40-hour course covered methods, techniques, and best practices to support overall KFR reduction in Haiti. The HNP has requested further trainings on KFRs based on the success of this first iteration.

Increased U.S. government efforts, including by the Department of State, the Department of Justice, and U.S. law enforcement agencies, have already helped Haitian security forces combat gangs. In early May 2022, the HNP transferred Joly "Yonyon" Germiné, described as a leader of the "400 Mawozo" gang, to the United States to face charges in connection with the armed kidnapping of 16 U.S. citizens in Haiti in October 2021. His arrest and transfer into U.S. custody sent a strong signal of the HNP's commitment to combat gangs across Haiti. These enhanced coordination efforts will provide much-needed assistance for the HNP to reduce kidnappings and gang violence across Haiti.