

Port-au-Prince, Haiti, August 21, 2023

Open Letter by Haitian Civil Society Organizations and Defenders of Human Rights to Warn African Countries Against the Harms of an Illegitimate Foreign Intervention in Haiti Planned by Imperialist Nations

Dear African cousins and friends,

As Haitian civil society and human rights organizations focused on guaranteeing and promoting democracy, the defense of human rights, and security in Haiti, we are writing to you to sound the alarm against an international military deployment supported by imperialist countries: the United States, Canada, France and demanded by the illegitimate, corrupt, and repressive government of Ariel HENRY; it is these same actors who are responsible for the crises in Haiti. If the international community (the United States, Canada, and France) is serious about wanting to protect human rights in Haiti and help restore security there, it must first stop supporting puppet governments and give Haitians the necessary space to put in place a legitimate and competent transitional government. Otherwise, it will be another costly and foreign act of interference that fails to bring about sustained stability for Haitians and instead further cements the rule of a group of anti-democratic, exploitative actors.

The reasons for our refusal of an illegitimate foreign intervention in Haiti planned by imperialist nations are as follows:

The de facto regime is illegal, corrupt and complicit in human rights abuses

Haiti, which had forged a budding democracy out of a brutal, foreign-supported dictatorship in the 1990s, now has zero elected officials. Our **de facto** government is presiding over increasingly hellish conditions for most of the population. This crisis is the product of twelve years of power consolidation by actors who have deliberately dismantled Haiti's democratic and accountability mechanisms, promoted corruption, and empowered gangs to use violence against civilians with impunity. The **de facto** regime of Dr. Ariel HENRY is comprised of these same actors and has no legitimacy to govern. HENRY was appointed by extraconstitutional means by a President who had himself overstayed his term without the requisite parliamentary approval. His appointment had not been finalized at the time the President was assassinated. Instead, Dr. HENRY rose to power several days later through an announcement by the *Core Group*. The Haitian people opposed him in his role as **de facto** head of state, without checks and balances. Haitian people repeatedly took to the streets, despite dangerous conditions, to show that Dr. HENRY had no legitimacy in the view of the Haitian population. His regime responded with inappropriate force. **De facto** Prime Minister Dr. Ariel HENRY also faces serious allegations of complicity in the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse on July 07, 2021; and his regime enabled – and probably directly facilitated – the deterioration of the situation in Haiti. For example, while the international community focuses its efforts on supporting the Haitian police, there is evidence of widespread gang infiltration of the police and collusion with gang leaders such as Vitelhomme Innocent. The de facto regime does not represent Haitian interests, has no authority to govern, and is responsible for creating and sustaining the Haitian crisis. The **de facto** regime no longer has the authority to request intervention. Therefore, Dr. Ariel HENRY has neither the legitimacy to rule nor the legal

authority to request foreign intervention and should not be considered a credible partner for international peacekeeping efforts.

International military action by the United States, Canada, and France in collaboration with the de facto regime will only serve to deepen state capture by the actors who created Haiti's crisis and to immiserate the Haitian people

Foreign military action in partnership with the **de facto** regime, regardless of how narrowly targeted, will only entrench the **de facto** regime's power. This will perpetuate the patterns of state capture and impunity leading to profound misery and insecurity in Haiti and reduce space for Haitian civil society and pro-democracy organizers, making it more difficult for the Haitian people to reclaim our rights and democracy. We do not believe that sustained security for the Haitian people can be achieved along this path. Foreign interventions in Haiti also already have a consistent track record of harming civilians with no accountability - introducing cholera, injuring civilians, whilst destroying property in military operations, perpetrating acts of sexual exploitation and abuse and leaving victims and the resulting children without resources or recourse, by misdirecting assistance and delivering faulty infrastructure. A legitimate government has some possibility of acting to direct aid flows appropriately and ensuring adequate safeguards. This **de facto** government characterized by practices of corruption and popular massacres, which depends on the international community to keep it in power, has never shown any interest aimed at truly establishing a climate of security in Haiti or representing the best interests of the Haitian people. The troubling record of improper use of force by state actors and an ongoing cholera outbreak in Kenya, which is the current contender for leading an intervention, makes these concerns especially pressing.

The will of the international community (the United States, Canada, and France) to help Haiti cannot justify acting in a way that is knowingly harmful; true solidarity requires international actors to start by desisting from propping up the actors responsible for Haiti's crisis

International support (from the United States, Canada, and France) for the **de facto** government at the expense of the sovereignty and human rights of the Haitian people is standing in the way of Haitians finding a political compromise that can start a transition towards democracy and security. So long as the **de facto** regime is considered an indispensable actor by the international community (the United States, Canada, and France), the regime wields an effective veto in favor of self-dealing policies that created Haiti's crisis in the first place. This must stop so that Haitians themselves can choose leaders and a transitional approach with popular legitimacy. Only then can there be meaningful and effective support from the international community, which we will welcome where it comes from the recognition of Haitians as sovereign holders of human rights.

We warn our African cousins and friends not to join in the ploys of imperialist countries (the United States, Canada, and France) for breadcrumbs, but rather to show solidarity with the Haitian people. And at the same time, we urge all actors to recognize the rights of the Haitian

people to security, dignity, and self-determination. It follows from these fundamental human rights principles that foreign military intervention at the behest and for the benefit of an illegitimate, corrupt, and repressive de facto regime is perverse and liable to cause great harm. It will certainly not bring long-term stability to Haiti.

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