

HUMANITARIAN AID AND REFUGEES SYNOPSIS PRAMUN 2026

TOPIC #2 Ensuring Humanitarian access and protection of civilians amid gang violence in Haiti.

I. Background

Gang violence and civil unrest in the country of Haiti has been an ongoing UN and civil issue that has caused many humanitarian organizations to urge for immediate action. After the assassination of the former president Jovenel Moïse in July of 2021, the country of Haiti was left without a form of effective leadership. As there was no stable central government, gangs began to take control of densely populated areas, and as early as 2024, gang activity has spread and taken over its capital Port Au Prince.

While Haiti's essential collapse of a government left the country open to gang take over, decades before the country had been faced with severe economic hardships with problems rooted in its colonial history and exploitation of slavery. Before the country's independence, Haiti was a resource rich colony, marked by its exports of sugar-cane and most notably slaves. Two years after its initial declaration of independence in 1804 was met with invasion, Haiti was able to secure stable independence. The country's revolution as well as success in becoming an independent nation was transformative, as it became the first country that was to be ruled over by former slaves. Consequently, European colonists did not meet the country's independence with open arms. In the next decades Haiti would be forced to pay reparations to France for the loss of former slaves, causing the country to be unable to support their own education, hospitals and other important facilities. Along with the reparations, hundreds of years of international intervention has left the country in a state of political instability. More recently, Haiti has experienced fuel shortages, environmental conflicts such as earthquakes and tropical storms, and along with the impact of COVID-19, the hardships have only enabled gang violence on a widespread scale across the country.

Since 2021, a coalition of nine prominent gangs known as the G9 blockaded Haiti's largest fuel terminal as well as the country's many ports. This in turn has caused difficulty in citizens receiving foreign aid for those who are in need, for example citizens who have been affected by cholera which has broken out in Haiti. G9 is not the only major gang operation as there are estimated two hundred gangs that operate in Haiti with 95% operating near or in the capital with seven major coalitions. Due to the immense competition between the gangs, escalation of violent crimes and kidnappings has spiked in the past few years.

As Haiti continues to be overrun by gangs and instability, citizens throughout the country have been the most affected and the most vulnerable. A report released by the Integrated Food Security Classification found that 5.7 million of Haitians (more than half of the population) are facing severe food shortages, with the crisis worsening as continued violence displaces families, destroys agriculture production, and reduces available aid. Along with food insecurity, the country also faces terrorization of the gang population as gangs continue to massacre, loot, and target schools, universities and hospitals. One of the biggest impacts that has the international community rushing to assist citizens is the rise in violence against women in children. With women being the most targeted group of sexual violence (including rape,

gang rape, and kidnapping) they are the most vulnerable group when gangs raid homes in neighborhoods. Women also face sexual and gender based violence especially in displacement sites where shelter, sanitation, and protection are lacking. Children are also a highly vulnerable group, with young boys (as young as 10) groomed into violence and gang activity, with over 55% of displaced populations being women and children, many kids are not receiving appropriate care, protection, and education.

II. Past UN Actions

The UN takes the situation in Haiti seriously with many security missions and human rights actions being taken to protect citizens and lessen the effects of gang violence in the country. For example, The UN has adapted resolution 2793, which has authorized the creation of the Gang Suppression Force with a 12 month mandate. This force authorized to conduct operations to “neutralize, isolate, and deter gangs”, secure infrastructure, and ensure aid access to civilians with the goal to protect affected vulnerable populations. They have also dispatched the Multinational Security Support Missions before the GSF but it was faced with many challenges such as insufficient personnel and the expanding gang control in 2023. For Humanitarian and Human Rights Actions, agencies throughout the UN including the WFP, UNICEF, and IOM, have delivered aid directly to civilians in gang-controlled or gang affected areas with many agencies sending consistent reports to the public on the status of the citizens and the human rights violations within the country. Finally, the Security Council has established a sanctions regime since 2022 targeting specific gang leaders and holding them accountable for the violence and instability.

III. Bloc Positions

There are major bloc positions that countries have taken in support of Haiti that go along with the UN’s previous and current support. Countries in the EU have extended sanctions against gang leaders and individuals, and support the need for stability, rule of law, and the necessity of humanitarian aid throughout the country. Major first world countries such as Canada and the United States have taken steps to expand the international blueprint for aid to Haiti, however many countries urge the importance of sovereignty and have criticized many countries who have over stepped on Haiti’s attempted government. Finally, many regional blocs such as CARICOM and OAS have emerged to assist Haiti. Both have urged the UN to continue efforts to help alleviate the effects of gang violence within the country. Many bordering countries of Haiti are also heavily affected by the displacement of citizens. Keep in mind that these bordering countries may be heavily affected and may not be able to support the influx of refugees seeking asylum.

IV. Questions to consider

Here are some key questions to consider when it comes to your country and this conflict:

- What areas are most affected and how does violence differ between urban and rural regions?
- What are your country's stances on providing humanitarian aid to foreign countries?
- What specific barriers prevent humanitarian organizations from reaching civilians?
- What responsibilities do armed actors have under international law to allow humanitarian access?
- What mechanisms exist to monitor, report, and prevent abuses against citizens?
- How do human rights law and UN security Council mandates apply to the situation in Haiti?
- How can the UN support humanitarian access without becoming a party in the conflict?
- What role can peace operations, UN police, etc play?

- How can coordination between UN agencies be improved?

Think about your country's stance specifically on the role of taking in those who are seeking asylum from the country as well as neighboring countries. Think outside of the box as the UN has many agencies that are attempting to alleviate the situation.

Sources and Further Reading:

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