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and the Secretary-General

Technical assistance and capacity-building

Situation of human rights in Haiti

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 55/24. The use of firearms and ammunition in Haiti, a country that does not manufacture such items, has bolstered and empowered criminal gangs, enabling them to commit severe human rights abuses. These gangs have become more united and coordinated, often overpowering national security forces. This situation has dramatically worsened the nation's security, human rights and humanitarian crises, while also generating significant ripple effects across the broader region. As clashes between rival gangs declined throughout 2024, gang members increasingly turned their violence against the population, brutally punishing those who defied their rules or were suspected of collaborating with the police or self-defence groups, and instilling fear within the population. Since July 2024, armed violence, in the form of gang attacks on the population, police operations targeting gangs and "vigilante justice", has remained alarmingly high. Human rights violations and abuses documented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have included numerous targeted and untargeted killings, kidnappings for ransom, rape and sexual exploitation, destruction of property and severe restrictions on access to essential services, such as healthcare and education.

* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 55/24, the Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide it, within the framework of an interactive dialogue with the participation of the expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti, with an interim report on the situation of human rights in Haiti at its fifty-seventh session and a full report on the subject at its fifty-eighth session. The present report also contains an analysis of progress made in the implementation of recommendations from previous reports.¹

2. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) collected information from a wide range of sources, including government entities and officials, other United Nations entities – in particular findings from monitoring activities conducted by the Human Rights Service of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) from 1 July 2024 to 28 February 2025 – non-governmental organizations, victims and witnesses. The High Commissioner also draws on findings of the expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti and information from the United Nations country team in Haiti. In accordance with OHCHR human rights monitoring and verification methodology, the standard of reasonable grounds was applied to establish the facts regarding individuals, cases, incidents and behaviours.

II. Legal framework

3. Haiti is a party to several international human rights treaties,² including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, Haiti has signed and ratified several international treaties on firearms control.³

4. International human rights law places obligations on States to respect, protect and fulfil the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights by everyone within their jurisdiction. Furthermore, under article 2 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, States Parties are obliged not only to refrain from violating the rights of individuals; States also have positive obligations with respect to acts committed by private persons or entities that would impair the enjoyment of the rights set forth in the Covenant, insofar as they are amenable to application between private persons or entities. There may be circumstances in which a failure to take appropriate measures or to exercise due diligence to prevent, punish, investigate or redress the harm caused by such acts by private persons or entities would give rise to violations by States Parties of those rights.⁴

5. As part of their obligations in relation to the right to life, States have a due diligence obligation to take reasonable, positive measures that do not impose disproportionate burdens on them, in response to reasonably foreseeable threats to life originating from private persons and entities whose conduct is not attributable to the State.⁵ The duty to protect life also implies that States should take appropriate measures to address the general conditions in society that may give rise to direct threats to life or prevent individuals from enjoying their right to life with dignity.⁶ The Human Rights Committee has stated that States Parties must prevent the risks posed by excessive availability of firearms.⁷

¹ A/HRC/54/79 and A/HRC/55/76.

² See <https://indicators.ohchr.org/>.

³ These include the Arms Trade Treaty, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

⁴ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 31 (2004), paras. 6 and 8.

⁵ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018), para. 21.

⁶ Ibid., para. 26.

⁷ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 35 (2014), para. 9.

6. The Human Rights Committee has also noted that States, as part of their obligations in relation to the right to life, must take appropriate legislative and other measures to ensure that all activities taking place in whole or in part within their territory and in other places subject to their jurisdiction, but having a direct and reasonably foreseeable impact on the right to life of individuals outside their territory, are consistent with the right to life, taking due account of related international standards of corporate responsibility and of the right of victims to obtain an effective remedy.⁸

III. Dynamics of armed violence by criminal gangs

7. Clashes for control over territory diminished in large part in the second half of 2024, given that many gangs had united under a coalition known as “Viv Ansanm” in February 2024.⁹ Since February 2024, the Viv Ansanm coalition has launched collective attacks on State institutions, infrastructure, private businesses and residences across the capital. As a result of these violent attacks, the gangs comprising the coalition have also expanded their control into middle-class neighbourhoods, notably Solino, using them as strategic footholds from which to gain easier access to wealthier areas. In November 2024, Viv Ansanm attempted to attack the area of Petionville, one of the last remaining gang-free neighbourhoods in the capital, where commercial areas and banks are situated.

8. During the reporting period, there was also a spike in abuses by self-defence groups and unorganized mobs. This uptick occurred amid a surge in human rights abuses linked to gang violence and, notwithstanding important efforts, the persistent inability of law enforcement to protect the population. These groups targeted not only alleged gang members and their families, but also individuals whom they suspected of committing crimes. Most of the violence occurred in the capital and in the lower Artibonite Department, most of which is controlled by gangs. Spikes in “mob justice” were notably reported after major gang-related incidents, such as the killing on 18 November of at least 77 suspected gang members in Petionville, following an attempted gang attack on the area earlier that day.

9. The number of people killed or injured as a result of law enforcement operations against gangs remained extremely high during the reporting period. While most of the victims (73 per cent) were reportedly gang members, others (27 per cent) were not associated with gangs and were struck mostly by stray bullets while in the streets or at home. Reports suggest a potential unnecessary or disproportionate use of lethal force during these operations.¹⁰

10. The lack of law enforcement in neighbourhoods under the control of gangs enabled them to continue to perpetrate acts of sexual violence, mainly against women and girls. Under the threat of lethal force, many victims were attacked in their homes, while others were abducted, raped in public spaces or intercepted while travelling on public transportation. Owing to the strong grip of gangs over entire neighbourhoods, other women and girls were forced by gang members into so-called “relationships” with them, in which the victims were subjected to months of sexual exploitation.

11. Armed gang violence continued to disrupt State institutions and public services, further exacerbating the Government’s inability to maintain public order and provide basic services. On 11 November 2024, gangs shot at three commercial planes, causing the suspension of all flights and disrupting both domestic and international air travel until the end of February 2025. This attack came a day after the ad interim Prime Minister, Gary Conille, was dismissed by the Transitional Presidential Council and replaced by Alix Didier Fils-Aimé.

⁸ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018), para. 22. In relation to international standards of corporate responsibility, see [A/HRC/17/31](#), annex.

⁹ See [A/HRC/57/41](#).

¹⁰ See paras. 27–29 of the present report and https://binuh.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/human_rights_quarterly_report_-_october-december_2024_-_en.pdf.

IV. Impact of the use of firearms by gangs on human rights

12. A wide range of firearms and ammunition is being used by criminal gangs in Haiti. This includes AKM and AR-15 series assault rifles and AK-308, FN FAL, Galil, H&K G3, BM59 Beretta and VZ58 rifles, according to reports presented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to the Security Council.¹¹

13. Recent media reports have also indicated the trafficking to Haiti of the 50 calibre Barrett M82 anti-materiel rifle.¹² The procurement of increasingly large-calibre rifles and ammunition is of concern, given that past reports have served to highlight mounting evidence of 7.62 x 39 mm, 7.62 x 51 mm and 12.7 x 99 mm weapons in Haiti with the potential to inflict a greater number of casualties and result in more severe injuries.¹³ As at October 2024, experts estimated the number of firearms circulating illicitly in the country to be between 270,000 and 500,000. The majority of the weapons in circulation were believed to be illegal and were mostly in the hands of criminals but also of other private actors, including private security companies.¹⁴ The use of these firearms has fuelled a destructive cycle of violence in Haiti, leading to severe human rights abuses. The proliferation and use of weapons and ammunition, including by gangs, are having a significant impact on the enjoyment of civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

14. According to OHCHR, at least 4,239 persons (3,491 men, 601 women, 94 boys and 53 girls) were killed and 1,356 others (1,036 men, 270 women, 34 boys and 16 girls) were injured between 1 July 2024 and 28 February 2025. OHCHR estimates that 92 per cent of casualties were killed or injured as a result of firearm use.¹⁵

15. Among these incidents, several mass killings involving armed gangs were documented during the reporting period. Between 6 and 11 December in the Wharf Jérémie neighbourhood of Cité Soleil, at least 207 people, most of whom were older persons, were allegedly executed by the gangs controlling the area in a matter of days. Similarly, in an attack launched on 3 October in the locality of Pont Sondé in Artibonite Department, the Baz Gran Grif de Savien gang killed at least 100 people and injured 16 others, including 3 babies.¹⁶

16. Firearms were used to intimidate the victims in all of the kidnappings documented by OHCHR. Information gathered by OHCHR indicates that many of those who attempted to resist abduction were shot and killed. During the reporting period, at least 705 people (423 men, 267 women, 12 boys and 3 girls) were kidnapped for ransom by gangs, mostly in Artibonite Department.

17. Armed gang members continued to commit sexual violence, including collective rape and sexual exploitation, using it as a tool to coerce their victims and assert dominance over communities.¹⁷ Most of the perpetrators carried out their attacks at gunpoint to prevent victims from resisting. The ubiquitous presence of guns was central to the violent acts, such as rape, perpetrated by the gangs.¹⁸ It is likely that sexual violence is underreported due to fear of retaliation, social stigma and a lack of trust in institutions, especially the police and the judiciary. Notwithstanding, 477 victims¹⁹ of sexual violence reportedly committed by

¹¹ S/2024/752, para. 14.

¹² See <https://leplacentin.com/post/15-12-2024-urgent-haiti-sous-le-feu-des-barretts> and www.facebook.com/100083471253900/videos/2359160177756899/. In this video, the leader of the 400 Mawozo gang can be seen displaying his Barrett M82 rifle.

¹³ S/2025/85, para. 26.

¹⁴ S/2024/711, para. 27.

¹⁵ The methodology used to calculate this percentage entails the consideration of the number of casualties caused by gunfire (92 per cent of the total documented), as well as those attributable directly to attacks by gangs (56 per cent), whose members acquire their weapons by bypassing national and international legal regulations governing the supply, registration and possession of firearms.

¹⁶ See https://binuh.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/flash_report_20241223_wharf_jeremie_en.pdf.

¹⁷ See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/10/haiti-gangs-use-sexual-violence-instill-fear-un-report.

¹⁸ See www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr36/8875/2025/en/.

¹⁹ 365 women, 87 girls between the ages of 8 and 17 and 1 boy aged 15.

gangs have been identified through the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements established in Haiti in August 2024.

18. Gang control over specific areas has a severe impact on the enjoyment of the right to freedom of movement. Armed gang members control key roads in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area and Artibonite Department, where they have set up checkpoints to force the payment of so-called circulation taxes by drivers, passengers and pedestrians passing through the areas under their control. Victims may also be kidnapped or raped at these checkpoints. The gangs' control over these critical routes, where drivers are extorted and trucks transporting food and other products are hijacked, disrupts commerce, stifles economic activity and hinders the delivery of humanitarian aid.

19. According to testimonies gathered by OHCHR, gang members having access to and possession of firearms and ammunition reinforces the gangs' perceived power within the community. It contributes to a false sense of security among the children and young people who join gangs, notwithstanding the inherent risks, often as a result of marginalization and social exclusion. It also results in child trafficking and recruitment by gangs. Although many of the recruited children and young people want to leave gang life once they realize its implications, armed gang members prevent them from doing so, maintaining control through force or the threat of force. Within the gangs, in some instances, children, usually boys, are provided with weapons and coerced into using them. This turns the children into active participants in criminal acts, such as kidnappings and ransacking, and in violent confrontations with rival gangs or law enforcement. During his most recent visit to Haiti, the expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti met three former gang members who reported fearing for their lives and those of their families if they chose to leave the gang that they had joined in the hope of securing at least one meal a day.

20. In addition, the availability of firearms has enabled criminal gangs to expand their influence and territorial control, while further eroding State presence, through the destruction and ransacking of public institutions and the infrastructure used to provide public services, including schools, healthcare centres and courts. This has had a severe impact on the realization of the right to health, including unhindered access to health facilities, goods and services. On 24 December, gang members stormed the hospital of the State university of Haiti during the reopening ceremony, killing two journalists and a police officer and injuring seven other journalists. The expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti highlighted the fact that attacks against health workers and premises have further weakened a health sector already near collapse.²⁰

21. According to a displacement assessment conducted by the International Organization for Migration,²¹ as at December 2024 there were at least 1,041,229 internally displaced people in Haiti, owing primarily to the escalating armed violence in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince. Some 52 per cent of the displaced were children. Displaced people had been forced to seek shelter with host families with limited financial resources or in makeshift shelters that lacked basic security, and where access to food and water was severely limited. Furthermore, many sites for internally displaced people, in particular in the capital, had been set up in schools, significantly exacerbating the impact on the right to education.

22. In the report on Haiti published in August 2024 under the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification initiative, it was estimated that armed gang violence had pushed 5.4 million people into acute food insecurity.²²

V. Obstacles to effective law enforcement and firearms control

23. Effective law enforcement and robust firearms control and accountability mechanisms are essential in order to stem illicit flows of weapons and ammunition. It is also vital that this

²⁰ See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/haiti-un-expert-william-oneill-says-deeply-concerned-attacks-health-care.

²¹ Available in French at <https://dtm.iom.int/node/47811>.

²² Available in French at www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1157971/?iso3=HTI.

approach remain firmly grounded in human rights in order to ensure its long-term sustainability.

A. Law enforcement

Ongoing efforts by the authorities of Haiti to curb the illicit trafficking of firearms and ammunition into the country

24. The national authorities are increasing their efforts to curb the illicit trafficking of firearms and ammunition into Haiti, with the support of the international community. Two specialized units of the Haitian National Police are actively contributing to efforts to combat the trafficking in arms as part of their broader mandates: the Office for the Suppression of Illicit Drug Trafficking and the Polifront unit, which is responsible for border security. In addition, the Transnational Criminal Investigation Unit of Haiti, a unit dedicated to investigating transnational crimes, was established in February 2024, although it is still in its early stages of development. Operations led by the Haitian National Police appear to have resulted in multiple firearms and ammunition seizures throughout August 2024.²³

25. Notwithstanding ongoing efforts to disrupt the trafficking in firearms and ammunition into Haiti in the context of the national action plan of 2023 to address the illicit trafficking in firearms into the country,²⁴ traffickers have continued to exploit ineffective and inadequate border control systems in order to facilitate the illegal importation of weapons into the country.²⁵

26. The ability of the General Customs Administration and specialized police units to combat the smuggling of weapons is hindered significantly by several interconnected challenges. According to information received by OHCHR, these challenges include severe underfunding and understaffing, inadequate resources and technology to monitor ports, airports and land border crossings effectively, the inefficiency of inter-agency cooperation, corruption and a lack of oversight.

Law enforcement operations against gangs

27. During the reporting period, notwithstanding limited and sometimes inadequate resources, the Haitian National Police regularly conducted operations along key roads in areas controlled by gangs. These operations slowed the advance of gangs towards strategic areas temporarily, such as the communes of Petionville and Léogane, but they did not result in significant territorial regains or conditions that would enable the return of State authorities to those areas.

28. According to OHCHR, the number of persons killed or injured during those police operations rose in 2024. During the reporting period, at least 2,012 people were killed or injured during such operations, which represented an increase of 60 per cent compared with the period from 1 January to 30 June 2024, when 1,253 casualties were documented. While the majority of the victims (73 per cent) were reportedly affiliated with gangs and were injured or killed during exchanges of fire with the police, others (27 per cent) were struck, mainly by stray bullets while in the streets or at home, even though they were not involved in acts of violence.

29. There is information to suggest a possible unnecessary or disproportionate use of lethal force by the police.²⁶ In such locations as Carrefour Drouillard and Carrefour Vincent, OHCHR has documented incidents in which police officers fired gunshots from their armoured vehicles into areas where people were walking or selling goods on the streets. In

²³ [S/2024/752](#).

²⁴ The national plan is in line with the Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030.

²⁵ [S/2024/554](#).

²⁶ See https://binuh.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/human_rights_quarterly_report_-_october-december_2024_-_en.pdf.

addition, there have been reports of the increased involvement on the part of some police officers in the summary execution of suspected gang members,²⁷ their families and individuals who, when intercepted, were unable to provide identification documents or offer a sufficient explanation for their presence in the area. According to OHCHR, at least 219²⁸ people were allegedly killed under those circumstances during the reporting period, including children as young as 10 years old.

Multinational Security Support Mission to support the efforts of the Haitian National Police

30. In its resolutions 2699 (2023) and 2743 (2024), the Security Council authorized the formation and deployment of a Multinational Security Support Mission. It also requested the Mission to cooperate with BINUH and relevant United Nations entities, including, but not limited to, UNODC and OHCHR, to support the efforts of the Haitian National Police to re-establish security in Haiti. This includes their efforts to combat illicit trafficking in, and the diversion of, arms and related materials, including ammunition, as well as their efforts to enhance the management and control of the country's borders and ports.

31. The Security Council, in its resolution 2699 (2023), called upon the Mission to establish an oversight mechanism to prevent human rights violations or abuses, in particular sexual exploitation and abuse, and to ensure that the planning and conduct of operations during deployment would be in accordance with applicable international law. OHCHR has been providing advice in relation to the development and implementation of the human rights compliance mechanism requested by the Council.

32. As of March 2025, approximately 40 per cent of the 2,500 personnel that were to be deployed by the Mission had been deployed. The deployment of personnel and the operation of the Mission had allowed schools, businesses and healthcare facilities to reopen in some parts of Port-au-Prince. However, insufficient operational capacities, coupled with other operational challenges, such as inadequate equipment, had limited the Mission's effectiveness.

Corruption in the police

33. Information gathered by OHCHR indicates passive corruption²⁹ within the police force, potentially undermining its effectiveness in combating gang activities and the availability of firearms and ammunition, and compromising any effective strategy to restore security in Haiti.³⁰ For example, the World Bank Group reported that the police would demand at least \$200 per container from economic operators to provide escort services for convoys transporting goods through gang-controlled areas.³¹

34. The Panel of Experts on Haiti has expressed concern regarding the lack of oversight and control over firearms and ammunition held by the Haitian National Police, highlighting frequent diversions towards the illicit market that were contributing to the escalation of armed violence. According to the Panel, over the four years to 2024, close to 1,000 firearms were diverted from the relatively limited stockpiles of the Haitian National Police.³² In addition, notwithstanding the existence of standard procedures for the destruction of seized firearms and ammunition, credible sources suggest that some are being diverted by police officers and sold on the black market.

²⁷ See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/haiti-over-5600-killed-gang-violence-2024-un-figures-show.

²⁸ Among the victims of summary executions, 65 per cent were alleged gang members (129 men, 6 women and 8 boys) and 38 per cent were individuals not associated with gangs (61 men, 14 women and 1 girl).

²⁹ Passive corruption entails the solicitation or acceptance by a public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage, for the official himself or herself or another person or entity, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her official duties, as defined in the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

³⁰ [A/HRC/54/79](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/haiti-over-5600-killed-gang-violence-2024-un-figures-show).

³¹ See <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099051724102532865/P18025713dadcb0bf1aa581c9ab8215e82b>, p. 7.

³² [S/2024/704](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/haiti-over-5600-killed-gang-violence-2024-un-figures-show), paras. 77 and 78.

35. Such authorities as the General Inspectorate of the Haitian National Police have cited resource limitations and logistical challenges arising from gang-related insecurity as reasons for the delay in investigations and the implementation of accountability measures in relation to allegations of human rights violations by the police force. Although an investigation process has been in place since 2023, no police officer has been thoroughly investigated by the General Inspectorate. According to the information gathered by OHCHR, during the reporting period, only 23 cases of human rights violations involving police officers were opened by the General Inspectorate, with 3 of these cases being referred to the justice system for prosecution.

36. A case in point of this lack of accountability relates to the execution of two patients of Médecins sans frontières, allegedly by police elements, on 11 November 2024. Furthermore, according to information in the public domain, police officers reportedly threatened the organization's personnel on at least four occasions during and after this incident.³³ As of February 2025, the General Inspectorate had yet to conclude its investigation into those alleged violations, and no one had been held accountable.

B. Justice and penitentiary system

37. The justice system's functions continue to be severely undermined by a prolonged shortage of resources, staffing constraints and frequent strikes by justice sector actors, all of which are compounded by the paralysis caused by widespread gang violence targeting justice infrastructure.³⁴ As stressed in previous reports, corruption and poor oversight are deeply entrenched in the criminal justice sector.³⁵ Convictions for corruption are exceedingly rare and national anti-corruption and accountability mechanisms remain underresourced.³⁶

38. In addition, reports serve to highlight a persistent lack of independence within the judiciary³⁷ and pressure from influential figures, which undermine the integrity of the legal system and erode public trust in its ability to fairly uphold the law. There are reports of several magistrates handling sensitive or landmark cases being forced to leave Haiti in order to protect themselves and their families.

39. Legal proceedings against those suspected of committing human rights violations and abuses have consistently failed to result in trials or convictions in Haiti, as a result of such factors as corruption and the ongoing security crisis. Entrenched impunity remains prevalent in relation to killings committed by gangs possessing firearms, as well as their alleged enablers. Investigations into massacres committed by gangs in recent years, which have claimed the lives of thousands of people, such as the massacres of Grande Ravine (2017), La Saline (2018) and Bel-Air (2019),³⁸ continued without significant progress during the reporting period, and perpetrators have not yet been held accountable. In July 2024, the investigating judge concluded his investigation and indicted 30 individuals in relation to the massacre of 2018 in La Saline, including political figures and gang leaders, although there have been no convictions to date. OHCHR is not aware of any other investigations or prosecutions against alleged perpetrators of the killings, including massacres, of recent years.

VI. Trafficking in weapons and ammunition to Haiti

40. Compliance with international law, including the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council, is critical for reducing the uncontrolled flow of firearms into Haiti. The

³³ As a result, on 20 November, Médecins sans frontières suspended all of its activities in the capital for 22 days.

³⁴ [A/HRC/57/41](#).

³⁵ [A/HRC/55/76](#).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ [S/2024/320](#).

³⁸ The investigations into these incidents are considered "landmark" cases in Haiti because they exemplify systemic issues, such as widespread violence, impunity and the alleged complicity among powerful elites, criminal gangs and State authorities, including the distribution of weapons by the elites and authorities to the gangs.

Council imposed a range of sanction measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as a travel ban, asset freeze and arms embargo, through its resolution 2653 (2022). That resolution has been in effect since 2022 and the sanctions measures that it contains were subsequently renewed in resolutions 2700 (2023) and 2752 (2024).³⁹ Under the arms embargo, the Council required all Member States to take the measures necessary to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to Haiti, from or through their territories or by their nationals, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related materials of all types, including weapons, ammunition and military vehicles and equipment.⁴⁰ In addition, the Council decided that Member States should take appropriate steps to prevent the illicit trafficking and diversion of arms and related material in Haiti.⁴¹

41. According to UNODC, notwithstanding the reinforcement of the arms embargo, trafficking in weapons and ammunition persists and armed violence continues to rise, with increasingly high-calibre firearms and ammunition being obtained by gangs in Haiti.⁴² In a report issued in September 2024, the Panel of Experts on Haiti, established pursuant to Council resolution 2653 (2022), stated that enforcement of the embargo remained weak, with regular violations occurring.⁴³

42. The trafficking in weapons and ammunition to Haiti is linked to regional and sub-regional dynamics, in which illicit firearms are a growing concern.⁴⁴ Trafficking in weapons and ammunition is often intertwined with other gang activities, such as drug trafficking, fuelling insecurity and violence in the region. Trafficking routes to gangs in Haiti pass through several countries across the Americas, including The Bahamas, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and the United States of America, as well as the Turks and Caicos Islands.⁴⁵

43. According to UNODC, a persistent flow of firearms is trafficked to Haiti from the United States in general, and Florida in particular.⁴⁶ Weapons are procured frequently through straw man purchases in the states of the United States with looser gun laws and fewer purchasing restrictions.⁴⁷ Once acquired, firearms and ammunition are transported to Florida, where they are concealed and shipped to Haiti. Consignments may be assembled and delivered in containers directly from ports in southern Florida, with items hidden inside consumer products, electronic equipment, garment linings, frozen food items or even the hulls of freighters.⁴⁸ An administrative loophole allows cargo valued under \$2,500 with handwritten manifests to bypass inspection.⁴⁹ Export controls are scarce, with the vast majority of containers shipped from southern Florida to Haiti not subject to inspection.⁵⁰

44. In reports submitted to the Security Council, UNODC highlights the fact that the Administration and lawmakers of the United States are taking steps to curb the illicit flows of firearms and ammunition to Haiti, as well as other countries in the Caribbean and Latin

³⁹ In resolution 2653 (2022), the Security Council imposed an arms embargo on Haiti, banning all supplies of arms and related materiel to individuals and entities. In 2023, this was modified to an arms embargo on transfers of small arms and light weapons to any non-government individuals and entities, and in 2024 this was expanded to include arms and related equipment of all types.

⁴⁰ Security Council resolution 2752 (2024).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² [S/2025/85](#).

⁴³ [S/2024/704](#), para. 12.

⁴⁴ [S/2024/79](#). States in the Caribbean have voiced their concerns about the proliferation of illegal firearms in the region and stressed the urgency of addressing that concern by implementing the comprehensive measures outlined in the Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030. Key objectives include curtailing the flow of illicit arms, reinforcing regulatory frameworks, empowering law enforcement and enhancing data-collection and reporting mechanisms. See https://unlirc.org/wp-content/uploads/PRESS-RELEASE_-Annual-Meeting-CFRM.pdf.

⁴⁵ [S/2025/85](#).

⁴⁶ Ibid., para. 34.

⁴⁷ See www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/toc/Haiti_assessment_UNODC.pdf.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ [S/2024/554](#), para. 16.

⁵⁰ [S/2024/704](#), para. 62.

America.⁵¹ According to UNODC, United States Customs and Border Protection officers recently confirmed a reduction in maritime trade between the Miami River and Haiti,⁵² although there has been a marked increase in trade between the Miami River and The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands, with possible trans-shipments to Haiti.⁵³

45. In January 2024, UNODC noted that weapons and ammunition also arrive illegally in Haiti after being purchased in the United States and then illegally transported to several seaports in the Dominican Republic.⁵⁴ During his recent mission to the country, the expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti received information that confirmed that this situation had not changed. The recent Operation Pandora case in the Dominican Republic has fuelled concern about ammunition being diverted from national stockpiles.⁵⁵ According to an investigation initiated in November 2024 by the Public Prosecution Service of the Dominican Republic, high-ranking Dominican army officers are alleged to have been implicated in selling ammunition and modified blank-firing weapons from domestic security forces to police officers and private actors. Some of these weapons and ammunition were reportedly smuggled across the border to individuals who used them in criminal activities in Haiti.⁵⁶

46. In September 2024, the Panel of Experts on Haiti noted that prosecuting traffickers and preventing illicit exports provided the main starting points for combating transnational arms trafficking.⁵⁷ In this regard, Germine Joly, former leader of one of the largest gangs in Haiti, was sentenced to 35 years in prison by a United States court in 2024 for charges related to money-laundering and firearms trafficking from the United States to support criminal activities, including the kidnapping of United States citizens in Haiti.⁵⁸

47. The security vacuum in Haiti has fuelled demand for private security companies and a concomitant demand for weapons in recent decades.⁵⁹ Estimates indicate that there are between 75,000 and 90,000 individuals working for approximately 100 private security companies in Haiti.⁶⁰ The arms embargo notwithstanding, some private security companies operating in Haiti continue to procure weapons and ammunition, contributing to their trafficking into Haiti.⁶¹ According to the Panel of Experts, much of the material used by private companies is acquired illicitly, and it frequently turns up in the hands of criminals.⁶² Private companies' stockpiles of weapons are often mismanaged: weapons, including semi-automatic rifles, which are illegal in Haiti, are unregistered, and the quantity of firearms exceeds the legal limit. Most of the diversions from the stockpiles of private security companies occur through loss and theft, but prominent local figures who own such companies also allegedly use their illicit stockpiles to arm gangs. On the basis of its investigation, the Panel found that a prominent former official sanctioned by Canada and the United States had used their own private security companies to acquire firearms for gangs.⁶³

⁵¹ S/2024/752, para. 17. These steps include the signing into law of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in 2022, which established federal criminal offences in relation to firearms trafficking and granted the Government expanded authority to prosecute these crimes. In addition, in July 2023, a Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms Prosecutions was appointed to strengthen the investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking in the region. See https://files.gao.gov/reports/GAO-25-107007/index.html#_ftn6.

⁵² S/2025/85, para. 35.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ S/2024/79.

⁵⁵ See www.policianacional.gob.do/ministerio-publico-pone-en-marcha-la-operacion-pandora-contrared-criminal-integrada-por-policias/.

⁵⁶ S/2025/85, paras. 36–41.

⁵⁷ S/2024/704, para. 61.

⁵⁸ See *United States of America v. Joly Germine et al.*, 10 November 2021, available at https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/en/case-law-doc/illicitfirearmscrimetype/usa/2021/united_states_of_america_v._joly_germine_et_al.html.

⁵⁹ See www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/toc/Haiti_assessment_UNODC.pdf.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ S/2024/704.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

VII. Violence: prioritizing protection and prevention

48. Security policies based on a law enforcement approach alone would be insufficient to address violence in Haiti effectively and prevent firearms-related deaths and injuries. Efforts to reduce deaths, injuries and other violations of human rights will be ineffective without a comprehensive strategy that includes prevention, regulation, enforcement and socioeconomic reforms.

49. On the basis of past disarmament programmes in the country and the current national strategy on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and community violence reduction, some have advocated voluntary surrender or buy-back schemes to reduce the prevalence of firearms among gang members.⁶⁴ While initiatives of this kind have yielded some positive results in similar contexts, they should be rooted firmly in human rights in order to ensure their sustainability. They should, therefore, exclude amnesty for perpetrators of serious human rights abuses.

50. Efforts should also be made to increase community-based violence prevention programmes, including with the aim of reducing the availability of firearms in society. These programmes should raise awareness about the dangers of illicit arms, promote peaceful conflict resolution and involve local leaders, schools and youth organizations so as to encourage public order and reduce gang activity and violence. In addition, it is crucial to address the underlying socioeconomic factors contributing to gang violence, such as a lack of access to education, poverty and limited economic opportunities.

51. During his visits to the country, the expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti and the Haitian authorities discussed the creation of a “youth corps”, based in a civil or community service or rehabilitation centre where young Haitians would be offered job training; the opportunity to contribute to public works, such as planting trees and clearing drainage canals; literacy courses; and remuneration. This programme would enable young people from Haiti, especially those in gang-controlled territory and former gang members, to benefit from education and employment opportunities so that they would not need to join a gang to survive.

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

52. **Since the publication of the previous report, the number of human rights abuses and violations in Haiti has remained alarmingly high. A key driver is the widespread possession of a broad range of trafficked firearms and ammunition by gangs, facilitated mainly by corruption, impunity and poor governance. In addition, notwithstanding the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council, the trafficking in weapons and ammunition to Haiti has not been curbed.**

53. **The Government of Haiti, with support from the international community, including the Multinational Security Support Mission, has deployed significant, although insufficient, resources to combat gang expansion, yielding mixed results. Far fewer resources and efforts have been dedicated to neutralizing the actors involved in facilitating the diversion of firearms and ammunition and their trafficking into Haiti. In addition, the ability of the policing and justice system to arrest, prosecute and try gang leaders and arms traffickers has been limited.**

54. **The ability of Haiti to curb the illicit flow of weapons and ammunition into the country remains heavily dependent on the support of, and cooperation with, other States and firearms manufacturers. Strict enforcement of the applicable obligations of States with respect to addressing illicit trafficking, including under international human rights law, therefore remains critical.**

⁶⁴ See www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-OP14-Haiti-FR.pdf.

55. The High Commissioner reiterates his previous recommendations⁶⁵ and urges action by all national stakeholders and Government authorities.

56. In addition, the High Commissioner calls upon the Haitian authorities:

(a) To strengthen the ability of the Haitian National Police, including through the provision of adequate resources and equipment, to respond to gang violence; protect and secure public buildings, in particular those used to provide essential services to the population; expedite the vetting of prospective Haitian National Police officers; and hold accountable all those involved in human rights violations, including those described in the present report, as well as misconduct and criminal acts, in accordance with international human rights norms and standards;

(b) To establish specialized judicial units to address mass killings and crimes related to sexual violence;

(c) To establish an integrated protection system to provide comprehensive support for victims of gang violence. This support should include access to immediate and long-term medical care, psychological counselling, legal assistance and social reintegration programmes;

(d) To relocate immediately all internally displaced persons living in squalid conditions to safe and appropriate facilities, in line with international law and standards;

(e) To provide a safe and enabling civic space for civil society actors;

(f) To address the involvement of children and young people in gangs by creating educational and socioeconomic opportunities, in particular in marginalized areas. This could include establishing a youth corps or rehabilitation centres where children and young people could benefit from literacy courses and job training, and engage in public works projects.

57. The High Commissioner calls upon Member States:

(a) To continue to advance the deployment of the Multinational Security Support Mission, as authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 2699 (2023), and to assist the Haitian National Police in re-establishing security in Haiti, ensuring strict compliance with international law, including human rights law, and integrating a gender-responsive approach;

(b) In the light of Security Council resolutions 2653 (2022), 2700 (2023) and 2752 (2024):

(i) To ensure the strict application of both domestic and international regulations on arms control, as well as adherence to the United Nations arms embargo on Haiti;

(ii) To continue to update the list of individuals and entities subject to Security Council sanctions for engaging in or supporting criminal activities that violate international human rights law;

(iii) To strengthen community-based violence prevention programmes that reduce firearm availability, raise awareness of the dangers of firearms and promote peaceful conflict resolution.

⁶⁵ See [A/HRC/57/41](#), [A/HRC/55/76](#) and [A/HRC/54/79](#).