

What Solution for Haiti Under Siege?

by Cynthia R. Rush

March 14—While Haiti’s capital of Port-au-Prince was under siege by a coalition of violent gangs on a rampage, killing, looting, destroying property and wiping out all vestiges of normal life, the country’s *de facto* Prime Minister Ariel Henry finally announced his resignation in a video address March 11. For well over a year, Haitians had taken to the streets in sometimes violent protests demanding Henry’s ouster, accusing him of doing nothing to stop ever-increasing gang violence, or to improve an economy crushed by IMF austerity policy.

The unelected Henry took power after the July 7, 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, and while considered an illegitimate ruler by the majority of the Haitian people, Henry remained in place thanks to the largesse of the Biden Administration and its European allies. It was only on March 6, when the domestic situation had spun completely out of control, that the State Department told Henry, whom it had steadfastly supported for the past two and one-half years, that he’d have to step down—something that Caribbean leaders had been demanding for some time. Jimmy “Barbecue” Chérizier, the leader of the Viv Ansanm gang coalition that has terrorized the capital, warned he would unleash civil war “that would lead to genocide” should Henry dare return.

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Ariel Henry, the never-elected, now former Prime Minister of Haiti, did nothing to improve an economy crushed by IMF austerity policy.

VOA/PICRYL



Jimmy “Barbecue” Chérizier, a former elite police officer who now heads the Viv Ansanm gang coalition. After Prime Minister Ariel Henry announced his resignation from his refuge in Puerto Rico March 11, Chérizier said he would unleash a civil war “that would lead to genocide” if Henry returned.

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ignation from Puerto Rico, where he had been forced to take refuge after gangs shut down Port-au-Prince’s Toussaint Louverture International Airport, locking him out as he returned from a trip to Kenya. There, he had tried to finalize details on a Kenyan police-led Multinational Security Support Mission (MSSM) organized to deploy to Haiti to assist the national police in combating violent gangs.

“Kenyan” is a relative term—the MSSM was organized by the Biden Administration, which couldn’t send American troops to a country where the history of brutal U.S. military and regime change interventions is seared into the memory of the Haitian people. Washington had to find some black faces to go in its place, and Secretary of State Tony Blinken worked on Kenyan President William Ruto to get him to “volunteer” for the police mission. Ariel Henry had first requested a foreign intervention force in October of 2022, a request the U.S. immediately supported.

Henry’s resignation came at the end of a day-long meeting in Kingston, Jamaica of representatives of the United States, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Canada, France, and other Ibero-American and African countries, and the UN, to debate a proposal for the creation of a transitional presidential council to replace Henry. This council would name an interim prime minister and

reportedly pave the way for elections. Presented as “Haitian-led and Haitian-conceived,” this proposal is yet another project of the “international community,” and the condition for membership on the new council is acceptance of the MSSM. Within hours of the council’s announced creation, designated members had already begun fighting with each other over the project’s viability.

The Agenda Is Genocide

The backdrop to these developments is the unprecedented violence that has ravaged the capital and other parts of the country over the past few weeks, unleashing a Gaza-like genocide that is the deliberate result of policy decisions made outside of Haiti, including the IMF’s imposition of killer austerity measures. Gangs laid siege to the downtown’s central *Champs de Mars* District where all government buildings, ministries, the presidential palace, and major hotels are located—vandalizing, looting, and in the case of the Interior Ministry, destroying it completely. The violence has not stopped in the wake of Henry’s resignation.

Viv Ansanm has forced the shutdown of hospitals, schools, universities, businesses and government offices, while an attack on Port-au-Prince’s main port prevented the distribution of urgently needed food and medicine. Although police retook control of the port, they haven’t been able to establish a safe corridor through which food can be distributed to the population.

The shortage of food and fuel has caused their prices to soar beyond the reach of increasingly impoverished citizens. Many poor families are eating only one meal a day, and according to Jean-Martin Bauer, Country Director for the UN’s World Food Program (WFP), Haiti, “What’s going on in Haiti is a protracted episode of mass hunger” typically seen in war zones. 4 million people are “a step away from famine,” he warned, and at least 200,000 children are vulnerable to acute malnutrition. Water and fuel are scarce.

Over the period of Feb. 29–March 2, using drone technology, gangs attacked the National Penitentiary and the Croix-des-Bouquets, the city’s two large prisons and released 3,700 inmates including many high-profile gang leaders. Several police stations have been burned to the ground and indiscriminate shoot-

ings have left scores of dead, hundreds wounded and 362,000 internally displaced, half of them children. That figure has increased by 15% just since the beginning of this year. Access roads into and out of the capital are blockaded, as are roads within the city, making transportation dangerous, especially for the delivery of humanitarian aid. Trade between the capital and the rest of the country is shut off, denying other regions access to food and fuel.

Corpses line Port-au-Prince’s streets, and the stench of rotting flesh is so strong that it has forced some people to flee their homes. Morgues are overwhelmed, or their employees are too scared to venture out on the streets to retrieve bodies.

Not a ‘Haitian Problem’

For any rational political thinker or strategist looking at Haiti today, it would be obvious that the nation’s descent into this hell is not of its own making. It’s not a “shithole” country as Donald Trump claims, or a permanent “basket case,” but rather a victim of the Malthusian Anglo-American oligarchy resident in the City of London and on Wall Street, which never considered that Black Haiti deserved to be sovereign or to develop economically. For these financial predators, the 1804 revolution by black slaves, the second revolution for independence in the Americas after the American Revolution of 1776, was not to be tolerated, nor its Constitution, which America’s first Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton helped write, respected.

In its 220 years of existence, Haiti has been subjected to one foreign intervention after another because it was always a “problem” requiring outside interference. If it wasn’t U.S. Marines, it was the army of NGOs that flooded the country after the horrific 2010 earthquake, which had billions of dollars to throw around and nothing to show for it. Fourteen years after that devastating event, there are still people living in the remains of tarp tents in the downtown area, or whose “new” houses were cobbled together with tarps and other flimsy materials. There are shanty towns outside of the capital made from the leftover tarps from 2010 and other materials provided by the “Republic of NGOs” that set up shop in the country but never contributed to its development. Promised investments in sanitation, sewage systems, energy, healthcare, and education never materialized.



A sewage removal and treatment proposal from 2017—one component of a new, comprehensive infrastructure plan developed by China’s Southwest Municipal Engineering Design and Research Institute to renovate and rebuild Port-au-Prince and its port.

The 2017 [proposal](#) by China’s Southwestern Municipal Engineering Design and Research Institute to spend \$4.7 billion to completely renovate Port-au-Prince, with modern sanitation and drainage systems, transportation, a sewage treatment plant and reconstruction of the port, was sabotaged by the IMF.

How to explain gang proliferation, the unhindered flow of weapons into the country from the United States, and the ever-increasing drug trade, for which Haiti is a key transshipment point for cocaine heading to America and Europe? Look to Dope, Inc., the international banking and drug-money laundering apparatus which thrives on the physical and mental destruction of Haiti’s population, especially its youth. It is estimated that 30–50% of Haiti’s gangs are minors—poor, unemployed, uneducated. The March 8 *New York Times* [quoted](#) Haitian radio broadcaster Blondine Tanis on the

young kids in the streets with heavy automatic weapons. They shoot people and burn their bodies with no remorse. I don’t know how to qualify that. I ask myself what happened to this generation. Are they even human?

Haiti today is a wholly owned subsidiary of Dope, Inc. whose local collaborators include powerful oligarchs with international banking and political connections; Colombian and Mexican drug cartels are responsible for the drug-

trafficking in the region. That these oligarchs also coordinate with and use violent gangs is well known.

Sticking with the Old Order

With the establishment of a new financial security and development architecture, as called for by the Schiller Institute, Haiti’s economic and political devastation could be adequately addressed. It would take China, Russia, the United States, and other Ibero-American or

nations of the Global South coming together in a collaborative venture to lift this nation out of its forced underdevelopment and depopulation and connect it to China’s Belt and Road Initiative and the BRICS development perspective. The Schiller Institute Plan to Develop Haiti, published in the October 1, 2021 issue of *EIR*, offers a detailed [plan](#) for Haiti’s development, based precisely on the above perspective.

Speaking at the Feb. 25–28 summit of the Caribbean Community in Guyana, Brazilian President Lula da Silva sharply criticized the international community for its failure to promote Haiti’s economic development as the way to deal with its humanitarian and security crisis:

In Haiti we need to act quickly to alleviate the suffering of a population lacerated by tragedy. Unfortunately, the international community didn’t listen when Brazil warned that the effort to stabilize [Haiti] would only be sustainable with massive support for development and the institutional strengthening of the country.

Instead, the “international community” is sticking with the “rules-based” unipolar order that has doomed Haiti to its current existence. The transitional presidential council announced by the March 11 High Level Meeting on Haiti in Jamaica is already being questioned by some of the seven designated members, per-



DoS

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's proposal for a "transitional council" for Haiti would merely continue the imperial policy of denying sovereignty and economic development, to be enforced by a U.S. proxy police deployment from Kenya.

haps because the U.S. hand is all over this "Haitian-led and Haitian-conceived" proposal. According to *The Washington Post* March 13, Secretary of State Tony Blinken spent time at the meeting

working out who, exactly, would join the transitional council.... At one point, Blinken huddled with other leaders in a corner marking down names on a piece of scrap paper.

The clincher was Blinken's demand that the proposal be accompanied by the "swift deployment" of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSSM), to include 1,000 Kenyan police personnel and perhaps more from other countries. Acceptance of the MSSM deployment is a requirement for membership in the transitional presidential council.

Blinken even offered another \$100 million for the MSSM, raising the total U.S. contribution to \$300 million, failing to mention that Republicans in the U.S. Congress have refused to approve any funding at all for this operation until their questions about its purpose and effectiveness are answered. Blinken confidently stated that the MSSM would be crucial to stabilizing Haiti's security situation and thus pave the way for free and fair elections. As of now, however, Kenya has put the MSSM on hold, stating that it can-

not deploy its police unless there is a legitimate "constitutional authority" in Haiti with which it can coordinate. Without the presidential council and interim prime minister in place, nothing will happen.

On March 12, a rattled State Department spokesman, Matthew Miller, expressed the certainty that the presidential council would be in place within 24 to 48 hours.

In an astute comment [reported](#) March 8 by *Responsible Statecraft*, Brian Concannon, Jr., founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, pointed out:

[A] legitimate, broadly supported, sovereign transitional Haitian government might request foreign police assistance. But a government allowed to form only if it accepts a U.S.-imposed occupation force originally designed to prop up a hated, repressive government is not sovereign. It may not be legitimate or broadly-supported either.

The Discredited West

That the proposed transitional presidential council is a product of the same imperial policy responsible for Haiti's immiserated state, is hardly a secret. The Haitian daily *Le Nouvelliste* pointedly [commented](#) March 8 that for the previous three days,

[E]very six hours, on average, an American official has made a statement that is believed to be definitive but turns out to be merely repetitive.... Americans and the international community are in disarray. While all this is happening, everyone is making plans over the nation's remains while Port-au-Prince is left to fend for itself.

A day later, Maarten Boute, Director of Operations for the Digicel Group, Haiti's telecommunications agency, demanded:

The U.S. must acknowledge its role in Haiti's current crisis. Gangs involved in drug smuggling for U.S. consumption, armed with weapons from the U.S., have flourished, due to disas-

trous U.S. foreign policy. Haiti is teetering on the edge of total collapse. It's time to act.

More directly to the point were the March 11 remarks by Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodríguez, at a seminar sponsored by the Puebla Group of progressive Ibero-American leaders in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, titled “A New Regional Financial Architecture.” Rodríguez charged that the horrific crisis in Haiti today is but the “most terrible example” of the great harm which the United States inflicted on the entire Ibero-American and Caribbean region when it imposed crushing economic sanctions on Venezuela. That crisis, she warned, has created the pretext for yet another invasion of Haiti, which is currently being planned—a reference to the MSSM.

Laying siege to Venezuela has hit our region, and not only South America but also ... the other countries which were part of PetroCaribe, and the most terrible example, from the humanitarian point of view, we see today is Haiti.

Before Venezuela was slammed with U.S. and European sanctions, it had provided financial assistance to poor Central American and Caribbean nations through its PetroCaribe program, selling oil at a subsidized price and on generous repayment terms. In Haiti's case, Venezuela provided \$4 billion in humanitarian support before sanctions forced PetroCaribe to shut down. So, Rodríguez asked:

Where is Haiti today? Whose responsibility is it that Haiti is the way it is, and that now constitutes the pretext which warrants a military intervention into Haiti? Because it is an invasion into Haiti that is planned. Who is the principal party responsible for this?

Caribbean Basin Belt & Road Projects



EIRNS

The Caribbean Belt and Road proposal for both maritime and overland transport routes, as presented in EIR's World Land-Bridge report, provides a region-wide economic development solution to escape the descent into hell.

The proper response? Rodríguez urged those nations around the world which have been affected either directly or indirectly by the more than “26,000 unilateral coercive measures” imposed by the United States and Europe, to work on creating a new international financial architecture. “Unilateral coercive measures, wrongly called sanctions, [are imposed] as a means of extortion” against countries and are “the central axis of Washington’s war policy,” the Venezuelan official stressed. Some 930 coercive measures imposed on her country had taken “almost 700 billion dollars out of its economy; and when it was cut off from the SWIFT payments system, it lost “in one second” more than 77% of its international banking correspondents.

As *RT* reported, Rodríguez urged countries to “start saving, trading, and financing themselves with their own currencies, because if they decide to continue to be ‘subjected to U.S. domination over trade relations,’ it will be ‘very difficult’ to establish the new financial architecture ‘that we want’ and that ‘we have to create.’” She told conference participants that “exclusion from the economic, commercial and financial life of the world leads us to rethink our path.”