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Haiti's Presidential Transitional Council Flounders During Meeting to Appoint Chair; Food Insecurity Rising Amidst Ongoing Violence

Security concerns and internal disagreements challenge Haiti's path to stability

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Even before it has begun to address the crisis gripping the country, Haiti's presidential transitional council finds itself in limbo, with some members withdrawing due to security concerns and deep disagreement over the council's exact composition.

On Sunday, UNESCO Ambassador Dominique Dupuy, issued a video statement saying that she was stepping down from the council after being subjected to an intense campaign of political attacks and death threats. Although Ms. Dupuy was replaced, other representatives withdrew

shortly before a Monday evening meeting during which the council was supposed to elect its chair.

Famni Lavalas delegate Leslie Voltaire wrote a letter stating that a “political accord signed between the different sectors” was necessary before a president could be elected, while Jean Jumeau, one of the two non-voting members on the council, said that he would no longer take part because “the need for concrete action is too great to remain impotent in a spectator’s posture.”

The apparent floundering of the transitional council a mere two weeks after it was announced has prompted some to call on more action from the international community, a prospect being strongly resisted by the armed groups currently terrorizing the capital, as well as some members of the general public.

Gedeon Jean, founder of the Center for Human Rights Analysis and Research, said that an “intermediate force” of regional troops should be brought in to attempt to stabilize the security situation. Although the intense fighting of the last few weeks seems to have somewhat subsided in the city of Port-au-Prince, armed gangs on Monday and Tuesday set fires to business places and looted health care facilities in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Meanwhile, the instability is worsening the country’s malnutrition crisis, according to UNICEF. Recent findings from the World Food Program suggest that “rising hunger is fueling the security crisis that is shattering the country,” according to Jean-Martin Bauer, WFP’s Country Director in Haiti. “We need urgent action now – waiting to respond at scale is not an option.”

The WFP says that the cost of a food basket has risen 22% between August 2023 and February 2024, pushing food prices beyond reach for millions of Haitians, who have reportedly resorted to selling assets and taking on increasing amounts of debts just to be able to purchase daily sustenance. Almost 5 million people across the country now face crisis, emergency, or catastrophic levels of [food insecurity](#). The Artibonite valley, known as the country’s “breadbasket”, is largely under the control of armed groups, who appropriate crops and control farmland for their own purposes, WFP says. Humanitarian assistance has also been hindered by the ongoing violence.

On Monday, members of the transitional council met with regional and international officials, aiming to find a feasible solution amidst the ongoing turmoil. Haiti, currently under the temporary leadership of Acting Prime Minister Michel Boisvert, is in the process of selecting a transitional leader.