

# Urgent Civil Society Appeal for a Rights-Based International Response to the Crisis in Haiti

June 12, 2023

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As Haitian and international human rights and civil society organizations working in and on Haiti, we sound the alarm about the catastrophic human rights and humanitarian situation in the country and call on regional and international actors to mobilize in support of an urgent, rights-based response.

Such a response should be multi-faceted and explicitly seek to avoid the harms caused by past, abusive international interventions. An essential first step is to **stop propping up** the set of actors who created the crises facing the country, including those currently in power.

A new approach going forward should be respectful of Haitian sovereignty and make a meaningful contribution towards empowering the Haitian people on the path towards true democratic governance, investment in public safety and community resilience, restoration of the rule of law and security, an end to impunity for grave abuses, and ensure access to basic necessities to everyone in need.

The rights-based international response should include the following components:

## ***Support the Establishment of a Legitimate Transitional Government***

- Facilitating the establishment of a transitional government led by technocrats who would commit to not participating in future elections and who would work to create an environment that will allow for the organization of free, fair, and credible elections within a clearly defined timetable. This transitional government should first work to establish minimum security, adherence to fundamental human rights and the rule of law, and access to basic necessities for all Haitians.

## ***Support the Restoration of Security***

- Provide adequate technical security assistance to the National Police to restore basic security in the capital, Port-au-Prince, and the metropolitan area, as well as throughout the national territory. The form of this support may cover areas such as training, equipment, logistics, intelligence, tactical guidance and command, as will be determined by the newly established transitional government.
- Support independent human rights monitoring, including Haitian-led civilian oversight, and reporting on the conduct of the experts who are going to be called to support the Haitian police institution.
- Contribute to setting up and provide support to a credible independent vetting mechanism under the authority of the transitional authorities for the Haitian National Police, with the goal of identifying, removing, and referring to judicial authorities those police officers implicated in violent abuses, large-scale corruption, or support to abusive criminal groups.
- Contribute to the establishment of specialized programs to support community reconciliation and the disarmament and reintegration of people associated with violent criminal groups, with special attention paid to the trauma-informed support of children and young adults associated with such groups.

### ***Support Justice and Accountability***

- Provide technical assistance to the judicial system to build capacity in case management and the conduct of criminal investigations, including the prosecution of those involved in serious criminal activities such as killings, kidnappings, sexual violence and any other acts of violence, corruption and aiding criminal groups.
- Provide specific technical assistance in the fight against corruption with a view to carrying out emblematic trials against the perpetrators and co-perpetrators of financial crimes.
- Support for programs by the legitimate transitional government to improve prison conditions and reduce pretrial detention.
- To the full extent permitted by law, pursue accountability in every jurisdiction available to bring to justice those responsible for incidents of large-scale violence, corruption, and providing support to abusive criminal groups.

### ***Stopping Arms Flows***

- Encourage the adoption of strong measures, especially by the U.S. government, to stop the illicit flow and sale of weapons and ammunition to violent criminal groups operating in Haiti, including doing more to enforce U.S. law regarding arms sales and related shipments leaving U.S. jurisdiction, including the ports in Florida, support for strengthening the work of the police and port authorities in Haiti, and increasing rights-respecting sharing of information among regional governments to combat arms trafficking in the Caribbean.

### ***Supporting Haitian-Led Reparations Process***

- Encourage an explicit recognition from the UN, U.S., France, and Canada of their responsibility for past harms during previous international interventions in Haiti and make a public commitment to make deliberate efforts to ensure the failures and abuses of past interventions will not be repeated and to work towards the development of a Haitian-led reparations process (a guarantee of non-repetition is one of the five elements of reparation).

### ***Support the Haitian State in order to respond adequately to urgent humanitarian needs***

- Increase substantially and sustainably emergency humanitarian assistance to ensure that Haitians, especially those in the most vulnerable communities, have access to adequate food, clean water, sanitation, health care, education, and electricity. This assistance should be delivered with an eye towards Haitian capacity-building over the long term.
- Grant trauma-informed specialized health care, legal support, and psychosocial support for survivors of sexual violence, provided directly or through support to Haitian organizations.

### **Signatories:**

Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI)

Commission Episcopale Nationale Justice et Paix (CE-JILAP)

Ensemble Contre la Corruption (ECC)

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