Weekly report: October 26 to 31, 2026

Colectivo Estrella Roja · English translation by Voz Rebelde SV

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Estrella Roja announces that its Weekly Report is now available on the Voz Rebelde SV website, vozrebeldesv.com, and on its Facebook page. An archive of previous issues will also be available soon.

Cover caption: Dead or missing? Or is this another “false flag” operation, like the COSAVI helicopter? Families and the public must demand that Bukele clarify the circumstances that led to their present, uncertain fate.

1. Weekly commentary: Military escalation in Haiti

A significant development was the denunciation by the United Nations Association-Haiti (UNA-Haiti), which, in an open letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, condemned the military operations carried out by Salvadoran forces on Haitian territory. The organization reported “intense aerial bombardment, gunship helicopter incursions and heavy-weapons assaults” in densely populated neighborhoods such as Croix-des-Bouquets, Canaan and La Plaine du Cul-de-Sac since October 22. Its statement was unequivocal: “Children are being killed not by gangs, but by Salvadoran explosives. These operations are not a security solution, but a slaughter of innocents.” As usual, Bukele denied these actions by the Salvadoran contingent, arguing that those he sent were “members of rescue teams performing humanitarian tasks and medical evacuations” assigned to the MSS mission.

The MSS (Multinational Security Support mission, October 2023) was led by Kenya and created through UN Security Council Resolution 2699, without the endorsement or authorization of the UN General Assembly. Bukele officially joined it in 2024, sending the first group of 70 personnel in February 2025.

The UN Security Council, again without the General Assembly's endorsement or authorization, approved a new mandate creating the GSF (Gang Suppression Force, September 2025) through Resolution 2793, at the Haitian government's request. At the beginning of 2026 there were 78 Salvadoran military and police personnel. On September 29, 2026, Bukele's Legislative Assembly approved, with 57 votes, a Special Temporary Law authorizing Salvadoran participation in implementing a new GSF mandate: annihilating Haitian gangs.

Bukele also concealed that, before arriving in Haiti, his troops received, and continue to receive, instructions and intelligence, as well as support from armed drones operated by Vectus Global, the mercenary company owned by Erik Prince, the former US Navy SEAL and owner of this mercenary army hired by the Haitian president on the “recommendation” of the United States.

The escalation generated by the presence of more than 2,000 Salvadoran personnel, and growing, used as its pretext the October 18 ambush against a Salvadoran vehicle belonging to Task Force “Libertad II.” According to the official report, four army personnel were attacked with explosives and all contact with them was lost. The Salvadoran dictator then ordered the deployment of more than 2,000 personnel, including special forces, warning gang members that “what has happened so far is nothing compared with what is coming.”

The haste with which the new law was approved, published and brought into force is striking. Normally, laws are sent to the president for approval and an order for publication, with a 15-day deadline. The law then takes effect eight days after publication in the Official Gazette.

However, in the case of the “Special Temporary Law for the Participation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador in the Gang Suppression Force (GSF) in Haiti,” the deadlines were suspiciously short: just four days. Legislative Assembly approval: September 29, 2026. Publication in the Official Gazette: September 30, 2026. Entry into force: October 2, 2026.

Operational reality on the ground

Since the October 18 ambush, the dictator, as is his custom with corruption cases in his government, political disappearances, the absence of public oversight and other matters, has maintained complete secrecy beyond the information provided by his masters in the GSF. Haiti is experiencing its highest level of military tension in recent years, owing to an unprecedented massive deployment of Salvadoran troops, from 78 to 2,000, including special forces; a political ultimatum; and intensified urban fighting, reckless and deplorable bombardment of civilians, indiscriminate arrests, and harassment and terror from the armed drones of Erik Prince's Vectus Global. These support the maneuvers he has assigned to the Salvadoran troops placed at his disposal as cannon fodder by dictator Nayib Bukele.

Psychological warfare and logistics

Bukele has issued direct warnings to Haitian armed gangs. Although he insists this is a rescue mission rather than an invasion, international analysts point out that the volume of troops and armored vehicles suggests a long-term deployment for direct intervention.

History of occupations of Haiti

1. Spain's occupation of Haiti. Spain was the original colonial power. Columbus arrived in 1492, and Hispaniola, the island now shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti, was a Spanish colony for 195 years. Spain ruled Haiti from 1502 to 1659: a total of 157 years.

2. France's occupation of Haiti. France did not continuously occupy the entire island. It began occupying western Hispaniola, Haiti, and Tortuga Island in 1659, which Spain recognized in 1697. France took full control of the island in 1795, until the 1802 rebellion defeated Napoleon Bonaparte's troops, who withdrew in late 1803. Haiti declared independence on January 1, 1804. In summary, France's presence in the western part of the island, Haiti, totaled 145 years, from 1659 to 1804.

3. The United States' occupation of Haiti. There is no complete consensus, but the two most frequently cited episodes of direct military occupation add up to approximately 20 years. The first occupation, 1915-1934, lasted 19 years; it was a formal military occupation, the longest and most significant. The

second, in 1994, was a military intervention to restore President Aristide. US troops occupied Haiti for less than a year before a UN mission replaced them. Although the total military presence amounts to around 20 years, US economic and political interference has continued for more than a century.

4. Other occupations by other powers. The UN mission MINUSTAH, 2004-2017, was not an “occupation” by a single power, but a UN-led military peacekeeping mission with Latin American participation. It lasted 13 years and constituted a prolonged foreign intervention.

Conclusion: Understanding the gangs is inseparable from the history of outside intervention and exploitation that has marked Haiti. This is not a case of a “failed state” caused by internal factors, but of sovereignty repeatedly curtailed. Whenever the country attempted to build an autonomous national project, from independence in 1804 to Aristide's governments, it encountered blockades, unpayable debts, coups tolerated or promoted from abroad, and an economy dismantled by outside interests. The gangs are the latest and most visible expression of that chain: they arose from paramilitary groups armed and financed from abroad, fed on economic collapse caused by external policies, and now operate in a state vacuum created and sustained by outside interests.

Current US interests in Haiti

These could be divided into two broad categories: declared objectives and hidden ones.

I. Declared objectives. (a) Security and political stability: holding elections, containing the gang crisis and avoiding another prolonged intervention, all conditioned on first recovering control of strategic areas held by gangs through the US-promoted and US-financed GSF. This would be complemented by direct political pressure, such as visa revocations, frozen accounts and similar measures to ensure an aligned government. (b) Geostrategic location: Haiti is considered a vulnerable link in the US “backyard” for consolidating influence in the Caribbean and countering outside influence, under the Monroe Doctrine. The recent deployment in Haitian waters, Operation Southern Spear, signals a willingness to use force to shape politics in its sphere of influence.

II. Hidden objectives. (a) Creating a multinational intervention force based on the “Defense Shield of the Americas”: Haiti would serve as a military experiment for intervening in any Latin American country that puts US interests at risk. This includes social control, repression of social movements and invasions, as in Haiti, under pretexts such as gangs, drug trafficking or similar issues. (b) Outsourcing: the United States is the main financier of the GSF and Haitian police. It promotes ties with Vectus Global to exert influence without a massive military deployment of its own. (c) Geopolitical and economic objectives: containing China's and Russia's continental influence and projecting regional leadership; dominating access to critical minerals and supply chains.

What is Erik Prince's Vectus Global?

It is a private military and security company, a mercenary company, owned by Prince and hired by the Haitian government since March 2025. It is said to use drones and helicopters for “targeted killings” of gang members and to provide air support to Salvadoran personnel during their incursions.

It seeks influence in security and a possible advisory role in collecting state revenues. It has “informal” coordination with the GSF, according to testimony by a Pentagon colonel. The United States has denied financing or overseeing its contract. The UN recalls that these companies must comply with

human rights obligations, which conflict with the absence of principles on the part of both Prince and Bukele.

Further reading accompanying the weekly commentary

1. The “informal” relationship between Vectus Global, Erik Prince, and the Pentagon. According to a military adviser, US officials envisage closer ties with the security company of Trump ally Erik Prince in Haiti. US News, July 21, 2026.

2. UN framework, the Haitian government and the GSF. The Security Council resolution establishing the GSF specifies that the transition is coordinated with Haiti's government. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2793 (2025), S/RES/2793(2025).

3. El Salvador's participation and legislative approval. The Salvadoran Legislative Assembly approved a law authorizing the country's participation in the GSF: “Armed Forces' continued presence in Haiti for security is authorized,” September 29, 2026.

4. US strategic interests, economic and geopolitical. A congressional document links trade programs with Haiti, HOPE/HELP, to access to critical minerals and competition with China.

5. “Self-defense” groups and violence figures. A UN report provides data on deaths caused by self-defense groups: “Haiti: More than 5,500 deaths from gang violence between March 2025 and January 2026, according to the UN,” March 24, 2026.

6. Original MSS mandate. Amnesty International statement detailing the mandate of the preceding mission, MSS, under Resolution 2699, June 4, 2024.

2. Unmasking the interventionist project

Where is Barbecue? While the Trump administration, Erik Prince's mercenaries and Bukele's cannon fodder continue intensifying the invasion of Haiti, where is social media's favorite “revolutionary”? For years, Jimmy Chérizier, known as “Barbecue,” a former police chief, has given hundreds of interviews to Western audiences, talking endlessly about “change” in Haiti. His paramilitary project Viv Ansanm, an alliance of gangs whose name comes from the French Vivre Ensemble, “Living Together,” has destroyed Port-au-Prince and Latibonit in Haiti.

Meanwhile, Barbecue has “chosen to remain silent,” according to his henchmen. What they neither say nor admit is that Barbecue and Viv Ansanm's mission “has ended.” There is much speculation about Barbecue's links to the CIA and FBI, although the United States offers a $5 million reward for his capture. Barbecue's paramilitary gangs, sold to the highest bidder, successfully displaced hundreds of thousands of Haitian families and dealt a fatal blow to a mass movement that was in the streets of Port-au-Prince from August 14, 2018, to July 7, 2021. This benefited the United States and Haitian oligarchs, who again gave their orders to Barbecue, who followed them as a loyal mercenary.

Could anyone be naive enough to think billionaire Erik Prince is in Haiti to do good? The thousands of foreign occupation troops are not in Haiti to rescue four kidnapped Salvadoran soldiers or improve the lives of Haiti's forgotten masses. They are there to take over the role of the paramilitary gangs and profit from the same lucrative criminal economy from which the gangs benefited. The thousands of

hired Salvadoran, Chadian, Sri Lankan and other soldiers are, in effect, the shock troops of CIA asset Erik Prince and the latest profiteering by disaster capitalism from hunger and defenselessness. No one pays attention to listening to the Haitian people's real leaders rather than false opportunists such as Barbecue, Viv Ansanm, Trump, Prince and Bukele. [1]

3. Bukele denies that his mercenaries bombed civilians

On October 25, the Gang Suppression Force (GSF) confirmed receiving, through a humanitarian organization, unidentified human remains that could belong to the four missing soldiers, although no definitive forensic findings have been disclosed. The GSF reaffirmed its determination to fulfill its mandate despite gang violence and deployed armored vehicles and aerial patrols over the capital.

The Haitian NGO Rhajac urged Bukele to act cautiously, warning of an alleged “secret agreement” between Haiti's prime minister and gang leaders to retain power, further complicating the situation. While the IACHR seeks to consolidate a space for dialogue and accountability in Panama, Haiti's reality shows the limits of purely military responses. UNA-Haiti's condemnation and uncertainty over the missing soldiers show that Haiti's crisis will not be resolved with more firepower, but through transparent investigations, effective protection of civilians and a real commitment to the human rights that the IACHR itself is demanding from Panama. [2, 3]

4. Bukele's troops in Haiti increase to more than 2,000

El Salvador increased its military presence in Haiti and will exceed 2,000 soldiers, Nayib Bukele's government confirmed after a call with Haitian Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé. The operation seeks to rescue four aviation technicians from the GSF who have been missing since October 18, after their armored vehicle was attacked by armed men outside Port-au-Prince.

In recent days, aircraft carrying military personnel and equipment have left for Haiti. A witness told CNN that two buses and a truck carrying soldiers were escorted by police toward Óscar Arnulfo Romero International Airport. Haiti described the operation as “bilateral and cooperative coordination” to support search and rescue. Bukele had already warned on X on October 21 that “today's attack is nothing compared with what is coming if they do not release the four hostages alive.” According to the statements, both leaders expressed their commitment to rescuing the soldiers and supporting Haiti's security against the gangs.

The decision divides opinion in El Salvador. Some criticize intervention in Haiti's internal problems and invoke the defense of sovereignty; others support doing everything possible to rescue the soldiers. Expert Misael Rivas Soriano believes special forces can succeed, but need intelligence on the ground, translators and local knowledge. So far, no casualties or clues about the missing personnel have been reported; Bukele denied that remains recovered by an NGO belonged to the aviation technicians. [4]

5. Bukele threatens Haitian gangs

President Nayib Bukele stated that his government will rescue the four Salvadoran aviation technicians “by force” if they are not released alive in Haiti. During a press conference at the Presidential House, he warned: “If they do not hand them over willingly, we will rescue them by force.”

Bukele maintained that the operation aims to recover the four Salvadorans rather than launch a general offensive against Haitian gangs. However, he said deployed forces would act against these groups if they tried to prevent the rescue. He also said he does not seek a permanent military presence in Haiti and that troops would leave the Caribbean country once the technicians were released alive. “If they hand over the four aviation technicians tomorrow, we will leave tomorrow afternoon,” he said.

He did not set a specific date for concluding the mission, but insisted that the duration of the deployment would depend on decisions by the gangs involved. Addressing possible resistance, he warned that the intervention would continue and these groups would face action by Salvadoran forces: “We are not going to knock on the door and ask, ‘May we?’” “We know how to deal with criminals of that kind,” he said. [5]

6. Bukele admits paying for the invasion of Haiti by cutting the budget

Bukele said El Salvador is paying 90% of the costs of the operation to rescue the four Salvadoran soldiers, aviation technicians, who have been missing in Haiti since October 18, when their armored vehicle was attacked with explosives by gangs near Port-au-Prince. He said they receive “a little logistical help” from some unidentified countries and did not specify the cost: “It costs us dearly, but justice and peace are priceless.”

He said they are not seeking to make money and showed videos of troops, 4×4 armored vehicles and helicopters being transported. The soldiers belong to the UN-authorized GSF. On October 28, the government announced that deployment of more than 2,000 military personnel would continue. Bukele clarified that the mission does not seek to eliminate Haitian gangs or invade Haiti, but to rescue the four technicians: if they are handed over alive, the forces will return that same day; if the gangs delay, he warned, they will be “finished.” Haiti has had no elected government since Jovenel Moïse's assassination in 2021, and, according to the UN, armed groups control 90% of Port-au-Prince.

To date, the countries of the “Shield of the Americas” supporting Trump's order to invade Haiti, in addition to the United States, are Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras and El Salvador. A Colombian Air Force aircraft departed San Salvador for Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to support the deployment of more Salvadoran troops and equipment. One thousand Salvadoran soldiers landed in Haiti; the troops were transported on US C-130 aircraft to search for four soldiers following an ambush. [6]

7. Doctors Without Borders warns of an “explosion of violence” in Haiti

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned on Wednesday of an “explosion of violence” in Port-au-Prince after fighting intensified following the October 18 attack on a vehicle carrying four Salvadoran GSF soldiers. Between October 18 and 26, MSF treated 30 patients with gunshot wounds or injuries from drone explosions at its hospitals in Tabarre and Cité Soleil. Haiti head of mission Davina Hayles said the victims include women and children and described seeing them arrive wounded as harrowing.

She also said transporting injured people is extremely risky because roads and bridges are blocked; some took hours to arrive. MSF warned that violence is hitting densely populated neighborhoods and worsening the health crisis, as many facilities are closed and the healthcare system has collapsed. It therefore called for guaranteed access to facilities that remain open and functioning.

After the attack on the Salvadorans, whose fate remained officially unconfirmed ten days later, the GSF launched a large-scale operation against armed gangs, reinforced by hundreds of soldiers sent by Bukele. MSF fears more casualties and displacement as international contingents arrive. MSF suspended mobile clinics and treated-water supplies in affected areas and demanded protection for civilians and medical care without discrimination. [7]

8. Trump gave Bukele the green light to invade Haiti

Trump gave Bukele the green light to expand the Salvadoran military deployment in Haiti and confront the gangs responsible for the disappearance of four Salvadoran aviation technicians. Bukele personally called Trump before the operation. According to Axios, the US president's response was direct: “Do what you have to do.” [8]

9. Bukele refuses to answer the IACHR over human rights violations

This afternoon, at a second IACHR hearing on the situation of El Salvador's Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDDH), Dr. Iván Solano Leiva, president of the Medical Association, denounced a policy of unjustified dismissals of personnel from the Ministry of Health, Salvadoran Social Security Institute and Solidarity Health Fund implemented in the country since 2024, without the Ombudsman's Office prioritizing the cases. Solano said that at least 7,700 workers had been dismissed by mid-2026.

On this second day, the Salvadoran state was again absent. “Its absence is notably deplorable on this occasion, and demonstrates its lack of independence from the executive branch,” said David Morales, head of transitional justice at Cristosal, who denounced the Ombudsman's abandonment of its duties in the face of multiple human rights violations under the state of exception.

The week closes with two sources of tension shaping the regional agenda: the IACHR's 197th Period of Sessions in Panama and intensified military operations in Haiti, which are already leaving civilians dead and causing a diplomatic crisis over the Salvadoran contingent's conduct.

The IACHR in Panama: a space for listening, not trials. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights opened its 197th Period of Sessions at the headquarters of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament in Panama City, with around 30 public hearings scheduled for October 26-30. Its president, Edgar Stuardo Ralón Orellana, clarified that the hearings “do not seek to attribute responsibility to any state” and do not constitute a trial, but rather a space for inter-American dialogue to hear the accounts of those involved.

The agenda included migration, judicial independence and sexual rights, as well as an own-initiative hearing on the impacts of extracting critical minerals for the energy transition. On October 30, the full Commission held a dialogue with civil society so organizations could present their analyses to the

commissioners. Amid growing hemispheric militarization, this space takes on particular relevance as a civilian counterweight. [9]

10. The UN again rejects the US embargo on Cuba

The UN General Assembly rejected the unilateral US embargo on Cuba, in force since 1960, for the thirty-fourth time. The resolution, introduced by Havana, passed with 130 votes in favor, 17 against and 25 abstentions, the lowest support in 20 years.

The result reflects changes in Latin America: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Paraguay voted against; Chile, the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Peru abstained. The text calls for lifting the economic, commercial and financial blockade and expresses concern about extraterritorial laws such as Helms-Burton, which affect third countries. It also warns of tougher policies since 2017 and asks states to repeal or render similar rules ineffective. It requests a follow-up report from the Secretary-General for the next session.

The United States rejected the premise of the debate. Its representative, Mike Waltz, said “there is no blockade” and maintained that Cuba's crisis stems from the island's own government, not the embargo. He cited more than $876 million in US exports to Cuba over eight months of 2026 and said the country's wealth “changed hands” to the ruling elites.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla responded during the debate by blaming the blockade for deteriorating health conditions: doubled infant mortality, delayed surgical treatments and cancer medicines that cannot enter. “Cuba is not a threat; the blockade is,” he concluded. [10]

11. Release ordered for former president Antonio Saca

El Salvador's judicial system confirmed that former president Elías Antonio Saca has had a valid release order since Tuesday, October 27, 2026, after serving his ten-year prison sentence for embezzlement and money laundering connected to the diversion of approximately $301 million in public funds during his government, 2004-2009.

As of Wednesday morning, October 28, his departure from La Esperanza prison, known as Mariona, had not been officially confirmed; the order had already been issued and he could leave in the coming hours or days. Saca was sentenced in September 2018 by San Salvador's Second Sentencing Court after admitting the facts and submitting to an abbreviated proceeding.

His prison term has been served, but financial obligations remain in different proceedings: $260.7 million in civil liability in the “Destape a la Corrupción” case. For illicit enrichment, he also owed the state $3,892,698.71 and, as of April 2026, had paid only $5,845.75; his wife, Ana Ligia Mixco de Saca, had an obligation of $589,608.42.

The Attorney General's Office also reported that 25 properties and eight financial products connected to the case, valued at approximately $9.6 million, passed into state administration and ownership. In the “Trances” proceeding, he received a two-year prison sentence, considered served through pretrial detention. Official confirmation of his departure from Mariona and the judicial determination of compliance with his financial obligations remain pending. [11]

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