



# AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

February 20, 2026

*Intelligence for Haiti's Democratic Transition*

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A landmark UN-BINUH/OHCHR report released February 19-20 documents systemic child trafficking across 26 of Haiti's active gang networks, with over 500,000 children living under gang territorial control. Simultaneously, two abducted girls aged 4 and 6 were found dead on Gonave Island, and 12 or more kidnappings were recorded during the Carnival period in Port-au-Prince. The FBI's removal of Vitel'homme Innocent from its Most Wanted list and a \$1 million bounty on "Izo" signals a recalibrated U.S. targeting posture. Haiti's inclusion in Global R2P Atrocity Alert No. 470 raises the prospect of formal international accountability mechanisms. The compound severity of these developments pushes the operational threat environment to its highest recorded level this quarter.



### QUICK SUMMARY FOR STAKEHOLDERS

UN-BINUH/OHCHR report documents child trafficking implicating 26 gangs; 500,000 children at direct risk.

Two abducted girls, ages 4 and 6, found dead on Gonave Island on February 19.

FBI shifts most wanted targeting from Vitel'homme Innocent to "Izo" with \$1 million bounty. Haiti designated in Global R2P Atrocity Alert No. 470 alongside Israel/OPT and Venezuela. TPS D.C. Circuit panel now in deliberation with no decision deadline set; 350,000 Haitians remain in legal limbo.

### DEVELOPMENT 1: UN-BINUH/OHCHR CHILD TRAFFICKING REPORT AND GONAVE ISLAND KILLINGS

The release of a UN-BINUH/OHCHR report on February 19-20 represents the most comprehensive institutional documentation of child trafficking within Haiti's gang ecosystem to date. The report identifies 26 active gang networks as participants in child trafficking operations and establishes that more than 500,000 children reside within territories under effective gang control. The findings shift the analytical framing of Haiti's security crisis from a governance problem to a mass atrocity environment with a distinct child protection dimension requiring separate international response tracks.

The operational implications are immediate. Humanitarian organizations operating in gang-controlled zones now face documented evidence that their access corridors intersect with active trafficking networks. The report creates new liability exposure for international actors who have maintained neutrality postures in negotiations with gang leadership. It also provides the

## AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

evidentiary foundation for escalation of accountability mechanisms at the UN Security Council and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The discovery on February 19 of two girls, ages 4 and 6, murdered after abduction from their home on Gonave Island provides a concrete, high-visibility case that will amplify the report's political impact. Gonave Island had previously been considered a lower-intensity zone relative to Port-au-Prince metropolitan areas. This incident signals geographic expansion of kidnapping and trafficking operations beyond the primary urban corridor.

The convergence of the institutional report and the Gonave Island case within the same 24-hour reporting window creates a media and advocacy environment that will accelerate calls for Security Council action, expanded MSS mandate authority, and targeted sanctions against named gang leaders. Operational actors must anticipate heightened restrictions on movement and access as international pressure generates short-term security environment volatility.



### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Haiti's gang networks have evolved from localized criminal enterprises into territorial governance structures over the past decade, with acceleration following the July 2021 presidential assassination. Child recruitment and trafficking by armed groups in fragile states follows a documented pattern in West Africa and Central America in which economic collapse and state absence create conditions for systematic exploitation. The Gonave Island incident is consistent with ACLED-documented trends showing kidnapping operations expanding into secondary population centers as primary urban corridors face increased MSS presence.

### TALKING POINTS

UN-BINUH/OHCHR has produced a trafficking report with 26 named gang networks, establishing institutional-grade evidentiary foundation for accountability proceedings. 500,000 children in gang-controlled areas are now a documented protection priority requiring dedicated international response beyond general security stabilization.

Gonave Island killings confirm geographic expansion of kidnapping and trafficking operations outside the Port-au-Prince metropolitan zone.

The convergence of the report and the killings within one reporting cycle will generate immediate pressure on the UN Security Council and MSS mission leadership.

International organizations with access negotiation frameworks in gang-controlled areas must reassess neutrality postures in light of documented trafficking involvement.

## RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

International organizations should immediately convene emergency access review meetings to assess operational posture in light of the trafficking report findings.

MSS and BINUH should coordinate a formal response statement within 48 hours to shape international media framing before advocacy organizations set the narrative.

Donor governments should prioritize fast-track funding for UNICEF and child protection NGOs operating in Haiti to activate rapid response programming.

Security managers at all humanitarian organizations should issue updated threat assessments that specifically address the Gonave Island geographic expansion vector.

UN Security Council member states with Haiti portfolios should request a formal Council briefing from BINUH within the next five to seven days.



## CONFIDENCE



**High confidence based on official institutional reporting.**

## DEVELOPMENT 2: FBI TARGETING RECALIBRATION: VITEL'HOMME INNOCENT REMOVED, "IZO" ELEVATED TO \$1 MILLION BOUNTY

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation's removal of Vitel'homme Innocent from its Most Wanted list, concurrent with the announcement of a \$1 million bounty on the gang leader known as "Izo," marks a significant recalibration of U.S. law enforcement targeting priorities in Haiti. This action is not a de-escalation. It reflects an intelligence-driven reassessment of which armed actors currently represent the highest operational threat to U.S. interests, humanitarian access, and MSS mission viability.

"Izo," whose real name is Gabriel Jean-Pierre and who leads the Gran Grif gang, has been documented by ACLED and UN monitoring bodies as one of the primary actors in the Artibonite Valley violence that has produced mass displacement and blocked northern supply corridors. The \$1 million bounty at the same level previously associated with major international terrorism designations signals that the U.S. government views Izo's operational capacity as a top-tier threat to regional stability. It also provides legal and financial infrastructure for informant networks and interdiction operations.

## AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

The status of Vitel'homme Innocent following his removal from the Most Wanted list requires clarification. Removal from a public wanted list does not imply cleared status. It may indicate that his case has moved to sealed indictment, extradition proceedings, or a classified enforcement track. Operational actors should not interpret this change as a reduction in U.S. enforcement posture toward Vitel'homme.

The timing of this announcement during Carnival, when 12 or more kidnappings were recorded in Port-au-Prince, underscores the gap between U.S. enforcement signaling and on-the-ground security conditions. The bounty announcement may generate short-term reprisal activity from Izo-aligned networks targeting perceived informant populations.



### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The U.S. government has used public bounty mechanisms as components of gang suppression strategy in Haiti since the formation of the Viv Ansanm coalition in late 2023. Previous Most Wanted designations against Haitian gang leaders produced limited direct enforcement outcomes but disrupted financial networks and created internal gang security pressures. The \$1 million threshold is consistent with U.S. Treasury and FBI bounty levels applied to cartel leadership in Mexico and Central America.

### TALKING POINTS

FBI removal of Vitel'homme Innocent does not signal reduced U.S. enforcement posture; probable transition to sealed or classified enforcement track.

\$1 million bounty on "Izo" elevates him to the highest tier of U.S. law enforcement targeting, with immediate implications for Gran Grif operational posture.

Carnival period recorded 12 or more kidnappings in Port-au-Prince, demonstrating that enforcement signaling has not produced short-term security improvement.

Reprisal risk against perceived informant communities should be assessed as elevated in Gran Grif territorial zones.

U.S. targeting recalibration may indicate intelligence assessment that Izo represents greater MSS mission risk than previously classified actors.

### RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Organizations with operations in Artibonite Valley and Gran Grif territorial zones should

## AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

immediately elevate threat levels and review staff movement protocols.

MSS mission leadership should coordinate with FBI attachees at the U.S. Embassy to assess whether the bounty announcement alters their operational deployment priorities.

Security managers should brief local national staff on reprisal risks associated with informant bounty programs operating in their communities.

Private sector actors with supply chain exposure to northern corridors should model contingency scenarios for sustained Artibonite disruption through at least Q2 2026.

Diplomatic missions should seek clarification from U.S. Embassy on Vitel'homme Innocent's current legal status and implications for enforcement coordination.



### CONFIDENCE



**Moderate confidence based on partial institutional reporting.**

### DEVELOPMENT 3: GLOBAL R2P ATROCITY ALERT NO. 470 AND INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

Haiti's inclusion in Global Responsibility to Protect Atrocity Alert No. 470, alongside Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories and Venezuela, marks an escalation in the international accountability framing applied to Haiti's crisis. The R2P mechanism is distinct from standard UN peacekeeping or humanitarian response frameworks. Its activation for Haiti signals that monitoring bodies have assessed conditions as meeting or approaching the threshold of mass atrocity crimes under international law, specifically the categories of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The operational significance of this designation lies in what it enables, not merely what it documents. R2P Alert status creates political and legal space for Security Council resolutions invoking Chapter VII authority, targeted sanctions beyond existing frameworks, and international criminal accountability referrals. For the CPT and PM Fils-Aime's government, the designation represents a reputational and diplomatic liability that elevates pressure for demonstrable governance action within a compressed timeframe.

For international organizations operating in Haiti, the R2P designation creates a more complex advocacy and operational environment. Neutrality frameworks that were functional under standard humanitarian crisis classification become legally and ethically strained when the

## AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

environment is formally characterized as a potential atrocity zone. This will generate internal policy reviews at major international NGOs and UN agencies regarding their engagement models.

The designation also intersects directly with the child trafficking report findings from Development 1. The documentation of systematic trafficking by 26 gang networks, combined with R2P Alert status, creates a compounding evidentiary record that will be difficult for Security Council members to deflect. France, the United States, and other Council members with Haiti portfolios will face increased pressure to move from monitoring posture to enforcement posture.



### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The R2P framework was adopted by UN member states at the 2005 World Summit in response to the failures of international response in Rwanda and Bosnia. Its application to Caribbean states is extremely rare and reflects the severity of the documented conditions. Haiti's previous international interventions, including MINUSTAH (2004-2017) and MSS, were framed primarily as peacekeeping and stabilization operations rather than atrocity prevention responses, making this designation a qualitative shift in international legal framing.

### TALKING POINTS

R2P Atrocity Alert No. 470 places Haiti in a category previously reserved for the world's most severe conflict zones with respect to international legal accountability.

The designation enables Security Council Chapter VII action, expanded sanctions, and potential ICC referral pathways.

CPT and government leadership face compressed diplomatic timeline to demonstrate governance response before accountability mechanisms accelerate.

International NGOs and UN agencies must initiate internal policy reviews regarding operational models under a formally designated atrocity-risk environment.

Combined with the child trafficking report, the R2P designation creates a compounding evidentiary record that reduces Security Council deflection options.

### RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Diplomatic missions should immediately brief home governments on the R2P designation's implications for bilateral Haiti policy and Security Council positioning.

International NGO leadership should convene emergency policy reviews to assess operational

frameworks under atrocity-risk classification.

CPT and government communications offices should develop a formal response to the R2P designation within 48 to 72 hours to manage international narrative.

BINUH should prepare a formal Security Council briefing document that maps the R2P designation against current MSS mandate authorities and identifies gaps.

Donor governments should assess whether current funding levels and mandate authorities for MSS are adequate given the elevated accountability framework.



## CONFIDENCE



**High confidence based on official institutional reporting.**

### DEVELOPMENT 4: TPS LITIGATION STATUS AND DIASPORA LEGAL EXPOSURE

The D.C. Circuit panel considering the Temporary Protected Status litigation affecting approximately 350,000 Haitians in the United States has entered deliberation with no announced deadline for a decision. This status creates a condition of sustained legal uncertainty that is now entering its most consequential phase. The litigation challenges the termination of TPS protections under executive authority and will determine whether this population retains work authorization and deportation protection during Haiti's ongoing crisis period.

The deliberation phase is operationally significant because it removes the short-term certainty that either an adverse or favorable ruling would provide. Organizations providing legal services, employment, and social support to the Haitian diaspora in the United States must continue operating under dual contingency planning frameworks. A favorable ruling would preserve TPS status pending further review. An adverse ruling would trigger immediate work authorization loss for a population that provides an estimated \$3 to \$4 billion annually in remittances to Haiti.

The macroeconomic implications for Haiti of an adverse ruling are severe and immediate. Remittances represent Haiti's single largest source of foreign exchange, exceeding all foreign direct investment and official development assistance combined. A rapid reduction in remittance flows would accelerate gourde devaluation, compress household purchasing power across all economic strata, and reduce the hard currency availability that sustains import-dependent supply chains including food and fuel.

## AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

The panel's deliberation coincides with the elevated security and atrocity documentation environment described in Developments 1 through 3. Diaspora community organizations and legal advocacy groups are likely to use the child trafficking report and R2P Alert designation as supporting evidence in any emergency stay or congressional intervention efforts, arguing that forced return to an atrocity-risk environment strengthens the legal and humanitarian case for TPS extension.



### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

TPS for Haitians was originally granted following the January 2010 earthquake and has been repeatedly extended through successive administrations in recognition of ongoing instability. The current litigation arises from a 2025 executive action to terminate TPS for multiple nationalities. Remittances from the Haitian diaspora in the United States represent approximately 40 percent of Haiti's GDP in recent years, making this population's legal status a direct macroeconomic variable for Haiti's political transition timeline.

### TALKING POINTS

D.C. Circuit panel is in active deliberation with no deadline; 350,000 Haitian TPS holders remain in legal limbo during Haiti's most acute security crisis period.

An adverse ruling would immediately eliminate work authorization and trigger remittance contraction with direct macroeconomic consequences for Haiti.

Remittance flows of \$3 to \$4 billion annually represent Haiti's largest foreign exchange source; their disruption would accelerate gourde devaluation and supply chain stress.

Diaspora legal advocates will likely deploy child trafficking report and R2P Alert findings as supporting evidence for emergency stays or congressional intervention.

CPT and government must develop contingency economic planning for scenarios involving significant remittance reduction within 30 to 60 days.

### RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

International financial institutions with Haiti portfolios should model remittance-shock scenarios and identify rapid response liquidity instruments.

CPT economic advisors should brief government leadership on the macroeconomic exposure created by TPS deliberation and develop a public communication strategy.

Haitian diaspora legal organizations should formally submit the UN child trafficking report and R2P Alert documentation to the D.C. Circuit panel as supplemental evidence of conditions in

## AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

Haiti.

Private sector actors dependent on import supply chains should assess hard currency exposure and model contingency procurement strategies.

BINUH and OCHA should coordinate to ensure that any TPS adverse ruling is immediately flagged to UN humanitarian planning as a compounding shock to Haiti's economic environment.



### CONFIDENCE



**Moderate confidence based on partial institutional reporting.**

### WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

#### NEXT 24 TO 48 HOURS

Monitor for formal CPT or government response to the UN-BINUH/OHCHR child trafficking report; absence of response within 48 hours will be read internationally as tacit acknowledgment of governance failure. Watch for any Gran Grif or Viv Ansanm statement or activity in response to the \$1 million FBI bounty on Izo, particularly in Artibonite Valley corridors where reprisal risk is elevated. Track MSS mission public communications for any adjustment of operational posture in response to the R2P Alert designation.

#### THIS WEEK

Watch for UN Security Council consultations on Haiti triggered by the R2P Alert No. 470 and child trafficking report; any Council meeting request from France, the United States, or a Caribbean member state would signal accelerated accountability track. Monitor D.C. Circuit for any procedural developments in TPS deliberation. Assess whether the Gonave Island killings generate sufficient media pressure to trigger a formal PNH or MSS response operation in secondary island zones. Track Carnival period kidnapping data for week-over-week trend confirmation.

#### STRATEGIC HORIZON

The convergence of R2P Alert designation, institutional child trafficking documentation, and TPS legal uncertainty within a single reporting cycle represents a threshold moment for Haiti's

## AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

international engagement framework. If Security Council members move from monitoring to enforcement posture within the next 30 days, the operational environment for all actors in Haiti will shift materially. CPT mandate authority extending to February 7, 2027 provides nominal governance continuity, but the legitimacy deficit created by this week's documentation accumulation will compress the political space available to transitional institutions. The electoral timeline and its international support infrastructure must now be assessed against a backdrop of potential Chapter VII escalation rather than standard stabilization support.

### PRIMARY SOURCES

UN-BINUH/OHCHR Child Trafficking and Gang Violence Report, February 2026

Global R2P Atrocity Alert No. 470, February 2026

FBI Most Wanted Update: Vitel'homme Innocent Removal and "Izo" Bounty Announcement, February 2026

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Ministry of Women's Affairs GBV Workshop Announcement, February 2026

ACLED Haiti Conflict Data, February 2026 Update

IOM Haiti Displacement Tracking Matrix, February 2026

Reuters Haiti Coverage, February 19-20, 2026

Haiti Libre, Carnival Kidnapping Coverage, February 19-20, 2026

AP Wire, Haiti Gang Activity and Carnival Security Report, February 2026