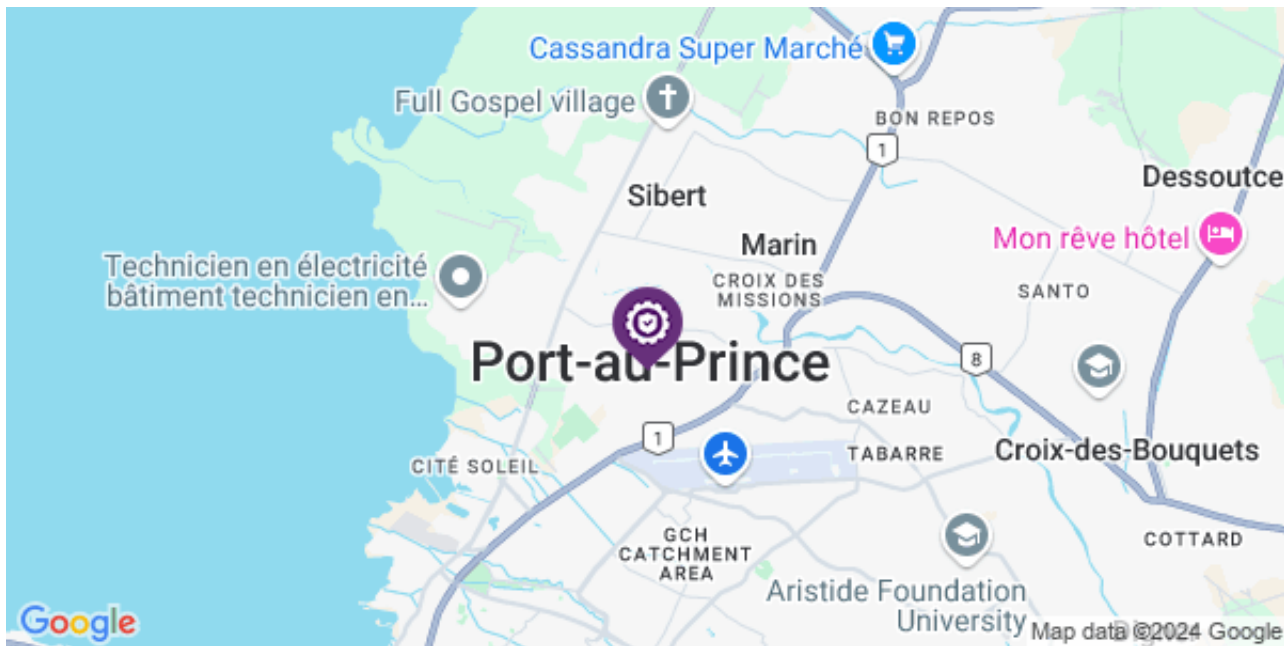




Security Operations



21

DEC

13:19 UTC

Haiti Alert: PNH implements “maximum alert” against gangs in Port-au-Prince on December 20; risk of renewed attacks against critical infrastructure likely

Current Situation

- On December 20, inspector Alain Auguste the Central Director of the Administrative of the Police Nationale d’Hati (PNH) announced that Port-au-Prince is under “maximum alert” due to possibility of renewed gang attacks.
- The announcement follows “credible” reports stating that the “Viv Ansanm” gang coalition has issued threats to launch coordinated attacks across Port-au-Prince, during the upcoming weekend, starting from December 21.
- In response, Director General of the PNH, Normil Rameau has ordered Port-au-Prince’s departmental directors of Ouest 1 and 2 police stations, as well as the heads of specialized units (CIMO, CBIM, POLIFRONT, POLITOUR, among others), to remain stationed at their posts indefinitely.
- Additionally, authorities have advised local citizens to remain vigilant due to the anticipated resurgence in gang attacks in the capital.

Source: [Le Quotidien](#)

Assessments & Forecast

1. Although unconfirmed, the Viv Ansanm coalition's recent calls for attacks in the capital are seemingly in retaliation against the December 15-16 PNH-led operations in Port-au-Prince and Artibonite department, which killed several high-profile gang leaders, including "Jeff Mafia," Viv Ansanm's second-in-command. In addition, these threats coincide with the city's preparations for Christmas, a period characterized by an increase in commerce and cash flow, driven by holiday shopping and remittances. However, this surge in economic activity presents opportunities for gangs to exploit the situation through extortion, theft, and kidnappings. Moreover, the festive season coincides with the arrival of international aid and supplies, offering additional avenues for exploitation. This pattern is evidenced by previous incidents of numerous attacks reported during the year-end period, with December 2023 reports detailing armed gangs orchestrating assaults on public transportation and local markets, leading to widespread panic and economic disruption. Additionally, the abductions of priests and churchgoers saw a marked increase during the 2023 Christmas period, particularly as families reported receiving remittances from abroad.
2. **FORECAST:** Based on the precedent of Viv Ansanm-led offensives in response to security operations, particularly in Port-au-Prince, targeted public shootings against law enforcement personnel and indiscriminate attacks against civilian are expected to increase in the coming days. Moreover, Viv Ansanm will likely increase the frequency of attacks against security infrastructure such as police stations and armored vehicles. This is supported by Viv Ansanm members attacking the Motorized Intervention Brigade (BIM), located in Clercine, in the commune of Tabarre on December 20. Likewise, gangs also opened fire against residences in Butte Boyer and Tabarre 25-27 near Clercine on December 20.
3. **FORECAST:** With the latest call for attacks plausibly motivated by both financial and territorial incentives, the Viv Ansanm coalition will likely continue to target critical infrastructure and public spaces like airport, hospitals, police stations, commercial areas, transportation hubs, and inter-city highways over the coming days. Given this, despite the December 18 resumption of commercial flights at Toussaint Louverture International Airport (PAP), the ongoing "maximum alert" may disrupt operations due to potential preemptive closures or anticipated gang attacks. In addition to this, armed groups are also likely to target fuel depots and shipping routes during the holiday period, in a bid to secure lucrative incoming shipments of goods and aids. Such attacks are likely to be witnessed in **downtown Port-au-Prince, including Tabarre, Gressier, Delmas, Portail-Leogane, Bel-Air, Cabaret, Cite Soleil, and Carrefour**, which serves as the city's administrative and commercial center. This area also houses government offices and transportation hubs, making it a likely hotspot for attacks. Furthermore, in **Martissant and Croix-des-Bouquets**—areas notorious for gang activity—roadblocks, shooting incidents, and highway extortions are likely to persist, as intermittently reported since June 2024. In other districts, such as Petion-Ville, which hosts diplomats, expatriates, and business leaders, gangs may continue targeting these areas due to their symbolic and international significance.
4. Furthermore, despite preemptive security operations, the PNH, in collaboration with other joint forces, is likely to face significant challenges in maintaining control due to limited resources and a predominantly reactive strategy. With insufficient manpower and advanced equipment, the police often respond to incidents only after they occur, allowing gangs to exploit vulnerabilities in public security. While occasional successes, such as reclaiming strategic assets like the oil terminal and international airport, have been achieved, the PNH's ability to sustain these gains remains tenuous. This is further compounded by the notable evolution in the modus operandi of armed gangs, particularly since early 2024. Gangs initially employed strategies of maximum pressure, executing daily, simultaneous attacks across multiple locations in Port-au-Prince. However, their approach has since evolved to focus on more targeted and strategic objectives, including ambushes on police convoys and assaults on critical infrastructure, such as police stations and prisons. These attacks have demonstrated the gangs' ability to sustain prolonged clashes, highlighting their growing operational confidence and coordination despite targeted crackdowns.

Recommendations

1. Avoid all travel to and operations in Haiti due to the extreme risk of gang violence.

2. Those continuing to operate or reside in Haiti are advised to minimize all outdoor movement in Port-au-Prince due to the escalation in gang violence and the increasing indiscriminate nature of the recent attacks.
3. Avoid all travel in the vicinity of major government buildings, critical infrastructure facilities, police stations, and foreign missions due to the heightened threat of attacks targeting these facilities and the risk of ensuing clashes between gang members and security forces.
4. Allot for significant disruptions to supply chains and travel due to the potential suspension of operations to/from major transport terminals including the PAP Airport and the main port terminal in Port-au-Prince.