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Study Guide
for
the Organization of American States

Topic Area: Addressing the situation in Haiti

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1. Welcoming Letter

We are honored and pleased to welcome you to the Organization of American States in RhodesMRC 2023. We are thrilled to be a part of this incredible initiative and during the committee sessions we will appreciate your efforts in order to make this experience unique. Effective teamwork and planning are crucial for achieving it. This year we will explore and discuss a crucial and current topic: Addressing the situation in Haiti.

Haiti is descending into a catastrophic spiral of violence and has to deal with complex and significant problems. Government institutions have ceased to function effectively, and gangs, backed by the wealthy oligarchs, control nearly two-thirds of the country. Frequent natural disasters further exacerbate the multitude of crises confronting Haiti. It lands on the IRC's 2023 Emergency Watchlist top 10 as political instability, gang violence, rising food insecurity and disease outbreaks.

The purpose of this study guide is to offer the appropriate assistance in your preparation and active participation in the conference by outlining the key points of the topic being discussed. Nevertheless, it simply serves as the basis for further research that is necessary to find out the most recent developments. This means that you should be informed with both the policies of the country that you are representing and the duties assigned to the Organization of American States. You need to be familiar with the Rules of Procedure as they are the most helpful instrument for this diplomatic mission! All in all, we look forward to seeing you and admire your diplomatic skills and creative ideas. The bibliography and further reading sections at the end of the guide can be great starting points for your research.

We remain at your disposal anytime and do not hesitate to ask for our advice. We wish you a productive investigation.

Best regards,

Ourania Vasileiadou (Chairperson)

Elisavet Ioannidou (Secretary General)

2. Introduction to the committee

It is essential to comprehend everything there is to know about the Organization of American States (OAS) before diving further into the topic at hand. This will allow each delegate to come up with ideas and bring out strong points during the committee's sessions, which are compatible with its mandate. Realistically, a resolution cannot demand acts that the Organization cannot carry out because it lacks the authority to do so. Almost the same can be stated regarding previous acts and resolutions that have been made by the committee. Consequently, it is crucial to learn about the OAS, since it will furtherly allow for a fruitful debate.

OAS is a multilateral regional organization that includes 35 independent nations of the Western Hemisphere. It was created in 1948 to serve as a platform for dialogue and the discussion of matters of interest to the countries of the hemisphere. According to its Charter the OAS's fundamental goals, are to uphold peace and security, encourage the effective exercise of representative democracy, ensure the peaceful resolution of member disputes, provide for coordinated action in the event of aggression, find solutions to potential political, legal, and economic issues, and promote economic, social, educational, scientific, and cultural development through cooperative action.

Concerning its mandate, the Organization, which has a budget of \$145.2 million allocated for 2023, engages in a number of activities to further these objectives, frequently offering member nations technical support and policy recommendations. By organizing the hemisphere in the face of threats to democratic rule, the OAS aids in the preservation of democracy. Resolution 1080 (1991) of the General Assembly gave it the authority to assist democracy in Haiti, Peru, Guatemala, and Paraguay. It also offers development aid and other forms of support aimed at advancing human rights, preserving the environment, observing elections, and strengthening democratic institutions. Moreover, OAS member states have recently been successful in negotiating significant international accords to reduce hemispheric arms trafficking, provide transparency in the acquisition of conventional

weapons, fight corruption, battle drugs and money laundering, and establish equitable telecommunications standards.¹

All in all, the Western Hemisphere is facing many difficulties, such as democratic regress, challenging economical conditions, and transnational crime. The OAS is ideally situated to promote regional cooperation on these issues as the leading international platform in the hemisphere, but it needs to overcome political divisions among member states and internal financial restrictions.²

2.1. Internal bodies

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., from October 1889 to April 1890. The Organization was established in order to achieve among its member states—as stipulated in Article 1 of the Charter—"an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence." The most important internal bodies are the following :

The **General Secretariat**, which carries out the programs and objectives decided upon by the General Assembly and the two councils, is the OAS's main and permanent entity. It is managed under the Secretary General's direction and services the entire inter-American system, including all member states. The General Assembly chooses the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General³.

The assistant secretaries for legal affairs and management, the director general of the development agency, the executive secretaries of the women's commission, the drug abuse control commission, the directors of the unit for the promotion of democracy and the trade unit, and the executive director for human rights commission are among the **senior**

¹ "Background Notes: Organization of American States (OAS)." n.d. 1997-2001.State.gov. https://1997-2001.state.gov/background_notes/oas_0005_bgn.html.

² Congressional Research Service. 2023. "Organization of American States: In Brief." <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47230>.

³ "Background Notes: Organization of American States (OAS)." n.d. 1997-2001.State.gov. https://1997-2001.state.gov/background_notes/oas_0005_bgn.html.

secretariat officials . All OAS units are operated by secretariat staff members, who also act as staff for commissions, councils, and other entities.

The **General Assembly** is the supreme organ of the OAS. It holds a regular session each year, either in one of the member states or at headquarters in Washington, DC. In special circumstances, and with the approval of two-thirds of the member states, the Permanent Council can convoke a special session of the General Assembly. Delegations are usually headed by foreign ministers. In addition to deliberating on current issues, the General Assembly approves the program-budget, sets the bases for fixing member-state quota assessments, establishes measures for coordinating the activities of the organs, agencies, and entities of the OAS and determines the general standards that govern the operation of the General Secretariat. General Assembly decisions usually take the form of resolutions, which must be approved by a majority of all members (two-thirds for agenda, budget, and certain other questions).⁴

The **Permanent Council**, which is composed of ambassadors from each member state, convenes in Washington, DC, every two weeks throughout the year. The council, its standing committees, and special working groups manage the OAS' daily operations, which include General Assemblies' directives and initiatives in order to strengthen democracy and promote human rights. The council's chairman may convene a special session instantly in case of an emergency or at the request of any member. no member can exercise a veto in the Permanent Council. OAS members place great importance on obtaining consensus before decisions are made.

Additionally, the Permanent Council functions annually as the General Assembly's preparatory committee and, provisionally, as the organ of consultation (for meetings of foreign ministers).

2.2. Specialized inter-American organizations working with OAS

The "Standards on Cooperative Relations between the Organization of American States and the United Nations, Its Specialized Agencies, and Other National and International

⁴ OAS. 2009. "OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development." Www.oas.org. August 1, 2009. https://www.oas.org/en/about/our_structure.asp.

Organizations" were approved by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1971 through resolution AG/RES. 57 (I-0/71). The aforementioned Standards set the guidelines for working relationships between OAS organs and non-governmental, governmental, and intergovernmental organizations. They specifically gave the OAS General Secretariat permission to create cooperation agreements with institutions pursuing objectives similar to those of the Organization.⁵

Many significant inter-American actions are carried out by independent organizations, some of which are funded entirely or in part by the OAS, while others just involve in hemispheric meetings that are supported by the OAS Secretariat on a regular basis. The most important external/decentralized bodies which cooperate with OAS are:

1. **The Inter-American Children's Institute (IACI)** is dealing with issues involving children, families, and "street children," as well as the growing number of children involved in armed conflict. It serves as a hub for social action and initiatives in the areas of statistics, social service, health, and education.
2. The first international group devoted to women's issues was **the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM)**, which was founded in 1927. Women's human rights, domestic violence, trafficking in women, and integration of women into development and decision-making processes are currently of concern to CIM. Under the direction of the CIM, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women was created. Twenty-nine OAS members have signed it since it was made available for signing at the OAS General Assembly in 1994.
3. **The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)** stands out from other human rights organizations multilaterally thanks to its political independence. The OAS is given an active and, at times, strong role in promoting and safeguarding human rights by the IACHR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The IACHR has played a significant role in enhancing the human rights practices of OAS countries and

⁵ "OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development." Www.oas.org. August 1, 2009. https://www.oas.org/en/ser/dia/institutional_relations/agreements.asp.

in mediating disputes through public reports on violations of human rights and private persuasion.

4. Since 1948, the Western Hemisphere component of the UN World Health Organization (WHO), has been **the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)** which was founded in 1902. In order to fight diseases and advance both physical and mental health, it coordinates hemispheric efforts. It has made a substantial contribution to the eradication of communicable diseases and the promotion of better hygienic and health conditions.⁶
5. **The Pan American Development Foundation (PADF)**, which was founded in 1962, is a private, non-profit organization that works under a cooperation agreement reached with the OAS to support development initiatives and provide aid to those affected by natural disasters and humanitarian crises.⁷

3. Introduction to the topic

3.1. Definitions

Gang violence: Two or more individuals who are grouped together and have a common identity are referred to as gangs. Gangs have a nickname or sign that serves as their identification and their goal is to commit crimes against innocent people.

Sexual violence: Sexual violence is any type of unwanted or involving one or more of the following sexual behavior or conduct, even online- bullying, intimidation, threats, manipulation and pressure. There are different types of sexual violence such as child sexual abuse, rape or assault.

⁶ "Background Notes: Organization of American States (OAS)." n.d. 1997-2001.State.gov. https://1997-2001.state.gov/background_notes/oas_0005_bgn.html.

⁷ "OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development." Www.oas.org. August 1, 2009. https://www.oas.org/en/ser/dia/institutional_relations/agreements.asp.

Economic Collapse: A national, regional, or territorial economy that has collapsed usually comes after a period of crisis. Depending on how severe the conditions are, an economic collapse can start at the beginning of a severe economic contraction, depression, or recession and extend for any number of years. An economic collapse may occur suddenly as a result of an unanticipated incident, or it may be preceded by a number of occasions or indicators that the economy is fragile.

Drug trafficking: is a global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws.⁸

Corruption: corruption, Improper and usually unlawful conduct intended to secure a benefit for oneself or another. Its forms include [bribery](#), [extortion](#), and the misuse of inside information. It exists where there is [community](#) indifference or a lack of enforcement policies. In societies with a [culture](#) of ritualized gift giving, the line between acceptable and unacceptable gifts is often hard to draw.⁹

3.2. Historical Background

The island that is now known as Hispaniola, which is shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic, is claimed by Christopher Columbus on behalf of Spanish kings Ferdinand and Isabella. Although this is widely recognized as the start of Haiti's recorded history in 1492.

The first Spanish settlement in Haiti was founded in 1496. Five years later, with the Tano population all but wiped off, Spain transports 1,600 kidnapped and enslaved Africans to the island to labor in sugar cane and gold mines. In 1625, the first French colonists built colonies in the northwest region of Haiti's mainland.

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines assumed the role of Governor-General. He declares himself Emperor later that year, and is assassinated two years later. The result is a civil war in Haiti that breaks out between the north and south and lasts until 1820. The United States invaded Haiti in 1915 to defend its assets there after an ongoing series of border disputes with the

⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2011. "Drug Trafficking." Unodc.org. 2011. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html>.

⁹ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. 2018. "Corruption | Law." In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/corruption-law>.

Dominican Republic and short-lived presidents that culminated in the murder of leader Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam. In 1934, the United States pulled back its troops. Three years later, Dominican troops acting on President Rafael Trujillo's instructions massacred 30,000 or more Haitians residing in the area that serves as the two countries' border. Following the murders of two candidates and a massacre of Haitian voters, the elections of 1987 were postponed. Leslie Manigat is declared the winner of the military-conducted elections in January 1988. Six months later, Namphy leads a military coup to depose him.

With an estimated 67% of the vote, former Salesian priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide succeeded in the nation's first free and peaceful democratic elections. In 1991, a coup led by the retired brigadier-general Raoul Cedras overthrew his government. Until Cedras abdicates his position of authority and leaves the country in September of that year, Aristide is exiled. After René Prével served as president from 1996 to 2000, Aristide was re-elected despite allegations of fraud.

On January 1, 2010, Port-au-Prince was hit by an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0. A cholera outbreak, the first of its sort ever recorded and often regarded as the worst in recent memory, has further destabilized the nation. 820,000 cases, lasting for years, and about 10,000 fatalities are reported. At the same period in the political sector, Michel Martelly is elected president after a bloody campaign. He designated Jovenel Moïse as his party's candidate at the end of his term and Moïse won two elections, held in 2015 and 2016.

COVID-19 lockdowns increase food insecurity and financial loss. In July 2021, Moïse was murdered in his own home, sparking an upsurge in violence throughout the nation. Ariel Henry is confirmed as prime minister, and also takes on the role of acting president. A 7.2-magnitude earthquake strikes western Haiti five weeks after Moïse's murder.

3.3. Unfolding of the Crisis

Haiti has been in a state of electoral and constitutional turmoil since the assassination of the president, Jovenel Moïse, in 2021 at the hands of Colombian mercenaries with unknown paymasters, but the immediate crisis can be traced back further.¹⁰ Since the 2019 elections,

¹⁰ Bland, Archie. 2023. "Haiti Crisis: How Did It Get so Bad, What Is the Role of Gangs, and Is There a Way Out?" The Guardian. January 12, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/12/haiti-crisis-jovenel-moise-gangs-water-way-out>.

Haiti has not held legitimate elections, and the nation has been unstable after the 2010 earthquake that may have killed up to 300,000 people. However, Moïse's passing in July 2021 and a subsequent earthquake sent the situation into a downward spiral. Moïse was shot inside his home in the hills above Port-au-Prince at 01:00 local time, according to police. The president was shot 12 times and had bullet wounds to his forehead and several to his torso. He died at the scene and was found lying on the floor on his back, his shirt soaked in blood. Police claims that a group of mercenaries, most of them Colombians, was behind the attack, Ariel Henry, an acting president who was not elected and is widely regarded as being unconstitutional, took over for Moïse. The G9 gang coalition blocked the main port and petroleum terminal in September when Henry announced a reduction in fuel subsidies, which caused fuel prices to quadruple and escalated the crisis. With 4.7 million people suffering from severe hunger, Haiti is currently going through its worst-ever famine.

Gangs have taken the place of a functioning state. Port-au-Prince is the centre of a horrific turf war in which there have been prolific kidnappings, many civilian deaths, and gang-rape of elderly people and children. Gangs control key roads and profit from the distribution of electricity and water as well as bus services.

Gang violence is expanding at an alarming rate in areas previously considered relatively safe in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Compared to the first quarter of 2022, criminal incidents — homicide, rape, kidnappings and lynching — more than doubled in the same period in 2023 to 1,647. Some residents have begun to take matters into their own hands as a group of civilians seized 13 suspected gang members from police custody, beat them to death and burned their bodies. With killings, dismissals, and resignations, the Haitian National Police force is gravely understaffed and ill-equipped to deal with the violence and criminality. Haitians continue to experience one of the worst human rights crises in decades, with gangs using sexual violence, kidnappings, and rape to terrorize people.¹¹

The arrival of illegal drugs and weapons into Haiti is aggravating the situation, escalating the bloodshed, and posing challenging issues. According to a UNODC report titled "Haiti's criminal markets: mapping trends in firearms and drug trafficking," the country is being

¹¹ "As Haiti Slides into Violence, Its People 'Cannot Wait Any Longer' for Assistance, Foreign Minister Tells Security Council | UN Press." n.d. Press.un.org. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15266.doc.htm>.

flooded with new, high-tech, and sophisticated firearms and ammunition, with the majority of these smuggled goods arriving illegally by land, air and most frequently sea. The effort to prevent the influx has been hampered by severe limits in marine control capabilities, manpower, and equipment, as well as a lack of border surveillance and patrol infrastructure, which is allowing gang-related violence to reach new levels.

Violent criminal gangs target vital infrastructure like ports, grain storage facilities, police stations, courthouses, and prisons while also seizing control of main highways leading to the capital as a result of the flow of illegal drugs and weaponry into Haiti. Due to these issues, Haiti is a desirable location for drug traffickers, which harms political prospects and has disastrous effects on access to basic services and acute hunger. 80 % of cities are under the control or influence of armed groups, with half the population living on less than \$2 a day.

Drugs, mostly cocaine and cannabis, are transferred through public, private, and unauthorized ports as well as covert runways, with the majority of destinations being the United States, the Dominican Republic, and Western Europe. The possibility of drug trafficking serving as a destabilizing element in Haiti only increases as illicit drug markets spread throughout the world and worldwide production and demand of cocaine reach historic highs.

OAS and UNODC have been working together to improve information-sharing on transnational organized crime and to strengthen Haiti's capacity to look into, prosecute, and rule on cases of corruption, money laundering, and economic crimes. Comprehensive assistance is needed, complementing any operational support provided to Haiti's police with a long-term vision to restore criminal justice.

Haiti's future and sustainable recovery requires urgent and sustained action to tackle the root causes of this multifaceted crisis, and the Government's firm commitment to accountability and the rule of law. International human rights law prohibits refoulement and collective expulsions without a thorough evaluation of each person's protection needs prior to their return, urging cooperation to guarantee that everyone who wishes to apply for asylum has access to a fair and effective asylum process, regardless of the circumstances surrounding their departure from their home country. Immediate measures to restore security must be accompanied by efforts to address the root causes of violence in the country: extreme poverty, corruption, impunity, and collusion between the political and economic spheres. In

this context, sanctions are one important tool to help break the power of armed gangs, also noting that the solutions to this crisis must be Haitian-owned.

The two most important steps for the restoration are ending the gangs' power and holding meaningful new elections.

4. OAS actions in response to the crisis

The current situation in Haiti is being closely watched by the OAS General Secretariat. The protection of human rights, the separation of powers, the safeguarding of democratic institutions, and the citizens' political rights are issues that deeply concern the Organization. Collaboration amongst governmental entities is essential if Haiti's problems are to be solved.

- On 9 February 2022, OAS and Haiti's Central Financial Intelligence Unit (UCREF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will serve as a framework for inter-institutional dialogue and collaboration between UCREF and the GS/OAS on anti-corruption issues. According to the Memorandum of Understanding, OAS|RILCH will provide instruction to UCREF staff members and collaborate with them to assist in the development of their capacities and the sharing of skills between OAS specialists and UCREF employees. Additionally, the legal foundation for the battle against corruption will be strengthened. The Government of Haiti requested assistance for the development of anti-corruption infrastructure in the nation, which led to the emergence of the Project for Institutional Strengthening in the Fight against Corruption in Haiti. By improving current institutional systems and processes through training and active collaboration, OEA|RILCH seeks to strengthen the institutions that make up the Haitian anti-corruption system. It also ensures that these institutions' staff has the necessary skills to prevent and combat corruption continuously. The project also involves assistance with advancing the application of information and communications technologies (ICTs), particularly open data, in the context of the digital government policy to combat corruption.¹²

¹² "OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development." OAS - Organization of American States. https://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-006/22.

- One year later, on 10 February 2023, OAS adopted a resolution to aid Haiti in preparing for its long-delayed elections and assist the Caribbean nation in controlling the widespread gang violence that has caused a humanitarian crisis. In order to address issues like gun trafficking and the proposed multinational force to assist police in restoring order, which Haiti's caretaker government searched for five months ago, the resolution suggested establishing a working group of member nations no later than February 22.¹³
- Following the aforementioned resolution, on 16 February OAS established “the Permanent Council Working Group on Haiti”, addressing Haiti's security situation and promoting the hemispheric collaboration in the battle against food shortages and against the destabilization of democracy. This Working Group was created in order to facilitate the Organization's periodic meetings on the situation in Haiti.¹⁴
- Recently on June 16 the OAS Permanent Council examined and decided upon a draft resolution's content at its regularly scheduled meeting. The General Assembly Plenary has received the document for additional review. The draft resolution places emphasis on the desire to strengthen Haiti's capacity for border and port security, as well as institutional capacity and operational effectiveness of the Haitian National Police, through the provision of equipment from donations made through the United Nations Collective Fund. Combating the illegal trafficking of firearms is one of the main goals stated in the paper because it helps Haiti's crime rates, gang control, and kidnapping problems. The project, titled "Immediate Facilitation of Security and Humanitarian Assistance and Support for the Protection of Human Rights and the Strengthening of Democracy in Haiti," calls on OAS member states that are able to do so to prioritize, incorporate, facilitate, and provide immediate assistance as well as funds specifically designated for Haiti in security-related and other areas. The OAS will also urge its members and observers to coordinate and integrate the commitments and contributions with those of international partners engaged in humanitarian assistance

¹³ Reuters. 2023. “OAS Members Recommit to Helping Haiti through Gang Violence.” *Reuters*, February 10, 2023, sec. Americas. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/oas-members-recommit-helping-haiti-through-gang-violence-2023-02-10>.

¹⁴ “OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development.” OAS - Organization of American States. <https://www.oas.org/en/council/GT/Haiti/about.asp>.

by taking advantage of consultations facilitated by the Working Group for Haiti's Thematic Group on Humanitarian Assistance.¹⁵

The General Secretariat of OAS reaffirms its support for the Haitian people and its readiness to continue collaborating with its counterparts in Haiti, with the OAS member states, with CARICOM, and with the OAS Working Group on Haiti in order to find solutions for the country's problems with democracy, human rights, security, and overall development.¹⁶

5. Dealing with specific aspects of the crisis

5.1. Political crisis and corruption

Haiti has not been without elected officials since Jean-Claude Duvalier's violent regime came to an end in 1986. Both the Supreme Court and the electoral commission of Haiti are inoperable. Despite numerous accusations, the murder of Moïse, who frequently used illegal means of power to rule, has not yet been entirely investigated. The urban elite mostly benefits from Haiti's resource mismanagement, which is highly concentrated and corrupt. The vast majority of Haitian society disagrees with Prime Minister Ariel Henry. The Montana Accord, a combination of Haitian NGOs, members of civil society, and politicians that has earned broad support from both Haiti and the Haitian diaspora, is one of his main rivals.

A transition proposal to hold elections in February 2024 and establish an interim high transitional council with input from civil society was unveiled in December by Henry and a competing alliance of corporations and NGOs. In addition to restructuring the election commission and the Supreme Court, the transitional arrangements would also perform constitutional revision.¹⁷

¹⁵ "Next OAS Meeting Will Address Strengthening the Haitian Police and Border Points." DominicanToday. June 19, 2023. <https://dominicanoday.com/dr/world/2023/06/19/next-oas-meeting-will-address-strengthening-the-haitian-police-and-border-points/>.

¹⁶ "OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development." OAS - Organization of American States. https://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-045/22.

¹⁷ Felbab-Brown, Vanda. 2023. "Haiti in 2023: Political Abyss and Vicious Gangs." Brookings. February 3, 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/haiti-in-2023-political-abyss-and-vicious-gangs/>.

In fact, a High Transition Committee (HCT) was formally established on February 6 by Prime Minister Ariel Henry with the goal of creating an electoral road map and setting up the necessary framework for Haiti's long-awaited elections. This is Henry's most recent attempt to carry out his promise to organize elections, which have been delayed since October 2020, and to end his caretaker administration after taking office in July 2021 as a result of president Jovenel Mose's assassination. The HTC, which PM Henry appointed, is made up of three representatives from civil society, political parties, and the commercial sector. Its job is to provide the crucial tools for organizing general elections and facilitating a transition that will span 14 months. In preparation for elections, the HTC will choose the members of the necessary provisional electoral council. It is also in charge of fostering political discourse during the transition period, working with government representatives on matters involving constitutional and economic reforms, and putting strategies to reduce gang violence into action. Following Ariel's declaration, the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted a resolution on February 10 that called for the formation of a working group to address the security situation in Haiti and make it easier to promote free, fair, and legal elections.¹⁸

The international community has a role to play:

- The diplomatic, economic, and security-related support is necessary to bolster and maintain a Haitian transitional governing system, as well as the technical, personnel, and security requirements necessary to set up elections at some point within this hazy timeframe.¹⁹
- The international community should also provide the logistical and security support, the funding for a Haitian-led secretariat, and the behind-the-scenes guidance and problem-solving required for a successful resolution to the political crisis with the support of a national dialogue process from key Haitian actors. To avoid allegations of backdoor agreements and international intervention, transparency would be crucial. As the difficulties and the method would need to be sorted out over the course of up to three weeks, the meeting would also

¹⁸ "Haiti - February 2023 | the Global State of Democracy." n.d. Idea.int. Accessed August 7, 2023. <https://idea.int/democracytracker/report/haiti/february-2023>.

¹⁹ Contributor, Georges Fauriol | Global Americans. 2022. "Avoiding Disaster—a Narrowing Path Forward in Haiti." Global Americans. August 16, 2022. <https://theglobalamericans.org/2022/08/avoiding-disaster-a-narrowing-path-forward-in-haiti/>.

require patience. Additionally, an institutional framework for follow-up meetings and additional gatherings would need to be made.²⁰

5.2. Gang violence (rape, kidnapping, gender violence)

Armed gangs in Haiti use sexual violence to terrorize, intimidate, subjugate, and control the local population. The cruelty has an enormous impact on the survivors' and their families' lives in every way. The number of children and women victims of armed assaults, has significantly increased in Haiti, rising from 45 to 73 in incidents, including killings, injuries, rapes and kidnappings.²¹ Haitian women and children are increasingly being targeted for rapes, torture, kidnappings, and murders by the 200 armed gangs that now hold 60% of the city, in addition to getting caught up in the country's escalating gang conflicts.

The gang violence has caused the relocation of nearly 96,000 individuals, yet neither the Haitian government nor the international community have authorized the establishment of official displacement sites, which have been established in the past during periods of instability or tragedy. In just two days in September, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) documented about 32 instances of rape or other forms of gender-based violence.²²

The majority of armed gangs operating in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area purposely target local residents with sexual violence in order to increase and strengthen their control over particular areas. Armed conflicts in Martissant, Village de Dieu, Croix-des-Bouquets and Tabarre proved how armed elements committed rapes against men, women, boys, and girls while also committing other violent acts like killings, assaults, and property destruction. The brutality with which these acts of sexual violence were carried out by gang members indicates a clear aim to cause severe pain and to punish people who are deemed to be supporters of the rival organization. In order to cause as much humiliation and fear as

²⁰ Mines, Keith . 2022. "How to Break the Stalemate in Haiti." United States Institute of Peace. June 9, 2022. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/06/how-break-stalemate-haiti>.

²¹ "Rising Gang Violence in Haiti Is Now Targeting Children, UNICEF Warns." 2021b. Wwww.unicef.org. April 15, 2021. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/press-releases/rising-gang-violence-haiti-now-is-targeting-children-unicef-warns>.

²² "Sexual Violence in Port-Au-Prince: A Weapon Used by Gangs to Instill Fear." 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/20221014-Report-on-Sexual-Violence-haiti-en.pdf>.

possible, offenders have on multiple instances raped women, girls, and boys in front of their families after breaking into their homes or after taking them to public areas.²³

Fear of further attacks and/or stigmatization by their families and communities led some survivors who had the financial means or a social network, to leave their neighborhoods and to relocate to other areas of the capital or of the country. However, once victims of sexual violence manage to relocate, they are usually deprived of their belongings and resources, and are then exposed to further risks and vulnerabilities.

Civil society organizations, and service providers should aim to gather timely, accurate, and trustworthy data on sexual violence in general, with a particular emphasis on sexual violence committed by gangs. With the aim of evaluating trends and patterns, developing early warning indicators, identifying hotspots, and developing coordinated policies and programmatic survivor-centered responses, should involve a wide range of actors, including United Nations and OAS. Their main goals have to be the creation of awareness campaigns and other public education initiatives in order to stop sexual violence that armed gangs use to terrorize the population. Moreover, it is of major importance the education of gang members about the effects of sexual violence through specialized sensitization training to community-based actors, such as foundations and other local associations, who are situated in or have access to the hardest-to-reach areas with the highest prevalence of gang-related incidents.²⁴

A National Strategy on Disarmament, Dismantling, Reinsertion, and Community Violence Reduction (SNDDR-CVR) was adopted by the government in July 2021. Three pillars serve as the foundation for this strategy: security, community-based socioeconomic growth, and protection. The National Strategy emphasizes the importance of protecting communities, particularly women and girls, against sexual violence through a number of initiatives aimed at assisting victims of sexual and gender-based violence, enabling protection mechanisms at

²³ Port-au-Prince, Jess DiPierro Obert in. 2022. "Women's Bodies Weaponized": Haiti Gangs Use Rape in Spiraling Violence." The Guardian.

November 14, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/14/haiti-gangs-violence-women-rape>.

²⁴ "Haiti: Deploy Specialized Force to Take down Gang Violence, UN Rights Chief | UN News." 2023. News.un.org. March 21, 2023. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1134842>.

the community level, reducing the vulnerability of women and girls and empowering their leadership.²⁵

Future campaigns to abolish gender-based violence, including sexual assault, should concentrate on, and be particularly tailored to, targeted audiences as part of a lessons-learned process. Additionally, they have to be founded on investigations that make it possible to determine the exact fundamental causes and motivations of sexual assault. In addition, it is crucial that sensitization campaigns to address gender-based violence, including sexual violence, also reach armed gang elements.

5.3. Famine and water insecurity

Haiti, a Caribbean nation with a rich cultural heritage, has faced persistent challenges related to food insecurity, famine, and water insecurity. The convergence of natural disasters, environmental degradation, and socio-economic issues has exacerbated these problems, making them deeply intertwined and complex. This chapter explores the root causes, impacts, and potential solutions to tackle the critical issues of food, famine, and water insecurity in Haiti.

Haiti's food insecurity is rooted in a combination of factors, including inadequate agricultural practices, deforestation, and a lack of access to resources. The country's agricultural sector has been weakened by unsustainable farming methods and limited investment, leading to low crop yields and increasing reliance on food imports.²⁶ The impact of climate change has further strained food production, causing more frequent and intense natural disasters, such as hurricanes and droughts.²⁷ These disasters disrupt the agricultural cycle and exacerbate food shortages, leading to famine in many regions.

Except for the food shortages, water insecurity is a significant concern in Haiti as well, resulting from limited access to clean water and inadequate water management. Deforestation and environmental degradation have led to soil erosion, which affects water

²⁵ "Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 186th Period of Sessions COMPREHENSIVE WRITTEN SUBMISSION of CIVIL SOCIETY HEARING on WIDESPREAD SEXUAL VIOLENCE against WOMEN and GIRLS in HAITI." n.d. Accessed August 3, 2023. <http://www.ijdh.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/IACHR-Haiti-SGBV-Combined.pdf>.

²⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization. 2019. "Investing in Sustainable Agriculture in Haiti." Rome: FAO.

²⁷ United Nations Development Programme. 2020. "Haiti: Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction." New York: UNDP.

quality and availability.²⁸ Haiti also lacks proper water infrastructure, making access to clean water a challenge for many communities.²⁹ The devastating earthquake in 2010 further worsened water insecurity, as it damaged water supply systems and led to a deadly cholera outbreak.³⁰

The most vulnerable populations in Haiti, such as women, children, and the elderly, bear the brunt of food and water insecurity. Women, who often take on the responsibility of feeding their families, face increased challenges during times of scarcity, leading to malnutrition and adverse health effects.³¹ Malnutrition has severe consequences for children, affecting their physical and cognitive development and compromising their future prospects.³² The elderly, with limited access to resources and healthcare, are more susceptible to the health impacts of waterborne diseases, further exacerbating their vulnerability.³³

In order to combat this phenomenon, a multidimensional approach is needed. The solutions which will be presented below are examples -broadly formulated- upon which you should specialize during the conference sessions:

- **Promoting Sustainable Agriculture:** Investing in sustainable farming practices, such as agroforestry and soil conservation, can enhance food production and reduce reliance on imports.³⁴
- **Disaster Preparedness and Climate Resilience:** Strengthening disaster preparedness and implementing climate resilience strategies can mitigate the impact of natural disasters on agriculture and water resources.³⁵
- **Improving Water Infrastructure:** Developing water storage facilities and irrigation systems can enhance water availability and access.³⁶

²⁸ UNESCO. 2016. "Haiti Water Conservation and Management Strategy." Paris: UNESCO.

²⁹ World Health Organization. 2018. "Guidelines for Safe Wastewater Use in Agriculture." Geneva: WHO.

³⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2013. "Cholera in Haiti: Addressing the Water and Sanitation Crisis." Atlanta: CDC.

³¹ United Nations Women. 2019. "Women's Role in Food Security and Nutrition." New York: UN Women.

³² UNICEF. 2017. "Haiti: Nutrition and Child Development." New York: UNICEF.

³³ HelpAge International. 2021. "Ageing in the Caribbean: A Situational Analysis." London: HelpAge International.

³⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization. 2019. "Investing in Sustainable Agriculture in Haiti." Rome: FAO.

³⁵ United Nations Development Programme. 2020. "Haiti: Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction." New York: UNDP.

³⁶ World Health Organization. 2018. "Guidelines for Safe Wastewater Use in Agriculture." Geneva: WHO.

- **Water Conservation and Wastewater Treatment:** Implementing water conservation measures and establishing wastewater treatment systems can reduce water scarcity and prevent water pollution.³⁷
- **Empowering Local Communities:** Encouraging community involvement and empowerment can foster sustainable resource management and resilience.³⁸

In conclusion, addressing food insecurity, famine, and water insecurity in Haiti requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort from the government, international organizations, and local communities. By implementing sustainable agricultural practices, improving water infrastructure, and empowering vulnerable populations, Haiti can move towards a more secure and resilient future. Collaboration and long-term commitment are essential to break the cycle of insecurity and create lasting positive change for the people of Haiti.

5.4. The flow of illicit firearms

One of the main causes of the rising violence in the Caribbean, with Haiti reaching a breaking point, is the trafficking of firearms. Along with the horrific humanitarian crisis and gang-related violence that the nation is currently experiencing, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) that operate in and around Haiti and pose a security danger to other nations are also to blame for the country's gun shortage. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reported in August 2022 that it has observed a significant rise in the quantity of firearms being smuggled illegally into Haiti and the Caribbean.

To support illicit operations like the recent blockade of the Port-au-Prince petroleum terminal, ongoing gang wars, or the trade in firearms for narcotics, TCOs smuggle weapons into the area and sell them to local gangs and dealers. More than 930 individuals were slain in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, between January and the end of June 2022, according to a statement made in July by Jeremy Laurence, spokesperson for the United Nations (U.N.) Human Rights Office. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), a U.N. organization,

³⁷ UNESCO. 2016. "Haiti Water Conservation and Management Strategy." Paris: UNESCO.

³⁸ United Nations Development Programme. 2020. "Haiti: Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction." New York: UNDP.

recognized more than 113,000 internally displaced people in Haiti between June and August, 96,000 of whom had fled the capital's unrest.³⁹

Haiti has ratified the "Caribbean Firearms Roadmap" (Caribbean Firearms Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030), which codifies and expands on the 2019 measures that Caribbean Heads of Government adopted to combat illicit firearm trafficking in the region. The Roadmap acts as a foundational document for Haiti's National Action Plan (NAP). It has four main objectives: (1) strengthening the regulatory frameworks governing firearms and ammunition; (2) reducing the illicit flow of firearms and ammunition into, within, and outside the region; (3) enhancing law enforcement capability to combat illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking; and (4) systematically reducing the risk of diversion of firearms and ammunition from government and non-government owned arsenals. Each objective includes pre-determined actions, targets, and suggested performance indicators. All of these elements are in keeping with a timeframe that spans from 2020 to 2030, to coincide with the completion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁴⁰

The management and regulation of firearms must be centralized immediately. The NAP might assist Haiti in developing a single point of coordination for handling government-wide guns control issues. Strengthened gun laws could also be helpful in defining expectations and obligations. Currently, the Central Division of the Administrative Police (DCPA) oversees firearm control procedures. The Service de Porte d'Armes à Feu, or SAF, is the DCPA's carry permit service, however it lacks staff, material, and personnel resources. The draft NAP recommends creating a functional database of civilian firearms as additional support for fortifying the SAF. Additionally, stockpile management procedures should be strengthened in a useful way. Additional help could go toward establishing uniform investigation methods.

³⁹ MARTINEZ, FELIX. 2022. "Firearms Trafficking in the Caribbean: Haiti's Unrest and the Neighbors next Door." *Diálogo Américas*. December 12, 2022. <https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/firearms-trafficking-in-the-caribbean-haitis-unrest-and-the-neighbors-next-door/>.

⁴⁰ "UNLIREC and CARICOM IMPACS Hold Executive Seminar for the Advancement Haiti's National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap - UNLIREC." 2022. United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC). February 15, 2022. <https://unlirec.org/en/unlirec-and-caricom-impacs-hold-executive-seminar-for-the-advancement-haitis-national-action-plan-for-the-implementation-of-the-caribbean-firearms-roadmap/>.

Improved transparency and accountability over political and economic players who may be implicated in trafficking, illegal financial flows, or providing material and financial support to armed organizations must also be implemented alongside any steps to control firearms and seize drugs. In the medium term, international partners are committed to giving anti-corruption measures top priority. Haiti very recently designated corruption as a crime in 2014, following which bribery and illicit procurement were sanctioned. To stop the trafficking of drugs and weapons, Haiti's Unit for Combating Corruption needs to be strengthened. Upgrading the nation's court system is also necessary to address issues including out-of-date criminal and penal legislation, insufficient judicial monitoring, and pervasive systemic corruption that has reportedly been recorded. There have only been five successful drug trafficking convictions and one corruption conviction as of 2022.⁴¹

5.5. Drug trafficking

Haiti has a long history of involvement in the international drugs trade. The country emerged as a transit hub for cocaine heading to the US, courtesy of the Medellin Cartel in the late 1980s. Several tons of cocaine were transported annually by Colombian criminal gangs. Haiti's geographic location, political culture, illegal immigrants, entrepreneurial class and weak institutions have made it a major transshipment point for drugs to the United States from South America. Drug trafficking is a contributor to Haiti's current violence, corruption, political instability, poor economic growth, and lack of democratic consolidation.

Haiti is both a transit and source country for cannabis. Local producers supply the domestic market, which is small because most of the population does not have the resources to buy drugs. Additionally, there is evidence of some small-scale synthetic drug trafficking across the nation.

Although Haiti has traditionally been a transshipment center, the current instability may be reducing the country's appeal to traffickers. There are a number of factors that keep attracting drug traffickers in Haiti. For example, it lacks reliable maritime control capabilities. With fewer than 200 officers, the HCG is in charge of a fleet of twelve ships, just one is apparently in

⁴¹ "Haiti's Criminal Markets: MAPPING TRENDS in FIREARMS and DRUG TRAFFICKING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS." n.d. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/toc/Haiti_assessment_UNODC.pdf.

use, four need maintenance, and seven are no longer active. Due to a lack of remote scanning and X-ray facilities, customs personnel are less likely to inspect incoming cargo. While nations like the United States, Canada, and France have made investments in bolstering regional customs and police capacities, especially in the north of the country, Haiti lacks meaningful surveillance and patrol infrastructure at the border.

There are some important factors that contribute to drug trafficking. First and foremost, the nature and flow of drug trafficking and other illegal operations frequently depend on geography and scale. Haiti is located strategically on international trade routes and has attracted the attention of those involved in commercial enterprises of drugs. Geographically, Haiti is ideally situated between the world's greatest consumer of drugs, the United States, and the major drug producers in South America. One of the most significant marine routes in the hemisphere passes through Haiti.⁴²

Some countries are vulnerable to illicit activities due to their political cultures, which develop an environment that is suitable for such activities. Haiti's political culture has historically viewed the prevalence of illegal activity as a method of personal prosperity. Farmers feel obliged to engage in criminal operations as a means of survival. Under these conditions, the state's capacity to combat illegal activity is significantly reduced.

Moreover, migration has an impact on a country's involvement in criminal activities. A large immigrant population in a country where drugs are consumed provides a prime distribution network for illicit exports, but at the same time, the money that diasporas send back home helps the local economy. Haitian immigration has a significant impact on politics and economics. During the military coup, they sent over \$100 million to families and loved ones.

The level of entrepreneurship in a country has also a significant impact on its participation in drug trafficking. Drug traffickers typically focus on making quick, huge amounts of money. Therefore, as a result of globalization, organized crime is now able to make large rewards with little danger to law enforcement. A country might become a haven for drug traffickers due to institutional weakness. Although Haiti has made significant headway against drugs, there is still a lot of room for improvement. Even now, criminals are kept in jails for years at a

⁴² "Haiti's Criminal Markets: MAPPING TRENDS in FIREARMS and DRUG TRAFFICKING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS." n.d. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/toc/Haiti_assessment_UNODC.pdf.

time without being tried and in cruel ways. The court system still lacks the resources, qualified judges, and legitimacy to properly and fairly serve its citizens.⁴³

The inefficient justice system in Haiti continues to prevent quick and impartial trials. Due to the insufficient equipment and inadequate training of Haiti's newly formed police force, the country lacks the legal capacity to confront drug traffickers. The public's trust in the police has been eroded by their involvement in various drug scandals.

The Haitian government has signaled its inability to stabilize the country on its own, as evidenced by the request for the deployment of an international specialized security force.

5.6. Inequality and barriers to education

Haiti's education system has some challenges as ineffective teaching methods contribute to low-quality education. Around 50% of teachers in the public sector are unqualified, 80% have no pre-service training, and 25% have never attended formal school or have just completed secondary education.

More specifically, 40% of Haitian students drop out before the conclusion of Grade 9 (the last grade), and 10% drop out before the end of Grade 6 of the basic school. Schools were forced to close twice in 2019: once in the fall when the socio-political climate paralyzed the nation, and once a few months later when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out.

Inequality in Haiti remains high. Despite increases in life expectancy and education-related indicators, wealth disparity has only gotten worse as Haiti continues to be one of the world's most unequal nations. This is related to a concentration of resources in the hands of a small but powerful group of elites and the domination of gangsters.

In order to protect staff and children, administrators decided to close 30 schools in the first six days of February 2023 and more than 25% of schools have remained closed since October 2022 as a result of the escalating violence in urban regions. In January 2023, students skipped an average of 1.5 school days per week because of the possibility of

⁴³ "Haiti: Surge in Gun Trafficking Fuels Spike in Gang Violence | UN News." 2023. News.un.org. March 3, 2023. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1134097>.

violence.⁴⁴ The Haitian Ministry of Education has pushed for school reopening despite the danger. As a result, three out of four schools—rather than just one—reopened by December 2022.

The Haitian government is urged by UNICEF to ensure that schools are safe and to pursue legal action against businesses and individuals that put children in danger or cause harm while they are in school. According to the U.N., schools "must be places of learning, safety, and harmony." Education is praised for not just imparting knowledge and skills but also for transforming lives and fostering progress for individuals, organizations, and nations. In general, the United Nations calls on all countries to ratify the Safe Schools Declaration, which is an inter-governmental political commitment to protect students, teachers, schools and universities, from the worst effects of armed conflict.⁴⁵

The causes are all the more complex not only because the Haitian education system is fragile in terms of governance, access to schooling, and quality of education, but also because the country has significant departmental disparities that need to be taken into account in planning.⁴⁶ Numerous additional factors that contribute to school dropout in Haiti include the nation's extreme poverty, political instability, and security risks, as well as the qualifications of teachers, the quality of the schools' facilities, the absence of canteens and the language barrier. As a result, girls who are unable to attend school go to domestic labor and become vulnerable to physical, sexual and psychological abuse, unlike the girls who finish primary and secondary school who are more likely to escape these conditions.⁴⁷

Girls' access to school continues to be hampered by gender inequality. Between the ages of five and seventeen, children perform domestic labor. The majority of these kids, also known as *restavek*, are female. Though girls enter school on par with boys, they are marginalized and are subject to higher dropout rates.

⁴⁴ "Haitian Children at Mercy of Armed Gangs as Schools Close | United Nations in Haiti." n.d. Haiti.un.org. <https://haiti.un.org/en/185837-haitian-children-mercy-armed-gangs-schools-close>.

⁴⁵ "Haiti: Gang Violence Pushes Half a Million Children out of the Classroom in Port-Au-Prince." n.d. Wwww.unicef.org. <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/press-releases/haiti-gang-violence-pushes-half-a-million-children-out-classroom-in-port-au-prince>.

⁴⁶ "Dropping out of School: An Unwelcomed Trend in Haiti." 2020. IIEP-UNESCO. October 26, 2020. <https://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/dropping-out-school-unwelcomed-trend-haiti-13528>.

⁴⁷ "The Right of Women in Haiti to Be Free from Violence and Discrimination." n.d. Cidh.oas.org. <https://cidh.oas.org/countryrep/haitimujer2009eng/HaitiWomen09.Intro.Chap.IandII.htm>.

The social structure of Haiti and the State's lack of political will are the main causes of the country's educational crisis. All of the sociocultural actors in the nation have to be mobilized on a national level, including universities, labor unions, women's groups, cultural organizations and political parties. The main goal is the creation of a national training plan based on the application of the two languages, mandatory education for all Haitians, and a curriculum that is the same for private and public schools.

For the decrease of rural poverty, job creation and income diversification are crucial. In Haiti, people who work in agriculture are far more likely to be impoverished than those who work in the public sector. In Haiti, more than 75 percent of the rural population is employed in agriculture, and for 50 percent of them, agriculture is their sole source of income. The income disparity between rural and urban areas could be reduced with more financial inclusion. Economic inclusion has numerous aspects and refers to improving access for all citizens to markets, finance and high-quality education.

5.7.7. Criminal justice system

Institutions that uphold the rule of law are not just understaffed and underfunded, corruption and a lack of independence also have an impact on them. Gang members intimidate and retaliate against their representatives. In parallel, armed gang warfare has driven state officials—including police officers—out of a number of underprivileged areas where the majority of reported incidences of sexual violence have occurred.⁴⁸

In several active police stations located throughout the capital, there are divisions to combat sexual violence. In particular, there is a dedicated unit within the Central Directorate of Judicial Police (DCPJ), called the Unit to Combat Sexual Crimes. Due to victims' hesitation to report rape and other incidents of sexual assault as a result of fear of retaliation from the offenders and/or social stigmatization, the work of the police is frequently hindered.

Other barriers to victims reporting incidents include a lack of trust in police capabilities and worries about potential leaks of sensitive information and testimony to gangs. In general, one of the major obstacles preventing them from cooperating with institutions of the rule of law is

⁴⁸ "Sexual Violence in Port-Au-Prince: A Weapon Used by Gangs to Instill Fear." 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/20221014-Report-on-Sexual-Violence-haiti-en.pdf>.

the question of victim and witness protection. The fear of retaliation or revenge by gang members is widespread among victims as well as among police personnel.

Basic human rights are constantly violated by Haiti's criminal justice system, which also frequently disregards international and national legal protections. The jail system in Haiti has some of the worst conditions in the Western Hemisphere; its detention facilities and prisons are frequently low on food, water, and basic medical services as well as medical isolation units for contagious patients. More than 80% of prisoners have never been found guilty of a crime, and they are kept in illegal pre-trial detention for an average of over a year and up to three years in some facilities. The circumstances frequently amount to torture or cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment.⁴⁹

In a nation wracked by extreme poverty and violence, civilians have taken up arms and killed at least 160 people believed to be gang members in the six weeks since a citizens "self-defense" movement known as "bwa kale" kicked off its vigilantism with the brazen police station attack.⁵⁰

There are two methods to build structural solutions: internationally and regionally. On the one hand, foreign assistance is helpful for preserving the flow of humanitarian aid and serving as a tool for building a system of governance that properly supervises the security forces and the rule of law. But in order to prevent repeating the human rights abuses of the United Nations Stabilization operation in Haiti, it must be a brief, focused, and exact foreign support operation. An essential part of this process is educating the people of Haiti to support their own democratic institutions, as well as their own police and justice systems.

International law enforcement experts may support improving institutional control and oversight of criminal activities as well as creating educational and career alternatives that would prevent young people from entering criminal organizations. However, a global military involvement should not be the basis of the solution, as this might deepen the humanitarian crisis and put civil society at risk of a future conflict. Support for the restoration of democracy is required, as well as stronger oversight of fair elections with the assistance of OAS.

⁴⁹ "12 Th Session of the Working Group on the UPR Human Rights Council." 2011. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/session12/HT/JS10-JointSubmission10-eng.pdf>.

⁵⁰Robles, Frances, and Andre Paultre. 2023. "Vigilante Justice Rises in Haiti and Crime Plummets." *The New York Times*, June 3, 2023, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/03/world/americas/haiti-crime-gangs-vigilantes.html>.

Legitimate institutions, on the other hand, must come from Haiti. The most effective way to create legitimate institutions is through local efforts supported by public trust. Without structural change, Haiti may serve as the starting point for more significant security issues and regional destabilization.

5.8. Healthcare and public health system

After more than three years with no recorded cases of cholera, Haiti is currently suffering a cholera outbreak that is fast spreading over the whole nation. The outbreak was first reported on October 2, 2022. In addition, there is a complex humanitarian crisis that has been going on for a while and is becoming worse quickly because of gang violence, sociopolitical unrest, insecurity, fuel shortages, and unstable economies. As a result, access to healthcare and basic amenities like food, water, sanitation, and supply services has been restricted. Due to this circumstance, Haiti's populace is extremely susceptible to the continuing cholera pandemic and the ability of foreign organizations and partners to provide humanitarian aid is severely hindered.⁵¹

Furthermore, due to gasoline shortages, protest marches, looting, and general strikes, access to the impacted villages is exceedingly difficult and has become more difficult in recent weeks. Healthcare personnel are unable to commute to work as healthcare facilities start to close their doors. Due to poor transit options and traffic congestion in and around the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, patients have similar challenges. Access to water is impacted by problems with the power supply, which can make the already difficult situation worse.⁵²

Apart from the cholera epidemic, according to Dr. Christophe Millien, HUM's chief medical officer, the university hospital of Mirebalais (HUM) in Haiti recorded 40 cases of extremely high fever over the weekend, with 11 of those cases having been identified as dengue fever. A viral illness called dengue fever is spread by mosquitoes in tropical and subtropical regions.

⁵¹ World Health Organization. 2022. "Cholera- Haiti." Www.who.int. December 13, 2022. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON427>.

⁵² "PAHO Supports Health Authorities in Haiti in the Response to the Reemergence of Cholera - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization." n.d. Www.paho.org. <https://www.paho.org/en/news/6-10-2022-paho-supports-health-authorities-haiti-response-reemergence-cholera>.

The rural sections of the Dominican Republic, which borders Haiti, have already been hit hard by the viral sickness.⁵³

For the purpose of containing the outbreak in the West, Central, and Artibonite departments, PAHO/WHO Haiti provided technical, operational, and financial support for the training and mobilization of 1,200 Community Health Workers, also known as Agents de Santé Communautaire Polyvalents (ASCPs). In the ongoing fight against cholera and other health risks, ASCPs are the backbone of Haiti's health system, providing crucial care, education, and surveillance for their communities. By planning training sessions for ASCPs, PAHO/WHO Haiti assisted Health Directorates in numerous departments in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP). To ensure that ASCPs were deployed in the most impacted areas, this included modifying international guidelines to create training materials, organizing facilitators and trainers, and allocating financing.

The cholera pandemic highlights the vulnerabilities of the whole Haitian people, but especially those of the most vulnerable, in an environment of high insecurity and deteriorating economic conditions. The populace is at risk because of the severely restricted access to food, sanitization facilities, and drinking water, which also favors the spread of cholera. Oral rehydration points (ORPs), the operation of cholera treatment centers/units (CTCs/UTs), and epidemiological surveillance have all been hampered by the difficulty in accessing cholera-affected areas as a result of insecurity, protests, or social unrest. Health promotion initiatives, community outreach, and patient transportation to CTCs/CTUs are all substantially hindered. Moreover, the shutdown of ports continues to be a major obstacle to the entry of medical supplies into Haiti, denying access to crucial resources needed to scale up the response. The following are the primary needs for health:

- A new ORP must be installed.
- Insufficient cholera treatment facilities in priority locations
- Lack of case management tools and supplies (cholera kits, infusion sets, medicine sets, medical equipment sets, sampling sets, oral rehydration solution (ORS), etc.) in CTC and at the current Oral ORP for cholera management.

⁵³"HUM Tackles Alarming Dengue Fever Surge in Haiti." 2023. Partners in Health. August 3, 2023. <https://www.pih.org/article/hum-tackles-alarming-dengue-fever-surge-haiti>.

- A lack of skilled staff at the rehydration stations and in the cholera management structures (CTC/UTC).
- The challenge of getting cholera patients to treatment facilities.
- The inability to discover cases or absence of a community-based surveillance network in the target communities.
- The failure to produce and disseminate information on cholera through various channels (social media, SMS, distribution of IEC materials).
- The failure to carry out major sensitization campaigns (radio broadcasts, large-scale sensitization campaigns) on the important cholera messaging.
- The failure of targeted communities to implement door-to-door cholera sensitization campaigns.
- More data at the community level are required to identify risk behaviors, evaluate behavioral difficulties, and analyze local cultures, conventions, and customs associated with cholera hazards.
- Support for the MSPP's cholera immunization efforts is required.
- The need to offer psychosocial support to the impacted population

Given the cholera's resurgence in Haiti, PAHO/WHO advises that member States maintain and expand cholera monitoring for the early detection of suspected cases in order to offer proper care and stop the disease's spread. The case-fatality rate (CFR) of hospitalized patients can be kept to around one percent (1%), if they get prompt and effective treatment. In order to prevent or address issues with rapid access to care structures for a variety of reasons, the National Society must assist the Ministry of Public Health in strengthening the community-based surveillance system for response activities to the cholera epidemic. This is especially crucial given the lack of detection and prompt follow-up of suspected and confirmed cases of cholera at the community level.⁵⁴

In addition to enabling a more efficient response to the cholera outbreak, the training and mobilization of these essential health workers has also highlighted the need of funding

⁵⁴ "Haiti - Earthquake and Cholera (MDRHT018) | IFRC." 2023. Wwww.ifrc.org. May 30, 2023. <https://www.ifrc.org/media/52185>.

community-based health systems. The fight against cholera and other public health issues in Haiti has become significantly aided by ASCPs, which develop confidence and cooperation between local populations and health authorities. The knowledge gained from their work can be used as a model for new programs designed to fight infectious illnesses and advance public health in difficult humanitarian situations.⁵⁵

By 2040, Haitian economic, social, and structural inequalities are to be reduced, according to the National Policy for Social Protection and Promotion. This strategy has a focus on health, particularly for older folks and those with impairments. This contributes to the objective of universal health coverage and represents direct action on health inequities. The abolition of user fees for necessary health services at the point of care also places a special emphasis on financial protection.⁵⁶

5.9. Economic collapse (linked with earthquake)

The roughly 10 million inhabitants of Haiti were among the most impoverished in the Western Hemisphere even before the devastating earthquake in January 2010. An estimated 250,000 people were killed, 300,000 were injured, and at least 1 million had their homes and places of business devastated by the earthquake. The epicenter of the earthquake was Port-au-Prince, the capital and largest city of Haiti. Many of the city's 2.1 million surviving citizens still lack stable housing, access to public services, or a reliable source of income.

The destruction has been devastating for Haiti's population and economy. In 2005, an estimated 72 percent survived on less than US\$2 per day. This widespread poverty is reflected in poor health and low educational levels. Many Haitians have left their country in quest of better prospects. More educated Haitians typically leave their country to work abroad. Remittances are a significant source of income for the families of the one in eight Haitians who are thought to be living abroad. The Dominican Republic, which shares a land border with Haiti on the island of Hispaniola, has long seen a migration of Haitians.

⁵⁵ "Haiti Cholera Outbreak: Community Health Workers as Pillars of the Response on the Ground." n.d. Www.who.int. Accessed August 9, 2023. <https://www.who.int/about/accountability/results/who-results-report-2020-mtr/country-story/2022/haiti-cholera-outbreak--community-health-workers-as-pillars-of-the-response-on-the-ground>.

⁵⁶ "Haiti - Country Profile." 2022. Health in the Americas. September 16, 2022. <https://hia.paho.org/en/countries-22/haiti-country-profile>.

5.10. Infrastructure in the post-earthquake era

On August 14, 2021, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake devastated this Caribbean island nation's south-west, causing extensive damage in primarily rural areas. In addition to the fatalities and injuries, major infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, roads, and bridges were devastated, interrupting vital services, transportation, farming, and trade. According to the UN, approximately 800,000 people were affected in some form, including 300,000 children whose schooling was disrupted.⁵⁷

Repairing the damage brought on by the earthquake is expected to cost up to \$2 billion, according to government estimates. A little more than a billion dollars, or more than half of the available money, will be required to renovate or create primarily private housing, and \$400 million of those monies will go toward education. Initiatives to improve food security and healthcare services need \$40 million and \$55 million, respectively. Assistance has also been targeted at environmental programs as well as trade, industry, and agriculture. Ariel Henry, the prime minister of Haiti, said at the occasion that everyone would be included in the reconstruction and recovery process.

For the impacted households, emergency housing and basic household supplies are required given the destruction and damage to houses, infrastructure, and businesses. 53,815 demolished homes and 83,770 damaged homes were the initial figures provided by DGPC. According to the DGPC, households in rural areas, which make up 80% of the afflicted population, suffered five to seven times more housing damage than those in metropolitan areas. The provision of essential shelter supplies, such as tarpaulins, blankets, toolkits for making shelters, and kitchen sets, is necessary.⁵⁸

It is vital to find housing for those who have been displaced by the Haitian earthquake. Although the government gives great importance to emergency shelter, the purpose of this note is to expand on the efforts already made by the government and the international community and to offer recommendations for medium- and long-term transitional shelter. Transitional housing is more than simply a particular kind of home; it's a stage in a process

⁵⁷ United Nations. 2022. "Rebuilding Haiti: The Post-Earthquake Path to Recovery." UN News. February 12, 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1111382>.

⁵⁸ "Haiti at 'Crossroads' Entering Post-Earthquake Reconstruction." 2022. UN News. February 16, 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1112102>.

that lasts from the moment of need after a person is displaced until their home is rebuilt or a long-term solution is found.

Another issue that should be addressed is the debris cleaning. Debris may include human remains, which should be removed with respect, as well as personal property, which is frequently the only thing left that survivors have. Wood, metal, bricks, and concrete aggregate to create future structures and fill roadways are among the basic materials that debris can give for reconstruction. Because recyclable items may also contain pollutants and hazardous elements including fuel, ammonia, pesticides, lead, heavy metals, medical waste, and asbestos, debris from an earthquake may also pose a threat to the populace and the environment. A Post Disaster Debris Management Plan is typically advised to reduce expenses and coordinate activities. A plan like this outlines duties, protocols, the placement of sites for storage and disposal, as well as the necessary personnel and tools. By extension, poor early planning might result in high costs.⁵⁹

While Haiti's ability to mobilize local resources will be crucial to its long-term growth, bridging the immediate resource deficit will largely depend on outside financial and development aid. As a result, both the Haitian government and its citizens as well as international aid organizations from both rich and developing nations will share responsibility for Haiti's recovery. However, if recovery is to last, it is crucial that development cooperation be planned so that accountability gradually passes to the Haitian State. In order to bridge the gap between national rates of saving and the high rates of investment necessary to accomplish Haiti's development goals, particularly the MDGs, development aid should be utilized.⁶⁰

6. Points to be addressed

1) What are the governments of Haiti and the United States doing to combat drug trafficking? What more could be done?

⁵⁹ "Haiti Earthquake Reconstruction Knowledge Notes from DRM Global Expert Team for the Government of Haiti the WORLD BANK Government of Haiti." n.d. Accessed August 10, 2023.
https://www.gfdr.org/sites/default/files/publication/GFDRR_Haiti_Reconstruction_KnowledgeNotes_0.pdf.

⁶⁰ "UNCTAD POLICY BRIEFS." 2010. https://www.preventionweb.net/files/13681_presspb20103en1.pdf.

- 2) What is the economic impact of the earthquake in Haiti?
- 3) How can Haiti and OAS cooperate in order to end gang violence?
- 4) How can inequality and barriers to education affect the already difficult position of Haitians?
- 5) What guidelines should be implemented in order to diminish gender-based violence and sexual exploitation cases among women?
- 6) In what ways can OAS address the political crisis in Haiti and assist in the elections?
- 7) What kind of measures should be taken in order to eliminate famine and water insecurity?
- 8) How can the access to healthcare be ensured for all the Haitians?
- 9) How can member-states tackle the illicit flow of weapons in the Haitian territory and by that combatting the ongoing gang violence?
- 10) How can OAS and member-states support the economic and infrastructure development in post-earthquake Haiti?

7. Epilogue

It is evident that Haiti has seen various crises and natural disasters in recent decades. Due to growing socio political unrest, gang violence, and a cholera epidemic, 5.2 million people in Haiti currently require humanitarian assistance. Gang-related crimes have increased to frightening levels in Haiti, including kidnappings, armed robberies, and increased violence.

Horrific acts of violence are being committed against helpless individuals as gang activity has increased. Snipers randomly shoot in residential areas and in the streets, killing or wounding innocent bystanders. In order to terrify and dominate people, gangs are increasing the sexual assaults against women and girls. In addition, gangs are abducting parents, teachers, and students in the vicinity of schools, forcing many to close, and leaving kids open to recruitment by armed organizations.

At least 160,000 people have been forced out of their homes as a result of the violence, and many are now living in close quarters with friends and family without access to basic comforts

like clean water and sanitary facilities. Moreover, half of the population is suffering from acute hunger and an unstable health system.

Governments, OAS, international organizations, and political figures must work together to strengthen the legal framework and come up with concrete solutions. It is essential to combat this situation in order to guarantee that Haitians have access to equal education, sexual and reproductive health care, gender-responsive social safety systems, and opportunities in the job market.

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