



AYITI INTEL | ONE-STOP INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

February 27, 2026

Intelligence for Haiti's Democratic Transition

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Haiti's institutional architecture entered a zone of friction on February 27 as the Provisional Electoral Council publicly rejected any mandate to administer the constitutional referendum envisioned by the National Pact's Article 12, exposing a foundational gap between the Pact's electoral ambitions and the CEP's legal authority. Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aime returned from the 50th CARICOM summit reaffirming security as the overriding national priority, while the installation of new fiscal leadership at the Ministry of Finance and the DGI signals a revenue modernization push. The Gang Suppression Force first contingents remain confirmed for April 1, 2026. Stakeholders must monitor whether the CEP-Pact friction escalates into a formal institutional impasse that disrupts the August 30 electoral timeline.



QUICK SUMMARY FOR STAKEHOLDERS

CEP publicly states it lacks legal authority to administer the constitutional referendum required by National Pact Article 12.

PM Fils-Aime returned from CARICOM with no new international financial commitments secured for Haiti's security transition.

New Finance Minister Serge Gabriel Colin and DGI Director General Chesnel Francois installed February 25 with digital revenue reform mandate.

GSF first contingents publicly confirmed for April 1 arrival date by Le Nouvelliste citing government sources.

Gourde stable at 131.16 per USD with no devaluation alert and Q1 2026 forecast holding at 130.98.

DEVELOPMENT 1: CEP-NATIONAL PACT CONSTITUTIONAL FRICTION EXPOSES GOVERNANCE GAP

The Provisional Electoral Council issued a public statement through a member interviewed by Le Nouvelliste on February 25 declaring that the institution lacks both the legal mandate and the institutional authority to organize the constitutional modifications called for under Article 12 of the National Pact for Stability and the Organization of Elections. The CEP member explicitly stated that the council was not consulted during the Pact's drafting process, a procedural omission that now creates a structural liability at the core of the document signed by more than 200 political parties and civil society organizations.

The significance of this friction extends beyond procedural complaint. The National Pact operates on the assumption that the CEP will simultaneously administer first-round general elections and a concurrent constitutional referendum, with the referendum anchored to a provision allowing a limited number of constitutional changes approved through popular vote alongside the electoral process. The CEP's rejection of this dual mandate means the Pact contains a provision that currently has no implementing institution. Either the constitutional referendum track must be stripped from the Pact through renegotiation, a separate legal instrument must be crafted granting the CEP referendum authority it does not currently hold, or the provision risks becoming a permanent point of contention among Pact signatories.

This development fits a recurring pattern. The Transitional Presidential Council abandoned its own constitutional reform initiative in October 2025 under analogous institutional constraints, demonstrating that constitutional modification ambitions have consistently outpaced the legal architecture available to implement them. Le Nouvelliste's editorial board separately flagged that the National Pact grants PM Fils-Aime full governing powers without a defined expiration date, unlike the April 3, 2024 agreement that established the CPT, with the Pact remaining in effect until elected officials are installed. This creates a potentially indefinite mandate with no built-in sunset mechanism, a structural vulnerability that opposition actors and legitimacy challengers will exploit as the transition progresses.

The immediate operational risk for the August 30 first-round timeline is real but not yet determinative. The CEP has not issued a formal decree suspending electoral preparations. However, the absence of an implementing mechanism for Article 12 means the referendum track is effectively in suspension, and any political actor seeking to delay elections has a ready-made procedural argument.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Haiti has not held a constitutional referendum since 1987, when the post-Duvalier transition produced the current constitutional framework. All subsequent constitutional modification efforts, including the 2021 initiative under President Moise, collapsed under contested legitimacy or institutional obstruction. The pattern of electoral ambition exceeding institutional capacity is a structural feature of Haitian governance cycles, not an anomaly.

TALKING POINTS

The CEP's public rejection of referendum authority is the most significant governance signal of the day and must be tracked as a primary electoral risk indicator.

Pact signatories have no enforcement mechanism to compel CEP compliance with Article 12 as currently drafted.

PM Fils-Aime's government must either renegotiate Article 12, create a new legal instrument, or allow the referendum provision to become a dead letter.

The indefinite mandate language in the Pact represents a legitimacy exposure that will compound over time if elections are delayed.

This development is structurally distinct from and more significant than any single security incident recorded today.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

International organizations should formally request clarification from the CEP and PM's office on the legal pathway for Article 12 implementation within the next two weeks.

Diplomatic missions should assess whether the CEP-Pact friction warrants inclusion in the next BINUH or OAS monitoring report as a structural risk to the August 30 timeline.

Private sector legal counsel should flag the indefinite mandate language in the Pact as a contractual and regulatory uncertainty factor for investment planning through 2026.

Political actors aligned with Pact signatories should demand a formal written CEP position by March 15 to prevent this friction from hardening into an impasse.

Diaspora-focused organizations tracking electoral participation should note that the referendum track, if unresolved, could complicate diaspora voting procedure publication timelines.



CONFIDENCE



Moderate confidence based on partial institutional reporting.

DEVELOPMENT 2: KIDNAPPING SURGE TRIGGERS EMERGENCY SECURITY MEETING IN DELMAS

Minister of Justice Patrick Pelissier, serving as acting Prime Minister during Fils-Aime's CARICOM travel, chaired a high-level strategic security meeting in Delmas on February 25 in direct response to what Le Nouvelliste described as a kidnapping surge across the metropolitan area. The meeting convened PNH High Command including the Director General, the Central Directorate of Judicial Police, the Central Directorate of Administrative Police, and the West 1 and West 2 Departmental Directorates, alongside Delmas Mayor Wilson Jeudy and central government representatives.

The operational measures announced at the meeting reflect an enhanced posture across all ten departments. PNH leadership committed to optimizing mobile patrol density and fixed checkpoint coverage, intensifying prevention operations, expanding police outposts and forward operating bases, enforcing stricter internal troop identification protocols, and activating structured civilian collaboration through anti-kidnapping alert mechanisms. The scope of the announced measures extending to all ten departments rather than only the metropolitan zone signals recognition that kidnapping networks have operational reach beyond Port-au-Prince.

The meeting was preceded by three significant security incidents that define the operational context. On the night of February 20 to 21, a large-scale anti-gang operation in Kenscoff resulted in at least 16 gang members killed through a combination of sniper fire and drone deployment, with Task Force elements and private military contractor assets confirmed as participants. On February 23, a kidnapping interdiction operation in Delmas 48 killed six kidnappers including a figure identified as Kalash, but also killed two PNH officers, Junior Dorelus of the SWAT unit and Isreno Etienne of the Bureau of Investigation. Eight firearms and three vehicles were seized. On February 24, two additional suspected kidnapping network members were arrested in Port-au-Prince. The deaths of two officers in a single Delmas interdiction operation on February 23 are operationally significant, indicating that kidnapping networks are offering armed resistance at a level that generates PNH casualties.

The Carrefour-Aéroport substation, which had been seized and burned by gang forces, reopened as

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a renovated police station with businesses beginning to return to the corridor. This represents a concrete territorial recovery indicator, though DW's February 27 documentary on the Viv Ansanm coalition documented continued gang control over schools and healthcare facilities across large sections of Port-au-Prince, illustrating the fragmented and contested nature of security gains.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Kidnapping for ransom has functioned as a primary gang revenue stream in Haiti since the collapse of state authority in the metropolitan area accelerated in 2021. BINUH documented 5,915 conflict-related deaths in 2025 and noted that security force actions supported by the GSF have produced localized territorial gains, but gang financing through kidnapping and extortion has proven structurally resilient to interdiction-focused responses.

TALKING POINTS

Two PNH officers killed in a single February 23 operation signals high operational tempo and officer attrition risk that may constrain sustained anti-kidnapping campaign capacity.

The ten-department scope of announced operational measures reflects official recognition that kidnapping networks have national rather than metropolitan reach.

The Kenscoff operation's use of drones and confirmed private military contractor involvement represents a tactical evolution that requires monitoring for escalation dynamics.

The Carrefour-Aéroport corridor recovery is a positive territorial signal but remains fragile and geographically limited.

The DW documentary on Viv Ansanm, broadcast February 27, will likely amplify international media pressure on the Haitian government regarding gang control metrics.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

NGO security managers should reassess kidnapping risk protocols for all departments given the explicit ten-department operational framing of the February 25 security meeting.

Business security officers should monitor whether the announced mobile patrol and checkpoint expansion translates into measurable incident reduction over the next 30 days before revising risk ratings.

International donors should request a PNH casualty and attrition report for Q1 2026 to assess whether officer losses are structurally degrading unit capacity.

Diplomatic missions should request a formal technical briefing from PNH High Command on the role and legal status of private military contractor assets in the Kenscoff operation.

Diaspora organizations with family networks in departments outside Port-au-Prince should communicate the ten-department kidnapping alert status to community networks.



CONFIDENCE



Moderate confidence based on partial institutional reporting.

DEVELOPMENT 3: PM FILS-AIME RETURNS FROM CARICOM WITHOUT NEW FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aime landed at Toussaint Louverture International Airport on February 26 and delivered a public briefing from the diplomatic lounge flanked by government ministers, the PNH Acting Commander-in-Chief, and FAd'H representatives. The staging of the briefing at the airport alongside security leadership was an intentional signaling exercise: security as the institutional frame for the entire CARICOM engagement. Fils-Aime declared that the National Pact had been welcomed by regional and international partners as a strong signal of commitment to dialogue and described constructive exchanges with UAE representatives on strategic partnerships encompassing security cooperation, foreign investment, and financial oversight.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's appearance at the CARICOM summit produced a rhetorically significant but materially limited outcome for Haiti. Rubio stated that the United States will hold accountable all those who support gangs, including corrupt politicians who contribute to the destabilization of Haiti. However, the CARICOM summit produced no new dollar commitments to Haiti's security transition, no named security initiative specifically directed at Haiti, and no expansion of the financial architecture supporting the Multinational Security Support mission. The warning thus represents a continuation of the rhetorical accountability posture maintained by Washington since the Biden administration, without the sanctions actions or funding announcements that would give the posture operational weight.

The UAE engagement noted by Fils-Aime is a development requiring close monitoring. Strategic partnerships in security, foreign investment, and financial oversight with Abu Dhabi represent potential access to funding streams outside the traditional US-Canada-France donor framework that has historically conditioned international support. If UAE engagement moves from exploratory conversation to formal agreement, it could provide the government with financial autonomy that reduces leverage held by traditional bilateral partners, an outcome that both diversifies Haiti's transition financing and potentially reduces accountability conditionality.

Four appointments were installed on February 25 that define the government's economic management posture. Serge Gabriel Colin, former Director General of the Social Assistance and Economic Stimulus Fund, was named Minister of Economy and Finance. Colin installed Chesnel Francois as Director General of the General Tax Directorate with an explicit mandate for fiscal performance modernization and digital reform. Kesner Romilus was installed as Director General of FAES, and Luckson Philemond was named General Coordinator of the National School Canteen Program. The new DGI leadership explicitly acknowledged the departure of experienced personnel abroad and persistent revenue underperformance under the previous administration, framing the transition as a reset toward digital compliance enforcement.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Haiti's fiscal administration has chronically underperformed budget projections, with domestic revenue collection unable to meet more than a fraction of government spending requirements, forcing dependence on international budget support and remittance inflows. CARICOM has served as the primary regional diplomatic framework for Haiti transition management since the 2021 assassination of President Moïse, with the organization co-facilitating the negotiation frameworks that produced both the CPT structure and now the National Pact.

TALKING POINTS

Rubio's accountability warning at CARICOM carries rhetorical weight but zero new operational content for Haiti's security transition without accompanying sanctions or funding.

UAE engagement on security, investment, and financial oversight is the most consequential new bilateral signal from the CARICOM period and must be tracked through its implementation phase.

New DGI leadership's digital reform mandate signals stricter tax compliance enforcement with direct operational implications for businesses operating in Haiti.

The National Pact's indefinite mandate for Fils-Aïme, combined with CARICOM backing, gives the PM the strongest international legitimacy base of any Haitian executive since 2021.

New Finance Minister Colin's FAES background positions him toward social investment programming, potentially creating tension with the DGI's revenue enforcement mandate.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

Businesses operating in Haiti should immediately review tax compliance posture in anticipation of DGI enforcement intensification under new leadership aligned with digital audit systems.

Diplomatic missions should request a formal read-out from the government on the UAE strategic partnership discussions within two weeks to determine scope and conditionality.

International donors should coordinate on whether Rubio's accountability warning will be followed by a formal US sanctions package targeting specific politically connected gang financiers before the April 1 GSF deployment.

Private sector investors should note that the Colombia buyer forum on April 14 to 15 represents an actionable trade diversification opportunity that does not depend on Port-au-Prince security normalization.

Diaspora stakeholders tracking electoral participation should register the continued absence of published CEP diaspora voting procedures as the most immediate electoral access risk pending resolution.



CONFIDENCE



High confidence based on official institutional reporting.

DEVELOPMENT 4: GSF APRIL 1 DATE CONFIRMED AND HUMANITARIAN INDICATORS HELD STABLE

Le Nouvelliste confirmed on February 27 that the Haitian state intends to allocate millions of dollars to co-finance the Gang Suppression Force, with first contingents expected to arrive in Haiti on April 1, 2026. This represents the most specific and authoritatively sourced date yet published for GSF operational deployment and advances the timeline from the previously vague first-quarter-2026 framing. Prime Minister Fils-Aime briefed CARICOM Secretary General Carla Barnett on FAd'H and PNH strengthening needs and on the logistical requirements for GSF deployment support during the summit. The April 1 date now functions as a public commitment with both domestic and international visibility.

The BINUH Q4 2025 quarterly report, released in January 2026, recorded 5,915 conflict-related deaths in Haiti during 2025 and documented that security force actions supported by the GSF and the Multinational Security Support mission produced localized territorial gains. The report's framing confirms that the GSF operational model delivers incremental, geography-specific results rather than metropolitan-wide security transformation. The Carrefour-Aéroport corridor recovery reported this week by AP News is consistent with this model and represents a genuine if limited operational gain. The Deutsche Welle documentary broadcast February 27 provided a countervailing data point, documenting that Viv Ansanm maintains structural control of large sections of Port-au-Prince and continues to finance operations through kidnapping and extortion revenue streams that have not been disrupted by current security operations.

Humanitarian indicators are held stable from the prior reporting cycle. The International Organization for Migration's displacement tracking matrix recorded 1,450,254 internally displaced persons as of February 26, and the World Food Programme records 5.7 million food-insecure Haitians representing approximately half the population, with 277,000 children in acute malnutrition. The gourde exchange rate closed at 131.16 per USD on February 25 with a daily change of positive 0.16 percent, a monthly depreciation of 0.89 percent, and a 12-month depreciation of 0.54 percent against the USD. The Q1 2026 forecast stands at 130.98 per USD. No devaluation alert is warranted. The Ministry of Agriculture and Expertise France signed a memorandum of understanding under the PMSAN II program to support agricultural production in Leogane, Grand-Goave, and Petit-Goave, co-financed by the EU and the French Development Agency.

A shipwreck off Ile de la Gonave on February 24 resulted in one death, one person missing, and four rescued when the goods-carrying vessel Masa Lasa capsized in heavy swells. The incident is operationally significant for humanitarian logistics planning because island communities cut off from overland routes depend entirely on maritime transport, and vessel safety standards in Haiti's informal maritime sector remain unregulated and dangerous.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Gang Suppression Force was authorized by the Kenyan government and approved through UNSC mechanisms in 2024 as the backbone of a multilateral security support architecture intended to create conditions for Haiti's electoral transition. Kenya's first deployment encountered operational constraints including funding gaps and logistical challenges that pushed the initial timeline. Each confirmation of an April 1 date from the Haitian government side represents an incremental reduction of uncertainty in a deployment sequence that has faced repeated schedule pressure.

TALKING POINTS

April 1 GSF first contingent arrival is now a public Haitian government commitment, increasing accountability for non-delivery on both the government and contributing countries.

The gourde's sustained stability through Q1 2026 is a positive macroeconomic signal that reduces one category of business continuity risk.

The Viv Ansanm coalition's continued structural presence documented in the DW report must be weighed against the Carrefour-Aeroport territorial recovery as contradictory but simultaneous realities of the current security environment.

HOPE/HELP Senate renewal remains pending, with the House having passed the bill 345 to 45 in January 2026. A Senate delay beyond April creates direct risk to Haiti's textile employment base. The agricultural MOU for the South Department corridor is operationally significant for EU and AFD program managers and provides a concrete stability investment signal in a period dominated by security headlines.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

GSF contributing countries should confirm logistical pre-positioning requirements for April 1 deployment within the next two weeks to prevent a repeat of the 2024 timeline slippage.

Businesses dependent on the Gonave Island supply chain should immediately audit vessel safety and cargo insurance arrangements given the demonstrated maritime risk conditions.

US Congressional liaisons for Haiti stakeholders should prioritize HOPE/HELP Senate scheduling confirmation before the April recess to prevent a legislative gap that would directly harm textile employment.

Humanitarian program managers should treat the 1.45 million displacement figure as a minimum baseline and build operational surge capacity into Q2 2026 programming given the April GSF deployment timeline.

International financial institutions should note the new DGI leadership's revenue modernization mandate as an indicator of fiscal reform intent and request a formal reform timeline before the next IMF/World Bank Haiti consultation cycle.



CONFIDENCE



Moderate confidence based on partial institutional reporting.

WHAT TO WATCH NEXT

NEXT 24 TO 48 HOURS

Trigger: CEP issues or declines to issue a formal written institutional position on Article 12 of the National Pact.

Direction of travel: If the CEP formalizes its rejection, the Pact's constitutional referendum track moves from friction to impasse, requiring emergency renegotiation.

Risk: An informal standoff that persists without formal resolution creates a low-visibility but high-impact structural vulnerability to the August 30 electoral timeline.

Trigger: PNH casualty and operational tempo reporting following the February 23 Delmas officer deaths.

Direction of travel: If officer casualty rates remain elevated, PNH High Command may request accelerated GSF deployment or scale back anti-kidnapping operation intensity.

Risk: Officer attrition at current tempo could degrade unit cohesion and institutional morale entering the critical pre-election security period.

THIS WEEK

Trigger: UAE-Haiti strategic partnership details emerging through diplomatic channels or official government communications.

Direction of travel: If the UAE engagement moves from exploratory to formalized, it signals a deliberate Haitian government strategy to diversify away from traditional Western donor conditionality.

Risk: New bilateral funding without accountability conditionality may reduce international leverage over governance reform timelines.

Trigger: HOPE/HELP Senate scheduling confirmation or absence thereof.

Direction of travel: A Senate vote before April recess preserves Haiti's textile employment base.

Absence of scheduling represents a legislative threat requiring diaspora and private sector advocacy escalation.

Risk: Legislative gap in HOPE/HELP authorization would immediately affect employment for tens of thousands of Haitian textile workers at a moment of acute economic vulnerability.

STRATEGIC HORIZON

Trigger: April 1 GSF first contingent arrival confirmation or delay announcement.



Direction of travel: On-schedule arrival consolidates the security transition narrative and increases confidence in the August 30 electoral timeline. Delay would trigger a credibility crisis for both the Haitian government and contributing countries.

Risk: Any GSF deployment delay beyond April 1 will be interpreted by gang networks as a window of opportunity and will be used by political opposition as evidence of transition failure.

Trigger: CPT mandate expiration tracking under the Transitional Presidential Council's extended framework.

Direction of travel: The CPT mandate under its current extension runs to February 7, 2027.

Governance actors and opposition forces will begin positioning around this date as the electoral cycle moves closer to its projected culmination.

Risk: Failure to seat elected officials before February 7, 2027 would create a second governance vacuum requiring another round of emergency transition architecture.

PRIMARY SOURCES

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