



## Haiti: Stop the silence and international collusion Change begins by ending impunity

Since July 2018 and on many occasions, in a context of deteriorating rights and living conditions, Haitians have mobilized with force and courage against impoverishment, corruption and authoritarianism. Their fight was met with repression from the government of Jovenel Moïse and subdued or explicit opposition of the international "community".

In two years, the situation has deteriorated even more, and is characterized mainly by:

**Impoverishment:** the already precarious living conditions of Haitians (59% in poverty) have continued to deteriorate. The inflation and devaluation of the local currency, the seizure of public institutions and policies by a corrupt elite have further compromised access to basic social services, especially health and education.

**Corruption:** the Supreme Court of Auditors documented the waste and embezzlement of 1.5 billion euros from the Petrocaribe agreement, intended for development projects. Haitian businessmen as well as the political class, including President Jovenel Moïse, are involved in this scandal.

**Terror:** explosion of insecurity, proliferation, consolidation and convergence of armed gangs. The United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) documented 159 people murdered and 92 others injured - including children - between January and June 2020, due to gang violence. These gangs are behind at least four massacres (the last one, in late August-early September). The deadliest massacre is that of La Saline, where at least 71 people were killed on the night of November 13th to 14th, 2018. National and international investigations have pointed out the involvement of a former police officer, Jimmy Chérisier, alias "Barbecue" as well as the relations between armed gangs and the government, to the point of evoking a "*state massacre*".

**Impunity:** The scandal of the Petrocaribe funds demonstrates not only the gravity, but also the systematic nature of corruption, which feeds and reinforces impunity. No progress in the investigations on corruption, human rights violations and the massacres, no trials on the horizon. The investigations have trapped, the massacres go unpunished, and the victims are left with no way out.

Discredited, contested by a very large majority of Haitians who, over the past two years, have shown their discontentment, President Jovenel Moïse is holding out largely thanks to the support of the United States, and the subordination of other countries and international bodies, including the European Union (EU). In such way, they have become the direct and indirect coconspirators of the Haitian government. Moral condemnations and calls for a consensual solution do not change anything and disregard the fact that there is already a very large consensus in Haiti *against* the current president.

## **Time is running out**

A breakthrough has been reached in recent weeks with the assassination of the head of bar of Port-au-Prince, Me Monferrier Dorval, the massacre of Bel-Air, a popular district in the center of Port-au-Prince, and the unconstitutional establishment of a Provisional Electoral Council ( CEP) to hasten the holding of elections and the reform of the Constitution. There is a race against democracy.

No conditions are in place for free and credible elections. Neither the legal conditions (violation of constitutional rules), nor the technical conditions (absence of local offices, material including the new identity cards of the German firm Dermalog, accused of corruption, etc.) nor the democratic conditions (the new CEP members do not represent the various sectors of the nation, and were not chosen in agreement with civil society organizations as expected). Even less in security: the United Nations representative in Haiti is outlining the stranglehold the armed gangs have on the most popular districts of Port-au-Prince, *"no doubt in order to exert an influence on the outcome of the elections in these districts"*.

In addition, given the context and the general distrust in their leaders and institutions, the vast majority in Haiti does not want these elections. Is it therefore a matter of imposing them against the will of Haitians themselves? Under the current conditions, rather than offering the means to freely express popular sovereignty, these elections are part of the reproduction of a "system" against which the Haitian people struggle.

Change begins by putting an end to impunity. And by fighting against the conditions and actors that allow it and use it. This involves, in particular, the establishment of the Petrocaribe trial, the prosecution of those responsible for the violence and the massacres, the suspension of any person involved in current cases, and, above all, the respect of the voices and of the rights of Haitians.

***Consequently, we demand from the international community and particularly the Core Group to conduct diplomacy based on:***

- 1. The sovereignty of Haitians**, who dare to stand out and oppose any interference, including that of the United States.
- 2. Haitians' demands to end impunity and ensure a transition**, by supporting and accompanying their work for a fair and equitable trials of those responsible for the massacres and the embezzlement of the Petrocaribe funds.
- 3. The denial to provide economic, political and moral support for constitutional reform and elections which**, under the current conditions, amount to a masquerade in the advantage of the current government.
- 4. Accountability to Haitian citizens and countries known as "friends of Haiti"** for the decisions taken so far on their behalf. We want to know, among other things, why the EU has granted 63.3 million euros of budget support to the government of Jovenel Moïse, when the conditions for risk management and the rule of law were not met, and what use was made of this money. Likewise, we want the EU to give itself the means to respond to and verify the corruption accusations leveled against the German company, Dermalog.