

Background Guide



Answering Haiti's Crisis: The United Nations Stabilization Mission

Topic A: Restabilizing Haiti's Government

Topic B: Addressing Gang Violence

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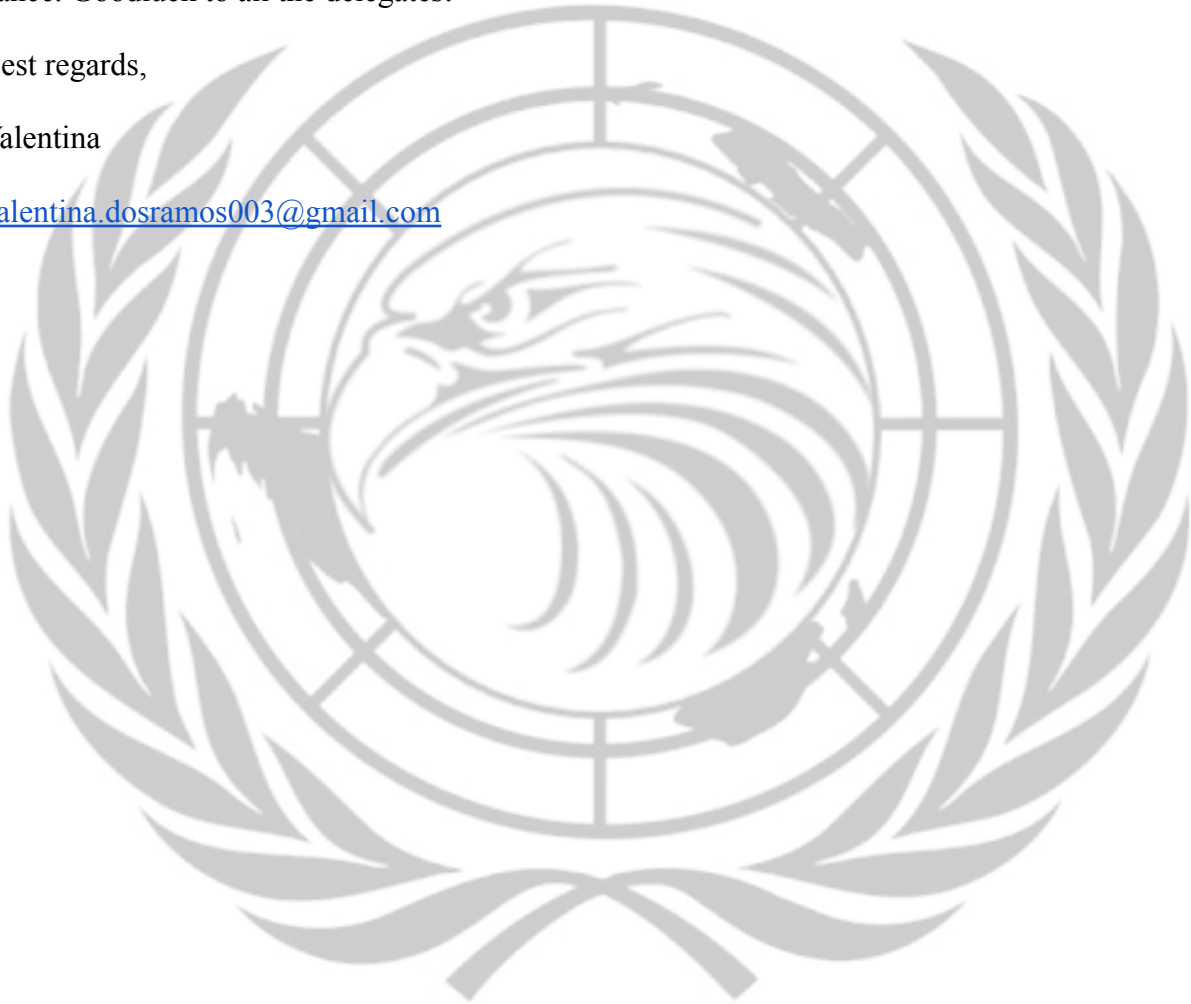
Greetings Delegates!

My name is Valentina Dos Ramos and I am the director of Haiti's Crisis for TAEMUN IX. I am a junior at Edison High School and this is my second year in Model UN. Some extracurriculars I participate in are tennis, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), and dance. Goodluck to all the delegates!

Best regards,

Valentina

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Topic A: Restabilizing Haiti's Government

Background:

Haiti is an independent Caribbean country that shares its island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. Originally, the entirety of Hispaniola was a colony of Spain; however, after almost three centuries of absolute rule, the Spanish surrendered the western third of Hispaniola in 1697 to the growing French presence. Subsequently, French colonists began exploiting the land by creating a social and economic structure dependent on sugarcane plantations and the prevalent slave population. Haiti, at the time called Saint-Domingue, became France's most prosperous colony which suggests why there was such hostility over the Haitian population's insurrections starting in 1791. Through a little more than a decade of efforts to become autonomous from France, Saint-Domingue became the independent nation of Haiti on January 1, 1804.



From the start of their independence, Haiti dealt with political instability and overtime more issues arose. Some of those issues included frequent natural disasters, the radicalization of Haiti's emperor Dessalines, social unrest as a result of the hierarchy entrenched by the French, and interference from foreign nations. Throughout the coming centuries, Haiti would find difficulty separating from a labor-reliant infrastructure and eliminating political corruption.

Current Situation:

Haiti's political situation from 1957 to 1986 was run by François Duvalier and subsequently, by his son Jean-Claude Duvalier. Together, the two led Haiti into deep-rooted



corruption, vast human rights abuse, and federal despotism.

Contrary to popular prediction, the Haitian people adored the Duvaliers. The father-son reign lasted longer than any other in Haitian history because a culture of fear, violence, and repression became so far entrenched in Haitian society that civilians were normalized to, and thus accepted it.

Following the Duvalier dynasty, Jean-Bertrand Aristide took control of Haiti in 1990 through the country's first democratic election. That being said, the following year, Aristide was removed from power after his involvement in government corruption was discovered by the Haitian people. Consequently, the US, a major proponent of democracy, became involved in Haitian politics and threatened to intervene if Aristide's term did not continue. The Haitian people yielded to the US's ultimatum which opened Haiti up to consecutive peaceful transfers of power in following elections.

Every Haitian president since has either been accused of or proven to part in political corruption. In 2017, Jovenel Moïse was elected president and added yet another leader who exacerbated Haiti's political situation and the country's downfall. Those who opposed Moïse accused him of restricting judicial power as a strategy to reserve all power for himself. By bolstering his autocratic influence, Moïse maintained power in Haiti despite citizens, and even gangs, calling for his removal from office. A pause in elections ensued which only worsened Haiti's damaged government. In an effort to prevent more resistance, Moïse supplied gang

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members, who he previously sought to inconvenience, with money and arms. On July 7th 2021, Moïse was assassinated during a civilian insurrection. Currently, prime minister Ariel Henry has control of the Haitian government. Ultimately, Haiti has been stripped of its claim to democracy after the country's ten senators', the country's last hope, terms have ended.

Past UN Actions:

For approximately the last twenty years, The UN has had a presence in Haiti to provide diplomatic and financial support. The UN security council also established a peacekeeping mission called *The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti* (MINUSTAH). The mission's original purpose was to restore the Haitian national police, however now it is also participating in reestablishing law and security. Despite the good intentions of this mission, the Haitian public are weary about the foreign aid thus adding resistance. The Haitian people only know the peacekeepers to be responsible for sexual abuse and the pervasive cholera outbreak- not the development of peace.

To combat the animosity, the UN has started a similar, yet better mission called *The United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti* (MINUJUSTAH), which aims to protect human rights and strengthen the judiciary and national police. Additionally, MINUJUSTAH strives to implement violence reduction projects and successfully increase the number of police by 10%. This being said, the Haitian people still blame the rise in sexual violence on the UN's involvement. Finally, the UN has established a third effort in Haiti called *The United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti* (BINUH). BINUH's mission is to inform the Haitian government on how to reestablish stability and security in addition to further protecting civilians from gang violence and human rights abuse.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the main obstacles preventing Haiti from practicing a functional and just governmental system?
2. What type of government best suits Haiti? What are the steps to achieving this political structure?
3. How can Haiti prevent the risk of corrupt leaders? What precautions can be set in place?

Useful Links:

- [Instability in Haiti](#)
- [Haiti's Troubled Path to Development](#)
- [Haiti: Recent Developments and U.S. Policy](#)
- [Papa Doc, a Ruthless Dictator, Kept the Haitians in Illiteracy and Dire Poverty](#)

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Topic B: Addressing Gang Violence

Background:

In tandem with Haiti's political instability, gangs also overwhelm the country. Haiti has a



pernicious history of leaders governing the country through despotism, whether it be France or any of the “elected” presidents. Similarly, Haiti's history is littered with leaders using paramilitary and gang cooperation to achieve

power. Needless to say, much of Haiti's political history- good or bad- is found to be at the hands of gangs.

Resultantly, those aspiring to rule Haiti created a culture of violence, corruption, and fear that now runs the country, perhaps more rampantly than any leader ever did. Birthed from and bolstered by this culture, the presence of gangs has only intensified. Strong institutions have never been implemented in Haiti with leaders willing to serve gangs in order to maintain power. To that effect, there is no functioning structure to protect Haiti from the expansion of gang presence. Furthermore, Haiti's gangs have learned to take advantage of the little economic

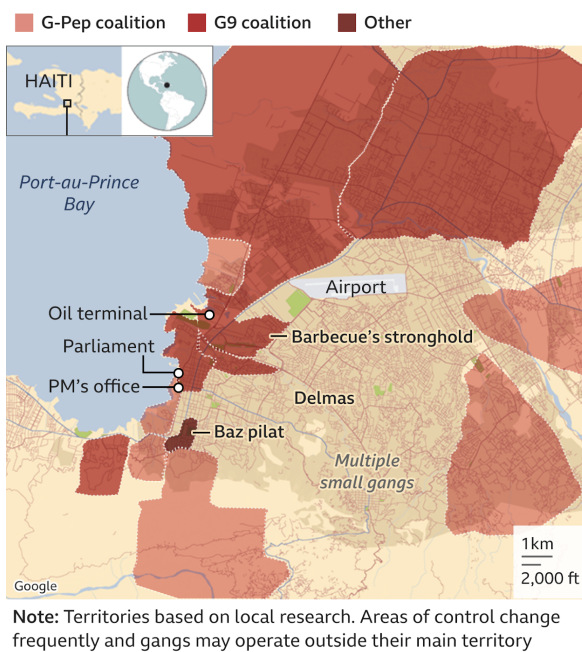


or political backbone, frequent natural disasters, and entrenched culture of fear to become exponentially more pervasive.

Current Situation:

With at least two hundred gangs, gangs have taken control of much of Haiti including the

Main gang territories in Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas



capital Port au Prince. Experts estimated that about 60% of Port au Prince is controlled by ruthless gangs. The two most prevalent gangs are the G9, created by a former police officer Jimmy Chérizier and boasts strong police ties, and GPèp la, led by Gabriel Jean Pierre and is connected with many Haitian businesses. All Haitian gangs in combination have managed to reach every aspect of Haitian society to create a unanimous presence.

A popular gang practice is to limit transportation across territories, which is detrimental to people who are looking for jobs or resources in a different part of the country. Another example of common gang leverage is how they limit access to medical care and education to repress non-affiliated civilians. Most pressingly, the powerful gangs like to strengthen fear amongst Haitians by kidnapping, murdering, and sexually exploiting them. Sexual violence has been a huge aspect in the lives of Haitians. According to UN reports from January 2023 to March 2023, at least 652 women and girls were victims of collective rape. This sexual violence crisis makes it nearly impossible for women and children to

safely leave their homes to get food, water, or any other necessities. As an emphasis to the point of gang domination's severity in Haiti: gangs often elect to perform rape in front of the victim's family or in public places to assert their dominance.

Although women and girls are the main targets of sexual violence, LGBTQ persons and elderly people have also been affected by the brutality of the gangs. LGBTQ persons have managed to report that gangs like to rape them in order to "fix" their homosexuality.

In addition to widespread sexual violence at the hands of gangs, kidnapping and according pressure for families to pay ransoms often terrorize Haitian civilians. This situation has become so acute in Haiti that families have begun methodizing ways to mollify gangs so as to hold onto any kind of finances. One reported method is where families encourage their daughters to create relationships with gang members and act as sexual objects to create no position for a gang to target the family of the daughter. In their fashion, gangs have learned to use this particular effort by Haitian civilians to deflect gang pressure by using it to their advantage. Now, these kinds of arrangements are used to leverage benefits like food, water, and protection from other gangs over families.

In addition to sexual violence, there is also an abundance of drug and weapons trafficking within gangs. Haiti is a transit country which means cocaine, cannabis, heroin, and more are stored and then distributed to other countries via boat or plane from Haiti. Partly at the fault of the weak police force, Haiti is in a difficult position when it comes to combating drug traffickers. Controlling drugs is so dysfunctional in Haiti that customs officials estimated that they manage to interdict less than 10% of the drugs traveling through the country.

Past UN Actions:

In an effort to eliminate Haitian gangs, UN interventions have been attempted. In October of 2022, the UN approved an idea proposed by the United States and Mexico to establish an international sanction against gang leaders along with the people who supply and finance Haitian gangs. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has also helped with the manipulation of drugs by sanctioning a former Haiti customs director after discovering his participation in arms trafficking. Other countries like Kenya considered sending 1,000 police in hopes to strengthen the growing Haiti national police force. However, there has been sparse action against gang violence in Haiti because of how complex and deeply rooted it is in Haiti's crisis.

Questions to Consider:

1. How are Haitian gangs attracting members? Could eliminating the increase of gang members be a start to decreasing gang power?
2. How can other countries get more involved in the gang issue?
3. What resources is Haiti missing and how could different resources be helpful in decreasing gang violence?

Useful Links:

- [Haiti Is on the Brink of State Failure](#)
- [Haiti in 2023: Political abyss and vicious gangs](#)
- [Sexual violence in Port-au-Prince: A weapon used by gangs to instill fear](#)

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