



Protection Now for the People of Haiti: Statement on the Situation in Port-au-Prince

18 October 2022

In July 2022, the Security Council noted “with deep concern the protracted and deteriorating political, economic, security, human rights, humanitarian and food security crises in Haiti” as part of Resolution 2645. Amidst worsening violence, deprivation and abuse experienced by communities across the country since early September, the Security Council once again met to discuss the situation yesterday. The meeting comes on the heels of [a new report](#) published by the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that documents in horrifying detail the severity and frequency of the sexual violence being perpetrated by the armed gangs.

The deteriorating security crisis in Haiti has also led to major fuel and food shortages and unrest. The effects of continuous armed gang violence have resulted in the closure of already limited commercial activities and basic services, including health clinics and schools. The Government announcement made on 12 September to end fuel subsidies and increase funding for social programs has also contributed to the escalation of mass protests and has the potential to crash the already low purchasing power of the large majority of Haitians.

In September only, at least 191 people were killed or injured due to violence during protests, most of them due to excessive force used by police to restore order. In addition, gangs have killed more than 196 persons, subjected dozens of women and girls to collective rape, and caused the forced displacement of over 22,000 people. Overstretched by multiple security challenges and weakened by a lack of resources and professional skills, the police have been unable to restore public order. At least 27 offices and warehouses run by humanitarian organizations have been vandalized and ransacked across the country following calls by influential public figures via local radio stations.

This situation is causing particular harm to population groups already living under vulnerable conditions. Pregnant women and new-born babies are dying from lack of healthcare. Marginalized communities are living in dire sanitary conditions, which are a breeding ground for the spread of infectious diseases. In this context, the government has recently declared a cholera outbreak in Port-au-Prince, mainly in gang-controlled areas where access to basic services is extremely limited. The national prison was also hit. Last week alone, 26 inmates died from atrocious prison conditions and disease, including 9 due to cholera.

Despite this, government authorities, enmeshed in protracted political talks with opposition parties, have not shown the determination needed to address the social and economic demands of the local population. Due to insecurity and lack of fuel in a country where most services depend on generators to operate, humanitarian actors have been compelled to reduce their programming to lifesaving activities only.

The Global Protection Cluster is deeply concerned about the deterioration of the humanitarian and protection situation in Haiti, where access to basic services and the capacity of humanitarian organisations to intervene were seriously challenged, even before this latest phase of violence and paralysis.

It reiterates the call made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in May for the Haitian authorities, with the support of the international community, to promptly restore the rule of law and protect people from armed violence.



Alongside meaningful political solutions, a scaled-up protection response is urgently required. This response must be grounded in:

- Strengthened data collection mechanisms to better inform evidence-based protection programming in areas hosting groups in vulnerable situations, including people living in gang-controlled areas, and internally displaced persons.
- Enhanced support for community-based protection approaches that enable local protection leaders and organizations, including women's rights groups, to monitor, assess and respond to protection risks and violations, including in relation to Gender-Based Violence, across affected communities.
- Strengthened engagement and negotiations with influential actors to enable meaningful access to protection and humanitarian assistance for communities living under siege-like conditions.
- Reinforced capacity of the protection sector with a particular focus on monitoring and strengthening engagement with Haitian national authorities, civil society and other stakeholders to strengthen the rule of law and to promote respect for human rights.
- Urgent diplomatic efforts by UN Member States, including through regional mechanisms and the Security Council.
- Urgent and fully funded humanitarian response that will support the rights, safety, resilience and protection of community members, including through emergency food assistance, restoration of livelihoods, increasing access to water, sanitation and hygiene, emergency health services and education.

For further information, please contact Samuel Cheung, Global Protection Cluster Coordinator, at gpc@unhcr.org.

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) is a network of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations and United Nations (UN) agencies, engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises including armed conflict, climate change related and natural disaster. The GPC unites members, partners and communities working on the full gamut of protection activities, including in four specialized Areas of Responsibility (AoRs): Child Protection (CP), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Housing, Land and Property (HLP) and Mine Action (MA). Additional information available here: <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/>

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