

From: Kristie van de Wetering, Beyond Borders
Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 4:57 PM

Subject: Re: Situation in Haiti

I wanted to share a quick update on our teams, partners, participants and programs in Haiti, as you have likely heard that things have been rapidly deteriorating in Haiti these past few days, specifically in and around the capital of Port au Prince, but also in other parts of the country.

The Situation as We Know/Understand it: Gangs in and around Port au Prince have escalated their attacks on neighborhoods, government institutions and businesses; they have now apparently united and are demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister. Various police stations in and around Port au Prince and in other parts of the country have been taken over by gangs, and the main prison in Port au Prince was also attacked over the weekend, among others. Attacks close to the international and national airport, during which at least one plane was hit with a stray bullet, has resulted in the suspension of all flights in and out of the country, as well as internal flights. The unconstitutional Prime Minister has been overseas for the past several days, including in Kenya to negotiate an agreement for the deployment of troops as part of a multi-national security force under the leadership of Kenya (as discussed and agreed upon in the UN). For a number of days, he has been trying to get back into Haiti but has been having difficulty due to the closed airport. Continued concerns remain for access to services, goods and access to cash in other parts of the country that rely on provisions from Port au Prince. Various stories are circulating around a possible resignation of the Prime Minister with a view to a transitional government; the question of transition of power to whom remains a concern. We continue to follow developments and monitor the situation where we have teams and programming.

Our Teams: Beyond Borders has an Emergency Management Team (EMT) that meets at least 1x per week, more often in difficult times such as these. Contingency Plans with guidance for actions at different levels of unrest and regular analysis of the situation in the country and in program sites guide the EMT members to make swift, site-specific decisions aimed at protecting staff, partners, program participants and assets. [Staff safety is our number one priority. We check in daily with team members and all are reported safe.](#)

While the office remains closed in Port au Prince and staff are working from home, **program teams in Jacmel and on Lagonav Island continue working in and with communities.** Schools are open and most businesses remain functional. As mentioned above, access to goods from metropolitan Port au Prince and related transportation issues within the country continue to create some challenges and delays for some activities but overall, the work continues. The installation of Starlink internet connectivity has allowed teams in Jacmel and Port au Prince to stay connected with colleagues in North America and Europe; schedules are full of regularly scheduled program and support meetings, as programs remain in the full swing of operation. Several Port-au-

Prince-based team members are on Lagonav Island at the moment, moving forward with various activities as planned. In the southeast, the Jacmel Office remains open and many staff from the Rethinking Power team (working to end violence against women and girls) are working in remote communities as they carry on with a variety of activities as planned. The situation in the city of Jacmel remains volatile with some reports of isolated incidents of violence but to date this is not affecting the overall functioning of the office.

Taking meaningful action during times of distress keeps despair at bay and increases hope. Stress levels are high among the teams, especially those in Port au Prince and those with families and around Port au Prince. Despite this, there are often smiles and light laughter as teams meet together via ZOOM or Google Meet and talk about how to keep moving forward to achieve the mission of the organization to which they are so deeply committed. We witness this commitment day in and day out. And this brings us great hope and encouragement too.

We thank you and the SSND community for standing in solidarity with our Haitian colleagues, partners and program participants, and ask you to continue to uplift them, the people and country of Haiti in your thoughts and hold them in your prayers.

There is a Haitian Creole saying that says “*Nou se wozo. Nou pliye men nou pa djanm kase*”, which translates as follows: “**We are like reeds. We may bend but we never break**”. We hold on to this as we long for a peaceful resolution to this current crisis.

Thank you for joining us in this journey.

With much appreciation and gratitude,
Kristie

Kristie van de Wetering

Deputy Executive Director | **Beyond Borders**