

Haiti in Crisis: What Role for a Multinational Security Support Mission?

Updated June 7, 2024

The political and security situation in Haiti has deteriorated since the start of 2024; more than 2,500 people were killed or injured by gang violence between January and March 2024. The gangs—some of which are aligned with political elites—amassed control over territory and illicit markets amid the [deeply unpopular](#) government of former Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who [assumed office](#) following the July 2021 assassination of then-President Jovenel Moïse. Henry resigned on [April 25](#) after the formation of a [Transitional Presidential Council](#) (TPC).

The TPC, which consists of a cross-section of [Haitian stakeholders](#) selected with [U.S.](#) and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) backing, is to govern Haiti, alongside recently selected Prime Minister [Garry Conille](#), until elections can be convened—and a president inaugurated—by February 2026. The TPC formation took place as a United Nations (U.N.)-authorized, Kenya-led [multinational security support mission](#) (MSS) prepares to deploy to Haiti.

The Biden Administration has [pledged support](#) for the MSS and asked other countries to contribute funding or forces. Some Members of Congress have expressed concerns about the crisis in Haiti and its potential to [destabilize](#) the Caribbean and fuel irregular migration. Some Members [support the MSS](#) concept; others assert there has not been [adequate planning](#) for the mission and have [withheld some requested MSS funds](#).

Origins of the Multinational Security Support Mission

In October 2022, then-Prime Minister Henry [requested](#) the deployment of an international force to help the Haitian National Police (HNP) quell insecurity and facilitate humanitarian aid. Canada, Brazil, and other Western Hemisphere countries that participated in the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH; 2004-2017) declined U.S. requests to lead such a force. MINUSTAH remains controversial in Haiti due to alleged [sexual abuse](#) by some of its forces and its inadvertent [introduction of cholera](#) into the country.

In July 2023, Kenya announced it would [consider](#) leading a multinational force in Haiti and sending 1,000 police, if authorized by the U.N. Security Council (UNSC). Whereas [U.S.](#) and [CARICOM](#) officials praised Kenya, some analysts [questioned](#) the human rights record of the Kenyan police and whether they

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

IN12331

could overcome language and cultural barriers. Others [oppose](#) any international security force, arguing that previous foreign interventions in Haiti have failed.

In October 2023, the UNSC adopted [Resolution 2699](#) to authorize a non-U.N.-conducted multinational force, financed by voluntary contributions, to provide security for critical infrastructure and operational support to the HNP. The resolution called on member states to contribute personnel, equipment, and financial and logistical support.

Current Status

In January 2024, Kenya's High Court blocked the government from deploying police officers to Haiti without a bilateral security agreement, amid debate about the deployment's [constitutionality](#). Kenya and Haiti signed [a reciprocal agreement](#) on March 1, intended to satisfy that requirement, but Kenya decided to [delay deployment](#) until a new Haitian government took power.

[Some countries](#) were initially willing to support the MSS, and several more have pledged financial and personnel contributions since February 2024 conferences in [Brazil](#) and [Guyana](#). Commitments include [2,000 soldiers from Benin](#); additional forces from the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, and Chad; a [\\$59 million](#) pledge from Canada; and at least [\\$21 million](#) in donations from other countries.

MSS leaders have developed an operational plan and created an oversight mechanism to monitor the mission's conduct. Participating personnel are to be subject to U.N. vetting, and those receiving U.S. support are to complete U.S. human rights vetting pursuant to the Leahy Laws ([22 U.S.C. §2378d](#) and [10 U.S.C. §362](#)); as of [April 2024](#), some 400 Kenyans and 250 Jamaicans had been vetted. Some human rights experts have [advocated](#) additional training and mechanisms to prevent and punish human rights violations. [Others](#) have raised concerns about a perceived lack of transparency on the MSS's rules of engagement.

Some [observers](#) express concerns about how complex the security situation in Haiti has become since authorization of the MSS, saying the mission may need to be strengthened. The mission's partner, the HNP, is weak and, at times, [allegedly complicit](#) with criminal groups. In early May, U.S. Southern Command transported [civilian contractors](#) to Haiti to build the MSS's living quarters. The official deployment date has not been announced, although some observers [expected](#) the MSS to begin deploying in [late May](#).

U.S. Funding and Congressional Consideration

To date, the United States has pledged at least \$380 million to support the MSS. In October 2023, Secretary of State Antony Blinken [announced](#) \$100 million in foreign assistance for the MSS and \$100 million in Department of Defense (DOD) funds for enabling support; in March 2024, Blinken [announced](#) the DOD commitment had doubled to \$200 million. Additionally, via presidential drawdown authority ([22 U.S.C. §2318\(a\)\(2\)](#)), President Biden has authorized the transfer of at least \$70 million in defense articles and services from U.S. stocks to Haiti—[\\$10 million](#) in March and [\\$60 million](#) in April. Haiti and/or Kenya also may receive additional DOD funding through other funding streams. U.S. support for the MSS is intended to complement assistance that has been provided to train and equip the HNP through bilateral U.S. programs and the multi-donor [U.N. Basket Fund](#).

The United States allocated [\\$230.9 million](#) to Haiti in FY2023, including \$45 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) assistance focused primarily on the HNP. The Administration is requesting [\\$356.7 million](#) in bilateral aid to Haiti in FY2025, including \$169 million in INCLE—\$100 million of which would support the MSS.

In addition to evaluating the Administration's FY2025 budget request, Congress may consider whether to provide funding for Haiti and the MSS and/or to shape how prior-year appropriations are used in Haiti. For example, some Members of Congress [reportedly](#) have placed a hold on roughly \$40 million in INCLE for MSS support.

Congress also may assess possible additional measures, should the crisis in Haiti deteriorate further. The Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47, Division F), does not specify a total funding level for Haiti but [directs](#) the Administration to comply with reporting requirements in H.Rept. 118-146 and S.Rept. 118-71, including reports to the Appropriations Committees on options to counter destabilization in Haiti.

Author Information

Karla I. Rios
Analyst in Latin American Affairs

Clare Ribando Seelke
Specialist in Latin American Affairs

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.