



AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

February 19, 2026

Intelligence for Haiti's Democratic Transition

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States escalated direct pressure on Haiti's gang leadership on February 18-19, 2026, announcing a one-million-dollar Rewards for Justice bounty on 5 Second gang leader Johnson Andre, alias Izo, days after he publicly financed Carnival activities with no government response. A second forward operating base for the GSF-MSS mission became operational, expanding the international security footprint ahead of the April deployment. The D.C. Circuit panel began deliberations on the TPS appeal with no ruling deadline, placing 300,000 Haitians in legal uncertainty. Post-Carnival governance resumed with the Fils-Aime government signaling an amending budget prioritizing security and elections. Stakeholders must treat the next 72 hours as a critical window across all four risk domains simultaneously.



QUICK SUMMARY FOR STAKEHOLDERS

US places one-million-dollar federal bounty on gang leader Izo effective February 18.
Second GSF-MSS forward operating base now operational as of February 19.
D.C. Circuit TPS deliberations active with no deadline; ruling may arrive at any moment.
PNH armored vehicle readiness at only 65.5 percent despite recent fleet additions.
Fils-Aime government considering amending budget with security and elections as stated priorities.

DEVELOPMENT 1: US ESCALATION: FEDERAL BOUNTY ON IZO AND SECURITY FORCE READINESS GAP

The United States State Department Rewards for Justice program announced on February 18, 2026, a reward of up to one million dollars for information leading to the arrest or conviction of Johnson Andre, alias Izo, leader of the 5 Second gang. The announcement came within days of video evidence showing Izo openly financing Carnival activities in Village de Dieu with no Haitian government interdiction. The bounty also covers information related to the March 2023 kidnapping of a US citizen, for whom a ransom was paid and whose vehicle and father's firearms were seized by the gang. The program includes relocation protection for informants, indicating the US anticipates serious personal risk to any source.

The timing is operationally deliberate. Izo is the same gang leader responsible for the December 24, 2024, General Hospital drone massacre. His public Carnival appearance represented a calculated demonstration of impunity. The US transition from passive observation to active federal incentivization marks the first time a named Haitian gang leader has been formally targeted by an RFJ bounty, representing a structural shift in US gang suppression posture rather than a tactical adjustment. The PNH is simultaneously seeking Izo for murder, kidnapping for ransom, and illegal

firearms possession.

The same reporting cycle revealed that only 65.5 percent of PNH armored vehicles are operational, meaning approximately 12 of 35 vehicles are non-functional despite recent deliveries of 10 Canadian armored vehicles on February 16 and 3 South Korean tracked vehicles on February 5. A second forward operating base for the GSF-MSS mission became operational on February 19, with location details pending. Guatemala rotated its 150-strong specialized military police contingent, confirming continued partner commitment.

A North Carnival incident compounded institutional credibility concerns: PNH officer Smith Bien Aime of the 31st graduating class is the prime suspect in the killing of Ronelson Mon Coeur, with 14 total arrests and 5 firearms seized. This follows the Ministry of Defense's February 16 statement threatening prosecution of FAd'H union activity. Haiti's security institutions face simultaneous external pressure from gang leaders demonstrating impunity and internal discipline failures at the moment of maximum GSF transition stress.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Rewards for Justice program previously offered similar bounties for leaders of designated narco-terrorist organizations across Latin America, but this marks its application to a Haitian gang leader. The 5 Segond gang controls critical Port-au-Prince territory and has demonstrated air and ground assault capability, including the December 2024 General Hospital attack. PNH armored vehicle maintenance deficits have been a recurring systemic issue predating the current fleet expansion.

TALKING POINTS

The one-million-dollar Izo bounty represents a qualitative escalation in US anti-gang posture beyond diplomatic statements.

The 65.5 percent vehicle readiness rate means expanded fleet size does not translate proportionally into expanded operational capability.

A PNH officer as a prime suspect in a Carnival killing directly undermines community trust during a critical trust-building phase.

The second FOB becoming operational ahead of the April GSF arrival is a positive sequencing indicator for the mission.

The bounty includes relocation protection, signaling US assessment that informant safety inside Haiti cannot be guaranteed.

Internal FAd'H union suppression and PNH officer misconduct point to compounding institutional discipline failures across both security pillars.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

International organizations should request full details of the February 19 US Embassy security alert and adjust staff movement protocols immediately.

GSF mission planners should publicly account for the 65.5 percent vehicle readiness rate in capability timelines communicated to donors and partner governments.

Businesses operating in Port-au-Prince should treat the Izo bounty as a potential trigger for gang retaliation activity in adjacent zones and adjust security protocols for the 72 hours following the announcement.

Diaspora organizations should brief community networks that the TPS ruling may arrive at any moment and ensure legal referral infrastructure is activated.

BINUH and OAS should formally document the North Carnival PNH officer incident as part of ongoing institutional accountability assessments.

The Haitian government should publicly address the vehicle readiness gap before the April GSF arrival to avoid a credibility deficit on security reform commitments.



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DEVELOPMENT 2: TPS DELIBERATIONS BEGIN: D.C. CIRCUIT PANEL ACTIVE WITH NO RULING DEADLINE

The February 19, 2026, deadline for brief submissions to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals expired, and the three-judge panel is now in active deliberations on the Temporary Protected Status appeal covering more than 300,000 Haitians in the United States. There is no statutory or procedural deadline for the panel to issue its ruling; the decision can be released at any moment from February 19 forward. The deliberation phase is by nature non-public, and no signals regarding timing or direction have been disclosed.

The legal landscape is adversarial. A recent D.C. Circuit ruling permitted TPS termination for Nicaraguan, Honduran, and Nepali nationals, establishing a precedent that the current administration has cited as applicable to the Haitian TPS population. The 18-state attorney general coalition led by New York AG Letitia James has argued that termination would separate families, damage state economies, deplete healthcare and educational workforces, and harm public health infrastructure. IRC Haiti Director Mwiti Mungania provided operational grounding: deportees would face an overlap of violence, displacement, and hunger, and would be especially attractive targets for gangs due to perceived wealth upon return.

The macroeconomic stakes for Haiti are direct. Diaspora remittances constitute approximately 25 percent of Haiti's GDP. A mass deportation event layered onto the 525,000 Dominicans already expelled from the Dominican Republic since October 2025 would create a simultaneous collapse of remittance inflows and surge of return migration into a country where 90 percent of the capital is under gang control and food inflation exceeds 35 percent. One in 10 of Haiti's 11 million inhabitants is already displaced internally.

For operational planning purposes, stakeholders should treat the TPS ruling as an asymmetric risk event: low daily probability but extreme consequence magnitude. The ruling can appear in legal notification systems without advance warning. Organizations serving Haitian diaspora communities or dependent on Haitian labor networks should have response protocols activated now rather than upon ruling issuance.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

TPS for Haiti was originally designated following the January 2010 earthquake and has been renewed and contested through multiple administrations. The current legal battle traces to the Trump administration's 2018 termination announcement, which has been in continuous litigation since. The precedent set by Nicaragua, Honduras, and Nepal rulings in the current D.C. Circuit represents the most direct legal threat to Haitian TPS in the program's history.

TALKING POINTS

The ruling can arrive at any time with no advance notice; organizations must have response infrastructure in place today.

The Nicaragua-Honduras-Nepal TPS termination precedent is the most significant legal risk factor for the Haitian case.

Mass deportation would compound the DR deportation surge, creating a dual-source return migration crisis.

Remittance collapse risk from TPS termination represents an existential macroeconomic threat to Haiti's already fragile economy.

The 18-state AG coalition provides political cover but has no procedural mechanism to delay a panel ruling.

IRC operational assessment confirms deportees face immediate gang targeting risk upon return.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Haitian diaspora legal aid organizations should activate emergency intake protocols now to handle immediate post-ruling demand regardless of outcome direction.

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International organizations should begin modeling dual-scenario humanitarian response plans for both TPS continuation and TPS termination outcomes.

Private sector entities employing Haitian TPS holders should consult legal counsel on employment authorization implications of each ruling scenario.

The Haitian government and CPT should formally communicate to the D.C. Circuit through diplomatic channels the operational conditions awaiting any deportee population.

Diaspora remittance monitoring should be elevated to weekly tracking frequency given the ruling's proximity.

CARICOM and Caribbean-EU Assembly stakeholders should formally incorporate TPS ruling risk into their Haiti transition support frameworks.



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DEVELOPMENT 3: FISCAL RESTART: AMENDING BUDGET SIGNALS AND GONAVE HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Government operations resumed on February 19, 2026, following the Carnival break of February 16-18. The Fils-Aime government is actively considering adoption of an amending budget, with security and elections identified as the two primary priorities. This represents the first substantive fiscal policy signal since Fils-Aime assumed the prime ministership and directly addresses the structural gap in Haiti's electoral financing, estimated at 137 million dollars. No specific allocation figures or timeline for the amending budget's adoption have been disclosed.

The amending budget signal is strategically significant for three reasons. First, it acknowledges that the current budget is structurally incapable of absorbing both GSF transition support costs and the full electoral calendar. Second, by naming security and elections as co-equal priorities, the government signals to international partners that it is operationally aligned with the conditionality frameworks attached to multilateral support. Third, the timing immediately after Carnival positions the amending budget as the Fils-Aime government's first governance test: its passage and content will reveal whether the administration has the legislative relationships and technical capacity to execute a complex fiscal instrument under political pressure.

Simultaneously, the Ministry of Public Health announced the reopening of seven public health centers, one community referral hospital, and one blood transfusion center on Gonave Island, following the January-February visit of Health Minister Dr. Bertrand Sinal. The facilities will become operational in phases, with full capacity projected in coming weeks. Medical equipment shipments

continue and staff recruitment is active. Gonave Island has a population of approximately 100,000 and has been chronically underserved by public health infrastructure.

The Gonave Island reopenings are the first significant health service expansion reported during the Fils-Aime government period and serve as a proof-of-concept for governance delivery outside Port-au-Prince. For international organizations evaluating whether the transitional government can execute basic functions beyond the capital, this is a positive data point. It also aligns with the Caribbean-EU Parliamentary Assembly's call for multidimensional security, which explicitly included health security as a component of Haiti stabilization.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Amending budgets in Haiti have historically required executive-legislative negotiation and have often stalled in periods of political instability. The last major amending budget exercise occurred under conditions of comparable institutional stress. Gonave Island's health deficit predates the current crisis by decades; the island lacks permanent specialist care and has relied almost entirely on NGO medical missions for advanced procedures.

TALKING POINTS

The amending budget is the first fiscal test of the Fils-Aime government's governance capacity and coalition management.

Naming elections as a co-equal budget priority alongside security signals alignment with international conditionality frameworks.

Gonave Island health reopenings demonstrate the government's ability to deliver services in populations outside Port-au-Prince, a critical legitimacy signal.

The 137-million-dollar electoral budget gap remains the central constraint on the CEP's operational timeline.

International donors should treat amending budget passage as a key governance benchmark and adjust support frameworks accordingly.

The phased reopening model in Gonave provides a replicable template for health service restoration in other underserved regions.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

International donors should formally link amending budget adoption and allocation transparency to next-tranche disbursement decisions.

The CEP should use the amending budget process as the moment to publicly specify minimum viable electoral funding requirements.

NGOs operating on Gonave Island should coordinate with the Ministry of Public Health on phased

facility activation to avoid duplication and service gaps.

BINUH and OCHA should incorporate the Gonave health reopenings into their public reporting as evidence of governance capacity outside the capital.

Business intelligence teams should monitor the amending budget's specific security allocation to assess whether PNH and FAd'H funding is sufficient to support the GSF transition.

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The Haitian government should publish the amending budget framework publicly before submission to maximize international donor confidence.

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**DEVELOPMENT 4: CARIBBEAN-EU ASSEMBLY AND INFRASTRUCTURE RISK:
MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK AND CIVILIAN HAZARD**

The first plenary session of the Caribbean-EU Parliamentary Assembly concluded in Antigua and Barbuda on February 18, 2026, adopting formal recommendations on Haiti addressed to the Caribbean-EU Council of Ministers. Members renewed strong support for a Haitian-led political solution and emphasized urgent need to address insecurity and the humanitarian crisis. The Assembly adopted five strategic priority areas, of which Haiti was named explicitly alongside climate resilience, trade and investment, transnational organized crime, and territorial integrity. Antiguan Prime Minister Gaston Browne stated that controlling the security situation is a prerequisite for free and fair elections and called for EU support to extend to food, energy, health, and transnational crime dimensions. The Assembly proposed a permanent consultative mechanism meeting at minimum twice per year for coordinated Caribbean-EU positions on shared priorities.

The Caribbean-EU recommendations provide a new multilateral advocacy instrument at a moment when the existing UN framework faces renewal pressures and the US is shifting from multilateral to bilateral intervention tools. The proposal for a permanent consultative mechanism is structurally significant: if adopted by the Council of Ministers, it would institutionalize Caribbean-EU coordination on Haiti beyond the current ad hoc crisis response mode. For Haiti's transitional government, Caribbean-EU recognition of its reform agenda provides external legitimacy that reduces dependence on any single bilateral patron.

On February 19, a high-voltage electrical cable snapped in a public marketplace in Petion-Ville, killing one person and hospitalizing five. Local judicial officer Eno Rene Louis confirmed the incident

to Reuters. The incident directly parallels the 2015 Carnival electrocution that killed 16 people, also caused by Electricite d'Haiti infrastructure failure. EDH's power grid in Port-au-Prince operates without adequate maintenance funding, and high-voltage cables in commercial and public spaces represent an active and recurring civilian hazard.

The Dominican Republic reported rising export volumes to Haiti in January 2026, indicating that cross-border trade flows continue to expand even as the humanitarian and deportation crisis at the bilateral frontier intensifies. This apparent paradox, deteriorating human rights conditions coexisting with increasing commercial flows, reflects the structural economic interdependence between the two countries that operates independently of political conditions.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Caribbean-EU Parliamentary Assembly is a relatively recent institutional mechanism; its adoption of formal Haiti recommendations marks a qualitative expansion of its operational scope. EDH has faced chronic underfunding since the post-earthquake period, and electrical infrastructure deterioration has accelerated as gang control of Port-au-Prince has disrupted maintenance operations. Dominican-Haitian trade has historically proven resilient to bilateral political stress, dating to the period of the Duvalier era border closures.

TALKING POINTS

Caribbean-EU Parliamentary Assembly recommendations elevate Haiti to formal priority status within a multilateral framework that includes EU institutional resources.

The permanent consultative mechanism proposal, if adopted, would institutionalize Caribbean-EU Haiti engagement beyond crisis response.

The Petion-Ville electrocution is not an isolated incident but a symptom of systemic EDH infrastructure failure that constitutes an ongoing civilian risk.

Dominican export growth to Haiti in January 2026 confirms trade-political decoupling at the bilateral level.

The 2015 Carnival electrocution precedent demonstrates that EDH infrastructure failures are predictable and recurring without structural investment.

Caribbean-EU engagement provides the Haitian government an additional multilateral legitimacy channel distinct from the US-UN framework.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Haitian government and EDH should commission an emergency audit of high-voltage cable conditions in public markets and commercial areas in Port-au-Prince and major urban centers. International donors engaged in infrastructure support should evaluate EDH electrical safety as a

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humanitarian protection priority, not solely an economic development concern.

Caribbean-EU Council of Ministers should formally adopt the permanent consultative mechanism proposal at its next session to lock in institutional continuity on Haiti.

Businesses with Haitian operations should add electrical infrastructure failure to site risk assessments for market-based and outdoor commercial facilities.

CARICOM secretariat should formally incorporate Caribbean-EU Assembly Haiti recommendations into its next bilateral engagement with the CPT.

Trade intelligence teams tracking Dominican-Haitian commerce should expand monitoring to include cross-border informal sector flows, which typically exceed formal trade volumes.



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WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

NEXT 24 TO 48 HOURS

The D.C. Circuit TPS ruling can arrive at any moment; trigger is panel consensus; direction is binary and consequence is immediate for 300,000 Haitians and Haiti's remittance economy. The US Embassy security alert issued February 19 requires full content review; trigger is any staff movement restriction; risk is escalation of post-Carnival gang activity. The Izo bounty announcement may trigger gang retaliation in 5 Segond-controlled zones; trigger is any armed incident in Village de Dieu or adjacent areas; risk is targeted attacks on perceived informant networks.

THIS WEEK



The amending budget framework is expected to take shape in the first post-Carnival government sessions; trigger is any executive submission to the legislative body; direction is toward either a credible electoral financing package or a delay that accelerates CEP calendar slippage. The second FOB location and capability details should become available; trigger is official MSS or BINUH disclosure; risk is that operational opacity undermines donor confidence. PNH vehicle readiness gap must be addressed before April GSF arrival; trigger is any Ministry of Interior or PNH statement on maintenance contracts; risk is that fleet expansion metrics conceal a capability plateau.

STRATEGIC HORIZON

The Caribbean-EU Council of Ministers response to the Parliamentary Assembly's Haiti recommendations will determine whether the multilateral framework expands or stagnates; trigger is the next scheduled Council session; direction is toward either institutionalized engagement or reversion to ad hoc crisis response. The GSF April deployment remains the dominant security calendar anchor; trigger is any deviation from the April timeline announced by Kenya or the BINUH; risk is that a delay collapses the current security reform momentum before it consolidates. The CPT mandate expiration on February 7, 2027, remains the hard political deadline governing all transition planning; any electoral slippage that extends beyond that date triggers a constitutional legitimacy crisis with no established resolution mechanism.

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