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MICHEL JOSEPH MARTELLY
56ÈME PRÉSIDENT DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'HAÏTI

October 22, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

My name is Michel Joseph Martelly, and I had the honor of serving as President of the Republic of Haiti from 2011 to 2016. Before entering public office, I spent many years as a musician and entertainer, building a close connection with the Haitian people both at home and abroad. My presidency took place during a particularly challenging period in Haiti's history, as the country continued to recover from the devastating earthquake of 2010.

Throughout my years of public life, much has been said and written about me – some favorable, some critical, and some deeply troubling. I understand that public figures are subject to scrutiny and that my presidency remains open to differing interpretations. However, I believe there is a distinction between public perception and the full account of an individual's actions, intentions, and circumstances.

On August 20, 2024, Biden Administration Secretary of the U.S. Treasury, Janet Yellen, imposed sanctions against me based on unfounded nor supported allegations. In addition, Vedant Patel, Principal Deputy Spokesperson for the U.S. State Department put out a statement on the controversy and therefore, I would like to clear up any misperceptions or incorrect information the State Department relied on for that press release. The announcements had profound consequences for my reputation, my family, and my personal and professional life. I recognize the authority of the U.S. government to take measures it considers necessary to protect its national interests. Nevertheless, I believe there are important facts and circumstances surrounding my case that deserve to be heard and carefully considered. I would welcome the opportunity to address the allegations, clarify misunderstandings, and provide relevant information through the appropriate channels.

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It is with respect for your office and the institutions you represent that I request and opportunity for a private meeting. My purpose is not to seek special treatment or to circumvent any established legal or administrative process. Rather, I hope to have the opportunity to share my perspective and facts, present my side of the story, and answer any questions you may have. I believe that a direct and respectful conversation could provide important context that has not been fully conveyed through public statements or official announcements.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be sincerely grateful for the opportunity to meet at your convenience.

Respectfully,

Michel Joseph Martelly

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SECURITY UNDER PRESIDENT MICHEL JOSEPH MARTELLY

May 14, 2011 – February 7, 2016

POLICE REFORM & INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

The Haitian National Police (PNH) expanded from approximately 10,000 to over 13,000 officers during this period, guided by the Plan de Développement de la PNH (PDPNH) 2012–2016. New and reinforced specialized units included the BIM (motorized intervention), SWAT, DCPJ (criminal investigation), CRO (operations intelligence center), DCPR (traffic police), and USGPN (presidential security). Commissariats (police stations) were built and renovated across all departments, and the Inspection Générale (IGPNH) was strengthened for internal accountability. New graduating classes from the Académie Nationale de Police introduced improved vetting standards.

Two notable new units were created during this period: **POLITOUR** (Tourist Police, 2013) — protecting visitor sites and strategic infrastructure — and **EDUPOL** (2015) — a school-based program to combat violence and discourage the use of drugs, alcohol, and weapons among students. The **BOID** (Brigade d'Opérations et d'Interventions Départementales/ Departmental Operations and Intervention Brigade) was established to extend operational police capacity across departments.

REMOBILIZATION OF THE HAITIAN ARMED FORCES (FAd'H)

President Martelly fulfilled a core campaign promise by initiating the reconstitution of the Forces Armées d'Haïti, disbanded since 1995. On March 9, 2015, the Council of Ministers adopted the decree establishing the organization and operation of the Ministry of Defense. Hundreds of Haitian youths were trained as technical soldiers in the Corps of Engineers through bilateral cooperation programs in partner countries — programs that continue to operate today. Dozens of senior officials received government scholarships to attend the Inter-American Defense College in Washington, D.C. Haiti also produced its first-ever White Paper on National Security and Defense in 2015, developed with technical assistance from the Inter-American Defense Board (JID/OAS) — the country's first strategic framework identifying threats and proposing sustainable solutions.

ANTI-NARCOTICS — MEASURABLE RESULTS

The **BLTS** (Brigade de Lutte contre le Trafic de Stupéfiants / Anti-Narcotics Trafficking Brigade) conducted an average of 80 drug operations per year between 2011 and 2015, with a total of 661 arrests over the period. Drug seizures included 9.6 tons of marijuana and 540 kg of cocaine, with an estimated street value of $21.6 million (cocaine) and $19.2 million (marijuana). In 2014 alone, nearly one metric ton of cocaine was intercepted in a joint operation with the U.S. DEA. In 2015, a joint operation by the BLTS, the U.S. DEA, and UNPOL seized 77 kg of cocaine and 10 kg of heroin — with an estimated street value of $10 million USD — concealed within a sugar cargo aboard the MV Manzanares. Haiti's third maritime base was inaugurated in Les Cayes in 2013, strategically positioned to intercept trafficking from South America. In 2014, the U.S. donated over twenty all-terrain vehicles and two speedboats to the BLTS. In 2016, 19-dog canine detection units were deployed at borders, airports, and coastal points. A

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border management contract with HLSI (an Israeli firm)_was signed in 2015 to modernize controls at land, sea, and air entry points. The contract was subsequently canceled by the succeeding administration. Haiti coordinated with the DEA, INTERPOL, UNPOL, OCRTIS, CICAD, CIFAD, the Canadian RCMP, TADOC, and the Dominican DNCD.

MINUSTAH & REDUCTION IN VIOLENCE

Joint PNH-MINUSTAH operations maintained relative calm in historically volatile zones — Cité Soleil, Martissant, Bel Air. Haiti successfully advocated for a gradual drawdown of MINUSTAH military components as PNH capacity grew, shifting the mission toward an advisory role. Political violence and kidnapping rates, while not eliminated, were significantly lower than during the catastrophic 2005–2007 peak. During the Martelly administration (2011–2016), reported kidnappings declined significantly, falling from 239 cases in 2012 to just 31 in 2014, before rising to 74 in 2015, according to historical crime statistics compiled in a UNDP-supported Coginta study. The Martelly administration pressed the UN for accountability over the cholera epidemic — caused by a MINUSTAH base — which killed over 10,000 Haitians.

STATE PRESENCE AS SECURITY STRATEGY

A defining and often underappreciated dimension of security under MJM was the use of social programs and local governance structures to deny gangs the vacuum they exploit. Programs including **PSUGO** (free universal education), **Ti Manman Cheri** (conditional cash transfers to mothers), **PSME** (micro-enterprise support), **Chanje Metye Chanje Lavi** (vocational training), **Kore Peyizan** (agricultural support), **Restaurants Communautaires (Community Restaurants)**, **Cantines Mobiles**, and **Kore Fanmi** (family social accompaniment) all brought active state presence into the country's most vulnerable communities. Local governance — (Departmental Delegates, Communal Section Assemblies (ASECs), Communal Section Administrative Councils (CASECs), Municipal Councils) — remained fully operational. The **Mandatory Mixed Civil Service Program** (launched June 2013) trained young Haitians in first aid, disaster risk management, and civic participation.

The collapse of security after 2016 tracked precisely with the dismantlement of these structures: when local governance was suspended and social programs ended, gangs moved in.

The 2011–2016 period was the most stable security environment Haiti had experienced since 2004. This was achieved through simultaneous investment across all security dimensions: police expansion and specialization, military reconstitution, strategic anti-narcotics operations with international partners, border modernization, and the use of social programs as instruments of order. The first White Paper on National Defense provided the country's first-ever security doctrine. These gains were not maintained after the administration's end — making their documentation and institutional memory all the more essential.

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N.B. — U.S.-Haiti Relations Under President Martelly

President Martelly maintained close ties with the United States throughout his administration, acting at times as a trusted diplomatic intermediary. In June 2015, he facilitated high-level talks in Port-au-Prince between U.S. State Department Counselor Thomas Shannon and Venezuelan National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello — a sensitive channel aimed at re-establishing dialogue between Washington and Caracas. He also assisted in back-channel efforts related to the release of American citizen Alan Gross, detained in Cuba since 2009. Notably, despite Haiti's historical ties with Venezuela, Martelly did not shield Venezuelan nationals from U.S. law enforcement: in November 2015, 2 high profile Venezuelan citizens were arrested in Port-au-Prince in a joint DEA-Haitian operation, then flown to New York where they were federally charged and subsequently convicted on cocaine trafficking charges involving approximately 800 kilograms destined for the United States.

PRE-MJM | 2005–2010	UNDER MJM | 2011–2016	POST-MJM | 2016–2020
One of the worst kidnapping crises in the Western Hemisphere. Peak of ~750 incidents (2005) and ~554 ransom kidnappings (2006). Partial decline through 2007–2009 MINUSTAH operations, reversed by the January 2010 earthquake.	Most secure period in Haiti since 2004. Historically low kidnapping levels sustained through PNH expansion, active local governance (ASECs, CASECs, delegates), EDE PEP and Ti Manman Cheri social programs, and FAd'H remobilization.	Rapid collapse. Suspension of elections and dismantlement of local governance created the vacuum gangs exploited. From ~78 cases (2019) to 234–796 (2020): a +200% spike in a single year — the start of an ongoing exponential crisis.

Methodological note: Official Haitian crime statistics are widely considered underreported. Sources use inconsistent definitions (incidents vs. victims; ransom kidnappings only vs. all abductions). The low figures for 2011–2018 reflect both genuinely reduced criminal activity and weaker systematic data collection during that period. Any citation should specify the source and definition used.

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