

# UN News

Global perspective Human stories

Haiti remains in ‘acute political and institutional crisis’, Security Council hears.

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© IOM. Despite some signs of progress, the situation in Haiti remains “fraught and highly polarized,” according to UN Special Representative Helen La Lime.

**Despite some signs of progress in ending the political, economic and humanitarian crisis that has worsened across Haiti since the assassination of its president last year, the situation there remains “fraught and highly polarized”, the UN envoy to the country told the [Security Council](#) on Friday.**

Special Representative Helen La Lime, who also heads the UN Integrated Office in Haiti ([BINUH](#)), outlined the need for structural reforms to tackle gang violence, address impunity and corruption, strengthen the justice system and sustainably transform the economy.

“The contours of a common vision shared by all, will ultimately depend on Haitian stakeholders placing the national interest above their own aspirations,” she [said](#). “Success will be determined by their collective willingness to compromise”.

## Tensions easing

She said the relative calm observed on 7 February – the date on which late President Jovenel Moïse’s term would have officially ended – was a good sign, telling ambassadors that the new Government, unveiled on 24 November, appears to have appeased tensions.

And while awaiting a revised electoral calendar, the [BINUH](#) chief noted that momentum seems to be building around “an inclusive, credible and effective Provisional Electoral Council”.

## Bane of gang violence

Meanwhile, **gang violence “continues to plunge major urban centres into lawlessness and grief.”**

“Criminal armed groups have a strong hold on the economic and social lives of millions...Their indiscriminate use of abduction, murder, as well as sexual and gender-based violence, as a means to terrorize local populations in the fight to extend their territorial control is particularly abhorrent”, she explained.

Although the Haitian National Police has tried to stem the wave of violent crime, the “over-stretched, understaffed, and under-resourced police force, cannot on its own curtail the alarming rise in gang-generated insecurity”, she said.

Against this backdrop, the UN and Haitian Government have jointly resolved to strengthen international support, epitomized by the imminent creation of a multi-donor basket fund.

**“The gang phenomenon cannot be addressed through policing alone”**, Ms. La Lime explained, elaborating on the need for a law-enforcement approach that incorporates greater control of illegal weapons and is complemented by socio-economic projects and reintegration activities “aimed at generating employment and revenue in the neighbourhoods most affected by the scourge of gang violence.”

## ‘Successes offer hope’

The UN official commended the Haitian authorities on a national community violence reduction strategy that has, after years of closures, resulted in the reopening of several schools in the Port-au-Prince neighbourhoods of Cité Soleil and La Saline.

“These successes offer hope that resolute and coordinated government actions will lead to the provision of additional basic services in these communities, as well as to their extension to other areas,” she said.

“Our continued support is crucial to the success of this effort”.

**Success will be determined by...**

**collective willingness to compromise – UN Special Representative**

## Cracks in the law

**Haiti also needs to urgently address the intractable phenomenon of impunity.**

The Special Envoy cited the 2020 assassination of Monferrier Dorval, the 2018 massacre in La Saline, and the “ghastly assassination” of President Moïse, whose stalled murder investigation has exacerbated “both suspicion and mistrust within the country”.

The Haitian judicial system suffers from “grave structural weaknesses” she said, that cripple the courts’ ability to “investigate, process and try cases”.

And while modest signs of progress are encouraging, more action is needed for new penal and criminal codes, and to ensure that judicial reform can be sustained over the longer-term.

## Layers of complexity

The devastating [earthquake of last August](#), which destroyed parts of the Southern Peninsula and killed 2,248 people, has added another layer of difficulty to an already dire humanitarian situation, said Ms. La Lime.

“It is now estimated that 4.9 million people, or 43 per cent of the country’s population, will be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2022.”

Pointing to Wednesday’s [international donors’ conference](#), she expressed her deep gratitude for \$600 million in pledges for the Integrated Reconstruction Plan to rebuild the heavily damaged areas.



**WFP Haiti/Theresa Piorr**

Members of a community in the south-west of Haiti work together to rehabilitate a road damaged in the earthquake.

## 3 years cholera-free

This month marked three consecutive years without a laboratory-confirmed case of cholera in Haiti, a “watershed moment” representing “a significant step” towards eliminating the disease in the country, according to the Special Envoy.

She credited the “unwavering dedication” of the country’s frontline workers along with UN, bilateral and multilateral organizations partnerships.

“While these collective efforts have succeeded...the lack of impact and effectiveness of development aid...requires us to collectively formulate a new approach, one premised on a deeper coordination of international efforts and a real partnership with Haitian authorities and Haitian actors”, said Ms. La Lime.

In her closing remarks, she advised all Haitian leaders to engage constructively with one another to steer the country towards elections and emerge from the “acute political and institutional crisis” in which it has been plunged.

And the international community must also continue to engage with the government and others to create security and political conditions to hold national elections and ensure structural reforms.

**“Now is not the time to let Haiti fall off the agenda,”** the Special Envoy stated.