

US-organized police-military “stabilization” force deploys in Haiti

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Haiti remains mired in a profound social crisis and escalating criminal gang violence, as a US-organized, United Nations’ sanctioned, police-military “stabilization” force continues to roll out its deployment in the Western hemisphere’s poorest country.

In a flimsy attempt to portray the mission as motivated by “humanitarian” concerns, not imperialist interests, the United States and Canada pushed for Kenya’s right-wing government to take the leadership of what is officially known as the UN Multilateral Security Support Mission to Haiti.

Between late June and mid-July, 400 Kenyan National Police Special Forces personnel arrived in Haiti, substantially short of what had been a promised 1,000-strong contingent. They are to be joined by 1,500 troops recruited from Jamaica, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, and Benin, and will work with the notoriously corrupt Haitian National Police to re-establish “law and order.”

The police-military mission has been organized and is principally financed by the United States. It has provided \$380 million to fund the mission and in recent weeks has delivered 80 Humvees, 35 MaxxPro vehicles, sniper rifles, and drones to Port-au-Prince.

Canadian imperialism is also playing an important role, and to a lesser extent France and Spain. Ottawa has contributed more than C\$80 million, some of it in the form of armored vehicles, and has provided training in Jamaica to some of the units deploying to Haiti.

The fraudulent character of the claims that the imperialist-organized intervention force is deploying to Haiti to protect its people and salvage “democracy” were exposed by the events occurring in Kenya, as officers drawn from its Special Forces police were deploying to Haiti.

The Kenyan government of William Ruto used National Police, and particularly the Special Forces, who are notorious for their thuggery and criminality, to violently suppress mass protests against IMF-dictated austerity measures. Last month, the Ruto government indefinitely banned protests in Nairobi’s Central Business District, invoking the manifestly trumped up pretext of potential violence by “criminal groups.”

In Haiti, Kenya’s police are carrying out the same role they do in Kenya. Their purpose is to terrorize the Haitian people into submission, so as to prevent the gang crisis from triggering a mass exodus of impoverished refugees to the US and Canada or destabilizing the broader Caribbean region, which Washington has long viewed as its backyard.

Over a century of imperialist occupation, regime-changes and plunder

After plundering Haiti for over a century, leaving death and destruction in their wake, the imperialist powers are only concerned with preventing the Haitian population’s desperate attempts to survive from becoming an

international “disturbance.”

The US has a long, bloody record of intervening militarily in Haiti, stretching back over a century. In the past three decades, they have repeatedly been joined by Canadian troops.

There are several reasons that the North American imperialist powers have chosen to outsource responsibility for establishing “order” in Haiti to Kenya and several other African and CARICOM nations, rather than deploying their own troops. First, US and Canadian military resources are focused on supplying Ukraine and preparing for direct war with Russia and China. There is also an acute awareness of the Haitian population’s hostility towards the imperialist powers. There have been repeated demonstrations in Port-au-Prince denouncing the role not just of Washington, but also of Canadian imperialism. Finally, there is a recognition that suppressing the gangs, who have intimate ties to and are sponsored by rival factions of the venal Haitian bourgeoisie, could cost considerable blood and treasure.

Since the beginning of the year, the situation in Haiti has been widely described as teetering on the brink of total collapse, with extreme violence and want having become the norm for a great portion of Haiti’s population.

Already burdened by over a century of imperialist occupation and oppression, Haiti suffered further devastation in a 2010 earthquake, from which it has never fully recovered. The imperialist led “humanitarian” efforts which followed the earthquake turned into systematic pillage. Repeated rounds of IMF imposed austerity, then the COVID-19 pandemic precipitated the ongoing collapse of Haitian society.

Armed gangs have taken control of much of Haiti, severing supply routes and isolating the capital from the rest of the country. The gang control has also restricted access to vital goods, including food, medicine, and fuel, making basic necessities a luxury. It is estimated that gangs control approximately 80 percent of Haiti’s capital.

According to a UN report issued late last month, some 578,000 people have been displaced and forced onto the streets, where killings, lynchings, and sexual assaults take place on a regular basis. Only a quarter of the country’s dilapidated hospitals are functioning, 1.5 million children have been shut out of school, and approximately half of Haiti’s population is in need of humanitarian assistance.

Meanwhile, with more than 8 months of the year already over, the UN’s Haiti 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan, has raised just \$162.5 million from member states or just 33 percent of a budgeted \$674 million.

The desperate situation in Haiti is causing a migration crisis, some of the consequences of which were tragically illustrated last month when a fire broke out on a boat carrying migrants off the coast of the island nation, resulting in at least 40 deaths and multiple injuries, according to a United Nations agency.

Social tensions are at a high point, as the population is facing increasing shortages of essential goods and services. It was reported on Wednesday that Haiti’s largest hydropower plant, Peligre, was shut down after

protesters stormed the facility demanding access to electricity. The country has been grappling with energy shortages, as the authorities prioritize the capital, Port-au-Prince, over other regions. The Peligre plant, with a capacity of 54 MW, represents nearly all of Haiti's hydropower output. Hydrocarbons are also in short supply due to Venezuela halting oil exports to Haiti in 2019 amid US sanctions and declining oil production.

The tragedy now engulfing Haiti is first and foremost a product of imperialist oppression and predation.

US Marines occupied the country from 1915 to 1934 to ensure "stability." This was a euphemism for guaranteeing that Haiti's debts to American banks were repaid, and that a peasant uprising was crushed. The national army, shaped and trained by the US occupation forces, became the backbone of the Duvalier dictatorship, which imposed a reign of terror and torture for three decades. During this time, Washington staunchly supported the regime, seeing it as a critical Cold War ally in the Caribbean. Even after the overthrow of "Baby Doc" Duvalier in 1986, the US maneuvered to maintain its grip on the country amidst a popular uprising.

The cycle of intervention continued with US and Canadian troops occupying Haiti in the 1990s and again in 2004 to remove democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, partnering with far-right factions linked to the old Duvalier regime. Following the catastrophic 2010 earthquake, the imperialist powers returned under the guise of humanitarian aid, pushing for the country's neoliberal economic restructuring to further exploit Haiti's resources and toiling masses.

American and Canadian imperialism and the sponsors of gang violence

On Aug. 20, the US Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control imposed sanctions on Michel Joseph Martelly, a far-right figure connected to the Duvalierist bourgeoisie who served as the President of Haiti from 2011 to 2016. According to a statement from the US government, Martelly was involved in drug trafficking, money laundering, and supported several Haitian gangs of the kind that currently control 80 percent of the nation's capital, and plunder, and terrorize its population.

Martelly's corruption and gang involvement were widely known, yet in his years in power he enjoyed staunch US support. As a recent *Foreign Policy* article noted, "Despite the long-standing allegations against Martelly, the United States maintained a warm relationship with him for years." It goes on to explain that the sanctions against Martelly are the product of immediate political concerns—that Martelly's plans for a political comeback could destabilize the transitional government of "national unity" the US-stitched together earlier this year to provide a fig-leaf of popular Haitian support for the foreign police-military intervention it was organizing.

As was shown by the release of emails under the Freedom of Information Act in 2016, Hillary Clinton's US State Department intervened heavily in the 2010-2011 presidential election in Haiti and effectively ensured the victory of Martelly. Once in power, Martelly's presidency saw corruption, suppression of local democratic processes, and the reestablishment of the Haitian army.

In 2015/16, the Obama administration and the newly elected Trudeau government manipulated Haiti's election process to install Martelly's protégé, Moïse, as president. With the imperialists' support, the latter imposed yet further IMF austerity, while trying to arrogate additional powers, and refusing to call new elections.

Following Moïse's assassination in 2021, in what appears to have been a settling of accounts among rival bourgeois factions and criminal gang-

sponsors, Washington, backed by Canada and the other imperialist powers—the so-called Core Group—imposed Ariel Henry as the un-elected head of Haiti's government and de facto dictator.

However, in February, the US turned on Henry, having concluded he had become a liability and removed him from office. It effectively kidnapped him as he returned from Kenya, having signed the security agreement that allowed for Kenya forces to lead the current police-military stabilization mission.

Henry has been replaced by an imperialist-sponsored "Transitional Council," another unelected body, created with representatives from Haiti's elite and civil society, including forces which formerly presented themselves as opponents of imperialism, like Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas. This Transitional Council is now tasked with organizing new elections by early 2026, which will no doubt once more be closely "supervised" by the imperialist powers.

According to recent Haitian media reports, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is set to visit Haiti in the next few days to hold meetings with Edgard Leblanc Fils, the Chairman of the Transitional Council, and Prime Minister Garry Conille.

Whatever political constellation results from the "transitional" process, it can be certain its members will be beholden to imperialism and the Haitian bourgeoisie and have corrupt links to the criminal gangs.

Last Tuesday, Haiti's anti-corruption agency launched a new crackdown on government corruption, accusing high-ranking officials of crimes such as illicit enrichment and abuse of office. The investigations revealed significant misuse of funds and resources, including cases where food meant for public school students was diverted and government fuel was used for personal benefit. Among the accused is the former minister of planification and external cooperation, Aviol Fleurant. There can be no doubt that this largely demonstrative crackdown only represents the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the Haitian elite's criminality.

Haiti's crisis is an extreme and highly concentrated manifestation of the crisis of capitalism as a whole. There is an intrinsic and direct link between the weak Haitian bourgeoisie's incapacity to rule within the bounds of democratic legality, and its complete dependence on imperialism to maintain its rule and safeguard its ill-gotten wealth.



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