



Securing America's Near Abroad: Recalibrating U.S. Policy Toward Haiti

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Haiti's proximity to the United States makes continued instability a direct challenge to U.S. interests. Located just 700 nautical miles from Florida, Haiti's fragility contributes to irregular migration, transnational crime, and broader regional instability. As criminal groups expand their influence, the risks to both Haitian governance and U.S. security continue to grow.

The arrival of the UN-backed Gang Suppression Force (GSF) in April 2026 marked the latest international effort to stabilize Haiti and restore security in Port-au-Prince. The United States has provided significant financial and logistical support to both the GSF and the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission that preceded it. While the new force may suppress violence in the near term, previous interventions in Haiti have demonstrated that security gains often prove temporary when underlying governance and capacity challenges remain unaddressed.

Based on field research conducted in Haiti in November 2025, this paper argues that while international security deployments may temporarily blunt violence, they are unlikely to produce lasting stability absent a parallel effort to rebuild Haitian state capacity and cut off gangs' access to material and financial resources.

The choice facing U.S. policymakers is between repeating a costly cycle of dependency and pursuing a strategy that enables Haitians to reclaim control of their own security and political future. The United States should continue supporting international security efforts, but it must also pursue a broader strategy focused on strengthening Haitian security forces, improving border and maritime enforcement, and disrupting the financial networks that sustain criminal groups.

Strengthen Haiti's National Security Forces

Supporting Haiti's capacity to recruit, train, and sustain its own security forces is essential to reducing long-term dependence on foreign missions.

- **Work with the United Nations** to strengthen the coordination and standardization of Haitian National Police training programs.
- Consolidate international police training partnerships by **limiting training** to one or two host countries.
- **Invest in Haitian infrastructure** by refurbishing existing or building new Haitian National Police training facilities.

Support a Stronger Haitian Border

Weak border and maritime enforcement allows illicit weapons, narcotics, and human trafficking networks to operate with relative ease. An estimated 80 percent of firearms recovered in Haiti originate in the United States, making weapons trafficking a critical driver of gang power.

- Expand efforts to **disrupt the flow** of U.S.-sourced weapons to Haitian criminal groups.
- **Provide targeted foreign assistance** through investments in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance technologies.
- **Promote Haiti–Dominican Republic cooperation** on border security, intelligence sharing, and anti-trafficking efforts.

Untangle the Links Between Criminal Groups and Economic Actors

Criminal groups rely on financial and political networks that facilitate arms procurement and illicit trade. Building on current U.S. policy efforts, policymakers could broaden their use of financial and intelligence tools to disrupt the entities that materially support gang activity.

- **Expand targeted sanctions** against political and economic actors that provide financial and material support to Haitian criminal groups.
- **Increase U.S. investigations** and prosecutions of individuals suspected of providing material support to Haitian criminal groups.
- **Increase funding** for the Treasury Department to enhance financial surveillance and intelligence gathering on Haiti-linked illicit financial networks.

A stable Haiti that no longer requires repeated international interventions should remain the ultimate objective of U.S. policy. Pairing international security assistance with sustained investments in Haitian state capacity offers the best prospect for reducing violence, restoring Haitian sovereignty, and advancing U.S. interests in its near abroad.



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