

United Nations releases emergency relief funds for Haiti



Gangs in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 2023. | Photo: Twitter/ @michaelcdeibert

United Nations, May 16 (RHC)-- United Nations Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths has authorized the release of \$9 million USD for aid to an estimated 5.2 million people in Haiti.

Griffiths took the action after the number of people who need humanitarian assistance in Haiti doubled over the past five years, said the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which he heads.

The 5.2 million people in need include a 30 percent jump in the number of children suffering severe acute malnutrition compared to a year ago. OCHA said Haiti suffered a massive deterioration in the humanitarian situation due to exploding violence and insecurity. The money comes out of the world body's Central Emergency Response Fund.

On Monday, UN Secretary Antonio Guterres returned to New York from a visit to Jamaica, where he met with Prime Minister Andrew Holness. During a press encounter with Holness before his departure, Guterres reiterated the need for an international police force to crack down on gangs in Haiti, the UN

Chief spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Guterres said such a non-UN force needs to take place in parallel with a political process, as was expressed in Guterres' proposal to the Security Council last year, Dujarric told a regular briefing on Tuesday.

"He acknowledged that this has been a difficult exercise, but once again asked the international community to understand that an effective solidarity with Haiti is not only a matter of generosity, it is essentially a matter of enlightened self-interest, because the present situation in Haiti reflects a threat to the security of the region as a whole and further afield," the spokesman said.

Violence erupted about 10 years ago during clashes between gangs and during gang activity in the capital of Port-au-Prince, where some gangs took control of swaths of neighborhoods in the city. OCHA said this year's humanitarian response plan for Haiti is the largest since the devastating 2010 earthquake. But the 720-million-dollar appeal is less than 12 percent funded.

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