

UN warns of escalating violence in gang war in Haiti



A gang member in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 2022. | Photo: Twitter/ @ChallengePetro

Geneva, May 19 (RHC)-- The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet warned of the consequences of the wave of extreme violence between gangs in Port-au-Prince.

Over the past three weeks, clashes have left 188 dead, including 92 civilians and 96 gang members. The real death toll, however, could be much higher given that there are reports of beheadings, burning of corpses, and murder of minors accused of being informants for rival gangs.

"Armed violence has reached unimaginable and intolerable levels in Haiti," she said, calling on local authorities to take urgent action to restore the rule of law, protect citizens from armed violence, and punish financial and political sponsors of gangs.

So far, the Haitian authorities have recorded 12 people missing, 113 citizens injured, 49 people kidnapped, and at least 9,000 citizens displaced from their homes to temporary shelters in other areas of the country.

Bachelet stressed that the fragility of the Police, the Judiciary, and other public institutions "has fueled anarchy" and expressed the fear that the violence will only intensify.

Traffic on the two highways connecting Port-au-Prince to the north and east of the country has been compromised by conflict, a situation that could have devastating long-term impacts on Haiti's already dire economic situation.

Since April 24, the 400 Mawozo and Chen Mechan gangs have been disputing control of several neighborhoods in the Cul-de-Sac plain, a large region in the north of Port-au-Prince, which is divided into the communes of Tabarre and Croix-des-Bouquets.

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