



CARDH

Centre d'analyse et de recherche en droits de l'homme

Cellule d'observation de la criminalité - COC

Kidnapping

Last quarter of 2022 and annual review (#10)

Sanctions regime influenced kidnapping in Haiti

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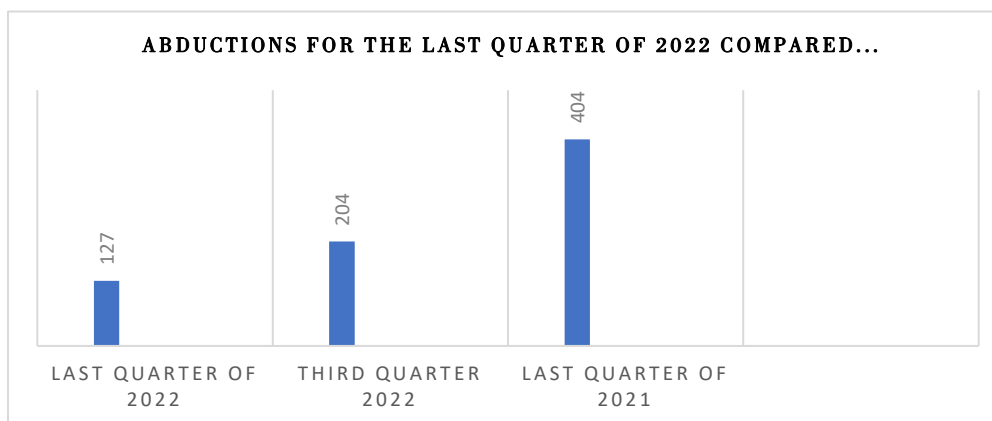
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I. Kidnapping for the last quarter of 2022

1. Abductions for the last quarter of 2022: October; November; December

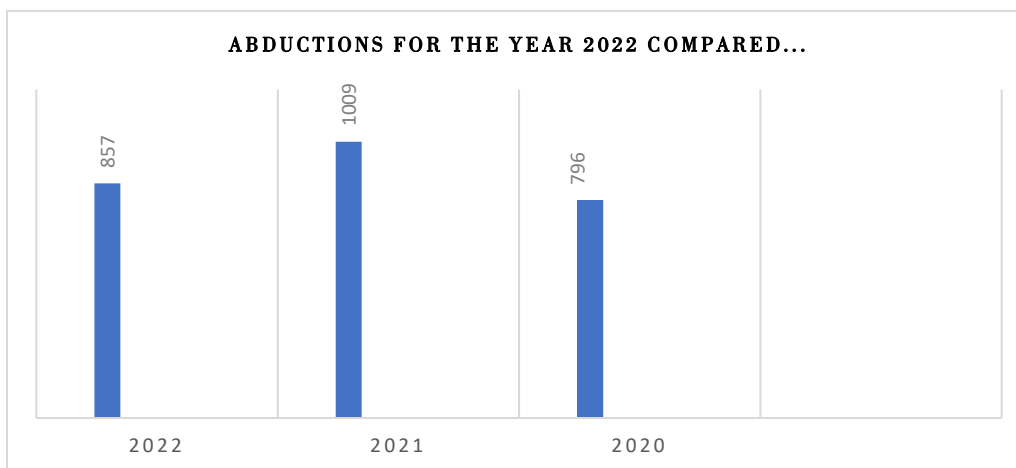
- For the last quarter of 2022 (October, November, December), the Crime Observation Unit (COC, in French) of the Centre for Analysis and Research in Human Rights (CARDH, in French) recorded 127 kidnappings, including **12 foreigners**. This represents a decrease of **37.75%** compared to the last quarter when the COC recorded 204 cases, and **68.56%** compared to the last quarter of 2021, when 404 cases were recorded.



II. Annual review

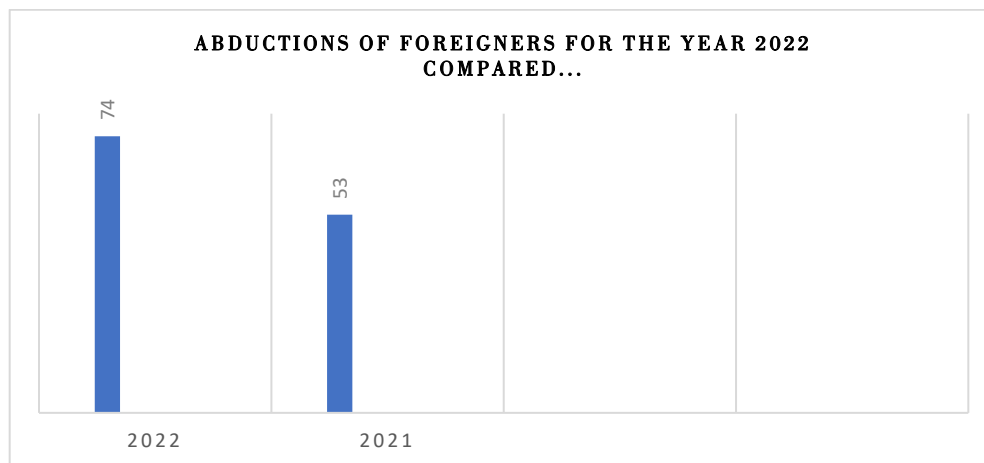
2. Abductions for the year 2022

- For the year 2022, **857** abductions were recorded, compared to **1009** last year, a decrease of **15.06%**.



3. Abductions of foreigners

3. In 2022, at least **74** foreigners were kidnapped compared to **53** last year, an increase of **39.62%**.



4. **N.B.** As mentioned in the newsletters, the COC figures show the trend of abductions in Haiti (decrease/increase). They do not express the exact number of people abducted.

III. Factors that would explain this drastic decrease, impacting the overall balance sheet compared to last year

5. Typically, the last quarter of the year is one of the times when there have been more abductions: **404** in 2021. About 1300 or more abductions were expected in 2022, or about 500 in the last quarter.
6. It is important for the COC to seek to understand this drastic decline. For example, two factors could explain it: police efforts against criminality; multilateral and bilateral sanctions regimes adopted to fight crime, political violence...

4. Police efforts and the fight against arms, ammunition and smuggling...

7. The efforts of the national police against criminality are an important factor that led to the decrease in kidnappings in the last quarter of 2022.
 - 5.1. Regular interventions in Croix-des-Bouquets, kidnapping attempts foiled, gangs stopped...
8. As highlighted in the previous bulletin (July, August, September), the interventions carried out by the police, particularly in Croix-des-Bouquets, against the 400 Mawozo gang, responsible for approximately 50% of the kidnappings in the metropolitan area from July 2021 onwards, including 16 American missionaries on 16 October 2021, have largely contributed to the reduction of the phenomenon. Most of its members have been "stopped" (killed), others arrested... This gang was on the verge of being disintegrated. Its leader is said to have taken refuge in Thomazeau.
9. At a press conference on 29 December 2022, the police presented their results: 1,140 police interventions carried out 149 bandits killed; 41 hostages freed; 93 kidnap attempts foiled (Port-au-Prince and Artibonite).
10. However, it should be noted that the police could not continue their interventions due to the political upheaval between August and September 2022. Faced with shortages of personnel and equipment, the police had to prioritise the security of these events.
11. The measures taken by the Ariel Henry administration to contain arms and ammunition trafficking and smuggling, supported by the US government, have also contributed to the reduction of the phenomenon. The Director General of the General Administration of Customs (AGD, in French), Romel Bell, whose US visa was revoked for illegal arms trafficking, was replaced by Julcène Edouard, who was appointed on 1 July 2022. Following his hearing by the

Anti-Corruption Unit (ULCC, in French) on 19 December 2022, his assets, those of his wife, Anna Dorvil Bell, and his companies were frozen¹.

12. The Port-de-Paix warf, a hotbed of arms and ammunition trafficking, smuggling and other activities, was closed after the latest scandal involving the boats Miss Lilie One and El Shaddai. State revenues increased: 8 billion gourdes for the month of August compared to 5 billion for the previous month; 10 billion for the month of December.
13. Although tangible and important, the efforts of the police, a vulnerable force, are insufficient to explain this reduction in abductions. Various methods could be used to undermine their efforts. The ongoing implementation of punishment regimes appears to be the major element contributing to the drastic decrease in kidnapping.

5. Bilateral and multilateral sanctions aimed at combating crime...

14. The sanctions adopted multilaterally (UN Resolution 2653 of 21 October 2022) and bilaterally, notably by Canada and the United States, appear to be the main factor leading to the decrease in kidnappings in Haiti for the last quarter of the year, which has influenced the annual balance sheet.

5.1. Gang leaders

15. **Jimmy Cherisier, alias “Barbecue”**, leader of the G9 an fanmi e alye (family and allies) coalition has been sanctioned by the United Nations (Resolution 2653), Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Switzerland. The other gang leaders know that they will also be sanctioned.
16. In addition, as part of the Transnational Organized Crime Rewards Program, the US State Department announced on 7 November 2022 rewards of up to US\$3 million to anyone who helps capture three gang leaders accused of being responsible for the kidnapping for ransom of the 16 US citizens in Haiti in October 2021: **Joseph Wilson** (aka Lanmo Sanjou), leader of the 400 Mawozo gang operating primarily in Croix-des-Bouquets; **Jermaine Stephenson** (aka Gaspiyay), also a leader of the 400 Mawozo gang; **Vitelhomme Innocent**, leader of the Kraze Barye gang operating in Torcelle and Tabarre.

5.2. Political and business figures

17. The sanctions, which are currently being implemented, also target those who support gangs (financing and otherwise) and who are involved in arms and ammunition trafficking, smuggling, drugs, money laundering, etc. These sanctions target the real "masters" of kidnapping and crime in Haiti. To understand the context leading to the adoption of the sanctions regimes and their nature, see “US, Canadian and Security Council Sanctions Regimes to Contain Crime in Haiti:

¹ Le Nouvelliste : Investigation/Corruption, ULCC freezes funds of ex-Customs GD Romel Bell (in French) [[Enquête/Corruption, L'ULCC gèle les fonds de l'ex-DG des douanes Romel Bell](#)], 21 December 2022.



Geopolitical Context, Results, Issues and Prospects” published on 21 November 2022 on the CARDH website².

18. In the paper titled: « Development of kidnapping in Haiti: 23 January 1973, spectacular kidnapping ! »³, published on 15 November 2021, the COC explained that kidnapping, as it is known today, is an “axis” displacement. People from popular areas are used and organised for this purpose (weapons, ammunition, equipment, strategies...). However, they take advantage of the system and its profitability (hundreds of thousands of US dollars) to carry out their own kidnapping, to organise themselves, to strengthen themselves and to grow.
19. In addition to official number plates (police and state services), diplomatic number plates⁴ are also used for kidnapping and other criminal activities.
20. On the morning of 8 June 2022, a diplomatic car numbered CD-00414 opened fire on a police patrol in Bourdon (Rue Théodule). One of the three police officers on the patrol was seriously injured and subsequently died on 26 June 2022 at the Bernard Mevs Hospital (Elgo Saint-Juste, 31st promotion)⁵.
21. A car belonging to the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) held by the criminals was used to kill policeman Luckson Misère who had just dropped off his child at school in Pernier. His body was taken away.
22. It was with delay that eight official, diplomatic and police license plates were released to the public by the police on 20 June: 1-00884; 1-01015; 1-01001; 1-01046; 1-01189; 1-00984; OF-4079; CD-00414. (See Bulletin #8, published on 30 June 2022, comments and conclusion, page 6 and following)⁶.
23. Today, residential areas tend to become hotbeds of kidnapping controlled by gangs: Frères, Thomassin, Laboule...
24. *The qualitative or quantitative increase in kidnapping often coincides with political demands.*
For example :
 - i) kidnapping and subsequent confinement of the American ambassador and consul, Clinton Knox and Ward Christensen on 23 January 1973 (release of political prisoners held at Fort Dimanche as a requirement) ;
 - ii) drastic increase in kidnappings between the end of 2004 and 2006 (return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide as a demand);

² [CARDH-Sanctions-ONU USA CANADA-Criminalite-en-Haiti-Novembre-2022.pdf](#)

³ [Crime Observation Unit \(COC, in French\) - CARDH](#) (in French)

⁴ On 6 June 2022, two Belgian nationals in a diplomatic vehicle were abducted in Pétiön-Ville and the car's number plate was taken away.

⁵ The men were reportedly travelling in a Toyota Land Cruiser (Zo reken) with the registration number Diplomatic Corps.

⁶ [CARDH-Kidnapping-Avril-Mai-Juin-2022-1 \(2\).pdf](#)



- iii) significant increase in kidnapping in September and October 2021 (117 and 140 cases respectively) coinciding with the fight against the Ariel Henry administration claimed by G9 and fanmi e alye (families and allies) and the “Jovenelistes” (supporters of late President of Haiti, Jovenel Moïse). (For more details, see bulletin #7, published on 30 March 2022, item 10, page 4 and following)⁷.
25. Have criminal networks (arms, ammunition, human or drug trafficking, money laundering...) taken advantage of or provoked political unrest to accelerate kidnapping? On the other hand, are political battles closely linked to kidnapping or is kidnapping a political lever?
 26. *Kidnapping can have economic, revenge and other motives.* On 16 October 2012, Coralie and Nicolas Moscoso, aged 23 and 24 (foreign nationals) were kidnapped by a gang led by businessman Clifford Brandt, because of a car sales contract with the newly appointed Michel Martelly administration, which was damaged and recovered by their father-Moscoso (see Bulletin #8, §28).
 27. The order of 5 March 2015 sent the Galil gang, led, among others, by Woodly Ethéart, alias Sonson La Familia, to the criminal court. For: “kidnapping for ransom, murder, illegal drug trafficking, vehicle theft, illegal possession of firearms, forgery, usurpation of title, asset laundering, complicity in asset laundering and criminal association” (see bulletin # 8, § 30).
 28. Some of the money from kidnapping is used to buy arms and ammunition. There is allegedly a strategy to keep the groups in a permanent conflict. Another part is laundered...
 29. As part of the implementation of bilateral sanctions, several political and business figures have been sanctioned by Canada and the US. Further lists will be published shortly. In addition, the United Nations is currently working on its list. Sanctions adopted by the Security Council will be binding on all states, as required by Article 25 of the Charter⁸.
 30. A second study on sanctions regimes will be published by the CARDH (see CARDH website for the first study: [US, Canadian and Security Council Sanctions Regimes to Contain Crime in Haiti: Geopolitical Context, Outcomes, Issues and Prospects – CARDH](#) (available in French)).
 31. For the COC, it is above all these sanctions that fundamentally explain this drastic decrease in kidnapping and political violence, two coinciding phenomena.
 32. However, the CARDH does not argue that all sanctioned persons are involved in kidnapping, especially as the sanctions cover several offences..

⁷ [Kidnapping: Newsletter for January, February, March 2022 – CARDH](#)

⁸ The Members of the Organisation agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter.