

Minister
of Foreign Affairs



Ministre
des Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

September 15, 2023

Mr. Ali Ehsassi
Chair
House of Commons Standing Committee
on Foreign Affairs and International Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Ehsassi:

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, I am pleased to respond, on behalf of the Government of Canada, to the Fifteenth Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, further to their Subcommittee on International Human Rights' study entitled, "*The Human Rights Situation in Haiti*." I would like to thank all members for their time and effort studying such an important issue facing Haitian people as well as many Canadians with ties to Haiti.

The Government of Canada has carefully reviewed the report the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (the Subcommittee) conducted on the human rights situation in the Republic of Haiti. The Government appreciates the subcommittee's considerable attention to this important issue. The Government wishes to thank the witnesses for their expert testimony which helped provide a holistic picture of the situation on the ground.

As members of the committee are well aware, the situation in Haiti remains volatile. The profound political, humanitarian and security crisis in Haiti continues. An increase in gang violence and control over territory has resulted in: the displacement of tens of thousands of Haitians; one of the world's highest per capita kidnapping rates; increased sexual violence; and over 2100 murders recorded in 2022 (a 35% increase from 2021). The mounting insecurity is coupled with severe economic challenges, contested political leadership and legitimacy, stagnant reconstruction efforts following the August 2021 earthquake that killed over 2000 people, and critical food insecurity. For the first time ever, Haiti has over 20,000 people living in a state of famine, and in May 2023, the United Nations (UN) elevated Haiti to its highest alert level for acute hunger.

For decades, the Government of Canada has taken a number of steps to contribute to the international efforts to Haiti, both through political and diplomatic channels as well as through its existing funding programs. The Government will continue to use the tools at its disposal to pursue an end to the current multidimensional crisis in Haiti.

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In response to this crisis, Canada implemented an integrated approach to support Haitian-led solutions and remains committed to working with the international community and partners in Haiti to finding a long-term solution to the crisis. This approach aims to support Haitian authorities' efforts to ensure the free and sustainable movement of fuel and humanitarian goods, and by extension, to help create the conditions for Haiti's greater political stability and an inclusive political dialogue leading towards restoration of democratic institutions through elections.

In that regard, Canada has committed to actively supporting dialogue efforts between different political groups in Haiti, as well as engaging the international community, including key regional neighbours such as CARICOM, to solicit support and awareness for a Haitian-led and Haitian-owned solution.

Our government will continue its efforts to sanction those who support gangs, foment violence and perpetrate unspeakable cruelty on the population in order to incentivize relevant stakeholders to engage constructively in resolving the crisis and encourage behaviour change away from corruption and impunity.

To meet the most urgent needs, including human rights issues, Canada commits to continued significant international assistance programming in Haiti across sectors but particularly governance, security, and anti-corruption.

With a focus on Haitian-led solution, Canada also continues to support Haitian authorities' efforts to restore order and security-led solutions to end the ongoing violence in the country.

We will closely monitor the human rights situation in Haiti and I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee as the situation evolves. I can assure you that Canada is doing all in its power to support vulnerable Haitians.

The Government welcomes the recommendations of the Subcommittee and has provided in the attached annex additional information responding to each recommendation.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Fifteenth Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, further to their Subcommittee on International Human Rights' study entitled, “The Human Rights Situation in Haiti”.

Introduction

The Government of Canada has carefully reviewed the report the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (the Subcommittee) conducted on the human rights situation in the Republic of Haiti. The Government appreciates the subcommittee’s considerable attention to this important issue. The Government wishes to thank the witnesses for their expert testimony which helped provide a holistic picture of the situation on the ground.

For decades, the Government of Canada has taken a number of steps to contribute to the international efforts to Haiti, both through political and diplomatic channels as well as through its existing funding programs. The Government will continue to use the tools at its disposal to pursue an end to the current multidimensional crisis in Haiti.

The Government welcomes the recommendations of the Subcommittee and has provided below additional information responding to each recommendation.

Recommendation 1: That the Government of Canada immediately addresses challenges with its sanctions regime, including the lack of transparency and information provided to Parliamentarians, as well as the lack of resources allocated to investigations and enforcement.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

The Government of Canada continues to be hard at work on several initiatives aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Canada’s sanctions regime. In October 2022, the Prime Minister announced \$76 million in funding to strengthen Canada’s capacity to implement sanctions, including through the establishment of a dedicated sanctions bureau at Global Affairs Canada and additional support to the RCMP for enforcement efforts. A new sanctions bureau at Global Affairs Canada will work collaboratively across government to explore opportunities to further enhance how information on Canada’s sanctions listings are conveyed to Canadians.

The Government of Canada is also committed to openness and transparency by sharing information on sanctions with Parliamentarians to the extent possible. Between tabling evidence, question period and responding to Committee reports like this one, the Government is already responding to Parliament in many ways, and Global Affairs Canada regularly notifies Parliament of new sanctions measures. Once entered into force, all new autonomous sanctions regulations are tabled in both chambers of Parliament forthwith for the *United Nations Act* (UNA), within 5 sitting days for regulations under the *Special Economic Measures Act* (SEMA) and within 15 days for the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Officials Act* (JVCFOA). Information relating to scope, intent, and enforcement of sanctions is made available online through various Government of Canada webpages, including the Global Affairs Canada sanctions website, Regulatory Impact Analysis Statements published in the Canada Gazette, Part II, and News Releases and Backgrounders that are issued alongside new sanctions listings. In some instances, information cannot be shared with Parliamentarians, for example, to preserve the commercial confidentiality or the integrity of ongoing investigations.

It is a criminal offence to contravene an order or a regulation under Canada's sanctions legislation and although Global Affairs Canada has a central role to play in ensuring the effectiveness of sanctions as a foreign policy tool, their implementation and enforcement relies on collaboration with other departments and agencies, including CBSA, RCMP and other departments and agencies. The CBSA and the RCMP are responsible for investigating and enforcing potential sanctions violations. Investigations of potential sanctions violations are often complex and dynamic, and require that information be kept in confidence as the investigation process unfolds. Though there are limitations to the information that can be shared during an active investigation, the Government of Canada remains committed to transparency as it relates to sanctions enforcement.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Global Affairs Canada officials have frequently spoken on sanctions and addressed questions from parliamentarians during committee appearances, and have also responded to specific parliamentary enquiries. For example, in fall 2022, Global Affairs Canada officials spoke before the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade as part of their comprehensive review of the provisions and operation of the JVCFOA and SEMA.

Moreover, that the Government of Canada continue and extend the use of the Justice for the Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, sanctioning individuals who are actively involved in undermining democracy and gross human rights violations in Haiti, including politicians and oligarchs who finance and support violent armed gangs.

Standing up for human rights and combatting corruption around the world are core parts of Canada's foreign policy. Our robust sanctions regime is a key tool for holding accountable individuals, entities, and states who threaten the international rules-based system that keeps us safe, and who violate fundamental human rights. In addition to imposing sanctions adopted by the UN Security Council through the *United Nations Act* (UNA), Canada imposes sanctions under two additional pieces of legislation: the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act* (JVCFOA); and the *Special Economic Measures Act* (SEMA). The choice of legal instrument to apply sanctions is considered on a case by case basis in the context of the specific circumstances at issue.

Under the JVCFOA, Canada imposes sanctions against foreign nationals responsible for, or complicit in: acts of significant corruption; or gross violations of internationally-recognized human rights against individuals who seek to expose illegal activity carried out by foreign public officials or obtain, exercise, defend or promote internationally recognized human rights and freedoms. Persons in Canada and Canadians outside Canada are prohibited from engaging in dealings with listed individuals sanctioned under the JVCFOA (dealings prohibition). These individuals are also inadmissible to Canada under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and are branded permanently as human rights violators.

Under SEMA, Canada imposes sanctions against a state in four situations: where an international organization to which Canada belongs calls on its members to take economic measures against a foreign state; where a grave breach of international peace and security has occurred and is likely to result in a serious international crisis; where gross and systematic violations of human rights have occurred; or where a national of a foreign state, who is either a foreign public official or associate of such an official, is responsible for or complicit in acts of significant corruption. Individuals listed under the SEMA are inadmissible to Canada under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. The SEMA provides for a wide variety of additional measures when imposing sanctions, allowing Canada to escalate measures beyond subjecting individuals or entities to a dealings prohibition such as an arms embargo, import/export restrictions, or technical assistance prohibitions. There are SEMA sanctions on 16 countries, including Haiti.

In response to the crisis in Haiti, Canada is working to end corruption and other types of egregious conduct, including by imposing sanctions on those who support gangs, foment violence and perpetrate unspeakable cruelty on the population. Since November 2022, Canada has imposed nine rounds of SEMA sanctions under the *Special Economic Measures (Haiti) Regulations* and targeted to date 25 individuals who are engaging in acts of significant corruption, violations of human rights, or supporting criminal activities and violence involving armed gangs and criminal networks that promote violence.

Canada has also integrated the UN sanctions regime developed pursuant to the United Nations Security Council resolution 2653, into Canadian law through the *United Nations Act (UNA)*. These measures impose a targeted asset freeze, travel ban, and arms embargo. In line with this legislation, all individuals listed by the UN Sanctions committee are automatically listed under Canadian regulations. Global Affairs Canada will continue to assess the evolving situation and propose additional sanctions as appropriate.

Recommendation 2: That the Government of Canada not only focus its aid to Haiti on immediate humanitarian needs but develop a long-term strategy for the country with predictable and long-term funding and outcomes. The Government of Canada should also leverage its position as one of Haiti’s key humanitarian partners to persuade the international community to increase humanitarian and development assistance.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

As the second largest bilateral donor to Haiti, Canada is a steadfast development and humanitarian partner of Haiti, having provided over \$2 billion in international assistance since the 2010 earthquake. Canada supports international assistance projects in Haiti in the sectors of health, education, governance, security, the fight against corruption and impunity, economic growth, and climate change. Canada has provided over \$100 million in international assistance since 2022, including over \$12.3 million in humanitarian response to meet the most critical needs of the population and over \$80 million in longer-term development assistance.

The Government reviews on an ongoing basis its long-term programming strategy and calibrates its development and humanitarian assistance to meet the most urgent needs of the Haitian population such as the recent cholera outbreak, while addressing longer term development challenges, including food insecurity, climate change and natural disaster-prone agricultural techniques, limited access to health services and education, weak rule of law and democratic institutions, women and girls’ empowerment and gender-based violence. Canada is looking at its long-term programming taking into consideration the Strategic Development plan put in place by the Haiti Government and by focusing its “Triple-Nexus” approach, combining human assistance, development and security in Haiti. This approach is targeting collaboration with Haitian authorities, the international community and the civil society in order to fight the insecurity, impunity and corruption. It will also aim to foster political dialogue and response to urgent humanitarian needs. Canada does so in accordance with its Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), prioritizing the promotion and protection of the rights and role of women and girls.

Canada has consistently been a key donor to the humanitarian response in Haiti. For example, In New York, Canada used its role as Chair of the UN Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti to raise the profile of the UN’s Humanitarian Response Plan for Haiti. Canada will continue to actively engage the international community and advocate for increased development and humanitarian assistance, including encouraging funding through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Basket Funds on security and justice sector reform.

Recommendation 3: That the Government of Canada continues to work with international partners to strengthen the capacity of the Haitian National Police Force.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Since 1993 when the UN deployed its first mission in Haiti (UNMIH), CAF members and Canadian law enforcement, from the RCMP and other Canadian police services, have deployed to Haiti on various UN missions. The purpose of these missions was to help stop the internal violence and civil unrest that had plagued the country for years, help promote and protect human rights, assist with capacity building, training and technical support, ensure election security and help strengthen the judicial systems. The deployment of Canadian law enforcement and police trainers is implemented through the International Police, Peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations Program (IPPP), which is managed through the Canadian Police Arrangement (CPA); an interdepartmental partnership between Global Affairs Canada, the RCMP, and Public Safety Canada. The goal of the CPA is to support the Government of Canada's commitments to build a more secure world through Canadian participation in international peacekeeping and peace support operations, which are critical to longer-term security system reform and conflict-prevention efforts. Between 2004 and 2018, the RCMP deployed, on average, approximately 100 personnel annually to the region. Since the end of the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti in October 2019, Canada has been deploying police officers to the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) to support the HNP by providing mentoring and strategic advice to senior and middle-level management. There are currently two police officers deployed to the BINUH. Haiti has historically represented two-thirds of all Canadian police deployments to peace operations since 1989. Two RCMP members were killed in Haiti during that time as a result of the 2010 earthquake.

The CAF has a long history of deployments to Haiti, sending more than 6000 military personnel to support seven missions between 1993 and 2017. CAF support to UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) commenced in October 1993. From 1993-1994, Canada's contributions consisted of up to 500 CAF personnel, mostly engineers and three Canadian surface vessels followed by a single ship until September 1994 to enforce the UN oil and arms embargo. In March 1995, 500 CAF personnel redeployed consisting of aviation, engineering, transportation, and support personnel.

In 1996, UNMIH evolved into UN Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH) which was based on a CAF contingent of 750 including reconnaissance, engineers, aviation, and support elements. In July 1997, UNSMIH evolved into UN Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH) to which Canada contributed a 4-month deployment of 650 based on infantry, aviation and support to assist the Haitian National Police. In 1997 the UN mission command transferred from Military to Police and the UN Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) to which the CAF provided six APCs and 11 driving instructors and maintainers.

From June to August of 2004 the CAF deployed 500 personnel to serve with the UN authorized, and US-led, Multinational Interim Force (MIF) and then the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

In 2010, from January to April, in response to a major earthquake the CAF provide Task Force Haiti (Op HESTIA) which comprised of naval, land, and air elements, peaking at 2,050 personnel.

From 2013 through October 2017, the CAF maintained a persistent 34-member platoon and several staff officers in UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). At its peak, MINUSTAH counted over 12000 troops from troop contributing countries.

On March 24, 2023, Prime Minister Trudeau announced an additional investment of \$100 million to strengthen the HNP through equipment, capacity building and other measures such as support to countering illicit trafficking of drugs and people and support to help address sexual and gender-based

violence. This new investment is in addition to the \$32.5 million Canada already committed in 2022, specifically to bolster the capacity of the HNP to address the rise in armed gangs.

More recently on June 15, 2023, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Melanie Joly, announced the establishment of a coordination group to facilitate and coordinate international assistance aimed at building capacity of the security sector in Haiti, and in particular of the HNP. Over 20 countries and international organizations are working with Canada through this mechanism which focusses on identifying the evolving needs of the HNP and coordinating international efforts to ensure that Haiti's security sector's most critical needs are met, while reducing duplication of efforts and leveraging partners' contributions to maximize results. This International Security Assistance Coordination Group already has had a presence in Haiti and in Ottawa since January 2023, notably with the Haiti Field Unit, an interdepartmental field team based out of the Embassy of Canada to Haiti, provides immediate and ongoing liaison with the HNP, UN Agencies, and the international assistance community. Furthermore, Canada will bolster its presence within the Embassy of Canada in the Dominican Republic (DR) to facilitate in-person cooperation and coordination with international representatives based in DR and accredited in Haiti.

In addition, the RCMP and Canadian policing partners have provided resources through the deployment of law enforcement personnel in the Caribbean region in support of Canada's integrated and scalable approach to the crisis in Haiti.

Recommendation 4: That the Government of Canada work with international partners, particularly source countries, to prevent and stop weapons and illegal drugs from being smuggled into Haiti and assist the Government of Haiti to enhance its border controls. This includes helping the government to increase the number of border service agents, provide better training and tools, as well as make long-term investments of time and resources in Haiti's security infrastructure.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

The Government of Canada currently partners with international organizations, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), and Organization of American States (OAS) to address firearms trafficking and illegal drug trafficking in the Caribbean region, including efforts to address the illicit flow of goods to Haiti.

Canada is also working closely with the United States (US) especially with the State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL). Through several meetings with INL, Canada and the US are actively working together on needs assessments of the HNP.

As part of the investment of \$100 million announced by Prime Minister Trudeau on March 24, 2023, to bolster the capacity of the HNP, Canada intends to provide assistance to Haitian Border Services. New resources will support the procurement of essential equipment to aid in maritime, land and air border security, alongside the delivery of capacity building training to border services agents. Provision of security assistance, including training and equipment delivery, will include necessary due diligence to ensure that Canada's immediate response and support to the Haitian National Police lays the groundwork for strengthening Haiti's security infrastructure.

Furthermore, along the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, there is a lack of access to basic services and precarious living and livelihood conditions for migrants, particularly women and children, who are even more exposed to all forms of gender-based violence.

Through Canada's \$10 million project in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Canada is working to strengthen and improve the resilience of Haitian women and children migrants along the border and in their places of origin. Through this project, Canada supports repatriated migrants and members of their communities by addressing their protection needs, including risks related to human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse. This will be done by providing adequate protection and assistance services, including food, water, clothing, first aid kits, medical assistance and dignity kits. This project will also support 200 women-led businesses by providing tools and capacity building support to help them develop and manage their businesses.

Recommendation 5: That the Government of Canada and international partners make long-term financial commitments to Haiti-based civil society organizations that are focused on providing Haitian children with safe spaces to learn and play.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Gang violence in Haiti has become more prevalent and increasingly brutal. Daily killing, kidnapping, and rape impose a state of constant fear while the pervasive insecurity has exacerbated existing economic pressures, which in turn drive gang recruitment as Haitians become increasingly desperate for necessities. With violence everywhere, Haitians, children in particular, have nowhere safe to turn. Canada is committed to reducing threats and to facilitating stability and development in fragile states and those affected by conflict.

Even though much of Canada's international assistance in Haiti is delivered through Canadian NGOs and multilateral partners, there are several mechanisms through which Haiti based Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) continue receiving support from Canada's funding. For example, Canada, in partnership with international partners and Haitian civil organizations, such as the Bureau Diocesien d'éducation, supports initiatives that protect children by improving their access to quality education and reducing child labour. In partnership with the World Food Program, Canada supports Haiti's National School Feeding Program, which in the 2021-22 school year provided daily nutritious hot meals to 223,649 school children, 49% of whom were girls. These meals not only contribute to the reduction of chronic malnutrition but also help to increase attendance and school success, and schools provide children with a safe space to learn and play. Having children in school, learning and eating, help keep them off the streets where they can become the prey of violent armed gangs.

By supporting the Girls' Access to Secondary School project implemented by the World Bank in collaboration with a Haitian government department, Canada contributes to improving access to inclusive and quality education as well as increasing the number of girls enrolled in 280 schools. Canada's funding enabled the reconstruction of 17 schools damaged by the earthquake of August 2021 that affected Haiti's Southern peninsula. This will ensure that schools have safe drinking water and separate toilets for girls and boys. This project also established gender clubs in 92 public schools, helping to raise awareness on gender equality issues and to ensure sensitive issues are discussed in a safe space. Gender clubs provided 91,723 school children with the necessary tools to better assert themselves and claim their rights. Recognizing that children outside the school system also need protection, Canada in partnership with UNICEF, a local non-governmental organisation and a Haitian government department, supports a project that works to remove children from domestic work situations

that practice forced labour. This has enabled the reintegration of 3,259 children into schools and contributed to the reunification of 3,491 children with their families, with no reported cases of children being taken back into domestic work.

Recommendation 6: That the Government of Canada ensures it is consulting with Haitian civil society, opposition and human rights advocates at every opportunity, and commit to supporting a solution to this crisis that is Haitian led.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Canada believes that Haitian-led and Haitian-owned solutions should be at the forefront of collective efforts to address the multidimensional crisis facing Haiti. Therefore, Canada is supporting these efforts on multiple fronts in consultation with Haitian civil society, opposition and human rights advocates.

Canada actively engages with civil society and human rights advocates. For example, on July 6, 2023, Minister Joly hosted a roundtable in Montreal with the Haitian community. The Minister was able to hear the views of some members of the Haitian community on Canada's work in Haiti. The Minister took the opportunity to reiterate Canada's commitment to strengthen the HNP.

Canadian officials in Haiti regularly meet with civil society, opposition groups and human rights advocates. Canada's UN Ambassador Bob Rae also met with many of them during his visits in August and December of last year.

Moreover, the Government of Canada has also partnered with *Lawyers without Borders Canada* for a project that aims to engage civil society as a key stakeholder for strengthening the justice sector in Haiti, so that it can play its role as a guardian of rule of law.

Canada is also supporting civil society in Haiti through its Women's Voice and Leadership project, partnering with the Centre d'étude et de coopération internationale (CECI) to reinforce the capacity of local women's rights organizations in 8 out of the country's 10 departments, as well as supporting efforts led by the National Federation of Women Mayors of Haiti, an organization that aims to strengthen the promotion of the role of women in local governance.

Canada also continues to support an inclusive national dialogue process that should lead to organizing elections as soon as security conditions permit. We are encouraging the international community to press all parties in Haiti to show a spirit of compromise and to be open to sharing power during a transition period. This includes our support for initiatives and processes like those led by CARICOM and the High Transition Council.

Recommendation 7: That the Government of Canada and its international partners pressure the Government of Haiti to make safe and unfettered access to schools a priority for all children of the country and work with civil society to pressure Haitian authorities to end the exploitation of children leading to recruitment into armed gangs.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Canada's international assistance aims to help young people gain access to quality education and skills that provide the foundation for lifelong learning, and to reduce barriers and narrow education gaps for women and girl. In Haiti, Canada contributes to increase school attendance and success, providing children with a safe space to learn and play and protecting them from gang violence and the risk of being recruited by gangs through the framework of Canada's support to Haiti's National School Feeding Program, in partnership with the World Food Program. Further, by supporting the Girls' Access to Secondary School project implemented by the World Bank, Canada also contributes to improving access to inclusive and quality education as well as increasing the number of girls enrolled in schools, protecting them from gender-based violence.

The Government of Canada understands that the protection of children must be part of any broader strategy to address insecurity. Access to education is critical, not only for children's personal development and their ability to take up their duties as informed citizens, but also for young adults to be able to take advantage of economic opportunities that will help them avoid the poverty that would otherwise leave them vulnerable to exploitation.

Canada also recognizes the important role that the HNP plays in providing safe and unfettered access to schools and is making significant investment to bolster the capacity of the HNP to counter armed gangs and re-establish security and order and to end the exploitation of children and their recruitment into armed gangs.

Recommendation 8: That the Government of Canada continue and increase its efforts to help empower local civil society groups, especially Haitian women's organizations, to develop and implement strategies to combat gender-based violence in Haiti, by assisting them with funding and expertise and make efforts to increase their political participation and representation and women's economic empowerment.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Canada is supporting Haitian institutions and civil society to step up the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) and strengthen respect for women's rights. Through Canada's programming in Haiti, Canada supports civil society organisations, particularly women's rights organisations, in building their capacities.

First and foremost, Canada aims to reduce women's vulnerability to GBV by helping organisations build their capacity to document, defend and improve the delivery of services for victims of GBV, particularly women and children. Canada also responds to the needs of health institutions that provide services to women who are victims of GBV and helps to involve people in positions of authority in the reduction and prevention of GBV. Canada's investments support the education of girls, women, boys and men, with the aim of changing social norms concerning GBV and increasing the resilience of women and girls.

Canada also supports repatriated migrant women by meeting their protection needs to reduce the risks associated with human trafficking and GBV. Additionally, Canada's support is helping to increase the capacity and activities of these organisations by improving their financial and logistical autonomy so that they can promote women's rights. Thanks to Canada's support, women's rights organisations are also equipped to effectively conduct legal proceedings and defend the human rights of women, minors and detainees. In terms of women's political participation and representation, Canada is working with the Fédération Nationale des Femmes Maires d'Haïti, an organisation that aims to strengthen the promotion of the role of mayors to enable women mayors, who continue to serve as a stop-gap measure, despite

all elected officials' mandates having expired, to better defend decentralised governance and the well-being of local residents.

Building on Canada's current programming to support civil society groups defending and protecting women's rights in Haiti, Canada will continue to fight against GBV by supporting women's groups, improving technical and professional training for midwives, and raising awareness among women and young girls about sexual and reproductive health and GBV. Canada will also provide holistic, high-quality sexual and reproductive health services tailored to the needs of GBV victims, and to advocate for greater involvement of women, girls, midwives and male agents of change in the process of integrating sexual and reproductive health, GBV and respect for women's rights into public policies and management processes.

Examples of achievements and ongoing projects:

- The "Strengthening Midwifery Practices and Services in Haiti" project (UNFPA, \$15 million, 2018-2023) has raised awareness among 107,751 women and girls, including 20,188 under-15s and 38,386 girls aged 15 to 19, about GBV and the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls.
- The "Women's Voices and Leadership" project (CECI, \$8 million, 2018-2024) has helped to build the capacity of 36 organisations to defend women's rights, and to provide medical and legal care for 3,012 survivors of GBV.
- As part of the "Adaptation climatique et valorisation économique des filières agricoles en Haïti" project (AAI, \$13 million, 2018-2025), 249 women, members of the committees of twenty-four farmer field schools (CEP), in six intervention communes, have seen their entrepreneurial and managerial capacity increase in the targeted value chains (i.e. coffee and cocoa). In addition, 46% of women members of the CEP (i.e. a total of 314 women) are more involved in production decisions within their households thanks to their technical capacity building and the subsidies and technical support they have received to create or regenerate their agro-forestry production plots.
- Through the "Kafé Makaya: productive, inclusive coffee and rice sectors adapted to climate change in Haiti" project (Oxfam-Québec, \$13 million, 2018-2025), the project aims to ensure that women benefit from mechanisms that promote their access to appropriate financial products. To achieve this, a set of tools has been developed to enable beneficiaries, particularly women, to access financial products tailored to their needs. As a result, 323 women and young people out of a planned 350 have been trained in economic leadership. This is a lever used by the project to mitigate/transform the effects of discrimination and exploitation, and to promote and defend women's rights and interests.

Recommendation 9: That the Government of Canada ensure that human rights are central to any work it carries out in Haiti by taking into account the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations such as those who have been displaced, women, children, people living with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ population.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Promoting and protecting human rights, including those of the vulnerable and marginalized populations such as displaced persons, women, children, people with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ population is at the heart of Canada's efforts and investments in Haiti. In adhering to its Feminist International

Assistance Policy, Canada adopts a human rights-based approach that combats all forms of discrimination based on criteria such as gender, race, ethnicity, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, abilities and migrant or refugee status.

This includes strengthening policies, the legislative framework and the management of social welfare and protection services for displaced families, child domestic workers and minors in detention. In addition, meals are provided for children to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and reduce inequalities in schooling. Efforts are also being made, with the help of civil society organisations (CSOs), to defend women's rights, promote their participation in political life, strengthen their legal powers and guarantee their access to justice. The professionalization of the HNP is also a key element in Canada's strategy. Through supporting the HNP to set up their National Police Academy, we help build the HNP's skills and awareness in police ethics, the protection of human rights and the fight against gender-based violence. Between 2012 and 2021, more than 480 police officers graduated from the commissioners and inspectors programmes of which 249 commissioners (21 Female, 237 Male) and 233 inspectors (12 Female, 212 Male). In 2019, Canada has also helped set up CALSDH, the first law firm specialising in human rights and strategic litigation with a contribution of \$22 million to Lawyers without Borders to set up the project.

Canada will continue its commitment to improving access to justice, particularly for people in vulnerable situations (e.g., women, victims of GBV, LGBTQ+ people, detainees). Canada plans to step up its efforts in Haiti to combat gender-based violence, in particular by raising awareness among women and young girls about sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence. Through our \$100 million in new funding announced by Prime Minister Trudeau in March 2023, Canada is fighting corruption and impunity by building the capacity of institutions to monitor, report, document and prosecute human rights violations and cases of corruption. Canada also plans to continue its efforts to help vulnerable children in schools and domestic situations.

Examples of achievements:

- As part of the school canteens project (World Food Programme; \$40 million, 2018-2024), during the 2021-2022 school year, Canada provided school meals to more than 180,000 schoolchildren, 49% of whom were girls.
- Since 2017, the Access to Justice and the Fight against Impunity in Haiti project (Lawyers without Borders Canada, \$22 million, 2017-2024), has enabled 8,917 people in vulnerable situations (PSV), including 2,288 women, to gain better access to justice. In addition, 171 lawyers, including 37 women and 134 men, from the Croix-des-Bouquets, Fort Liberté and Port-au-Prince Bar Associations, are now better equipped to support people in vulnerable situations in their quest for justice. This project also directly touched on the issue of defending the rights of LGBTQ+ people and people living with disabilities. For example, in 2022-2023, with technical support from Lawyers without Borders Canada, Kouraj (an organization dedicated to defending the rights of LGBTQ+ people) completed a report on violations rights of people from the LGBTQ community in Haiti in order to raise awareness among the general public and decision-makers about acts of violence and forms of discrimination and violations toward LGBTQ+ community in Haiti. Also, in 2022-2023, thanks to the support offered to the Office de la Protection du Citoyen d'Haïti, this organization is now providing training on the rights of people with disabilities, the principle of non-discrimination, the right to equality and on violence against women and girls. To date, 525 people (233 men, 267 women and 25 members of the LGBTQ+ community) have attended these trainings.
- In addition, as part of the project to combat child domestic labour in Haiti (UNICEF; \$12 million; 2016-2021), the project's efforts have made it possible to strengthen the child protection system to ensure that children are removed from unacceptable situations of domestic labour and to reunite 3,491

children with their families.

- As part of the Initial Training and Professional Development of Haitian National Police Executives project (COWATER, 2010-2021, \$22 million), a total of 483 inspectors and commissioners, including 33 women and 450 men, have successfully completed the training in ethics, professional conduct and human rights provided by the Police Academy programme

Recommendation 10: That the Government of Canada support Haitian civil society and its leadership in finding a way out of the crisis and an appropriate democratic governance model that will benefit the people of Haiti.

The Government of Canada agrees with this recommendation.

Canada believes that Haitian-led and Haitian-owned solutions should be at the forefront of collective efforts to address the multidimensional crisis facing Haiti.

Canada has a long tradition of support for Haitian civil society and understands that the country's democratic reconstruction cannot be achieved without the participation of citizens and civil society organizations.

We believe that it is essential to simultaneously bolster the security sector, while encouraging intensified efforts for a broad and inclusive national political dialogue towards the organisation of elections as soon as security conditions permit.

Canada's priority is to provide efficient support to Haitian authorities' actions aimed at restoring and maintaining order, addressing the urgent needs of the population, and creating the conditions for Haiti to be a stable and democratic country. Thus, we insist on the importance of involving both the Haitian authorities and key societal actors in political dialogue and decision-making at the national and local levels.

We strongly and persistently advocate for an inclusive political dialogue in Haiti. To that end, the Government of Canada is in continuous contact with government, opposition, human rights and other civil society leaders to encourage the search for a workable consensus among Haitians on a path forward to elections and an elected government taking office. Canada has supported all efforts to bring Haitians together in dialogue, including initiatives led by the High Transition Council and CARICOM.

Through Canadian-funded development projects, Canada supports civil society in several sectors through capacity-building and advocacy activities, with the aim of empowering Haitians to participate more actively in political life. For example, the Access to Judicial Services in Haiti (AJULIH) project aims to engage civil society as a key stakeholder for strengthening justice in Haiti so that it can play its role as a democratic counterweight, guardian of the rule of law, and pillar of inclusive and responsible governance, through building the capacities of civil society human rights organizations and lawyers representing victims of human rights violations and increasing citizen participation through improved public awareness, including women and youth, of human rights, anti-impunity and anti-corruption issues. The project "Improve Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Léogâne and Gressier" also aimed at increasing the effectiveness of Haitian civil society organizations and citizens, particularly women's and adolescent girls' rights organizations, to advocate for their sexual and reproductive health and rights and supporting civil society organizations to initiate a dialogue on the sexual and reproductive health and rights with political leaders, officials and managers of health institutions in the two municipalities.

The Government of Canada firmly believes that democracy, inclusive governance, peaceful pluralism and human rights are key to peace and development. In order to build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world, as stated in the *Feminist International Assistance Policy* launched in 2017, Canada supports the participation of civil society, particularly women's and human rights organizations, in promoting democracy, peacebuilding, stability and security. The Government of Canada invests in the defence of human rights, political participation, legal empowerment of vulnerable people and access to justice. For example, Canada provided support for the Haitian elections that were being organized at the time of President Moïse's assassination, including electoral observation, voter registration and logistics. Canada stands ready to support future electoral processes. Canada is also aware of the challenges posed by the centralisation of power in Haiti and is continuing its support for local and inclusive governance, which includes strengthening municipal administrations and increasing the representation of women mayors.

Recommendation 11: That the Government of Canada ensure that its response to this crisis encompass humanitarian, economic, and political efforts, as well as justice and security sector support, including training while making clear it will not participate in direct engagement in military operations on the ground in Haiti by Canadian Armed Forces.

The Government of Canada partially agrees with this recommendation.

The Government of Canada fully agrees that its response to the crisis must encompass humanitarian, economic, and political efforts, as well as justice and security sector support, including training. However, the situation on the ground in Haiti is dynamic and National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces will continue to support broader interdepartmental efforts, as appropriate.

Canada will continue to implement an integrated and comprehensive approach focused on four pillars: (1) diplomacy; (2) sanctions and legal measures; (3) international assistance; (4) security assistance.

Diplomacy

On the diplomatic front, Canada continues to support an inclusive national dialogue process that should lead to organizing elections as soon as security conditions permit. The Government of Canada is encouraging the international community to press all parties in Haiti to show a spirit of compromise and to be open to sharing power during a transition period. We are also supporting the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in its efforts to facilitate an inclusive national political dialogue..

Sanctions and Legal Measures

In addition to implementing in October 2022 the UN sanctions regime for Haiti (resolution 2653), Canada has imposed autonomous sanctions on 25 individuals for their role in fomenting violence and instability. We continue to assess further sanctions or related measures and to urge our international partners to join our efforts and apply autonomous sanctions and other measures, including visa restrictions or travel bans on individuals already sanctioned by Canada. The only other country implementing autonomous sanctions is the US (sanctions against 5 individuals and visa bans against 44 individuals). The Dominican Republic has also imposed travel bans against 54 Haitians, including 17 of the 25 individuals sanctioned by Canada and in July 2023, EU Member States adopted a new autonomous legal framework for Haiti to allow for autonomous EU sanctions, in addition to the previously implemented UN sanctions on Haiti.

International Assistance

Canada is committed to continue working with the international community to provide human rights based humanitarian and development assistance to Haiti. Canada continues to provide international assistance to address humanitarian needs and secure the longer-term sustainable development of Haiti. Our bilateral programming focuses on insecurity, justice, governance, corruption, health, education, inclusive growth, and greater resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

Since last year, Canada has provided over \$100 million in international assistance to Haiti, including to meet the lifesaving needs of crisis-affected people in Haiti, to protect and assist Haitian women and children along the Haiti-Dominican Republic border, to strengthen security, and to fight corruption and impunity. Canada focuses on working with partners to provide direct support to the HNP while helping to disrupt key drivers of instability, particularly armed gangs and those who support them.

In New York, Canada used its role as Chair of the UN Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti to raise the profile of the UN's Humanitarian Response Plan for Haiti.

Security Assistance

Strengthening the security sector in Haiti is a top priority for Canada and we have responded with a whole-of-government approach. The Government of Canada has focused on working with partners to provide direct support to the HNP while helping to disrupt key drivers of instability, particularly armed gangs and those who support them. Canada is closely coordinating with Haitian stakeholders, BINUH, and our international partners to continue defining the international community's response to the security crisis.

In March 2023, Canada announced \$100 million in new funding to bolster the capacity of the HNP. The Canada-led security assistance coordination group, announced on June 15 at the Ministerial on Haiti chaired by Minister Joly, will improve the effectiveness of international security assistance, leveraging the engagement and contributions of our partners and amplifying the impact of Canada's own investments in Haiti by channelling international efforts in a coherent way. This coordination effort is centred in Port-au-Prince, with complements in the Dominican Republic, in Canada and other locations. There are already 20 countries actively working with us on these efforts.

Programming under the above \$100 million envelope will help respond to the immediate needs of the HNP, including, but not limited to: support to address gaps in training; enhanced border controls (both maritime and terrestrial), procurement and delivery of equipment to meet the needs of new recruits; support to countering illicit trafficking of drugs and people; and, support to help address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This funding is in addition to \$32.5 million already announced in 2022-23 for three new initiatives over five years: \$12.5 million to strengthen the HNP, \$10 million to support the Police Academy, and \$10 million to the UNDP Security multi-donor Basket Fund.

Canada is also looking at options to support the HNP to increase its capacity to address the ongoing threat posed by the armed gangs. Recent planning missions to Haiti have been undertaken by Canadian officials to validate with the HNP and partner the immediate needs for which international support is necessary, including specialized training, lethal and non-lethal equipment, financial support, force protection, mobility, infrastructure, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR). In addition, in recent months, the CAF has assisted the HNP by delivering Haitian-purchased Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected (MRAP) armoured vehicles from a Canadian manufacturer and by supporting ISR activities.

CAF also deployed two vessels and a patrol aircraft to bolster efforts to establish and maintain peace and security for the people of Haiti.