



**FORUM:** UNICEF

**QUESTION OF:** PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM  
THE INCREASING VIOLENCE IN  
PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI



## **INTRODUCTION**

The issue of protecting children from the increasing violence in Port-au-Prince Haiti, is one of the most urgent and recent problems. In recent circumstances, criminal gangs have emerged in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, asserting control over the region and fostering an atmosphere characterized by apprehension, instability, and acts of violence. This situation has affected the most vulnerable segment of the population: children. The situation in Port-au-Prince is a complex mix of socio-economic, political, and environmental factors. Haiti, having a history of political instability and economic challenges, has seen a surge in gang violence with also natural disasters and a lack of developed infrastructure. Children are facing unprecedented dangers such as physical violence, severe disruptions to their education, and, most importantly, lack of healthcare. These challenges are not just immediate problems, they pose long-term implications on their overall development and well-being as adults. Our discussion about this matter should be based on the unique context of Haiti.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

The intensity of the security issue is demonstrated by recent instances of gang violence. The capital city of Port-au-Prince, which is home to almost 3 million people, saw clashes between April 24 and May 6, 2022, that resulted in over 188 being deceased and over 16,000 displaced individuals. At least 300 people have been murdered and about 160 injured in gun fights that broke out in the adjacent slum of Cité Soleil on July 7 and continued for ten days. After President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated inside his private mansion in the early hours of July 7, 2021, security in Haiti drastically declined, with hundreds of violent fatalities in recent months due to conflicts between well-armed criminal gangs. The identity of the assassin of the president remains a mystery.

95 of the 200 or more gangs in Haiti are based in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area. The overcrowded slums of the capital have long been the gangs' strongholds. Due to their dense population and lack of urban planning, these neighborhoods are politically important and are



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still difficult for state security personnel to protect. The G9 a Fanmi e Alye, commonly known as the G9, led by former police officer Jimmy “Barbecue” Chérizier, and the GPèp la, also known as the Gpèp, led by Gabriel Jean Pierre, alias “Ti Gabriel,” are the two primary alliances around which many of Haiti's gangs have gathered. The leaders of nine significant Port-au-Prince gangs banded together in June 2020 with the intention of becoming armed.

## **KEY TERMS**

### **Gang**

A gang is a group or society of associates, acquaintances, or family members that identify with or claim authority over territory in a community and participate, either alone or collectively, in unlawful and sometimes violent activities. They also have a clear leadership and internal organization.

### **Child Violence**

It consists of various types of child abuse, such as neglect, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse

### **Prevention**

Strategies include awareness campaigns, community-based interventions, early childhood development programs, and addressing the underlying causes of violence.

### **Protection**

Measures including shelters, family reunion initiatives, access to emotional support, legal aid, and child-friendly reporting systems.

### **Rehabilitation**

Includes possibilities for livelihood, education, mental health support, and reintegration programs for children impacted by violence.

### **The assistance of local communities**

Faith-based organizations, and grassroots organizations for child protection initiatives is the role of civil society.



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## MAJOR PARTIES INVOLVED

### UNODC

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been working to reduce drug use, organized crime, corruption, and terrorism for 20 years. In order to prevent these threats and promote peace and sustained well-being in their place.

With the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its center, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Office is dedicated to assisting Member States in putting them into practice. The 2030 Agenda unequivocally states that health-focused approaches to drug use, along with the rule of law and just, efficient, and compassionate judicial systems, are components and enablers of sustainable development.



### WHO

WHO was established in 1948 as a United Nations organization that links countries, partners, and individuals to advance health, safeguard the global community, and assist the most vulnerable so that everyone, everywhere, can achieve optimal health.

Global initiatives to increase access to universal health care are led by WHO. We oversee and plan the global response to medical crises. Additionally, we advocate for better lifestyles from conception to old age. Their Triple Billion targets present an ambitious strategy based on science-based policies and programs to ensure universal access to good health.

## RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

UN Secretary-General's Report on the Situation of Children in Haiti (2022)

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2023/07/haiti-briefing-and-consultations-7.php#:~:text=Notably%2C%20the%20Secretary%2DGeneral's%20most,between%20September%202022%20and%20March.>



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## Guiding Principles for the Alternative Care of Children

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/united-nations-guidelines-alternative-care-children/>

## Universal Declaration of Human Rights

[https://www.google.com.tr/books/edition/Universal\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Human\\_Rights/qZNKAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com.tr/books/edition/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights/qZNKAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover)

## **SOLUTION ALTERNATIVES**

Providing additional funds to UNICEF and the Haitian National Social Welfare Office (IBERS) to enable them to provide more outreach and support services to children who are at risk.

Providing short-term safe spaces with basic necessities and psychological support in neighborhoods with a high concentration of gang activity.

Teaching community leaders and social workers about child safety tactics, such as recognizing and reporting violent behavior.

Funding initiatives for gang disaffiliation and rehabilitation that provide chances for reintegration, education, and career training.

Implementing community policing programs to foster police-community cooperation and trust.

Giving top priority to rebuilding and renovating schools that have been harmed by violence, so that every child has safe and secure access to education.

Funding on trauma therapy and mental health assistance for children who have experienced abuse and displacement.



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Providing disadvantaged children and families with comprehensive healthcare services, including programs for nutrition and reproductive health.

In order to provide young people with employable skills and lessen their susceptibility to gang recruitment, youth employment programs and vocational training can be implemented.

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