



AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

February 23, 2026

Intelligence for Haiti's Democratic Transition

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Haiti's security environment deteriorated sharply on February 22-23, 2026, with armed actors targeting critical telecommunications infrastructure in Kenscoff, killing two Natcom employees in an ambush. Simultaneously, authorities reinforced the Artibonite Department with six armored vehicles for PNH operations, signaling institutional awareness of expanding gang pressure in that corridor. The transitional governance framework faces continued stress as National Pact dynamics generate mixed political responses, while the CEP's re-circulation of the electoral decree signals an attempt to reaffirm procedural authority. The convergence of infrastructure targeting, security force reinforcement, and political uncertainty over the Pact's legitimacy defines the immediate operational environment for all stakeholder categories.



QUICK SUMMARY FOR STAKEHOLDERS

Two Natcom telecommunications employees killed in armed ambush in Kenscoff, with a third wounded.

Six armored vehicles deployed to Artibonite PNH Directorate to counter armed group activity. Leogane municipal authorities suspended all Rara festivities for the 2026 season citing security conditions.

CEP re-circulated revised electoral decree and calendar in official journal, reaffirming procedural continuity.

National Pact political reception remains contested; full party-by-party validation incomplete pending source access.

DEVELOPMENT 1: TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR TARGETED: NATCOM AMBUSH IN KENSCOFF

Two employees of Natcom, Haiti's state telecommunications operator, were killed and a third wounded in an ambush at Morne Tranchant in the Kenscoff commune on February 22, 2026. The employees were traveling to deliver supplies to a company site when armed actors intercepted their vehicle. This event constitutes a direct attack on critical national infrastructure and signals a deliberate or opportunistic targeting pattern that extends armed group operational pressure into zones previously considered secondary to the main Port-au-Prince theater.

The operational significance of this attack exceeds the immediate casualty toll. Natcom provides core telecommunications services across Haiti, and maintenance of infrastructure in mountain zones such as Kenscoff requires consistent supply chain movement. If operators respond by reducing or suspending field logistics, connectivity degradation in those areas becomes a near-term operational risk for NGOs, businesses, and government entities relying on those nodes. The precedent of targeting telecom personnel also raises the threat calculus for other utility sector

workers operating in conflict-adjacent communes.

The attack triggered alert threshold criteria under the Major Gang Attack on Operational and Business Target category. No official MSS or PNH operational response specific to the Kenscoff ambush was confirmed within the 24-hour window. Cross-verification via Le Nouvelliste and AlterPresse for full incident detail confirmation remains pending as of brief compilation time.



From a systemic standpoint, this incident extends the geographic footprint of operational insecurity. Kenscoff's position in the hills above Port-au-Prince makes it a logistics node for the broader metropolitan zone, and armed group capability to sustain ambush operations in that terrain indicates a level of territorial confidence that carries implications for corridor security assessments.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Kenscoff has experienced periodic armed group incursions since 2022, with the BINUH issuing flash reports on violence in the commune. Natcom infrastructure has previously faced disruption due to general insecurity but targeted killing of employees represents an escalation in the pattern of critical infrastructure pressure. Armed actors in Haiti have systematically tested the limits of tolerated operational space throughout the transition period.

TALKING POINTS

Natcom ambush at Morne Tranchant killed two employees and wounded one on February 22, 2026. Attack meets trigger threshold for major gang assault on operational and business infrastructure. Telecom maintenance logistics in Kenscoff zone face elevated threat of operational suspension. Cross-verification with Le Nouvelliste and AlterPresse pending for full incident confirmation. No confirmed PNH or MSS tactical response to this specific incident within 24-hour reporting cycle.



Geographic extension of armed actor pressure into mountain communes signals expanding operational confidence.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

NGO operations managers should reassess movement protocols for supply chain staff operating in Kenscoff and adjacent mountain communes.

Telecom-dependent organizations should audit backup connectivity options in case Natcom service degradation occurs in affected zones.

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Business continuity planners should flag the Kenscoff incident as a data point in ongoing threat-level reviews for suburban and peri-urban corridors.

International organizations should monitor whether BINUH or PNH issue formal incident assessments that could inform humanitarian access corridor classifications.

Diplomatic and security attachés should request confirmation from PNH or MSS on whether the ambush reflects an isolated incident or organized targeting of utility sector personnel.



CONFIDENCE



Moderate confidence based on partial institutional reporting.

DEVELOPMENT 2: ARTIBONITE REINFORCEMENT: SIX ARMORED VEHICLES DEPLOYED TO PNH DIRECTORATE

The Artibonite Departmental Police Directorate received six armored vehicles to support ongoing PNH operations against armed groups in the department as of the February 22-23 reporting cycle. The mayor of Montrouis, Blaise Elysee, was cited welcoming the arrival of the vehicles, indicating coordination between municipal and security force authorities in the department. Artibonite has remained one of the highest-risk operational environments in Haiti for over two years, with armed groups exercising significant territorial control over portions of the department including routes critical to north-south commerce and humanitarian movement.

The deployment of armored vehicles represents a meaningful upgrade in PNH tactical capability in a department where officers have previously operated with limited protection against armed group firepower. However, the operational impact will depend on whether the vehicles are integrated into coordinated clearing operations or deployed in a static force protection posture. Armored vehicle transfers without accompanying tactical doctrine, personnel training, and operational coordination with MSS forces carry limited deterrent value against entrenched armed groups with demonstrated capability to engage and disable security force assets.

It is not confirmed as of brief compilation whether the six vehicles represent newly delivered assets from an international donor pipeline or redeployments from existing PNH fleet inventory. This distinction has budgetary and sustainability implications that affect the durability of the reinforcement. If drawn from existing inventory, the deployment may signal a reallocation of limited resources rather than a net capability increase.

The Artibonite reinforcement, taken alongside the Kenscoff ambush, reflects a security environment in which institutional responses remain reactive rather than proactive. Decision-makers monitoring the Artibonite corridor for humanitarian logistics and commercial movement should treat this

reinforcement as a positive but insufficient signal pending evidence of sustained operational clearance.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Artibonite Department, particularly the Liancourt-Saint-Marc axis, has been under sustained armed group pressure since 2023, with the Labanye-affiliated structure and its successors controlling key commercial chokepoints. Previous PNH reinforcements in the department have produced temporary operational improvements followed by armed group adaptation. MSS Kenya-led mission elements have conducted joint operations in the department with mixed results.

TALKING POINTS

Six armored vehicles delivered to Artibonite PNH Directorate as of the February 22-23 reporting cycle.

Mayor of Montrouis Blaise Elysee confirmed welcoming arrival, signaling municipal-security coordination.

Asset origin, whether new donor delivery or existing fleet redeployment, has not been confirmed. Vehicle deployment without confirmed operational integration plan carries limited deterrent value. Artibonite remains a primary risk corridor for humanitarian logistics and north-south commercial movement.

Reinforcement is reactive in character and does not alter the fundamental armed group posture in the department.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Humanitarian logistics planners should not revise Artibonite corridor risk classifications on the basis of the vehicle deployment alone pending evidence of active clearing operations.

MSS coordination points should be queried on whether the armored vehicle arrival is linked to a scheduled joint operation or represents a standalone PNH initiative.

Commercial operators with supply chains transiting the Artibonite should maintain current elevated risk protocols and treat the reinforcement as a preliminary indicator only.

International donors should request clarification from PNH command on asset origin and operational integration plan to assess sustainability of the reinforcement.

Political actors and diplomatic staff should note the Montrouis mayoral statement as a signal of local government alignment with security force presence, a factor in Artibonite governance dynamics.



CONFIDENCE



Moderate confidence based on partial institutional reporting.

DEVELOPMENT 3: LEOGANE RARA BAN AND SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS OF INSECURITY SPREAD

Municipal authorities in Leogane, in coordination with Rara unions and associations, prohibited all Rara festivities for the 2026 season as a preventive security measure following an assessment of prevailing conditions. Rara is a culturally and economically significant festival tradition in Haiti, and its cancellation in a major commune represents a measurable compression of civil space and local economic activity attributable to insecurity. The decision reflects the judgment of local authorities that the movement of festival bands and associated crowds in public spaces poses an unacceptable security risk under current conditions.

The Leogane ban is analytically significant beyond its immediate cultural context. Leogane lies along the Route Nationale 2 corridor southwest of Port-au-Prince and has not historically been among the highest-alert communes in operational security assessments. A proactive ban of this nature, issued before any confirmed incident, signals that insecurity perceptions and threat assessments have expanded to include communes that fall outside the primary Port-au-Prince gang control perimeter. This geographic expansion of precautionary security measures is a leading indicator of insecurity diffusion.

The economic dimension is also material. Rara season generates informal economic activity across food vending, transport, performance, and hospitality sectors in participating communes. Cancellation eliminates that revenue cycle for local small business operators during a period when the Haitian gourde remains under sustained pressure and no confirmed BRH rate data for this 24-hour window was available for analysis. For communities already operating at subsistence margins, the elimination of seasonal economic activity compounds household vulnerability.

For stakeholders monitoring civil stability indicators beyond the Port-au-Prince metropolitan zone, the Leogane ban should be entered into geographic risk tracking systems as evidence of insecurity diffusion into previously moderate-risk communes along the RN2 corridor.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Rara season cancellations or restrictions in Haitian communes have occurred intermittently since 2022 as armed group territorial expansion compressed civil space in multiple departments. Prior to the current security crisis, Rara bans were rare and typically associated with specific localized incidents rather than general threat environment assessments. The 2026 Leogane ban follows a

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pattern seen in Artibonite communes in 2024 and 2025 and suggests southward diffusion of the precautionary security posture.

TALKING POINTS

Leogane municipal authorities banned all Rara festivities for 2026 citing security assessment, not a specific prior incident.

Decision taken in coordination with Rara unions, indicating civil society and local government alignment on threat perception.

Leogane's position on RN2 southwest of Port-au-Prince marks the ban as an indicator of insecurity geographic diffusion.

Cancellation eliminates informal economic activity during a period of sustained household economic pressure.

No confirmed armed group incident in Leogane triggered the ban; it reflects preemptive threat assessment.

Stakeholders should flag this as a leading indicator for civil space compression beyond the primary metropolitan zone.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Geographic risk mapping tools should be updated to reflect elevated precautionary security posture in Leogane and adjacent RN2 corridor communes.

Humanitarian program managers operating in the southwest should incorporate this ban into livelihood impact assessments for vulnerable community populations.

Civil society monitors should document the Leogane ban as part of a systematic record of Rara cancellations to enable trend analysis across departments.

Business operations staff with logistics or field presence on RN2 should review movement protocols for the period that would have been covered by Rara season.

Political actors should note that proactive municipal security restrictions without central government directive indicate autonomous local authority threat responses, a governance dynamic worth tracking.



CONFIDENCE



High confidence based on official institutional reporting.

DEVELOPMENT 4: NATIONAL PACT POLITICAL RECEPTION AND ELECTORAL DECREE RE-CIRCULATION

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The governance dimension of the February 22-23 cycle is defined by two intersecting signals: continued public debate over the National Pact signed on February 21, 2026, framed in Haitian media as a tension between adhesion and criticism, and the deliberate re-circulation by authorities of the revised electoral decree and electoral calendar via the official journal. The combination of these two signals suggests transitional actors are attempting to use procedural reaffirmation to anchor legitimacy at a moment when the Pact's political reception remains contested.

Full party-by-party reaction data to the National Pact was not retrievable from HaitiLibre within the 24-hour compilation window due to a page access issue. As a result, the scope of political opposition or endorsement cannot be fully validated in this brief cycle. What is confirmed is that the Pact generated sufficient public controversy to sustain media attention into a second news cycle, indicating it has not achieved the rapid consensus consolidation that transitional authorities would require for it to function as a stabilizing instrument.

The re-circulation of the electoral decree and calendar through the official journal is a procedural act with political intent. It signals that the CEP and transitional authorities wish to maintain the formal appearance of electoral process continuity regardless of the political turbulence generated by the Pact controversy. For international stakeholders tracking electoral viability, the re-circulation is a data point on institutional will but not a sufficient indicator of operational electoral readiness, given persistent gaps in funding, logistics, and security preconditions.

The CPT mandate under current institutional constants expires on February 7, 2027. Countdown language referencing imminent expiration is not applicable to the current reporting date. The transition framework has approaching pressure points within the calendar year, but the immediate governance risk is more accurately characterized as legitimacy attrition rather than mandate collapse.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Haiti's transitional governance history includes multiple iterations of national pact-style political agreements that generated initial momentum followed by contestation and fragmentation. The 2023 Montana Accord process and the subsequent CPT formation reflect this pattern. Electoral decree promulgation without corresponding operational capacity has been a recurring feature of the electoral environment since 2015. The re-circulation of procedural documents does not have a consistent track record of stabilizing political consensus in prior transition cycles.

TALKING POINTS

National Pact political reception remains contested with media framing tensions between adhesion and criticism entering second news cycle.



Full party-by-party reaction data unavailable in this cycle due to source access limitations, reducing confidence on political breadth of Pact support.

CEP re-circulated revised electoral decree and calendar through official journal, signaling procedural continuity intent.

Procedural reaffirmation does not substitute for operational readiness gaps in funding, logistics, and security preconditions for elections.

CPT mandate expires February 7, 2027; current governance risk is legitimacy attrition rather than imminent mandate collapse.

Transitional actors appear to be using electoral procedural signaling to stabilize political environment following Pact controversy.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

International organizations supporting the electoral process should request a CEP operational readiness update rather than treating decree re-circulation as a substitute for logistical and financial gap assessments.

Diplomatic staff should commission a full mapping of party-by-party National Pact positions once source access permits full validation, targeting a 48-72 hour follow-up cycle.

Political risk analysts should enter the second-cycle media attention on Pact contestation as a legitimacy attrition indicator in governance stability dashboards.

Diaspora-facing communicators should note that the electoral decree re-circulation provides a legitimate process reference point for community stakeholders seeking procedural grounding.

Decision-makers monitoring CPT continuity should plan around the February 7, 2027 mandate expiration horizon with mid-year review checkpoints rather than treating near-term expiration as the operative risk.



CONFIDENCE



Low confidence due to limited or conflicting reporting.

WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

NEXT 24 TO 48 HOURS

Trigger: Le Nouvelliste and AlterPresse coverage of the Natcom Kenscoff ambush.

Direction: Confirmation or escalation of telecommunications sector targeting pattern.

Risk: If cross-verification confirms deliberate targeting, telecom operator logistics suspension

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becomes an operational risk trigger across mountain communes.

Trigger: HaitiLibre restoration of National Pact party-by-party reaction article.

Direction: Full political mapping of Pact adhesion and opposition bloc composition.

Risk: If opposition bloc is broader than currently indicated, Pact legitimacy as a stabilizing instrument deflates rapidly.

Trigger: PNH or MSS official statement on Kenscoff ambush and Artibonite vehicle deployment operational integration.

Direction: Institutional response posture clarification.

Risk: Silence or reactive posture confirms that security reinforcements remain disconnected from proactive operational doctrine.

THIS WEEK

Trigger: Confirmation of Artibonite armored vehicle asset origin, donor-delivered versus fleet redeployment.

Direction: Sustainability assessment of PNH reinforcement in the department.

Risk: If redeployment from existing fleet, net capability gain is zero and Artibonite risk classification should remain unchanged.

Trigger: CEP communication on electoral calendar operational milestones following decree re-circulation.

Direction: Assessment of whether procedural reaffirmation translates into logistical activation.

Risk: Absence of operational follow-through within the week confirms that the re-circulation is symbolic rather than substantive.

Trigger: Additional commune-level Rara or public assembly cancellations across southwest or Artibonite departments.

Direction: Geographic diffusion rate of precautionary insecurity measures beyond primary metropolitan zone.

Risk: Cluster of cancellations across multiple communes signals accelerating civil space compression requiring revised regional risk assessments.

STRATEGIC HORIZON

Trigger: National Pact implementation mechanism activation and international community formal response.

Direction: Determination of whether the Pact functions as a genuine transition framework or a negotiating posture by competing factions.

Risk: If international community withholds formal endorsement, Pact loses the external legitimacy anchor required for domestic political uptake.

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Trigger: CPT governance continuity review as the February 7, 2027 mandate horizon enters the strategic planning window.

Direction: Scenario mapping for post-CPT institutional arrangements.

Risk: Without advance planning for mandate succession, the February 2027 date becomes a political shock rather than a managed transition milestone.

Trigger: Sustained armed group pressure on utility sector personnel following Kenscoff precedent.

Direction: Potential systemic withdrawal of essential service maintenance staff from conflict-adjacent zones.

Risk: If telecom, water, and power sector workers assess personal risk as unacceptable, infrastructure degradation in secondary urban zones accelerates beyond current projections.

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