



Disarmament and International Security Committee

(Dual)

Regulating Gang violence

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Mandate

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, handling global peace, disarmament, and security threats under the UN Charter. Although its resolutions are non-binding recommendations, its universal membership gives its decisions immense political weight. These decisions set global standards that guide legally binding treaties established by other bodies.

DISEC's work centres on regulating conventional weapons, stopping weapons of mass destruction, and tackling emerging cybersecurity and space threats. A key part of its operational scope involves securing maritime trade routes and tracking weapons hardware to prevent arms races from disrupting global trade.

Regarding the Haitian crisis, DISEC's mandate targets the illegal flow of small arms, light weapons, and ammunition feeding local gang violence. By focusing on conventional weapons control, the committee helps member states track Caribbean trade routes and interdict illegal gun shipments heading into Haitian ports.

Working alongside the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), DISEC provides a platform for member states to share intelligence and build consensus. These joint efforts create the essential normative foundation for the UN Security Council to enforce binding Chapter VII actions, including strict arms embargoes.

Finally, DISEC favours preventative diplomacy and transparency over reactive military interventions. By pushing countries to report weapons transfers and military spending, the committee works to break up smuggling networks and build a safer environment for Haiti to rebuild peacefully.

Key Terminologies and Definitions

I. Gang violence:

It is violence often involving shootings, killings, kidnapping, extortion, and control of areas.

II. Organized crime:

Criminal activity planned and carried out by a group rather than by individuals acting alone.

III. Extortion:

When criminals force people or businesses to give them money by threatening them.

IV. Humanitarian Crisis:

A situation where large numbers of people cannot safely access basic needs such as food, water, healthcare, shelter, or security.

V. Small Arms and Light Weapons:

Weapons that can be carried and used by individuals or small groups, such as pistols and rifles.

VI. Transitional Government:

A temporary government that operates while a country moves toward a more permanent political system.

VII. Gang Fragmentation:

When a large gang breaks into smaller groups, often causing more competition and violence.

VIII. Displacement:

When people are forced to leave their homes because it is no longer safe to live there.

Historical Background

1804: Haiti became independent after a successful revolution against French colonial rule

1915-1934: The United States occupied Haiti. This affected Haiti's political system and increased public anger toward foreign influence.

1957: François "Papa Doc" Duvalier became president and created the Tonton Macoute, an armed group used to control the population and attack political opponents.

1971-1986: Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier continued his father's dictatorship.

1986: Baby Doc Duvalier left Haiti after large protests. Although the dictatorship ended, Haiti continued to face weak institutions, corruption, and political violence.

1991: Haiti's first democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was removed in a military coup.

1994: Aristide returned with the help of a US-led international military operation. This showed that Haiti's security problems could affect the wider international community.

2004: Aristide was removed from power again. The United Nations created the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to support security and political stability.

2006-2007: UN forces carried out operations against gangs in Port-au-Prince. Although some areas became safer, the deeper causes of gang violence were not solved.

2 January 2010: A major earthquake struck Haiti. More than 200,000 people were killed, and many government buildings, homes, schools, and hospitals were destroyed. The disaster weakened the state and made it easier for criminal groups to expand.

2010: A prison break after the earthquake allowed many prisoners to escape. This increased insecurity and contributed to the growth of armed groups

2011: Michel Martelly became president. During the following years, political groups and gangs became increasingly connected.

2016: Haiti held a delayed presidential election. Political disagreements and accusations of election fraud increased distrust in the government.

2019–2020: Elections were delayed, parliament became inactive, and the political system became weaker. Gangs used this situation to gain control over neighborhoods, roads, and businesses.

7 July 2021: President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated in his home. His death created a major political vacuum and caused armed groups to become even more powerful.

14 August 2021: A powerful earthquake struck southern Haiti, killing more than 2,000 people and creating another humanitarian emergency.

2022: Gangs expanded their control over parts of Port-au-Prince. They blocked the main fuel terminal, causing shortages of fuel, food, water, and medical supplies.

2024: More than 5,600 people were killed in gang violence in Haiti. Thousands more were injured or kidnapped, and many families were forced to leave their homes.

2025: Gang violence spreads beyond Port-au-Prince into areas such as Artibonite and Centre. The UN reported thousands of deaths and more than 1.3 million displaced people.

2026: Haiti continued to face gang control, political instability, displacement, and a humanitarian crisis. Restoring security remained difficult because the police, courts, and government institutions were weak.



Causes

I. Political Instability:

Repeated political crises and weak political institutions have reduced the government's ability to maintain order, provide services and create stable policies. This has created a power vacuum that gangs can exploit.

II. Weak Government, Police and Justice:

The Haitian state has limited capacity to control gang-controlled areas. The police face shortages of personnel, resources and equipment, while a weak justice system makes it difficult to hold criminals accountable.

III. Illegal Weapons & Gang Financing

Gangs have access to large numbers of illegally trafficked firearms and ammunition. They also raise money through extortion, kidnapping and other criminal activities, allowing them to maintain and expand their operations.

IV. Organised Gangs & Territorial Control:

Gangs have formed larger alliances and compete to control neighbourhoods, roads and other important areas. Territorial control gives them greater power over local communities and allows them to restrict movement and access to basic services.

V. Poverty & Lack of Opportunities:

High poverty, limited employment and poor access to basic services leave communities vulnerable to gang recruitment and exploitation. When people have few safe economic opportunities, gangs can become an alternative source of income or influence.

Need to Stop the Crisis

I. Protect Civilian Lives:

Gang violence puts civilians at risk of killing, kidnapping, injury and abuse. Stopping the violence is essential to protect their safety and basic human rights.

II. Restore the Rule of Law:

Gangs controlling territory weaken the government's authority and prevent police and courts from functioning properly. Reducing gang control allows Haitian institutions to regain control.

III. Protect Basic Services and Prevent Displacement:

Violence can prevent people from accessing food, healthcare, education and other essential services. It also forces families to leave their homes. Greater security allows communities to remain safely in place.

IV. Support Economic and Political Stability:

Gang violence disrupts businesses, jobs and trade while making political governance more difficult. Reducing violence creates conditions for economic recovery and stable government.

Past United Nations Actions

I. BINUH:

The UN established the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) to support Haitian institutions. Its work includes strengthening professionalism, justice reform, human rights, community violence reduction and political dialogue.

II. Human Rights Monitoring:

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) monitors human rights violations and supports efforts to protect civilians. The UN has also supported an Independent Expert on Human Rights in Haiti, who provides advice and technical assistance to the Haitian Government and civil society.

III. UN Panel of Experts:

The UN Panel of Experts monitors illegal arms trafficking, gang financing, and violations of Haiti's arms embargo. Its investigations support stronger international controls and help identify people responsible for supplying weapons to gangs.

IV. Resolution 2699:

The Security Council authorised a multinational mission to support Haiti's police and restore security. Although DISEC cannot deploy forces, it can discuss how international security missions should control weapons and protect civilians

V. Firearms Protocol:

The UN Firearms Protocol combats the illegal manufacturing and trafficking of firearms, ammunition, and weapon parts. It is directly relevant because reducing the flow of illegal weapons can limit gang power and violence in Haiti.

Case Studies

I. Brazil: Rio Pacification Programme

Operations conducted by Brazil's Pacifying Police Units led to the reduction of gang presence and killings in some of Rio's communities. However, police abuse reports tainted the pacification process and hindered community acceptance of the new authorities. The case illustrates the importance of promoting community policing, police accountability, and human-rights culture to achieve security.

II. El Salvador: Gang Truce and Crackdown

In 2012, the Salvadoran government supported a truce between MS-13 and Barrio 18. Homicides quickly fell from about 14 per day to around 5 per day, but violence increased again after the truce ended. This case shows that negotiations may reduce violence temporarily, but long-term solutions also require justice, employment, education, and lawful security policies.

III. Mexico: Cartels and Illegal Weapons

Mexico demonstrates how criminal groups can become powerful through drug trafficking, corruption, money laundering, and the illegal flow of firearms across borders. This case is relevant to DISEC because it shows that gang violence is not only a domestic issue; it requires international cooperation on border control, arms trafficking, financial investigations, and organised crime.

IV. Central America: Prevention and Reintegration

The Central American experience indicates that gang recruitment attempts can be countered through a combination of law enforcement measures and alternative programmes for at-risk groups. Simply put, arresting gang members is not enough to stop their expansion; education, jobs, and re-entry support are also needed to prevent young people from turning to a life of crime. This case is relevant to the topic because it provides an efficient multi-layered strategy.

V. Caribbean: Regional Arms Trafficking

Gangs' violence is fuelled by regional trafficking of illicit firearms and ammunition. Member states should coordinate their law enforcement, coast guard, intelligence communities, and customs to combat illegal trafficking of weapons, persons, and drugs across borders. The case is relevant to DISEC because unilateral measures taken by one country cannot tackle the problem efficiently.



Effects of the Crisis

I. Social Effects

1. Fear and insecurity:

Gang violence makes people afraid to travel, work, or visit certain neighbourhoods.

2. School disruption:

Violence affects school attendance and education choices, especially for children living in gang-controlled areas. Some students stop attending school or change schools for safety.

3. Displacement and migration:

Many families leave their homes or migrate abroad because of killings, threats, and extortion. Women and children are particularly affected by forced displacement.

4. Economic hardship:

Extortion forces families and small businesses to give money to gangs. This reduces household income, damages businesses, and limits people's freedom to work and move safely.

II. Political Effects

1. Weakening of state authority:

Gangs can take control of neighbourhoods, roads, ports, and public facilities, making the government appear unable to protect its citizens.

2. Damage to the rule of law:

Violence and threats can weaken the police, courts, and prisons, allowing criminals to act without fear of punishment.

3. Political corruption:

Gangs may use money, threats, or violence to influence politicians, public officials, and government decisions.

4. Threats to democracy:

Gang intimidation can discourage people from voting, prevent candidates from campaigning freely, and make fair elections difficult to organise.

III. Economic Effects

1. Lower economic growth:

Gang violence disrupts businesses, transport, farming, and trade, causing the economy to shrink. Haiti's GDP fell by 2.7% in 2025 during intensifying gang violence.

2. Higher prices and inflation:

Roadblocks, port closures, and insecurity make food, fuel, and transport more expensive, reducing people's purchasing power.

3. Business closures and unemployment:

Extortion, damage, and high security costs force businesses to close or reduce their activities, leading to fewer jobs and lower investment.

4. Reduced government revenue:

When businesses close and trade declines, the government collects less tax and customs revenue, leaving less money for schools, hospitals, police, and public services.

5. Disrupted trade and supply chains:

Gang control of roads and ports delays imports and exports, causes shortages, and increases the cost of moving goods.

Potential Bloc Formations

I. European Union Bloc:

Countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Belgium could form a European bloc. They would likely support stronger controls on illegal firearms, sanctions against gang leaders, financial investigations, police training, humanitarian aid, and human-rights protections.

II. Caribbean and Latin American Bloc:

Countries such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Argentina could cooperate because gang violence directly affects the region. They may support regional intelligence-sharing, border security, anti-trafficking operations, extradition agreements, and development programmes.

III. North American Bloc:

The United States and Canada could form or lead a North American bloc. They would likely focus on stopping weapons and money from crossing borders, improving maritime security, supporting police forces, imposing sanctions, and providing funding and training.

IV. African States Bloc:

Countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, and Egypt could create an African bloc. Kenya would be especially relevant because it led the multinational security mission in Haiti. This bloc may support peace-support operations, police training, counter-trafficking measures, and respect for national sovereignty.

V. Asian Development and Security Bloc:

Countries such as Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea could form an Asian bloc. They may support development assistance, technology for border control, intelligence-sharing, police training, weapons tracking, and programmes to prevent youth recruitment.

VI. Small Island and Vulnerable States Bloc:

Caribbean island states and other vulnerable countries could form a bloc focused on the effects of gang violence on small states. They would likely prioritise international funding, maritime security, disaster support, border control, and protection from weapons and drug trafficking.



Questions A Resolution Must Answer

I. How should the committee redefine "gang violence" in the Haitian context to close the loophole that allows armed coalitions to evade the narrow criteria of international humanitarian law and existing Security Council arms embargoes under Resolutions 2699 and 2700?

II. What international mechanisms should trace and intercept illicit small arms flowing into Haiti, and how should neighboring states and shipping networks be held accountable?

III. How can sanctions on gang leaders and their financiers be designed to survive name changes, shell companies, and shifting command structures?

IV. To what extent should an international security mission be authorized to disarm gangs, and how should it balance Haiti's sovereignty?

V. How should the resolution address gang financing from kidnapping, extortion, port control, and drug trafficking as it enables weapons acquisition?

VI. Should the international community push for a binding instrument on small arms trafficking or strengthen existing frameworks, given Haiti's crisis?

VII. How should the resolution address foreign fighters, mercenaries, and diaspora networks that provide training, weapons, or funding to Haitian gangs?

VIII. What prevention measures should address recruitment of youth and vulnerable populations into gangs, especially in displacement camps, to reduce long-term armed group strength?

IX. How should the resolution address the diversion of legally exported small arms and ammunition into illicit Haitian markets, and what end-use monitoring or export controls should be recommended?

X. What disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration measures should be included for gang members who surrender, and how can they be linked to community violence reduction?

XI. How should the resolution prevent gangs from acquiring heavier weaponry or dual-use technologies that could escalate the conflict beyond small arms?

XII. What maritime and border security measures should be prioritized to interdict arms trafficking routes into Haiti, and how can international naval or coast guard cooperation be encouraged?

XIII. How should the resolution address the link between corruption, arms trafficking, and gang violence, particularly when state officials or security forces facilitate weapons flows?