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Security in Haiti: Understanding an Evolving Threat to Prepare More Effectively

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A threat changing in scale

Haiti is entering another stage of its security crisis.

Haiti is entering another stage of its security crisis. Kidnappings, massacres, forced displacement and attacks against communities are, regrettably, not new. However, their geographical expansion, evolving methods and the growing use of new technology are fundamentally changing the environment in which citizens, businesses, humanitarian organizations and institutions operate.

The crisis can no longer be viewed as a problem confined to a few neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince. Armed groups are expanding into rural areas, strategic roads and agricultural regions. An analysis published in September found that small, mobile units are being used to conduct rapid attacks, establish roadblocks, carry out kidnappings and disrupt economic activity without necessarily occupying territory permanently. Artibonite, one of Haiti's principal agricultural regions, is particularly affected by this development.

SOURCE Reuters, September 7, 2026

● GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION

● EVOLVING METHODS

● NEW TECHNOLOGY

Kenscoff: A Painful Warning

47+

PEOPLE KILLED

50+

PEOPLE KIDNAPPED

The August 23 attack in Kenscoff illustrates the brutality and changing character of the threat. According to information presented to the United Nations, at least 47 people were killed and more than 50 kidnapped. Civilians who had sought refuge inside a church were among the victims.

Beyond the numbers, this massacre demonstrates how a community previously considered relatively peaceful can rapidly become the target of an organized attack. It also shows that places of worship, rural communities and locations traditionally perceived as protective cannot automatically be treated as safe havens.

SOURCE United Nations Security Council, August 28, 2026



A place perceived as protective can no longer automatically be treated as a safe haven.



When Violence Becomes a Spectacle

During the first weekend of September, an extremely graphic video circulated on social media. It reportedly showed individuals presented as members of the 400 Mawozo gang killing and mutilating a young woman with machetes in Croix-des-Bouquets.

According to Haitian media, the Central Directorate of Judicial Police reportedly issued wanted notices for Esther Thomas, known as “Nice B,” and Darlens Duclona, alias “Enspektè Tèt Kale,” in connection with their alleged involvement in the crime. It is now the responsibility of the judicial authorities to establish individual responsibility in accordance with the law and the presumption of innocence.

SOURCE Le Facteur Haïti, September 6, 2026
Rezo Nòdwès, September 5, 2026

The reported crime is especially alarming not only because of its cruelty, but also because those responsible chose to record and distribute it. Violence is thereby transformed into a communication tool intended to terrorize the population, humiliate the victim, display supposed power and normalize the inhumane.

Violence becomes a communication tool.

Protect dignity. Disrupt the message of terror.

Sharing such images, even for the purpose of condemning the crime, may unintentionally extend the victim's humiliation, traumatize viewers and amplify the perpetrators' intended message of terror. EDGE recommends that this type of content not be downloaded, reposted or forwarded. Information that may assist an investigation should be preserved without public distribution and transmitted only to the appropriate authorities.

This incident also underscores the importance of digital awareness. Organizations should prepare their personnel to recognize traumatic content, verify information before sharing it and protect the dignity of victims. Digital caution has now become an integral part of security in Haiti.

RECOMMANDATION EDGE

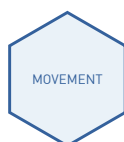
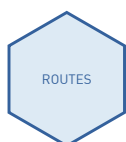
DO NOT DOWNLOAD, REPOST OR FORWARD THIS TYPE OF CONTENT.

Kidnapping Remains a Major Threat

Kidnapping remains one of the most destabilizing tools used by armed groups. Its consequences are not limited to human and financial losses. It creates profound psychological suffering for victims, families, colleagues and entire communities.

Recent attacks demonstrate that kidnappings can be individual or collective, opportunistic or planned. They may occur during a journey, near a residence, along a major road, within a community or as part of a larger attack.

No organization can guarantee the complete elimination of this risk. It can, however, reduce personnel exposure through regular route assessments, movement procedures, reliable communications, alert systems, careful protection of personal information and practiced incident-response arrangements.



Drones: A New Dimension of Risk

The use of explosive drones during operations against armed groups has introduced a new technological dimension to Haiti's crisis.

1,200+

REPORTED DEATHS

According to Human Rights Watch findings reported by Reuters, strikes conducted between March 2025 and January 2026 reportedly killed more than 1,200 people, including at least 60 identified civilians - 17 of them children. Some operations occurred in densely populated areas of Port-au-Prince. The United Nations and human-rights organizations have called for greater transparency, oversight, civilian protection and investigation of reported casualties.

SOURCE Reuters, March 10, 2026

Technology may support security operations, but it does not eliminate the obligation to protect civilians or the possibility of error. In densely populated urban areas, an explosive device may harm individuals who are not involved in hostilities.

Organizations must therefore consider not only gunfire, roadblocks and ground confrontations, but also aerial hazards and the secondary effects of operations near offices, residences, warehouses and travel routes.

Security analysis must also look to the airspace.

From Reaction to Preparedness

Fear is understandable in such a serious crisis. Fear alone, however, is not a strategy.

Effective preparedness requires organizations to:

01

update security-risk assessments regularly;

02

monitor developments beyond Port-au-Prince;

03

establish clear staff-movement procedures;

04

maintain multiple emergency communication options;

05

assign responsibilities before incidents occur;

06

develop shelter-in-place, relocation and evacuation plans;

07

train personnel to recognize changes in their surroundings;

08

provide psychological support to personnel exposed to violence;

09

verify regularly that plans remain understood, practical and tested.

A plan stored in a binder protects no one. It must be understood, practiced, updated and adapted to conditions on the ground.

A Shared Responsibility

Security is not solely the responsibility of security personnel or the security manager. Leadership must provide resources and establish priorities. Supervisors must apply procedures consistently. Employees must report relevant changes and avoid conduct that unnecessarily increases their exposure.

LEADERSHIP

Provide resources and establish priorities.

SUPERVISORS

Apply procedures consistently.

EMPLOYEES

Report relevant changes.

Decisions should be based on verified information rather than rumors circulating through social media. Sensitive information must also be protected. Staff routes, schedules, residences and movements should never be shared without a legitimate professional need.

Our Conviction

At EDGE Training and Consulting Group, we believe that no organization can completely control its operating environment. It can, however, better understand its risks, prepare its people and make more responsible decisions.

Massacres, kidnappings, recorded acts of violence and the use of drones demonstrate that the threat is evolving. Our approach to preparedness must evolve with it.

Resilience does not mean becoming accustomed to insecurity. It means retaining the capacity to anticipate, protect people, make informed decisions and continue essential operations despite uncertainty.

In Haiti, preparedness is no longer optional. It has become an institutional and collective responsibility.

About the Author



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Fabrus Guillaume is the Founder and Managing Director of EDGE Training and Consulting Group. He is a security, safety and operations professional with additional experience in crisis management, supply chain, logistics, fleet management and business continuity in complex operating environments in Haiti.

The information presented in this editorial constitutes general guidance. It should be adapted to each organization's operating environment, risk profile and internal procedures. Individuals mentioned in connection with ongoing investigations are presumed innocent unless and until found guilty by a competent court.

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