

FOCUS ON

HAITI



L'OSSERVATORIO

Associazione Nazionale
Vittime Civili di Guerra
ONUS
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ON CIVILIAN VICTIMS
OF CONFLICTS



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THE COUNTRY AT A GLANCE

Haiti is a Caribbean country that shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic to its east. The name Haïti (or Hayti) comes from the native name given to the entire island of Hispaniola that meant “land of high mountains.¹ The island was already inhabited since the 7th century by the Taíno people when Christopher Columbus landed, on December 5, 1492, and settled the first European presence under the control of Spain. After a long period under European colonization, in 1803 the French part of the island finally gained its independence. Unrecognized by most countries, oppressed by foreign debt and under heavy economic and political pressure, Haiti was afflicted by instability and underdevelopment. After a new period of occupation, this time by US forces, on 1934 Haiti gained again its freedom. A military coup in 1956 marked the beginning of twenty-nine years of dictatorship, during which the country saw widespread violence and human rights abuses. High levels of corruption resulted in the deterioration of basic services and infrastructure. Although there were moves towards democracy in the 1990s, Haiti continued to suffer from political instability and poverty. A series of riots in 2008 caused widespread disruption and suffering.² On 12 January 2010, an earthquake (magnitude 7,3 Richter) hit Port-au-Prince and the surrounding area, killing more than 220.000 people and wounding 300.000, of which 4.000 suffered from amputations. As a result of the quake, more than 1.3 million people were forced to seek shelter in temporary camps, 87% of institutional building resulted destroyed, as well as 4.000 schools and 50 health structures.³ Six years after the earthquake, Haiti has moved from recovery to longer term development.⁴ Struggling with serious internal governance issues, Haiti is currently under an Interim President, who will lead until new elections take place.

¹ https://books.google.com/books?id=HOE8AAAAYAAJ&pg=PA321&dq=Dessalines+haiti+indian&hl=en&sa=X&ved=OCBOQ6AEwAGoVChMlp-bwqjdjwxwIVTG4-Ch3_OQGR#v=onepage&q=Dessalines%20haiti%20indian&f=false and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiti>

² <https://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/haiti/conflict-profile/>

³ <http://www.unicef.org/haiti/french/overview.html>

⁴ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>

FLAG

NAME	Republic of Haiti République d'Haïti (French) Repiblik Ayiti (Haitian Creole)
CAPITAL	Port-au-Prince
OFFICIAL AND VERNACULAR LANGUAGE	French Haitian Creole
POPULATION	10.3 million
ETHNIC GROUPS	95% Black 5% Mulatto, White
NEIGHBOURS	Dominican Republic
TOTAL OF CIVILIANS AFFECTED	n/a
GDP (2016)	USD 19 billion
PEOPLE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE (2014)	200.000
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH	73.2 years
HAITIAN REFUGEES	n/a
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX	0.4/1 (ranking 163/188)
IDPS	61.000
GLOBAL PEACE INDEX	2 (ranking 89/163)⁵
CORRUPTION PERCEPTION RANKING	158/168

⁵ The world's leading measure of national peacefulness, the GPI measures peace according to 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Geopolitical context

Haiti remains the poorest country in the Americas and one of the poorest in the world (with a GDP per capita of US\$ 846 in 2014) with significant needs in basic services. Haiti faces important challenges to generate faster growth and fight poverty. With slower GDP growth, revenue mobilization remains weak and international aid has fallen from 16.5 to 5.3 percent of GDP between 2011 and 2015. In addition, concessional financing from PetroCaribe is substantially reduced due to lower oil prices, leading to cuts in public investment.⁶ Two-fifths of all Haitians depend on the agricultural sector, mainly small-scale subsistence farming, which remains vulnerable to damage from frequent natural disasters, exacerbated by the country's widespread deforestation. Haiti's outstanding external debt was cancelled by donor countries following the 2010 earthquake, but has since risen to nearly \$2 billion as of December 2015, the majority of which is owed to Venezuela under the PetroCaribe program.⁷ In addition to CARICOM, Haiti is a member of the Latin Union, the Organization of American States, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States; it is also seeking associate membership status in the African Union.⁸

Peacekeeping missions: Multinational Interim Force (MIF, 2004); United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH, 2004 - ongoing).

Main UN documents on Haiti

- **UN Secretary-General Report on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti [S/2016/753]**, 31 August 2016
- **UN Security Council Press Statements expressing “deep disappointment” that Haitian leaders had failed to meet election deadlines [SC/12364]**, 13 May 2016
- **UN independent expert report on the situation of human rights in Haiti [A/HRC/25/71]**, 7 February 2014

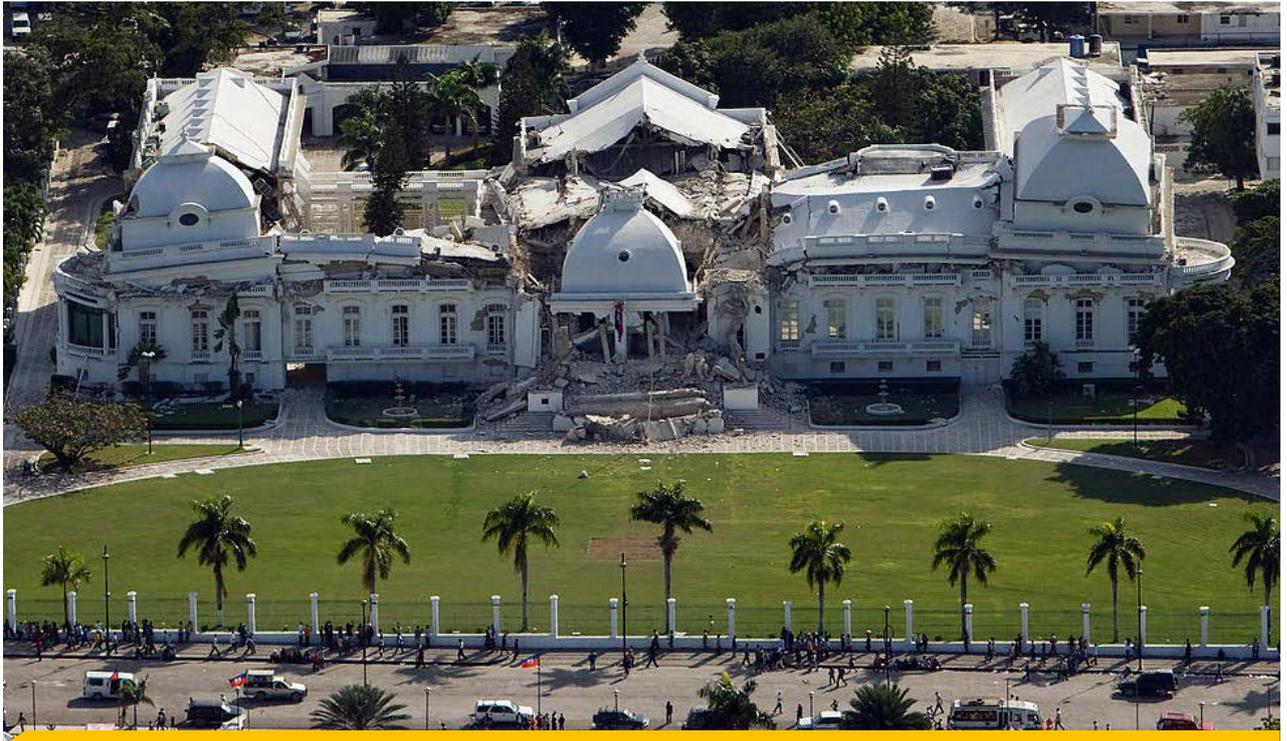
Peace talks and agreements

The verification of the 2015 elections in response to the widespread allegations of massive fraud made by Haitian political and civil society actors and the ensuing decision to rerun the first round of the presidential elections led to further delays in the continuation of the electoral process sparked violent opposition and clashes between party supporters. In 2016, Haitian stakeholders are working to restore constitutional order by a series of agreements, and electoral preparations are underway despite persisting uncertainty over provisional governance arrangements. In particular, the implementation of the agreement of 5 February 2016, which provided for temporary governance arrangements following the end of the five-year term of former President Michel Martelly, proved challenging from the outset and was characterized by protracted negotiations over the formation of a new Government, which delayed the installation of a functioning executive.

⁶ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>

⁷ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiti>

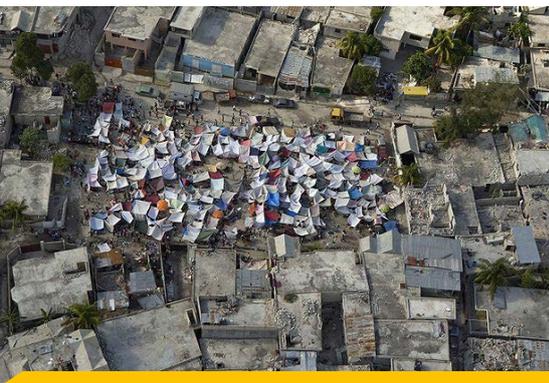


The National Palace following the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

Credit: CC BY 2.0, Logan Abassi / UNDP Global
Source: Wikimedia Commons

HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

The humanitarian context in Haiti remains complex and fragile due to multiple inter-linked risk factors, notably the cholera disease, the food security situation due to “El niño” phenomenon, the binational mixed-migration crisis with more than 118.000 individuals identified since June 2015, and remaining IDPs from the earthquake.⁹ Although significant humanitarian, social and economical challenges remain, Haiti has seen a number of positive developments.¹⁰



Haitians set up impromptu tent cities in the capital after an earthquake.

Credit: CC 2.0, UN Photo/Logan Abassi
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Shelter

Of the 1.5 million internally displaced people due to the 2010 earthquake or subsequent weather hazards, more than 1.4 million have left the camps and relocated,¹¹ but 61.000 remain in camps. In addition, in 2016 floods have affected more than 22.000 families.¹² In 2016, 120.646 people declared returning from Dominican Republic.¹³ Nearly 3,000 people have arrived in the makeshift camps at the border of Haiti’s territory in the last half of 2015, leaving the Dominican Republic by force or by fear after its government began a crackdown on illegal migrants. Some, born in the Dominican Republic but unable to prove it, cannot even speak French or Creole, Haiti’s main languages.¹⁴

⁹ https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/newsnapshot_june_2016_eng_-_update.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>

¹¹ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>

¹² https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/newsnapshot_june_2016_eng_-_update.pdf

¹³ https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/newsnapshot_june_2016_eng_-_update.pdf

¹⁴ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/world/americas/fearful-haitian-migrants-flee-dominican-republic-for-camps.html?_r=2



The Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) operates off the coast of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, while participating in Operation Unified Response

*Credit: Public Domain, 2nd Class Kristopher Wilson
Source: Wikimedia Commons*



Water distribution to earthquake survivors

*Credit: Public Domain, Seaman Aaron Shelley, USN
Source: <http://www.inapa.gob.do/>*



A market in Cap-Haitien

*Credit: CC BY-SA 4.0, Doron
Source: Wikimedia Commons*

Health

Cholera is still a major concern, although infections had gone down dramatically from a monthly average of around 30,000 cases in 2011 to about 3,000 cases per month in 2015, thanks to the joint efforts of the government and development partners. For the period January 1 to August 27, 2016, roughly 3,350 cases per month were reported on average, though deaths remained at below 1% of cases.¹⁵

Water and sanitation

Universal access to safe water and sanitation remains a critical development challenge in Haiti, as 42% of the Haitian population still lacks access to safe drinking water. Despite the increase from 18% to 28% of percentage of population with access to improved sanitation between 1990 and 2015, 7.6 million Haitians still lack essential facilities for good health and the prevention of waterborne diseases.¹⁶ The debate is still open about the role played by the UN in the cholera outbreak. A 2010 leaked internal report details sewage being dumped in the open and a lack of toilets in UN bases in Haiti managed by Nepali peacekeepers. The UN report faults sanitation at its time of cholera outbreak, despite the UN repeatedly denied its peacekeepers caused the epidemic that killed thousands.¹⁷

Food security

In Haiti as of mid 2016, 3.6 million people remain food insecure, of which 1.5 million people are severely food insecure.¹⁸ Extreme poverty has fallen from 31 to 24% over the last decade, especially in urban areas, and foremost in Port au Prince. According to a 2012 household survey, more than 6 million out of 10.4 million (59%) Haitians live under the national poverty line of US\$ 2.42 per day and over 2.5 million (24%) live under the national extreme poverty line of US\$1.23 per day. Only 8 percent of the Haitian population received noncontributory social assistance benefits in 2012, such as scholarships, food aid, and other transfers.¹⁹ Over one-third of child deaths are due to undernutrition, mostly from increased severity of disease.²⁰

¹⁵ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>

¹⁶ <http://www.haitilibre.com/en/news-16941-haiti-social-42-of-the-haitian-population-has-no-access-to-drinking-water.html>

¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/05/leaked-un-report-sanitation-haiti-bases-cholera-outbreak>

¹⁸ https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/newsnapshot_june_2016_eng_-_update.pdf

¹⁹ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>

²⁰ <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/952281468273898181/Haiti-Nutrition-at-a-glance>



The Roi Henri Christophe University in Limonade

Credit: CC BY-SA 3.0, Awiseman

Source: Wikimedia Commons

Education

Haitians children have benefitted from better access to primary education, where participation rates of school-age children rose from 78 to 90 percent. However, the quality of education and learning remains a challenge. Only one third of all children aged 14 are in the appropriate grade for their age.²¹



Haitian citizens crowd a ship near a port after earthquake devastation.

Credit: Public Domain, 2nd Class Candice Villarreal

Source: Wikimedia Commons

Protection of civilians

Despite the absence of a sudden increase in arrivals, the situation of returnees and deportees continues to present significant protection risks. The number of unaccompanied minors remains worrying. 1,805 allegedly unaccompanied minors were registered since the beginning of the border surveillance in July 2015, until 28 July 2016. In addition, 34.8 percent of the registered returnees are women and girls. The status of returnees and deportees also remains a concern for humanitarian actors.²² Haiti is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking.²³

MEMORY

N/A²⁴



Earthquake memorial

Credit: CC BY 2.0, Stefan Krasowski

Source: Wikipedia Commons

²¹ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>

²² https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/ocha_haiti_humanitarian_bulletin_63-july_2016.pdf

²³ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

²⁴ <https://www.icrc.org/es/document/infografia-las-alarmanes-dimensiones-de-la-desaparicion-en-colombia>

FIGHT AGAINST IMPUNITY AND REPARATION

In 2013, Haiti called for European nations to pay reparations for slavery and establish an official commission for the settlement of past wrong-doings.²⁵ The UN is currently facing a lawsuit from 1,500 Haitians who blame the world organisation for negligently allowing peacekeepers from Nepal to carry the disease into the country, months after Haiti was devastated by an earthquake.²⁶

PEACEBUILDING

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has been operating to maintain peace since 2004, when President Bertrand Aristide departed Haiti for exile in the aftermath of an armed conflict which spread to several cities across the country.²⁷ Since 2008, a number of organizations have worked with partners to conduct conflict mitigation and dialogue training workshops in Haiti, engaging community leaders in programs that enhance their ability to manage conflict nonviolently. Efforts are oriented to foster local forms of peacebuilding, such as the Konbit. The Konbit is a traditional Haitian system, a form of communal production whereby a group of people dedicate themselves to cooperation toward a common goal. The tradition is rooted in small agricultural communities throughout Haiti where residents collectively share resources and produce, but NGOs are trying to replicate it in more urban settings. Examples of the idea include a community bakery in the capital Port-au-Prince; a social services konbit for the rehabilitation of Cite Soleil; or the Kita Nago movement, in which an ancient tree trunk, like the Olympic torch, was carried on foot 700 kilometers (about 435 miles) from one side of the country to the other in a campaign to demonstrate unity and belief in a common goal.²⁸



Haitians voting on February 7, 2006

*Credit: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0, Marcello Casal Jr./ABr
Source: Agencia Brasil*

²⁵ https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=SofDAGAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT14&dq=%22Formulating+the+Case+for+reparations%22,+Lord+Anthony+Gifford++Reparations--+Colonialism,+Slavery,+Reparations,+and+Trade&ots=rQwr5_H7c9&sig=EeagdpM51eTfQVBpApchFJb2fU#v=onepage&q=Haiti&f=false

²⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/05/leaked-un-report-sanitation-haiti-bases-cholera-outbreak>

²⁷ <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minustah/>

²⁸ <http://www.buildingpeace.org/haiti-is-freedom-news-to-me>



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