



STUDY GUIDE
**United Nations Office on Drugs and
Crime**



**Addressing the illicit trade of drugs and
weapons in Haiti.**



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II. Letter from Chairs

Dear Delegates,

It is our greatest honour to welcome you to ZAMUN's 2025 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. As your chairpersons, we can promise that we will make every effort to keep the debates on the highest possible level and provide you with a genuinely unforgettable experience.

For now, we would like to ask you for cooperation. Drafting this document, we wish to bring you closer to the discussed matter. Therefore, we highly recommend pursuing those contents carefully. However, the study guide should not remain your only source of knowledge. We strongly encourage you to expand your research as it will help you represent your country and, possibly, get awarded.

Another task waiting for you is to prepare the position paper - a document containing a detailed overview of the government's policy regarding the discussed topic. We also encourage you to write an opening speech, which every delegate will present at the beginning of the debates.

Last but not least, we ask you to follow our social media, where you will be informed about the deadlines and organization. We are looking forward to seeing you in April!

Sincerely,

Palo & Johana



III. Overview

Historical and Geopolitical Context

Haiti's entanglement in the world of drug and arms trafficking can be traced back to key historical events that shaped its political and economic landscape. During the 1970s and 1980s, under the leadership of Jean-Claude Duvalier, also known as "Baby Doc," Haiti's political elites and intelligence networks began to co-opt the state's apparatus. This laid the foundation for corruption-based trafficking systems. Elements of Duvalier's regime formed connections with both local and international smuggling networks, turning Haiti into an essential hub for drug trafficking.

The situation worsened in the 1990s after the first ousting of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991. During this period, military juntas took control and facilitated drug trafficking to finance their operations. By the 2000s, gangs expanded their influence, further infiltrating political and security institutions. These gangs played a critical role in Haiti's growing instability, and by the time of the devastating 2010 earthquake, the state was severely weakened. The collapse of infrastructure and the displacement of key government functions allowed criminal organizations to fill the void, with gangs increasingly assuming roles traditionally reserved for the state.

Operational dynamics of the Illicit Trade

While Haiti does not produce drugs, it has become an essential transshipment point for illicit goods, primarily moving narcotics from South America to North America. Drugs such as cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and, more recently, fentanyl precursors pass through the country on their way to international markets.

The methods of transport are diverse and adapted to the region's unique challenges. Fast boats originating from Colombia and Venezuela are often used to navigate Haiti's coastline. Additionally, small aircraft regularly land in rural or unmonitored areas, bypassing official controls. Cargo containers passing through poorly regulated ports are another key avenue for



smuggling. These ports, critical logistical chokepoints, are often controlled by gangs who collude with corrupt port workers and customs officials, ensuring the smooth passage of illicit goods.

The Weapon Trade

In addition to the drug trade, Haiti has become a major conduit for arms trafficking. The majority of illicit firearms in Haiti originate from the United States, particularly from states like Florida and Georgia. These weapons are smuggled into Haiti through various routes, including shipping containers labelled as humanitarian aid, private docks, and small ports that are often not subject to rigorous security checks. Personal shipments from diaspora networks also contribute to the flow of arms into the country.

The weapons trafficked into Haiti include semi-automatic rifles, pistols, and, in some cases, military-grade equipment. These firearms are crucial for the militarization of gangs, enabling them to engage in urban warfare and further destabilize the country. The presence of such arms in Haiti contributes significantly to the growing violence, as gang leaders and members gain greater firepower, further weakening the state's ability to maintain order.

Key Players and Power Brokers

The ecosystem surrounding Haiti's illicit trade consists of a variety of interlinked actors, each playing a specific role in maintaining the flow of drugs, arms, and violence. Among the most influential are the gangs themselves, which operate not only as traffickers but also as enforcers of territorial control. Prominent gangs such as G9 an Fanmi e Alye, 400 Mawozo, Kraze Barye, and Base 5 Second exert influence over entire neighbourhoods, securing transportation routes and enforcing their will with armed violence.

Political elites also play a significant role in the illicit trade, often collaborating with gangs for mutual benefits. For example, politicians may use gangs to provide protection during campaigns, suppress rivals, or secure profit-sharing arrangements. Corrupt police and military officers facilitate trafficking operations, ensuring that shipments move through the country unimpeded. In exchange, these officials often receive a share of the profits or political protection from powerful figures.



Additionally, foreign cartels from Colombia, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic rely on Haiti as a waypoint to the United States, using the country's instability to move drugs and weapons. The Haitian diaspora, particularly those in the United States and Canada, is also deeply involved in the trafficking network, playing a crucial role in the purchase of arms, money laundering, and the coordination of logistics between local and international criminal networks.

International Dimensions

The transnational nature of the trafficking networks operating in Haiti complicates efforts to address the issue. Arms, primarily sourced from the United States, are trafficked into the country through lax gun regulations and loopholes such as straw purchases and non-commercial shipping channels. Money laundering is another critical aspect of the international criminal infrastructure, with shell companies, construction businesses, NGOs, and even religious institutions being used to disguise illicit financial flows.

The instability caused by these trafficking networks often spills over into neighbouring countries, particularly the Dominican Republic, which has been forced to address the impact of Haiti's crisis on bilateral relations. International actors have attempted to intervene, with varying degrees of success. United Nations peacekeeping missions have operated in Haiti for years, but their effectiveness has been limited. In 2023, a Kenya-led multinational security mission was approved in an effort to restore order and curb gang violence.

Socioeconomic consequences

The consequences of Haiti's involvement in the drug and arms trade are deeply felt by the Haitian population. The pervasive violence and criminal activities have led to the displacement of entire communities. Territorial gang warfare has made certain areas uninhabitable, leaving civilians in constant fear for their safety. Economic paralysis is rampant, particularly in the capital, Port-au-Prince, where roadblocks, fuel depot seizures, and port shutdowns have become common occurrences.

In addition to the economic hardships, civilian casualties, mass kidnappings, and sexual violence are widespread. Gangs are increasingly acting as proto-political actors, enforcing local authority



where the state has failed. This shift has eroded trust in government institutions and further entrenched the power of criminal organizations.

Emerging Trends

Several emerging trends highlight the growing complexity of the illicit trade and its impact on Haiti. One such trend is the convergence of multiple criminal enterprises within gangs. These groups are no longer solely focused on drug trafficking but have expanded into weapons smuggling, kidnapping, and extortion. The militarization of gangs is another concerning development, with access to increasingly sophisticated weaponry enabling gangs to engage in more organized and lethal forms of urban warfare.

The use of digital communication tools has also become more prevalent, allowing gangs to coordinate international logistics with greater efficiency. Additionally, youth recruitment has become a significant concern, with gangs preying on young people amid Haiti's economic desperation and social fragmentation. As gangs expand their reach, both within and beyond Haiti's borders, transnational networks are beginning to take shape, presenting a more significant challenge to the international community.

IV. Timeline

1980s – Early Drug Connections

- During **Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier’s regime**, Haiti became a drug transshipment point, aided by corruption in government and law enforcement.
- **1986**: Duvalier was ousted. The military and police continued engaging in corrupt practices, often profiting from drug trade.

1990s – Narco-Politics and Instability

- **1991**: A military coup ousted President **Jean-Bertrand Aristide**, prompting the rise of military-linked trafficking operations.
- **1994**: The U.S. intervened to restore Aristide. However, during and after this period, traffickers embedded themselves in security institutions.



- **Late 1990s:** The **National Police (PNH)** began to be infiltrated by drug traffickers. Haiti's weak judicial system allowed impunity.

2000–2004 – Deepening Narco-Links

- Under Aristide's second presidency, **allegations arose** that high-level officials, including Aristide himself, were involved in drug trafficking. U.S. DEA investigations pointed to ties between the government and traffickers.
- **2004:** Aristide was forced into exile after a rebellion, which was partly fuelled by gang violence and political conflict tied to organized crime.

2004–2010 – UN Mission and Persistent Trafficking

- The **United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)** arrived to restore order, but arms and drugs still flowed freely.
- Port security remained porous, and political instability continued to allow traffickers to operate with minimal oversight.

2010 Earthquake – A Turning Point for Gangs

- The **devastating earthquake** in January 2010 weakened state infrastructure and displaced thousands.
- Gangs took advantage of chaos and began consolidating control over urban areas like **Cité Soleil and Martissant**.
- This period saw **rapid growth in arms smuggling**, mostly from the U.S., often through **shipping containers falsely declared** as humanitarian aid.

2011–2017 – Rise of Gangs and Political Complicity

- Presidents **Michel Martelly (2011–2016)** and **Jovenel Moïse (2017–2021)** faced growing criticism for tolerating gang activity.
- Weapons and drugs became major sources of income for **gangs who often acted as political proxies** during elections.
- U.S. reports indicated Haiti remained a key drug transshipment point.

2018–2021 – Political Crisis and Gang Empowerment

- Massive anti-corruption protests rocked the country.
- Gangs like **G9 and Fanmi e Alye**, allegedly formed with political support, gained power.
- Gun smuggling increased, often via **private ports and unsecured customs**.



- **2021: President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated.** Investigations pointed to a mix of mercenaries, corrupt officials, and possibly drug-linked actors.

2022–Present – Near Collapse of Security

- Gangs now control **large swaths of Port-au-Prince**, acting as de facto authorities.
- **Weapon seizures by customs and police increased** but barely dented the flow.
- The U.N. and U.S. confirmed that the **majority of illegal firearms** entering Haiti still come from **Florida and other U.S. states**.
- A proposed **Kenya-led international force** was authorized in 2023 to help restore order, though implementation has been delayed.
- Drug shipments through Haiti continue, with **DEA and U.N. reports confirming cartel connections** to both local gangs and corrupt elites.

V. List of Affiliated Criminal Groups

1. G9 an Fanmi e Alye (G9 Family and Allies)

A powerful coalition of multiple gangs, originally formed by former police officer Jimmy “Barbecue” Chérizier. G9 controls large parts of Port-au-Prince and is heavily involved in arms trafficking and extortion. It has also been linked to controlling drug transit routes and imposing territorial control over key urban zones.

2. 400 Mawozo

One of the most notorious gangs in Haiti, based in Croix-des-Bouquets. Infamous for mass kidnappings, the gang also engages in arms smuggling and drug trafficking, using ransom payments to fund weapons purchases.

3. Kraze Barye

Known for violent confrontations and extortion operations. The gang is active in arms trafficking and has historically been involved in political intimidation and territorial enforcement for illicit trade routes.

4. Ti Lapli’s Gang (Grand Ravine faction)

Led by gang leader Ti Lapli, this group operates in the Grand Ravine area. It’s involved in both arms and drug trafficking, and is known for brutal violence, kidnappings, and controlling key roadways for smuggling.



5. Base 5 Second

A smaller but violent gang engaged in kidnapping, extortion, and providing armed support to larger coalitions. Linked to weapons distribution networks in urban zones.

6. Baz Pilate

This gang operates primarily in Port-au-Prince and is involved in local arms trade and turf wars. It maintains influence through extortion and provides logistical support in drug trafficking routes.

VI. Points to Consider

- How can international partners effectively disarm gangs without triggering widespread retaliatory violence or a power vacuum?
- What mechanisms can be developed to halt the flow of illicit firearms from the United States and other external sources into Haiti?
- How can the root causes of gang recruitment — poverty, unemployment, disenfranchisement — be addressed in tandem with security efforts?
- How can drug interdiction efforts be expanded without disrupting the livelihoods of civilians in gang-controlled areas?
- What is the exit strategy for international forces, and how will Haitian authorities be empowered to take sustainable control?
- How can international financial institutions and anti-money laundering frameworks be mobilized to disrupt the financial flows of drug and arms trafficking networks?



VII. Research

This study guide serves as a foundation for your research. However, you are expected to investigate further using credible sources. Consider the following research steps:

- Understand **your country's stance** on illicit drug and weapon trade.
- Identify **past actions and policies** your country has taken regarding illicit drug and weapon trade.
- Examine **international agreements** related to the prevention of illicit drug and weapon trade
- Study **existing UN programs and their impact** in Haiti and the Caribbean.

VIII. Position Paper

Each delegate must submit a **position paper** outlining their country's stance on the topic. Your paper should include:

1. **Your country's position** regarding the resolution of the issue.
2. **Previous policies and actions** taken by your country regarding illicit weapon and drug trade.
3. **Proposed solutions and contributions** your country is willing to make.

Position papers should be well-researched and provide a clear strategy for tackling the issue at hand.



After completing the Position Paper, please submit it through mymun.com as a .pdf file. If you do not manage to send it via mymun you may send it through discord.

IX. General Recommendations

We strongly encourage each Delegate to establish their stance early in the committee and ensure their research is as thorough as possible. Well-informed Delegates will play a crucial role in shaping the discussions and influencing resolutions. It is essential to remain aligned with your country's policies and engage in meaningful dialogue. Additionally, we highly recommend active participation in bilateral and multilateral negotiations, as these efforts will be instrumental in shaping the final resolution.

X. Addressing the Committee

All Delegates are expected to maintain diplomatic decorum and engage in constructive debate. Any form of hate speech, discrimination, or disrespectful behaviour—including racism, sexism, or personal attacks—will not be tolerated. Given the complexity of this issue, Delegates must recognize the weight of their decisions and the potential impact on global health and humanitarian concerns. Every intervention should be made with professionalism and a commitment to finding sustainable and equitable solutions.

XI. Sources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTmPE-qev3g>

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