

# [***US Warned of New Border Crisis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJ7-6RS1-JBR6-91HR-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** The U.S. could face a surge in illegal migration from Haiti due to the country's political turmoil according to government officials.

**Body**

There are growing fears the United States could face another wave of illegal immigration as refugees flee Haiti following the resignation of the Caribbean nation's president and a widespread breakdown in law and order.

Ariel Henry announced he would resign as president of Haiti on Monday as soon as a transitional council is able to take over amidst widespread gang violence which has left him unable to return to the country from a trip to Kenya. Armed gangs are estimated to [*control 80 percent of Port-au-Prince*](https://www.newsweek.com/haiti-crisis-us-embassy-evacuates-staff-gang-violence-escalates-1877632?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), the Haitian capital. The U.S. has evacuated some of its embassy personnel and is urging citizens to leave.

On Tuesday, Department of Defense official Rebecca Zimmerman was asked by Republican [*Matt Gaetz*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/matt-gaetz?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) during a House Armed Services Committee hearing whether the crisis could lead to "[*a mass migration*](https://www.newsweek.com/florida-could-get-hit-wave-migrants-biden-admin-warns-1878535?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)" into the U.S. She replied, "We are alert to that possibility," adding, "The driving conditions in Haiti could very well press more people [to migrate]."

According to Thomas Gift, who heads the Centre on U.S. ***Politics*** at University College London, a new migration crisis would be a major challenge to the Biden administration.

"Fair or unfair, anything that highlights the immigration crisis is a net negative for Biden at the moment," Gift told *Newsweek*.

"To the extent that the tragedy in Haiti puts a new refugee story in the headlines, it will only make the immigration issue more salient for American voters. At the same time, Biden's hands will no doubt be tied by progressive groups who will insist that the White House not repatriate refugees back to Haiti given the huge political instability in the country."

*Newsweek* has reached out to the White House press office for comment via email.

The arrival of migrants, many claiming refugee status, over the southern border is already an incendiary issue in American ***politics*** and has been one of the main campaign focuses of [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), now the presumptive Republican 2024 presidential candidate.

A [*recent Monmouth University survey*](https://www.newsweek.com/americans-poll-donald-trump-border-wall-1873707?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) found 84 percent of U.S. voters think illegal immigration is either a "serious" or "very serious" issue for the nation, against just 10 percent who believe it is "not too serious" and five percent for "not at all serious."

During Tuesday's House committee hearing, Gaetz, a passionate Trump supporter, also asked Army General Laura Richardson, who heads the U.S. Southern Command, whether the government should "activate the authorities, anticipating a mass migration."

She replied: "I think that we need to be postured appropriately for that. I have put in a request for increased capability to do exactly that. And we are ready if we need to deal with a mass migration."

On Tuesday, the *New York Post* published a leaked Florida Border Force memo suggesting the chaos in Haiti would prevent the repatriation of migrants to the country.

It said: "With the breakdown of the government in Haiti repatriating Haitians may not be happening for the foreseeable future. If this is the case, then the Coast Guard may not be stopping Haitian sail freighter[s]. They will just be escorting them into land."

Florida Governor [*Ron DeSantis*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/ron-desantis?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) activated the state's National Guard and declared a state of emergency in 2021 after hundreds of Cuban and Haitian migrants arrived by boat. It came after political chaos in Haiti after a group of foreign mercenaries assassinated Haitian President [*Jovenel Moïse*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/jovenel-moise?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) that July.

Between October 2020 and May 2023, law enforcement encountered Haitian migrants nearly 146,000 times across the southern border. From October 2002 until June 2023 around 4,600 Haitians were intercepted at sea according to Coast Guard figures.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2361722/haiti-protest.jpg)

**Graphic**

Haiti protest

CLARENS SIFFROY/AFP/GETTY

protester reacts while tires burn in the street during a demonstration following the resignation of its Prime Minister Ariel Henry, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on March 12, 2024. There are fears the crisis in Haiti could spark a new wave of irregular migration into the United States.

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