

## **To What Extent Can U.S. and Caribbean-Led Interventions Stabilize Haiti While Ensuring Its Long-Term Sovereignty and Development?**

Kush K. Dave

Youth In Policy Journal of Policy Analysis Submission: Summer 2025

Word Count: 5267

Haiti remains one of the most unstable nations of the Western Hemisphere. Armed groups currently control over 80% of its capital, Port Au Prince, heightening an already fragile security situation (Haiti, 2024). The 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse intensified the country's political crisis, creating a vacuum in power that continued to undermine state institutions and leave governance in disarray. Corruption, mismanagement of the economy, and leadership failures have propelled instability, preventing Haiti from developing strong institutions capable of addressing its mounting problems. Despite receiving billions of dollars of aid, especially after the 2010 earthquake, more than 60% of Haiti's population continues to live below the poverty line, with limited access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities (*Country Profile: Haiti*, 2024). The country's economic troubles are also reflected by its GDP per capita, which stands at about \$1,700, one of the lowest in the region, a sign of widespread poverty and lack of viable economic opportunities (World Bank, 2023). The persistence of extreme poverty and insecurity highlights the failure of past foreign interventions, which have often prioritized short-term stabilization over long-term development and sovereignty. As Haiti continues to deal with ongoing crises, the question arises: to what extent can U.S. and Caribbean-led interventions stabilize Haiti while ensuring its long-term sovereignty and development? This study seeks to examine the historical impact of foreign

involvement, evaluating both its successes and failures to determine whether a more sustainable, sovereignty-centered approach is possible, investigating the issue through economic, geopolitical, security, and social lenses. Furthermore, it explores alternative regional approaches that empower Haiti to establish resilient institutions, strengthen its economy, and reduce reliance on external assistance.

## Historical Context

Haiti's political instability can be traced back to its founding as the first independent Black republic in 1804. The Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) successfully ended French colonial rule and slavery but left the new nation in a precarious position. In retaliation for its independence, France and other global powers refused to recognize Haiti, fearing it would inspire slave revolts in their own territories. World powers, fearing the spread of slave uprisings, ostracized Haiti; the United States did not recognize it until 1862 (Office of the Historian, 2023). In 1825, France required a payment of 150 million francs—today worth between \$20 and \$30 billion—to recognize Haitian independence, saddling the country with debt that thwarted development for more than a century (Rosalsky, 2021). This was mainly due to the fact that, to meet these payments, Haiti had to take high-interest loans from French banks, which kept the country in a cycle of debt for more than a century, severely limiting its economic development. (College de France, 2024). Post-independence, Haiti also faced internal divisions. The nation split into the northern Kingdom of Haiti under Henri Christophe and the southern Republic of Haiti led by Alexandre Pétion. (Daut, 2020). Christophe's authoritarian rule contrasted with Pétion's land distribution to small farmers, weakening central authority but promoting an agrarian society. Even after reunification under Jean-Pierre Boyer in 1820, Haiti remained fragile. Boyer, who ruled for 25 years, annexed Santo Domingo (now the Dominican Republic) in 1822, but his oppressive policies sparked resistance, leading to the Dominican Republic's independence in 1844 (Zapata, 2019). His downfall also began an era of extreme political instability with frequent coups and temporary, short-lived governments (MacLeod & Lawless, 2023).

Foreign influence and economic control intensified Haiti's instability. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, European powers, particularly Germany and France, dominated Haiti's economy. German merchants, who controlled significant portions of Haiti's trade, armed political factions to protect their interests, while France maintained financial leverage through its banking institutions. Concerned about European influence in the Caribbean, the United States began asserting control over Haiti's finances. In 1910, American banks took over Haiti's National Bank, effectively controlling the country's treasury and customs revenues (Hudson, 2024). By 1915, Haiti's political volatility reached a breaking point with the assassination of President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam. His execution of 167 political prisoners led to mass uprisings, and he was killed by a mob in retaliation.

The U.S. military occupation from 1915 to 1934, initiated under President Woodrow Wilson following the assassination of the Haitian president, sought to restore order and maintain political and economic stability in the Caribbean (Office of the Historian, 2023). Under the pretext of preventing European influence in the Western Hemisphere, the occupation

strengthened U.S. control over Haiti's financial institutions, restricted Haitian sovereignty, and restructured its economy to favor American interests. While U.S. officials justified their presence as a means of further developing Haiti's infrastructure and centralizing governance, the occupation was met with Haitian resistance, most notably the Cacos Rebellion, a peasant uprising against U.S. military rule. During this time, the U.S. controlled Haiti's finances, implemented forced labor policies, and rewrote the Haitian Constitution in 1918 to allow foreign land ownership, which had been previously banned. (Chapman, 1927). The withdrawal in 1934 left behind a heavily militarized state that future Haitian leaders, including the Duvalier dictatorship, would exploit to consolidate power. François "Papa Doc" Duvalier ruled from 1957 to 1971, establishing a dictatorship backed by the paramilitary Tonton Macoutes, responsible for an estimated 60,000 deaths (Edwidge Danticat, 2013). He declared himself "President for Life" and maintained power through repression. His son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, took over in 1971, continuing authoritarian rule while allowing some economic liberalization. Foreign investment increased, but corruption was rampant, with wealth concentrated among elites while most Haitians remained in poverty (*Country Profile: Haiti*, 2024). Extravagant personal spending and allegations of embezzling millions of dollars further weakened Haiti's economy.

Fast forward to present day, and following the assassination in 2021, the country hasn't even had a presidential election in two years. Haiti's continuously heightening crisis is driven mainly by the unchecked expansion of armed territorial gangs, all of which now exert their control over critical infrastructure, including major roadways, ports, and even fuel distribution centers. Their dominance has severely restricted mobility, forcing businesses to shut down and creating localized economic collapses. The International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that in September of 2022, gangs blocked off ports in Port-au-Prince, triggering shortages of fuel, clean water, and food, thereby only worsening the already dire humanitarian situation. (Crisis Group, 2025). The Haitian National Police (HNP), comprising approximately 9,000 officers for a population exceeding 11 million, is overwhelmed and under-resourced. This disparity hampers their ability to effectively combat gang violence, leading to increased insecurity (Sanon, 2024). The judiciary's paralysis further enables gang rule, as courts remain largely nonfunctional. Judges and prosecutors face constant threats, leading to suspended legal proceedings and a cycle of impunity that emboldens gangs. The overall deteriorating security situation across the nation has led to mass displacement, with over 1 million people forced to flee their homes due to gang violence. These individuals often seek refuge in makeshift camps lacking essential services, while others risk perilous journeys to escape the country, facing threats such as human trafficking or dangerous sea crossings (Lederer, 2025). As Haiti's crisis heightens, the role of regional organizations like the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of American States (OAS) in facilitating stability is under scrutiny. While past international interventions have struggled to effect lasting change, some experts advocate for a regionally led, sovereignty-focused approach to restore governance and security on the island.

The United Nations-backed Kenyan-led Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission aims to restore stability in Haiti by addressing the widespread gang violence and political instability that have plagued the nation since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021. The mission, authorized by the UN Security Council in October 2023, represents a significant intervention effort by the international community. The primary objectives of this mission are to dismantle the influence of armed gangs, restore public safety, and create the conditions necessary for political and economic recovery. (Vote et al., 2024) However, despite its

ambitious goals, the MSS mission has faced significant logistical and operational challenges, raising concerns about its ability to achieve long-term stability in Haiti while safeguarding the country's sovereignty. One of the major hurdles facing the MSS mission is the overwhelming control exerted by gangs in Haiti, particularly in the capital, Port-au-Prince. The MSS mission is expected to fill the military power gap, but its deployment has been hindered by logistical and funding issues. Funding shortfalls have severely hampered the procurement of essential equipment, limiting the mission's operational capacity. In late February 2025, UN Secretary-General António Guterres recommended establishing a UN-funded logistics support office to back the Kenyan-led MSS mission, emphasizing that the mission remains under-resourced, with only 1,000 personnel deployed out of the 2,500 needed and insufficient funding to sustain operations (*IPi Global Observatory*, 2025). The Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in Haiti has struggled to become operational due to a lack of necessary financial resources, significantly hindering efforts to curb gang violence in the country (Blaise et al., 2025). However, in 2018 a major setback occurred when the United States, initially a strong supporter of the mission, froze over \$13 million in funding allocated for the United Nations-backed MSS mission under the Trump Administration. This decision was part of a broader 90-day pause on foreign aid implemented by the newly appointed president, affecting multiple international assistance programs, including security efforts in Haiti (Nichols, 2025). These financial constraints have significantly limited the mission's capacity to scale up its physical presence and effectively address the security situation on the ground. Beyond financial limitations, there are operational challenges tied to the structure of the mission itself. Kenya, the leading country in the MSS coalition, has faced internal legal and political obstacles in deploying its forces. The Kenyan High Court initially blocked the deployment, questioning the constitutional basis for sending police forces abroad (Opala et al., 2024). Additionally, concerns about the effectiveness of a primarily police-based mission rather than a military force raise questions about whether the MSS can adequately combat well-armed gangs that operate with impunity. The challenges of deploying forces in an unfamiliar environment, where gang members often outgun law enforcement, just add the limitations of this current approach.

### **Economic Considerations**

A sustainable economic strategy is essential for stabilizing Haiti while ensuring its long-term sovereignty and development. Again, historically, international aid has played a crucial role in Haiti's economy, yet much of it has been mismanaged or directed toward short-term relief rather than long-term economic sustainability. For instance, the 2010 Earthquake aid failed to rebuild infrastructure due to corruption within the Haitian government, as well as misallocation and a lack of financial coordination (Ramachandran & Walz, 2012). Instead of fostering economic independence, these aid flows have often reinforced dependency, with foreign NGOs taking over essential government functions while sidelining Haitian institutions (UNU-WIDER, 2014). Future interventions must shift from humanitarian assistance toward sustainable economic development, prioritizing long-term investments in infrastructure, education, and industry to create a self-sufficient economy.

One of Haiti's most significant economic vulnerabilities is its heavy reliance on remittances, which account for nearly 24% of its GDP (*World Bank Open Data*, 2017). While remittances provide a crucial source of income for millions of Haitians, they do not contribute to domestic job creation or industrial development. Many Haitians rely on family members abroad

to cover essential expenses, leaving the country's economy largely dependent on external financial flows (Prophete, 2022). To reduce this reliance, interventions must focus on fostering domestic entrepreneurship, improving access to credit for small businesses, and investing in sectors that can generate stable employment, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. Haiti's agriculture sector for example, which employs about 50% of the current workforce, has suffered from underdevelopment and competition with subsidized foreign imports, making it difficult for local farmers to compete in the market. Policies that support agricultural revitalization through subsidies, infrastructure investment, and fair trade agreements can strengthen Haiti's food security and create sustainable employment opportunities.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) has been another major factor in Haiti's economy, but historically, it has often led to economic exploitation. Large-scale foreign investments in mining and agriculture have frequently resulted in the extraction of resources with minimal benefits for Haitian workers and communities. For instance, foreign-owned textile factories operating in Haiti's free-trade zones pay some of the lowest wages in the region while generating significant profits for international corporations. (US Department of State, 2024) To ensure that foreign investment contributes to long-term economic growth rather than perpetuating inequality, the government of -Haiti must implement stronger labor protections, environmental regulations, and policies that require foreign companies to reinvest a portion of their profits into local development. Strengthening domestic institutions that regulate trade and investment is essential to prevent exploitative economic practices and maintain sovereignty over national natural and capital resources.

Infrastructure development is the last critical aspect of Haiti's economic recovery. Poor road networks, unreliable electricity, and limited access to clean water hinder business growth and discourage investment. The World Economic Forum ranks Haiti among the lowest globally in infrastructure quality, ranking 136 out of 137 countries (World Economic Forum, 2018). Future interventions must focus on public-private partnerships to rebuild key infrastructure projects while ensuring that Haitian-led initiatives drive the decision-making process. Ultimately, economic solutions must align with Haiti's long-term development by fostering self-reliance rather than reinforcing dependency. This requires a shift from aid-driven relief efforts to strategic investments in local industries, infrastructure, and governance.

## **Security Considerations**

Haiti's security crisis is one of the biggest obstacles to stability, with weak law enforcement, rampant gang violence, and a history of ineffective foreign interventions. The country's inability to maintain internal security has led to recurring cycles of foreign military involvement, often without long-term solutions. A sustainable approach to Haiti's security must prioritize rebuilding its national police force, preventing foreign forces from overstaying their mandate, and developing long-term strategies that ensure stability without military occupation.

One of the primary security challenges is the weakness of Haiti's National Police (PNH). Decades of political instability, underfunding, and corruption have left the force ill-equipped to combat rising gang violence. Political instability, underfunding, and corruption have left the PNH under-resourced and ineffective in combating the rising power of gangs. With approximately 9,000 police officers for a population of over 11 million, Haiti's officer-to-citizen

ratio falls well below international standards, allowing criminal organizations to operate with impunity (Security Council Report, 2024). This deficiency in law enforcement has contributed to the unchecked expansion of gangs, which now control over 80% of Port-au-Prince, as aforementioned. Efforts to rebuild the PNH must focus on increasing recruitment, improving training programs, and addressing widespread corruption within the force that persists within the country. Many officers lack basic equipment, and police stations are frequently targeted by gangs, further undermining operational effectiveness (Blaise et al., 2025). While international partners have pledged assistance, previous interventions have failed to create lasting improvements in law enforcement, a common theme. Instead of short-term training missions, Haiti requires sustained investment in policing infrastructure, forensic capabilities, and intelligence-sharing mechanisms that enable long-term crime prevention (Maingot et al., 2013). Strengthening Haiti's judicial institutions alongside law enforcement will also be essential to ensuring that arrests lead to effective prosecutions rather than arbitrary detentions that further diminish public trust.

Haiti has a long history of foreign interventions that, rather than providing lasting security, have often extended beyond their original mandates with negative consequences. This poses significant security concerns. For instance, the U.S. occupation (1915–1934) was initially framed as a stabilizing mission but ultimately undermined Haiti's sovereignty and left behind an economic structure that reinforced dependency. Similarly, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which was deployed from 2004 to 2017, became infamous for its role in introducing cholera and for allegations of human rights abuses, including sexual violence committed by peacekeepers (Ivers & Guillaume, 2017).

The current Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission, led by Kenya and backed by the United Nations, while improving upon some of these concerns, still faces similar risks (UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2024). Without a well-defined timeline and mechanisms for transferring security responsibilities to Haitian leadership, the MSS mission could become another long-term foreign presence, fostering local resentment and deepening Haiti's dependence on external actors. To avoid repeating past mistakes, foreign forces must work closely with Haitian authorities from the outset, ensuring that training efforts are Haitian-led and that local officials retain control over security policy decisions.

Ultimately, foreign interventions in Haiti have historically prioritized short-term security over long-term institution-building. Breaking this cycle requires shifting the focus from external military deployments to investments in law enforcement capacity, judicial integrity, and community-led security initiatives. Without these reforms, Haiti risks remaining in a perpetual state of crisis, where international forces repeatedly step in without addressing the root causes of instability. Moving forward, security assistance must be structured in a way that strengthens Haitian sovereignty, ensuring that law enforcement and governance institutions are resilient enough to maintain long-term stability without the need for recurring foreign intervention.

## **Political Considerations**

Next, the political considerations of the Haitian foreign intervention debate mainly revolve around the balance between need for intervention and balancing state sovereignty in Haiti. While external actors have repeatedly stepped in to stabilize crises, their involvement has

often fueled resentment among Haitians, who view these interventions as threats to self-determination. As the country struggles to establish legitimate leadership, the role of regional organizations such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of American States (OAS) has become increasingly significant in shaping Haiti's political future.

One of the biggest political obstacles in Haiti is the absence of a legitimate, stable government. Since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021, Haiti has struggled to form a functioning administration capable of addressing the country's crises. Interim governments have lacked public support, and deep divisions between political factions have prevented meaningful progress (*BTI 2024 Haiti Country Report*, 2024). Corruption, weak institutions, and the influence of armed groups over political decision-making have further eroded trust in the government, making it difficult to implement reforms or negotiate with foreign partners (The Haitian Times, 2025). A major challenge is ensuring that future leadership transitions are not dictated by foreign powers but are instead rooted in Haitian-led political processes. Historically, external actors, particularly the United States and France, have played key roles in selecting and supporting Haitian leaders, often prioritizing candidates who align with their strategic interests rather than those with genuine local legitimacy (Maingot et al., 2013). Moving forward, international efforts must focus on strengthening democratic institutions rather than handpicking existing corrupt leaders. This includes supporting electoral reforms, ensuring transparent governance, and preventing external economic pressures from dictating Haiti's political future. Without credible leadership, foreign interventions risk becoming indefinite, further weakening Haiti's ability to govern itself.

Given Haiti's long history of problematic foreign interventions, regional organizations such as CARICOM and the OAS have a crucial role to play in mediating solutions that balance sovereignty with external support. CARICOM has positioned itself as a key diplomatic actor, facilitating negotiations between Haitian political factions and advocating for a Haitian-led political transition (Security Council Report, 2024). Unlike Western powers, CARICOM countries share cultural and historical ties with Haiti, making them more suitable mediators who can offer solutions without imposing neo-colonial influences. Similarly, the OAS has worked to engage Haiti in broader regional security and economic discussions, though its efforts have been criticized for being inconsistent and largely symbolic (The Haitian Times, 2025). While these organizations can provide diplomatic frameworks and political guidance, their influence is limited by Haiti's internal divisions and the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms. Moving forward, regional organizations must not only facilitate dialogue but also provide tangible support, such as technical assistance for elections, economic partnerships, and security cooperation that strengthens Haiti's self-sufficiency rather than reinforcing dependency on outside powers.

Haiti's political crisis presents a difficult balancing act between sovereignty and intervention. While foreign assistance is necessary to stabilize the country, past experiences have left many Haitians wary of external control. Establishing legitimate Haitian leadership is essential to ensuring that interventions do not become indefinite occupations, and regional organizations must play a stronger role in facilitating sustainable, locally driven solutions. The international community must recognize that long-term stability in Haiti cannot be imposed from the outside—it must come from within.

## Geopolitical Considerations

Haiti's instability has long drawn the attention of international actors, with the United States, the United Nations, and regional powers shaping its security, governance, and economic policies. While foreign involvement has often been framed as humanitarian or stabilizing, it has also contributed to long-term dependency, political interference, and weakened sovereignty. The United States has been one of the most influential foreign players in Haiti, with its policies shaped by security concerns, economic interests, and migration control. Since the early 20th century, U.S. interventions have ranged from direct military occupations—such as the 1915–1934 occupation—to economic aid and security assistance (Maingot et al., 2013). More recently, Washington has focused on governance reforms, disaster relief, and policing initiatives, including a \$100 million commitment to the current Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission (Congress, 2024).

The United Nations has played a central role in Haiti's security efforts, deploying multiple peacekeeping and stabilization missions over the past three decades. The most significant was the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which operated from 2004 to 2017. While MINUSTAH succeeded in reducing gang violence and facilitating elections, its legacy was overshadowed by controversy, including widespread allegations of sexual abuse and its role in introducing a cholera epidemic that killed over 10,000 people (UN News, 2025).

Haiti's crisis extends beyond its borders, affecting regional security and migration patterns. The ongoing instability, marked by political turmoil, gang violence, and economic collapse, has forced thousands of Haitians to flee their homeland in search of safety and stability. Many attempt to reach the United States, the Dominican Republic, and other Caribbean nations, often undertaking dangerous journeys by sea or crossing heavily monitored land borders (The Haitian Times, 2025). The influx of Haitian migrants has placed immense pressure on neighboring countries, which have struggled to manage the increasing number of arrivals (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

The Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, has been particularly affected. In response, Dominican authorities have ramped up border security and carried out mass deportations of Haitian migrants (Press, 2025). These actions have heightened tensions between the two nations, with allegations of human rights abuses and racial discrimination further complicating diplomatic relations (Amnesty International, 2024). The situation underscores the deep historical and political divisions between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, making cooperation difficult but necessary for regional stability (The Guardian, 2025).

Given the widespread impact of Haiti's crisis, a regional approach is essential. Organizations such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of American States (OAS) must take a more active role in addressing Haiti's challenges. This includes providing humanitarian aid, supporting governance reforms, and fostering economic development (United Nations, 2024). However, foreign interventions must be carefully structured to respect Haiti's sovereignty and avoid repeating past mistakes that have contributed to its instability (Rutenbar, 2024). Sustainable solutions require collaboration between Haiti's government, regional partners, and the international community. Without a comprehensive



strategy, the crisis will continue to fuel migration, strain regional resources, and heighten geopolitical tensions. Addressing Haiti's instability is not just a national issue but a regional and global priority that demands coordinated and long-term action.

## Social Considerations

Haiti's prolonged instability has severely impacted its social fabric, placing immense strain on civil society, education, healthcare, and overall social cohesion. Despite these challenges, Haitian grassroots movements continue to play a crucial role in mitigating crises and fostering resilience. While foreign interventions have often focused on security and political reforms, addressing Haiti's long-term stability requires strengthening social institutions and empowering local communities. In the absence of strong state institutions, civil society organizations and grassroots movements have taken the lead in addressing Haiti's social and economic crises. Local organizations have been instrumental in providing essential services, from education and healthcare to food security and economic development. Religious institutions, including Catholic and Protestant churches, as well as Vodou-based community networks, have played a critical role in mobilizing resources and advocating for human rights (Maingot et al., 2013). Women's organizations have also been at the forefront of social activism, particularly in addressing gender-based violence, which has surged amid growing lawlessness. Groups such as *Fanm Deside* and *KOFAVIV* provide support to survivors, conduct advocacy campaigns, and push for legal reforms to protect women's rights (The Haitian Times, 2025).

Haiti's social institutions have been critically undermined by ongoing instability, particularly in the education and healthcare sectors. As of 2023, it was estimated that nearly 30% of Haitian children were out of school due to gang violence, displacement, and economic hardship (UN News, 2025). Many schools have been forced to close, either because they are located in gang-controlled areas or due to a lack of funding to pay teachers. This disruption threatens the future of Haiti's youth, limiting their economic mobility and reducing the country's prospects for long-term development. Haiti's healthcare system is similarly fragile, with hospitals and clinics frequently struggling to provide even basic services. The cholera outbreak introduced by U.N. peacekeepers in 2010 remains a symbol of how international interventions have sometimes worsened rather than alleviated public health challenges (UN News, 2025). While international aid has helped keep hospitals running, foreign-led medical initiatives have often operated independently of Haitian institutions, limiting their long-term impact. Social cohesion has also deteriorated due to increased gang violence and forced displacement. As gangs tighten their control over key urban areas, families are being forced to flee, leaving behind their homes, businesses, and social networks. This displacement disrupts not only economic stability but also community structures that have historically provided informal social support (The Haitian Times, 2025). Without intervention, these patterns risk deepening social divisions and fueling further violence.

## Policy Recommendations/Conclusion

Haiti's prolonged instability requires a strategic, multidimensional approach that addresses security, governance, economic development, and social stability. Foreign interventions have historically focused on short-term stabilization rather than institution-building, reinforcing cycles of dependency instead of fostering Haitian-led solutions.

Moving forward, policies must prioritize long-term security reform, sustainable economic development, and the strengthening of political and social institutions.

Security sector reform must focus on expanding and professionalizing the Haitian National Police (PNH) by increasing recruitment, raising salaries to reduce corruption, and implementing rigorous vetting and training programs. The police force should grow to at least 20,000 officers over the next five years, with specialized units focused on anti-gang operations, intelligence gathering, and border security. Foreign-led security assistance, including the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission, must transition toward training and equipping Haitian forces rather than leading operations. To improve law enforcement effectiveness, community-based policing initiatives should be established, integrating local security committees that collaborate with police to reduce crime and increase public trust. Additionally, stricter border controls and customs enforcement must be implemented to curb the illegal flow of arms and drugs, with enhanced intelligence-sharing agreements between Haiti and neighboring countries.

Governance reforms should center on restoring political legitimacy through free and transparent elections. A transitional electoral council composed of civil society representatives and independent observers should oversee election logistics, ensuring security and broad voter participation. Haiti must decentralize governance by strengthening municipal governments and allocating at least 30% of national budgets to local authorities for infrastructure, public services, and security initiatives. Judicial system improvements must focus on increasing the number of trained judges, digitizing court records to improve case tracking, and expanding legal aid services. Anti-corruption measures should include an independent oversight body composed of legal NGOs such as the World Justice Project (WJP) with prosecutorial powers to investigate and penalize officials engaged in financial misconduct.

Economic development policies should shift from reliance on foreign aid to fostering self-sufficiency through investment in key sectors. The agricultural industry, which employs over half of Haiti's workforce, must be revitalized through government-backed microfinance programs for farmers, expansion of irrigation infrastructure, and the implementation of import tariffs to protect domestic food production. Haiti must move away from an overreliance on imported food by investing in modern farming techniques, seed banks, and cooperatives that enable small-scale farmers to compete in local and regional markets. Strengthening Haiti's agricultural sector would create jobs, reduce food insecurity, and lower dependency on foreign aid. Additionally, Special Economic Zones (SEZs) should be developed to attract investment in manufacturing, textiles, and agribusiness, with mandatory labor protections ensuring companies provide training, fair wages, and safe working conditions for Haitian workers. The garment industry, one of Haiti's largest employers, should be expanded by offering incentives for businesses to manufacture in Haiti while ensuring fair trade practices that benefit local laborers. Financial sector reforms should focus on expanding banking access through mobile banking programs and microcredit initiatives to encourage small business growth and entrepreneurship. The Haitian government should also implement tax incentives for Haitian diaspora investment, encouraging remittance funds to be directed toward business development rather than short-term consumption. Infrastructure investment must be prioritized to support economic expansion. Haiti's unreliable energy supply severely hinders business development and daily life, with only 45% of the population having access to electricity. Renewable energy initiatives should focus on

expanding solar and wind power capacity through tax incentives, public-private partnerships, and investment in off-grid energy solutions to reach rural communities. Road and transportation networks must also be rehabilitated to facilitate trade and market access for rural farmers and urban businesses. Expanding Haiti's ports and improving customs processing would reduce trade bottlenecks and increase economic efficiency.

Education reforms must ensure that all Haitian children have access to quality schooling. This requires a multi-pronged approach that includes reopening closed schools, increasing teacher salaries, and developing alternative education programs for displaced students. Many schools in Haiti remain shuttered due to gang violence, displacement, and lack of funding. A national school security initiative should be implemented to deploy police patrols around schools in high-crime areas, install emergency alert systems, and increase protections for teachers and students. Haiti's education system must also become more aligned with workforce needs. Vocational training programs should be expanded within secondary education, providing students with skills in construction, agriculture, and technology to increase employment opportunities. Technical schools focused on mechanics, carpentry, and electrical work can provide pathways for young people to enter the workforce rather than being drawn into gang activity due to lack of economic opportunities. Expanding digital learning access through online education initiatives and public-private partnerships can help bridge the gap in Haiti's education system, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Investment in healthcare is also crucial to Haiti's recovery. Many hospitals lack essential medical supplies, trained staff, and basic infrastructure. A national health infrastructure plan should aim to rehabilitate at least 50% of damaged hospitals by 2030, expand mobile clinics in underserved areas, and create partnerships with international medical institutions to train Haitian doctors and nurses. Establishing telemedicine programs, particularly for remote communities, would improve access to medical care. Additionally, Haiti must invest in public health education initiatives to prevent disease outbreaks and improve sanitation in urban slums.

Disaster preparedness and climate resilience must also be incorporated into Haiti's recovery strategy. The country remains highly vulnerable to hurricanes, earthquakes, and other natural disasters, yet response efforts have historically relied heavily on international NGOs rather than local leadership. A more sustainable approach would involve training community-based disaster response teams that can coordinate emergency evacuations, manage food distribution, and oversee rebuilding efforts.

Haiti's recovery depends on a coordinated approach that prioritizes security, governance, economic sustainability, and social stability. Foreign assistance should be structured to empower Haitian leadership, ensuring long-term self-sufficiency rather than continued dependency. Addressing these challenges through targeted investments, institutional reforms, and localized solutions will provide Haiti with a sustainable path toward stability and growth.

## Works Cited

- Amid Rising Violence in Haiti, Security Council Urges States to Bolster Funding for Security Support Mission, Transfer to UN Peacekeeping Mission | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.* (2024, November 20). Un.org. <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15908.doc.htm>
- Blaise, J. (2025, February 28). *Did US funding for Haiti's security mission stop? The Haitian Times breaks it down.* The Haitian Times. <https://haitiantimes.com/2025/02/28/us-aid-haiti-security-mission/>
- BTI 2024 *Haiti Country Report.* (2024a). BTI 2024. <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/HTI>
- BTI 2024 *Haiti Country Report.* (2024b). BTI 2024. <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/HTI>
- Chapman, C. E. (1927). The Development of the Intervention in Haiti. *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 7(3), 299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2505854>
- Country Profile: Haiti.* (2024, October 28). New Internationalist. <https://newint.org/country-profile/haiti/2024/country-profile-haiti#:~:text=Haiti's%20eco nomy%20is%20highly%20unequal,clean%20water%2C%20healthcare%20and%20educa tion.>
- Daut, M. L. (2020, July 14). *The king of Haiti and the dilemmas of freedom in a colonised world* | *Aeon Essays.* Aeon; Aeon Magazine. [https://aeon.co/essays/the-king-of-haiti-and-the-dilemmas-of-freedom-in-a-colonised-wor ld](https://aeon.co/essays/the-king-of-haiti-and-the-dilemmas-of-freedom-in-a-colonised-world)
- Do Remittances Have a Dark Side in Haiti? – Inter-American Dialogue.* (2022, December 9). Thedialogue.org. <https://thedialogue.org/blogs/2022/12/do-remittances-have-a-dark-side-in-haiti/>

- Edition.* (n.d.). Retrieved March 19, 2025, from [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2017-2018/03CountryProfiles/Standalone2-pagerprofiles/WEF\\_GCI\\_2017\\_2018\\_Profile\\_Haiti.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2017-2018/03CountryProfiles/Standalone2-pagerprofiles/WEF_GCI_2017_2018_Profile_Haiti.pdf)
- Edwidge Danticat. (2013, April 25). *Memories of a Duvalier Massacre, 50 Years Later*. Progressive.org. <https://progressive.org/latest/memories-duvalier-massacre-50-years-later-danticat-130425/>
- Haiti. (2024). *Haiti. Security Council Report*. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-09/haiti-26.php>
- Haiti - United States Department of State.* (2025, January 4). United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-investment-climate-statements/haiti/>
- Haiti, 1825 : from independence to debt | Collège de France.* (2024, July 9). College-De-France.fr. <https://www.college-de-france.fr/en/agenda/symposium/haiti-1825-from-independence-to-debt>
- Haiti: Recent Developments and U.S. Policy.* (2025). Congress.gov. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47394>
- Haiti: Where Has All the Money Gone? – Vijaya Ramachandran and Julie Walz.* (2025). Center for Global Development. <https://www.cgdev.org/media/haiti-where-has-all-money-gone-%E2%80%93-vijaya-ramachandran-and-julie-walz>
- How Wall Street Colonized the Caribbean - Boston Review.* (2024, January 24). Boston Review. <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/peter-james-hudson-bankers-and-empire/#:~:text=The%20Farnham%20plan%2C%20as%20it,and%20dozens%20of%20villages%20burned.>
- IPI Global Observatory.* (2025, March 13). IPI Global Observatory. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/>
- Ivers, L. C., & Guillaume, Y. (2017). The Price of Peace? Peacekeeping with Impunity Harms Public Health in Haiti. *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 97(3), 639–640. <https://doi.org/10.4269/ajtmh.17-0582>
- Kenya's High Court blocks proposal to send police support to Haiti.* (2024, July 9). Global Initiative. <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/kenyas-high-court-blocks-proposal-police-support-haiti/>
- Lederer, E. M. (2025, March 11). *US bans flights to Haiti's capital until Sept. 8 as UN expert says gang violence is more dire.* AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/un-haiti-gang-violence-us-flight-ban-e18742d5acb98ebd5f5452874c96d295>
- Locked in Transition: Politics and Violence in Haiti | Crisis Group.* (2025, February 18). Crisisgroup.org. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/caribbean/haiti/107-locked-transition-politics-and-violence-haiti>
- MacLeod, M. J., & Lawless, R. (2023, July 27). *History of Haiti | Revolution, Independence, Flag, & Map.* Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Haiti>

- Maingot, A. P., Dubois, L., Farmer, P., Heine, J., & Thompson, A. S. (2013). HAITI: WHAT CAN BE DONE? *Latin American Research Review*, 48(1), 228–235. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41811598>
- Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations - Office of the Historian*. (2025). State.gov. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/haiti>
- Nichols, M. (2025, February 4). *US freezes some funding for security mission tackling Haiti's gangs*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/us-freezes-funding-security-mission-tackling-haitis-gangs-2025-02-04/>
- Overview*. (2023). World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>
- Press, T. A. (2025, February 11). *Haitian migrants share stories of abuse as Dominican Republic ramps up deportations*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/11/nx-s1-5292955/haiti-dominican-republic-migrants-deportations>
- Rights Groups Oppose Recent Remarks Targeting the Haitian Immigrant Community*. (2024, October). Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/10/01/rights-groups-oppose-recent-remarks-targeting-haitian-immigrant-community>
- Rutenbar, S. (2024, February 6). *A way forward for Haitian politics amid continued insecurity*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-way-forward-for-haitian-politics-amid-continued-insecurity/>
- Sanon, E. (2024, March). *New gang attacks overwhelmed officers, Haitian police says*. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/haiti-violence-police-killed-kenya-gangs-84eb8a827967238805827742bbd7bf69>
- “The Greatest Heist In History”: How Haiti Was Forced To Pay Reparations For Freedom*. (2021, October 5). NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2021/10/05/1042518732/-the-greatest-heist-in-history-how-haiti-was-forced-to-pay-reparations-for-freed>
- UNU-WIDER : Research Brief : Aid Failures in Haiti*. (2025). UNU WIDER. <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/aid-failures-haiti>
- Vote, H. (2024). *Haiti: Vote to Renew the Authorisation of the Multinational Security Support Mission\**. Security Council Report. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/09/haiti-vote-to-renew-the-authorisation-of-the-multinational-security-support-mission.php>
- World Bank Open Data*. (2017). World Bank Open Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/haiti>
- Zapata, C. (2019, October 3). *Dominican Republic declares independence as a sovereign state*. HISTORY. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/dominican-republic-declares-independence>