

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania, Ave. NW.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Janet Yellen  
Treasury  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania, Ave. NW.  
Washington, D.C. 20220

October 5, 2022

As members of Congress, we are deeply concerned regarding the ongoing political and insecurity crises in the Republic of Haiti.

A year after the assassination of former President Jovenel Moïse, the country lacks a democratically elected government. Haiti has fallen into a more profound political uncertainty since 2021. There is still no elected president, legislators, or mayors. The people of Haiti are being terrorized, raped, murdered, and kidnapped daily by emboldened gangs financed and supported by powerful elites. Over the past several months, the pervasive insecurity has resulted in massive protests against the government's complicity, failures to protect citizens, and high inflation.

Therefore, we urge your administration to impose sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act on known perpetrators and entities from the private and public sectors responsible for financing the insecurity in the country. We must cancel their visas and freeze assets. These acts pose significant national security threats to the United States and the entire region.

Nonetheless, these sanctions must target oligarchs, political elites, corrupt politicians, U.S. citizens, and U.S. residents who finance extrajudicial killings, torture, and kidnappings of innocent Haitian nationals and, in some cases, American citizens. Their actions have led to an increased flow of irregular migration. We have an obligation to disrupt their ability to serve as destabilizing forces yet enjoy the ability to access U.S. financial institutions and vacation in the United States freely.

On Thursday, September 29, 2022, the United States House of Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing titled "***Haiti at the Crossroads: Civil Society Responses for a Haitian-led Solution***," where witnesses also recommended imposing targeted sanctions.

The nation of Haiti, roughly 700 miles away from Miami, Florida, has faced unprecedented insecurity due to gang violence and the illegal flow of weapons. According to Human Rights Watch's 2021 World Report, Haiti is experiencing one of the worst outbreaks of violence in decades. According to United Nations, from January to May 2022, kidnappings rose by 36% and

homicides by 17%.<sup>1</sup> Haitians of all ages face powerful gangs who rule with impunity. Haiti continues to have the highest rate of kidnappings per capita in the world. The lack of the rule of law poses additional threats to holding perpetrators liable.

The power vacuum has allowed as many as 200 gangs in Haiti, and they control 60% of Port-Au-Prince, key ports, and roads, according to a study commissioned by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).<sup>2</sup> The government is not functioning to meet even the most basic needs of its citizens. Women and girls are more vulnerable to gender-based violence. Gang violence, including rampant sexual violence, has shuttered schools, businesses, and healthcare providers, severely restricting humanitarian relief operations.

While Haiti does not manufacture ammunition or weapons and has been subject to U.S. arms restrictions for over a decade, the island, terrorized by kidnapping gangs and other politically connected criminals, is filled with hundreds of thousands of firearms and ammunition, according to the Miami Herald.<sup>3</sup>

According to a recent report by the United Nations, a wave of gang violence in Port-Au-Prince in mid-July of 2022 resulted in more than 470 killings. In addition to failing to resolve Moïse's assassination, Haitian authorities have yet to arrest several Haitian officials implicated in the La Saline massacre, where 71 innocent people were murdered, brutalized women and children, and destroyed over 400 homes, leaving many displaced and in precarious living conditions.<sup>4</sup>

According to Réseau National De Défense Des Droits Humains (RNDDH), on July 7, 2022, a war broke out in Cité Soleil between the armed gangs belonging to the two (2) rival coalitions.<sup>5</sup> This conflict led to more than three hundred (300) people murdered, at least twenty-two (22) people injured by gunfire or stabbing, roughly fifty-two (52) women and girls raped, and a minimum of two hundred and ten (210) houses destroyed.<sup>6</sup> The violence displaced over 9,000

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<sup>1</sup> Congressional Research Service (CRS), *Haiti: Political Conflict and U.S. Policy Overview* (2022), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12182>

<sup>2</sup> Congressional Research Service (CRS), *Haiti: Political Conflict and U.S. Policy Overview* (2022), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12182>

<sup>3</sup> Miami Herald, *Haiti's illegal weapons trafficking has South Florida links* (2022), <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article264549951.html>

<sup>4</sup> At least 71 people were killed in the 2018 La Saline massacre, which was believed to be politically motivated. Many of those involved in the massacre – including then-police officer-turned gang leader Jimmy Chérizier and then-government officials Fednel Monchery and Joseph Pierre Richard Duplan – have faced no consequences. *See, e.g.,* IJDH UPR Justice Sector Report, *supra* note 124, at ¶ 6(b).  
156 *See, e.g.,* Marlyne Jean, *Droits humains : La Fondation devoir de mémoire-Haïti réclame vérité et justice sur l'ensemble des massacres, perpétrés depuis 60 ans*, ALTERPRESSE (Mar. 24, 2022), <https://www.alterpresse.org/spip.php?article28122>.

<sup>5</sup> The National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH), *Massacre in Cité Soleil: Chilling Stories of Women and Girls Victims of Gang Rape* (2022).



residents.<sup>7</sup> Those displaced by the violence are now living in makeshift shelters with limited access to humanitarian assistance and are vulnerable to exploitation.

Furthermore, according to RNDDH, from April 24 to May 6, 2022, the 400 Mawozo armed gangs attacked the Chen Mechan base in its stronghold at the Croix-des-Missions. In the ensuing violent clashes, one hundred ninety-one (191) people were murdered, one hundred seven (107) men, seventy-six (76) women, six (6) girls, and two (2) boys. At least eighteen (18) women were raped.<sup>8</sup> Seventeen (17) of them were later executed. Eighty-one (81) houses and at least fifty-seven (57) vehicles were set on fire. Many people were shot or stabbed, and one hundred fifty-eight (158) children became orphans.<sup>9</sup>

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported nearly 1,700 school closures in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area due to gang violence in late April, and the Office for the Protection of the Citizen (OPC) reported additional closures of hospitals and markets in Croix-des-Bouquets in early May. Critical and services-based institutions remain closed.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. President, as evidenced, the insecurity crisis in the Republic of Haiti is dire, and the Haitian people are living in terror daily. Your administration has a moral and legal obligation to use every tool at its disposal to protect the national security and strategic interests of the United States and the region. We must act swiftly.

Sincerely,

  
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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

<sup>6</sup> The National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH), *Massacre in Cité Soleil: Chilling Stories of Women and Girls Victims of Gang Rape* (2022).

<sup>7</sup> The National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH), *Massacre in Cité Soleil: Chilling Stories of Women and Girls Victims of Gang Rape* (2022).

<sup>8</sup> The National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH), *A new war in Cité Soleil: The RNDDH requires the immediate intervention of the police institution*, at at ¶ 7 (2022).

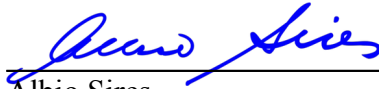
<sup>9</sup> The National Human Rights Defense Network (RNDDH), *A new war in Cité Soleil: The RNDDH requires the immediate intervention of the police institution*, at at ¶ 7 (2022).

<sup>10</sup> United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), *Haiti: Gang violence pushes half a million children out of the classroom in Port-au-Prince*, (2022), <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/press-releases/haiti-gang-violence-pushes-half-a-million-children-out-classroom-in-port-au-prince>



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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



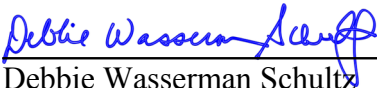
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Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



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Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



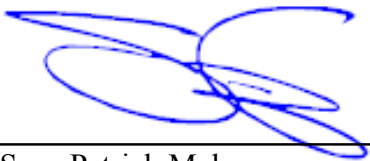
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Al Lawson  
Member of Congress



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Rashida Tlaib  
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Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



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Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary Antony Blinken, U.S. Department of State.