

US Hopes to Find Third Country to Lead UN Mission to Haiti

By [Kyle Anzalone](#) and [Will Porter](#)

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Officials in Washington say the United States has not abandoned its effort to find a country to lead a United Nations rapid response force to quell unrest in Haiti. The White House has proposed a multilateral security deployment to the Caribbean nation, with the State Department saying it expects to have a country prepared to lead the mission by early November.

On October 18, the US and Mexico [announced](#) an upcoming UN resolution to authorize a military deployment to Haiti, where chaotic protests have blocked major ports and disrupted the flow of goods and sorely needed humanitarian aid. According to a [report](#) in the Miami Herald earlier this week, the initiative was likely to fail as no country wanted to lead the force.

On Wednesday, however, Assistant Secretary of State Brian Nichols said Washington is still seeking a country willing to take the reins, and suggested Canada was a top candidate.

"I've talked to dozens of partner nations around the world about the situation in Haiti, and there is strong support for a multinational force. The desire to contribute in whatever ways that nations feel that they can be helpful I think is very widespread in our hemisphere and beyond," he [told reporters](#), noting that Secretary of State Antony Blinken is set to discuss the issue with Canadian officials later this week.

"Canada is an incredibly capable partner across a whole host of areas. Canada has incredible development skills, and has a very capable armed forces as well as a national police force. Those are important skills in the international community, and more broadly, it is a respected nation and leader on the full range of issues," Nichols added.

Washington and Mexico City proposed the security mission following a request for foreign

intervention by Haitian Prime Minister and President Ariel Henry. The leader previously called upon other nations to help restore order amid wide-scale protests and gang violence, sparked by a recent cut to government fuel subsidies – a decision [urged by the IMF](#). Armed groups have sized control of several key trade and distribution hubs in Haiti, creating dire shortages in basic necessities, such as water, and even forcing a significant number of hospitals, businesses and other institutions to close their doors.

Haiti's descent into chaos accelerated in July 2021 after the assassination of President Jovenel Moise. In the weeks following his death, then-acting PM Claude Joseph briefly took over as president, but was soon forced from power under international pressure after a bloc of countries led by the United States [declared their support for Henry](#). The new leader reportedly has [close ties](#) to a suspect in Moise's assassination, and even continued contact with him after the murder.

Should the White House find a suitable nation to lead a UN security mission, Beijing and Moscow could ultimately stifle the effort. Both countries are permanent members of the UN Security Council – meaning they hold veto power over any resolution that might authorize action in Haiti – and have each questioned the wisdom of such a deployment.

Some Haitians have also voiced objections to any Western military presence in their country, likely given a long and often violent [history of foreign intervention](#) there – including a US invasion and military occupation between 1915 and 1934 following a previous presidential assassination.

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Kyle Anzalone is the opinion editor of Antiwar.com and news editor of the Libertarian Institute.

Will Porter is the assistant news editor of the Libertarian Institute and a staff writer and editor at RT.

Kyle Anzalone and Will Porter host Conflicts of Interest along with Connor Freeman.

Featured image: FILE PHOTO: United Nations peacekeepers conduct a patrol in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, April 2004. (Credit: UN / Sophia Paris)

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