



AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

February 21, 2026

Intelligence for Haiti's Democratic Transition

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Haiti's security environment recorded a significant tactical gain on February 20-21 as PNH's "Operasyon San Kanpe" killed 16 gang members in Kenscoff while 150 additional officers with two armored vehicles reinforced Cap-Haïtien against resurgent insecurity in the North. These operational advances coincide with accelerating governance pressure: Le Nouvelliste published the first major editorial indicting PM Fils-Aime for inaction since February 7, as IOM confirmed 1.4 million internally displaced persons with 23,000 expelled in January alone. The Dominican Republic's arrest of 1,135 Haitians in a single 24-hour window on February 19 signals intensifying bilateral pressure on an already overwhelmed displacement system.



QUICK SUMMARY FOR STAKEHOLDERS

PNH killed 16 gang members overnight in Kenscoff under "Operasyon San Kanpe" continuing offensive operations.

IOM January 2026 report confirms 1.4 million IDPs with 23,000 new displacements in January alone.

Dominican Republic arrested 1,135 Haitians in 24 hours on February 19 compressing displacement corridors further.

Le Nouvelliste editorial marks the first significant mainstream media critique of PM Fils-Aime's post-February 7 inaction.

H-TAC Morne-Casse tactical center launched its first 3-week training cycle with 30 police officers.

DEVELOPMENT 1: PNH OPERATIONAL ESCALATION: KENSCOFF AND CAP-HAÏTIEN

The Police Nationale d'Haiti executed a major overnight operation in Kenscoff on February 20-21, eliminating 16 gang members under the sustained "Operasyon San Kanpe" campaign. The Kenscoff heights represent a strategically sensitive zone controlling access routes between the southern periphery and Port-au-Prince's upmarket residential districts, including Petionville. A successful PNH foothold there, if consolidated, would meaningfully constrain gang mobility between the capital's southern ring and the Carrefour-Martissant corridor.

Simultaneously, authorities deployed 150 reinforcement officers alongside two armored

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vehicles to Cap-Haïtien in response to a declared resurgence of insecurity in the North. This dual-front operational tempo -- southern heights and the northern economic hub simultaneously -- reflects either a deliberate nationwide pressure strategy or a reactive posture stretched thin across multiple fronts. The distinction matters: a deliberate strategy implies coordination capacity, while a reactive posture implies the PNH is running behind developing gang vectors.

The H-TAC Morne-Casse tactical center began its inaugural 3-week training cycle with 30 officers, providing the first institutional evidence that Haiti's security capacity-building pipeline is generating throughput. Thirty officers per cycle remains a marginal output against gang forces numbering in the thousands, but the cycle's launch establishes a reference point for tracking acceleration or stagnation in force generation.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

PNH has operated under severe resource constraints since the 2021 assassination of President Moïse, with gang territorial control expanding dramatically through 2023-2024. The MSS Kenya-led multinational mission was authorized specifically to provide operational backstop and capacity building that PNH could not self-generate.

TALKING POINTS

Kenscoff operation represents a concrete tactical gain in a zone directly relevant to Port-au-Prince access control.

Cap-Haïtien reinforcement signals institutional awareness that northern insecurity can no longer be treated as secondary.

H-TAC throughput of 30 officers per 3-week cycle requires significant scaling to approach meaningful force generation.

Simultaneous north-south operations test whether PNH command and logistics can sustain multi-front tempo.

MSS coordination role in either operation has not been confirmed and should be tracked explicitly.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

International security partners should request immediate confirmation of MSS involvement and coordination protocols in both operations.

NGOs operating in Kenscoff and Petionville corridors should reassess access routes given active operational conditions.

H-TAC training pipeline should be benchmarked against agreed targets in MSS mandate documentation.

Business operators in Cap-Haïtien should verify armored vehicle deployment perimeters before scheduling logistics movements.

Diplomatic missions should request PNH operational brief to distinguish deliberate strategy from reactive posture.



CONFIDENCE



High confidence based on official institutional reporting.

DEVELOPMENT 2: GOVERNANCE VACUUM: FILS-AIME UNDER EDITORIAL PRESSURE

Le Nouvelliste, Haiti's principal French-language daily and the country's most authoritative mainstream press institution, published an editorial on or around February 20-21 directly criticizing Prime Minister Alix Fils-Aime for delivering nothing of substance since February 7. The critique targets three domains simultaneously: failure to address gang territorial expansion, absence of government reshuffling to signal renewed political direction, and inaction on governance structures whose mandate transition created an expectation of recalibration.

The editorial's significance extends beyond its content. Le Nouvelliste does not routinely editorialize against sitting prime ministers in operational terms. Its decision to do so at this juncture -- two weeks after the CPT's formal mandate transition date -- represents a threshold crossing in elite media tolerance for executive inertia. When Port-au-Prince's editorial establishment breaks from institutional patience, it typically precedes or accompanies broader political repositioning among parties and civil society.

For international stakeholders, the editorial creates a new reference point. Statements and press contacts for PM Fils-Aime's office will now be measured against Le Nouvelliste's public accountability frame. Donors and diplomatic partners who have

been providing the government operational latitude during the post-February 7 adjustment period may face increasing pressure from civil society interlocutors to harden conditionality.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Haiti's post-Moise transition period has been characterized by recurring prime ministerial instability, with multiple governments failing to consolidate authority before CPT-level disputes undermined their operational coherence. Fils-Aime assumed the role under the CPT framework whose mandate structure itself remains contested.

TALKING POINTS

Le Nouvelliste's editorial critique marks the first significant mainstream accountability pressure on Fils-Aime post-February 7.

Three-domain critique -- gangs, reshuffling, governance -- mirrors the same pressure points international partners have raised privately.

Editorial threshold crossings in Haitian press history have preceded accelerated political realignment in multiple prior governments.

CPT's relationship with PM Fils-Aime will face public scrutiny if the editorial critique generates opposition or civil society alignment.

International partners should not treat the editorial as isolated but as a leading indicator of elite consensus formation.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Diplomatic missions should factor the Le Nouvelliste editorial into assessments of PM Fils-Aime's political durability.

International partners should request a concrete 30-day governance deliverables framework from the Prime Minister's office.

Civil society liaison officers should assess whether the editorial is generating structured opposition coalition activity.

Donor conditionality frameworks should be reviewed in light of the emerging accountability discourse.

Media monitoring should be elevated to track whether other outlets reinforce or rebut the Le Nouvelliste position.



CONFIDENCE



Moderate confidence based on partial institutional reporting.

DEVELOPMENT 3: DISPLACEMENT CRISIS: IOM JANUARY REPORT AND DOMINICAN PRESSURE

IOM's January 2026 situation report confirms Haiti's internally displaced population has reached 1.4 million persons, with 23,000 additional displacements recorded in January alone. The figure represents one of the highest single-month displacement tallies of the current crisis cycle, driven by continued gang-initiated population expulsions from contested neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince and Artibonite department. The scale of January displacement indicates that the security operations detailed in Development 1, while tactically significant, have not yet produced measurable relief in population movement patterns.

On February 19, the Dominican Republic arrested 1,135 Haitians in a single 24-hour enforcement operation. This figure is operationally significant because it compresses the displacement relief valve that irregular cross-border movement has historically provided. Haitians displaced by gang activity who previously found intermediate refuge in Dominican territory or used the border zone as a staging point for onward movement to third countries now face an enforcement posture that closes that corridor.

The convergence of record January displacement inside Haiti and intensified Dominican enforcement creates a compression dynamic: populations expelled from gang-controlled areas cannot move south to safer Haitian territory reliably, cannot move east across the border, and overwhelm displacement camps whose capacity and funding are already strained. Judge Voltaire's prosecution order against former PNH chief Rameau Normil for arms trafficking, while institutionally important, does not directly address the displacement drivers operating at this scale.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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Haiti's displacement crisis has intensified steadily since 2022, with IOM tracking periodic surges correlated with major gang offensives. The Dominican Republic has conducted cyclical mass deportation and arrest operations throughout this period, with February 2026 representing an intensification of that enforcement posture.

TALKING POINTS

1.4 million IDPs with 23,000 January displacements confirms the security operation tempo has not yet bent the displacement curve.

Dominican 24-hour arrest of 1,135 Haitians on February 19 directly compresses the primary informal displacement relief corridor.

Compression dynamic -- internal gang expulsion plus closed eastern border -- will accelerate camp saturation timelines.

IOM January figures will anchor humanitarian funding appeals for Q1 2026 and should be incorporated into donor engagement now.

Arms trafficking prosecution of ex-PNH chief Normil, while significant institutionally, does not address immediate displacement drivers.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Humanitarian organizations should immediately revise camp capacity projections using the January 1.4 million baseline.

OCHA and IOM should jointly assess the Dominican enforcement posture's impact on displacement corridor modeling.

Diplomatic missions should raise the Dominican enforcement escalation bilaterally to assess coordination or unilateral character.

Donor governments should accelerate Q1 2026 humanitarian funding decisions given January displacement velocity.

NGOs with border zone programming should assess operational viability under current Dominican enforcement conditions.



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High confidence based on official institutional reporting.

DEVELOPMENT 4: INFRASTRUCTURE SABOTAGE AND WATER CONTAMINATION CRISIS

Electricite d'Haiti confirmed that the Petionville electrocution incident -- which killed at least one civilian -- was caused by deliberate criminal sabotage of an electrical cable. This determination transforms the incident from a maintenance failure into a security event with direct implications for infrastructure vulnerability assessments across Port-au-Prince. If gang-affiliated actors or criminal networks are deliberately targeting utility infrastructure, the attack surface for Haiti's already fragile power grid extends beyond the gang-controlled perimeter into nominally secure zones such as Petionville.

The government simultaneously convened an inter-institutional workshop addressing Haiti's drinking water contamination crisis, with preliminary assessments indicating that over 92 percent of available drinking water is contaminated. This figure, if methodologically sound, represents a humanitarian emergency with multi-sector implications: contaminated water drives cholera and other waterborne disease vectors, degrades population health resilience in displacement camps, and imposes additional costs on humanitarian logistics chains already strained by displacement volume.

The combination of deliberate infrastructure sabotage and systemic water contamination creates compounding operational risk for both humanitarian actors and businesses. Generators dependent on fuel supply chains already vulnerable to gang disruption now face an additional electrical grid sabotage threat. Businesses and NGOs relying on municipal water access face contamination exposure requiring systematic filtration investment.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Haiti's infrastructure has operated in a state of chronic degradation since the 2010 earthquake, with gang expansion since 2022 further accelerating targeted attacks on power infrastructure and fuel logistics chains as instruments of territorial and economic control.

TALKING POINTS

EDH sabotage confirmation elevates electrical grid attacks from maintenance failures to deliberate security threats requiring different response protocols.

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92 percent drinking water contamination rate represents a systemic public health emergency compounding all existing humanitarian indicators.

Petionville sabotage demonstrates that gang-linked infrastructure attacks are not contained to gang-controlled zones.

Compound risk -- power sabotage plus water contamination -- directly degrades humanitarian operational capacity in displacement camps.

Government inter-institutional workshop on water is a first-order positive signal but requires concrete remediation timeline to be operationally meaningful.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Security teams for businesses and NGOs in Petionville and adjacent zones should update infrastructure vulnerability assessments immediately.

Humanitarian organizations should conduct emergency water safety audits for all camp and distribution sites.

Donors should evaluate emergency funding for water purification infrastructure as a direct complement to security programming.

EDH and government security partners should establish infrastructure protection protocols for utility assets in nominally secure zones.

International partners should request the government's concrete remediation plan from the inter-institutional water workshop within 72 hours.



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Moderate confidence based on partial institutional reporting.

WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

NEXT 24 TO 48 HOURS

Monitor PNH for formal operational report on Kenscoff eliminations, which would confirm command structure coherence and operational documentation capacity. Watch for any Le Nouvelliste or opposition political actor follow-up to the Fils-Aime editorial, as secondary amplification within 48 hours would confirm threshold crossing rather than isolated critique. Track Dominican Republic official statements on the February 19 mass

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arrest for indication of whether the operation is policy escalation or tactical enforcement surge.

THIS WEEK

H-TAC Morne-Casse first training cycle progress should be assessed against announced 3-week timeline for any signs of disruption or acceleration. PM Fils-Aime's office response to Le Nouvelliste editorial, whether through press conference, policy announcement, or cabinet reshuffle signal, will define the week's political narrative trajectory. IOM and OCHA camp capacity reporting should be monitored for indicators that January displacement velocity is continuing or decelerating into February.

STRATEGIC HORIZON

The convergence of tactical PNH gains, governance accountability pressure, and record displacement against a closing Dominican enforcement perimeter creates a critical stress test for Haiti's transition architecture over the next 30 days. If PNH operational tempo produces measurable territorial consolidation without corresponding humanitarian relief -- particularly on displacement and water contamination -- international partners will face increasing pressure to escalate either funding commitments or diplomatic intervention on the governance side. The CPT mandate's extended timeline to February 7, 2027 provides political runway, but operational and humanitarian deterioration at current velocity does not respect institutional calendars.

PRIMARY SOURCES

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