# Committee: International Organization for Migration (IOM)

President: Ximena Gil Quiroz

Moderator: Ernesto Pérez Ortiz

Official Assistant: Vanessa Manera Bonifaz

Introduction to the Committee.

The United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) was

established on December 6, 1951. It is led by a Director General and two Deputy Director

Generals, and its decisions are overseen by the Council, a governing body comprised of

representatives from member states. The IOM is part of the Specialized Agencies of the

United Nations and also belongs to the Global Migration Group, an inter-agency coalition

founded in 2003 by the United Nations Secretary-General.

IOM was founded after World War II to address the surge in migration and

provide order and security for the growing number of displaced people. It currently has

175 member states and works alongside other UN organizations, such as the World Bank

and the International Labor Organization, among others. The IOM's primary goal is to

develop humane solutions for global migration issues and support migrants. This includes

the evacuation of vulnerable migrants, voluntary and family relocation, making efforts to

counter trafficking and protection of migrants that are in vulnerable situations.

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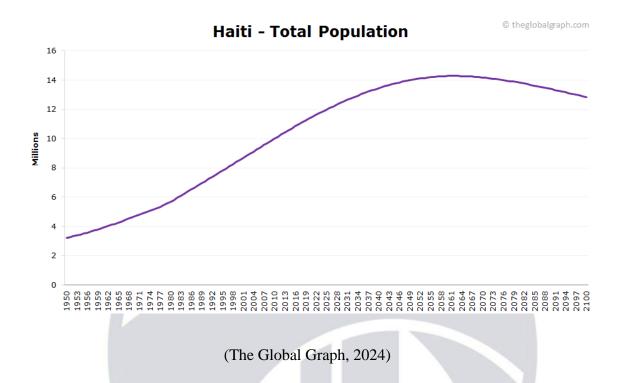


#### Introduction.

According to IOM, People who move voluntarily within a country are called internal migrants and move for several reasons, both formally and informally. If their movement is forced, they are referred to as internally displaced persons (IOM, 2024). The OHCHR defines IDPs as Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence (OHCHR, 2024). Haiti is one of the countries facing significant challenges with internally displaced people.

Graph 1. The population of Haiti between 1950 and the expected population of 2100





Haiti is located on the Caribbean Sea on an island shared with the Dominican Republic. It has a population of approximately 11 million people and it's currently experiencing significant internal displacement due to various factors affecting its population. One major issue is political instability. Following the assassination of the president in 2021, Prime Minister Ariel Henry assumed power. Haitian people did not agree with this, and when elections were postponed until 2025, armed groups already active in the capital began a new wave of violence to force the Haitian prime minister out of power.



**Q**4 2022 Q1 2023 ■ Q1 2024\* **Q**4 2023 1,554 1,104 846 826 541 382 393 379 Injured Killed Kidnapped

Graph 2. Gang violence consequences

(Statista, 2024)

An economic crisis caused by the political disruption and the great amount of violence in the country, has also been one of the reasons of the internal displacement, also the economy has been contracted on five consecutive years by "1.7% in 2019, 3.3% in 2020, 1.8% in 2021, 1.7% in 2022, and 1.9 percent in 2023 (World Bank Group, n.d). Additionally, the inflation rate remained high at 44.2 percent in 2023, while alarming unemployment rates have further worsened the situation for citizens.

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Haiti: Unemployment rate from 2004 to 2023

16.5%

16.5%

16.19%

15.93%

15.5%

15.65%

14.6%

14.6%

14.6%

14.1%

13.8%

13.8%

13.86%

13.9%

13.47%

13.62%

13.62%

Graph 3. Unemployment rate in Haiti

(Statista, 2024)

Natural disasters have also played a significant role in internal displacement in Haiti, Over a decade, the country has faced numerous earthquakes, including the devastating 2010 earthquake, which affected approximately 3.5 million people, as well as several hurricanes and tropical storms, including the ongoing Hurricane Beryl. Cholera outbreaks and frequent floods, with the most recent occurring in June 2023,

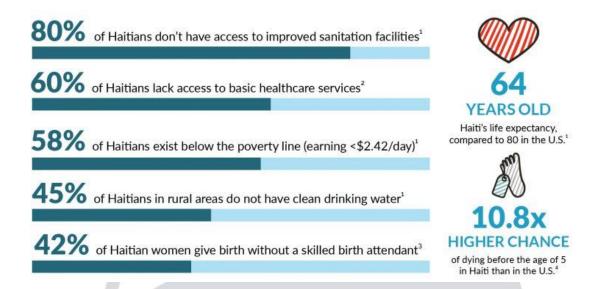


have further compounded the situation. 45% of Haitian rural areas do not have clean water to drink, and on average, 40% of the people in Haiti don't have access to basic healthcare services.

Also, a significant percentage of the population lives in poverty or near the poverty line, facing violence from armed gangs in Port-au-Prince and other regions, civilian casualties, insecure roads, and attacks on journalists. These conditions force many people to leave their homes and seek refuge in other communities.

**Graph 4. Conditions of life in Haiti** 





#### (FOTCOH, 2024)

Internally displaced people often lack adequate housing, as most funds are directed toward building shelters, which still are short to accommodate everyone. The living conditions on these camps are not getting any better despite the efforts of the humanitarian programs, they build their own places to live in with no assistance or guidance, and in most cases, the place where they build these houses is hazardous, and does not count with enough resources and jobs for the displaced people. Additionally, displaced people frequently face rejection from local communities due to strained resources, which leads to them being perceived as burdens.



As of June 2024, significant sources of internally displaced people include Portau-Prince 43%, Croix-Des-Bouquets 15%, Carrefour 11%, and Delmas 8%. Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite was the province that generated the most internally displaced people, primarily due to violence and preventive fear.

(IOM, 2024)

**Graph 5. Districts of origin of IDPs** 

Neighboring countries, such as the Dominican Republic, are dealing with the repercussions of Haiti's crises since they are receiving migrants from Haiti and have aided Haiti with some of its troubles like the 2010 earthquake. This issue also expands



to Canada, Mexico, and the USA, which are not only sending aid to improve security but also receiving a significant number of Haitian refugees. Even European countries, such as France, are involved by advocating for new and regulated elections in Haiti.

#### **Historical Background**

Haiti's problems can be traced back to 1942 when Christopher Columbus arrived on the island now shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic, naming it "La Hispaniola." Soon after, European powers like France, England, and Holland began exploiting the island's resources, particularly gold and sugar, with France formally colonizing the western part of the island in 1655 and renaming it "Saint-Domingue." It quickly became one of the wealthiest and most lucrative colonies in the world, relying on the labor of enslaved native people, who had a life expectancy of only 21 years. This exploitation led to significant dissatisfaction among the Haitian people. Years later, inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution, Dutty Boukman became the leader of the enslaved people in 1791 and initiated the struggle for independence. On August 22 of that same year, several plantations were destroyed as a manifestation, and the enslaved people killed many of the white colonists as an act of revenge. Haiti finally declared its independence in 1804.



After independence, Jean-Jacques Dessalines became Haiti's first emperor, implementing a policy of retaliatory violence against the white population. Between January and April 1804, around 5,000 white people were massacred. As a result, several countries refused to recognize Haiti as an independent nation and isolated it, fearing that Haiti's revolution could inspire similar uprisings in other Latin American colonies.

In 1822, the Republic of Haiti, led by Jean-Pierre Boyer, unified the entire island of Hispaniola by invading Santo Domingo. Although Boyer abolished slavery, the people of Santo Domingo still faced repression. The Haitian occupation aimed to unify the island, but it instead resulted in economic decline in Santo Domingo and growing resentment among its inhabitants. On April 17, 1825, after France refused to recognize Haiti's independence, President Boyer signed the Independence Debt Agreement, which required Haiti to pay 150 million francs as compensation for lost resources, enslaved people, and destroyed plantations. If Haiti failed to pay, France threatened to invade again. Boyer signed the agreement to secure Haiti's independence.

This led to Haiti taking on a loan from 30 million francs to the French Bank, but this increased the debt by 6 million more francs due to all the interests applied on the loan. In the year of 1830 the independence debt was half reduced by asking a loan to the banks of the United States, France and Germany. However, on the year of 1843,



President Jean-Pierre Boyer was overthrown due to all the crises that were present in the country, which caused three persons named Juan Pablo Duarte to found a secret society to fight the Haitians, by 1842 the rebellion gain strength, and caused Santo Domingo to finally solidify its independence and finally on 1944 the Haitians were expelled, renaming the land to the Dominican Republic.

In 19th-century Haiti, a significant divide emerged between the urban elite, primarily light-skinned French speakers residing in Port-au-Prince, which was the center of culture, business, and politics, and the black Creole-speaking majority living in rural areas. The rural population had little to no access to social services or communication, further deepening the social and economic divide between the urban elite and the countryside.

Later, the U.S. became concerned that Haiti's external debt would diminish its political and economic influence in the region, given its prior investments and established political sway in Haiti. As a result, in 1905, the U.S. took control of Haiti's customs operations. In December 1914, the U.S. further asserted its control by removing \$500,000 from Haiti's financial reserves and transferring it to New York for "safekeeping."



Some years later, in 1915, Haiti was occupied by the U.S. Marines, The United States justified it by citing the Monroe Doctrine, which asserted the U.S. right to prevent European intervention in the Western Hemisphere. However, many Haitians believed that the true purpose of the occupation was to protect U.S. investments and establish a strategic base near the Panama Canal. Haiti signed a treaty granting the U.S. political and financial control, initially set for ten years but later extended. During a United States Marine-supervised election in 1918, a new constitution was introduced that allowed foreigners to own land in Haiti.

During the U.S. occupation of Haiti, black Haitians faced discrimination from the Marines, leading to growing public dissatisfaction and the rise of guerrilla resistance. On December 6, 1929, a protest resulted in the injury of 23 people and the killing of 12 Haitians by the Marines. Eventually, in August 1934, President Roosevelt withdrew the U.S. Marines. However, during the occupation, an estimated 11,500 Haitians were killed by the U.S. forces. Although the Marines left, U.S. control persisted through indirect means, such as influencing elections and maintaining fiscal oversight, which lasted until 1947, with fiscal control continuing until 1941.

In 1947, Haiti finished paying its debt to France, with the loans from French bank Crédit Industriel et Commercial. But this only caused the interests to rise even



more and led Haiti to an undeveloped economy giving bad conditions for the citizens. Additionally, in 1990 the American trade policies, which consisted of preferential trades, imports, and exports, caused an economic vulnerability that left half of the existing resources, mainly crops, and minerals like copper, gold and calcium being consumed.

#### **Current Relevance**

The displacement of people from Haiti has become a significant issue due to violations of Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserts that everyone has the right to adequate housing. This displacement not only hinders Haiti's economic potential but also results in the loss of valuable resources and an inactive population, making trade with Haiti more difficult. In the long term, this situation hampers Haiti's development, making it a global concern.

Due to all the violent outbreaks and coordinated attacks by armed groups, in an attempt to make the minister renounce, and the lack of essential services and health services, people in Haiti are leaving their homes and establishing improvised places to live in, currently, Nearly 200,000 people are now internally displaced in Haiti, of which roughly 70,000 find themselves in inadequate and precarious spontaneous settlements



and collective centers, 31,000 are sleeping in the open air, and 34,000 are crammed into classrooms (IOM, 2023), all these conditions represent a high risk to all the persons who are internally displaced, since all these places are overcrowded and people can't access their needs, the lack of resources also generates violence due to the disputes and increases the risk of sexual attacks due to the lack of security and justice. A woman who went to one of these improvised living places said, When the shooting started, I left my neighborhood with my son...I had to find us a place to shelter quickly. I found the Lycée Jean-Marie Vincent; it lacks space in the classrooms, and when it rains, we sleep standing up in the rain (IOM, 2023).

One of the major events that forced many Haitians to leave their homes was the devastating 2010 earthquake, which registered a magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter scale. The earthquake claimed the lives of 220,000 people, making it one of the deadliest in history, including 102 United Nations staff members who were on a mission in Haiti at the time. Over 1.5 million people were left homeless. The long-term effects of the earthquake are still visible today, as it severely damaged Haiti's infrastructure, including bridges, transportation networks, airports, and ports, particularly in Port-au-Prince.

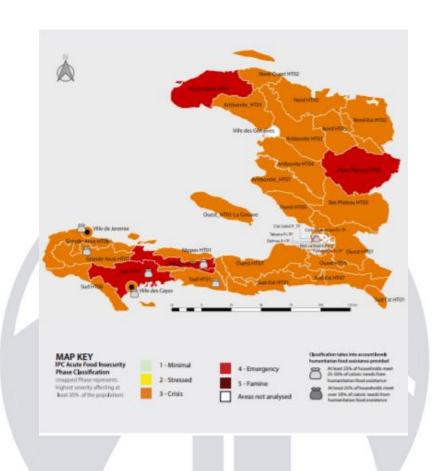
Haiti also faced a lack of fuel since 2018, this started when Venezuela ceased to export oil to Haiti in March of that year, this happened because of the struggle of the



Venezuelan president to manage the low petroleum production. The fuel shortage caused the Haitian government to suspend fuel subsidies, leading to a price increase of 50%; ; the lack of fuel also harmed the prices of the food, according to The One World Program an average working person spends 35% of their wage in one meal. This resulted in violent and deadly protests until the COVID-19 lockdown started, one example of these protests or movements was Peyi Lòk, it consisted of protestants that blocked most of the streets, the first one of these lockdowns lasted for 7 days.

**Graph 6. Food insecurity on Haiti** 





(IPC, 2021)

In addition to these challenges, the 2021 assassination of Haiti's president has led to the postponement of new elections, largely due to disorganization and ongoing violence. However, there is a promise of elections taking place in 2025. The violence has had far-reaching consequences, including a tripling of acute food insecurity as ports have been disrupted and traders are often forced to pay bribes to enter towns. This has

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indirectly contributed to rising prices. Additionally, the violence has led to numerous civilian casualties.

Recently, violent gangs attacked two prisons, resulting in the release of 4,000 prisoners and the deaths of 12 people. In response, the Haitian government imposed a curfew from 8 p.m. (23:00 GMT) to 5 a.m. (10:00 GMT) to address the prison break. Another critical development occurred in 2023 when the last remaining government officials stepped down, leaving Haiti without a functioning government, which further escalated the violence. According to the UN, this new wave of violence led to 2,500 kidnappings and over 4,700 homicides. Additionally, cases of rape rose by 49% compared to 2022, and 80% of women and girls reported experiencing one or more forms of gender-based violence.

In 2023, more than 31,000 people were internally displaced. That same year, a global cholera epidemic struck, with 72,000 reported cases in Haiti, triggering a major health crisis. The situation worsened when 40 doctors were kidnapped, leading many healthcare professionals to flee the country or stop working. As a result, the remaining medical services became overwhelmed, leaving many without proper care. Additionally, 48% of the hospitals in Port-au-Prince are located in areas controlled by armed groups and gangs, further restricting access to essential health services.



And finally, in 2024 the health insecurity kept rising, with the number of 4.7 million Haitians in need of health assistance, and 60% of the people don't have access to basic healthcare services. A recent wave of violence in 2024 caused the shutdown of the main international airport, causing the impossibility for humanitarian supplies to enter the country, making the crisis worse.

As a consequence of migration and internal displacement in Haiti, the return of migrants without documents, the countries that principally Dominican Republic and the U.S., where xenophobia is one reason why deportations keep happening, causing migrants difficulty in adapting and reintegrating into the country; people who are internally displaced are socially isolated because of the insecurity in the localities, and some of these people have left their improvised home to go to improvised refuges, building homes without any guidance or instructions and often in inadequate places.

At an international level there's also great influence and impacts, the United States for example, has a long history with Haiti, first not recognizing its independence until 1862, then in 1915 the marine corps remained in there for 20 years to maintain peace when there was no political power, having a vital role to rebuild Haiti and to create its national army, it also set economic ties which are still heavy for Haiti, and until today the United States plays an essential role on Haiti's economy.



In second place, France has a complicated relationship with Haiti too, since it imposed the debt of independence on Haiti, which details were previously mentioned, and now the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent is looking for a repayment from France, referred to as a ransom, France supports the swift deployment of the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti, which is supposed to help to restore peace and promote democratic and fair elections

It is essential to say that the Dominican Republic and Haiti share the same island; however, the border between them is heavily guarded, due to the huge inequality between both countries, the Haitians who try to cross for commerce purposes frequently suffer from racism and discrimination from the border guard. Nevertheless, the Dominican Republic helped Haiti after the earthquake.

#### **International Actions**

International organizations, both governmental and intergovernmental, are trying to help by making donations, food or medicine banks, helping Haitian migrants just as Caritas Internationalis did. This organization set up nine medicine banks, emergency medical supplies, five school cafeterias, and five care centers with all this it was able to



serve a population of 5,000 schoolchildren, 1,000 pregnant women, 3,000 infants, and 200 AIDS patients.

In the first place, Canada has been a country that has helped Haiti for a long time. In the 2010 earthquake, Canada helped by sending 7 million dollars in total. After this, more than 100,000 Haitian people migrated to Canada. Considering that security in Haiti at the moment is very bad, to help, Canada sent a military plan with armored vehicles to Prince Port to defend itself against criminals.

Since 2022, Canada has invested more than \$400 million in international assistance for Haiti intending to strengthen and restore state law in Haiti. To be better armed, Canada also gave 100 million dollars to support the Haitian national police. It also created the International Security Assistance Coordination Group for Haiti, a platform that is meant to help Haiti fight against violence, also helping by training specialized units in the HNP to counter gang violence in Haiti. Turning Canada into one of the countries that has helped Haiti the most.

Mexico's and Haiti's relations began with the devastating earthquake of 2010 after Mexico sent volunteers to help the people there. Mexico and Haiti had many difficulties in achieving their goals since the amount of economic resources was big, and



it was complicated. Some of the resources that Mexico gave to Haiti during the earthquake were: Medicines, medical supplies, drinking water, cans of tuna, beans, sardines, fruits in syrup, powdered milk, bottled water, and antibacterial gel. All this weighed 19 tons. This alliance continues for the moment, making more collaborations and international missions.

Similarly, after the earthquake of 2010 in Haiti, the United States donated 100 million dollars for a multinational force and another 33 million in humanitarian aid, the USA in July 2024 also provided \$60 million in humanitarian aid through the USAID, and in total, throughout the whole year of 2024, USA has provided more than \$165 million, in order to solve the insecurity, water, food and shelter problems, all this is achieved by using the UN or other NGOs as mediators to provide the aid and deliver the resources to Haiti.

An example of an NGO active in Haiti is the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The IRC provides comprehensive support, including psychological assistance, care for gender-based violence, and other critical services. They offer free and safe medical care, cholera prevention and treatment, and sexual and reproductive health services, addressing the needs of women and girls. In addition to immediate relief efforts,



the IRC is engaged in long-term initiatives such as rebuilding infrastructure, supporting education, and implementing economic programs to benefit the Haitian population.

The organization of American States has also been present in Haiti since 1956, during this time it has helped to strengthen peace and security, and to promote economic growth through cooperation programs, founded by member States and other partners. It is also on a mission called "Special Mission for Strengthening Democracy in Haiti" which consists of a resolution that should allow all democratic forces to express themselves and participate in the political process, in the time it has been active it has achieved to organize elections, nevertheless it has faced some trouble on tackling the violence and political instability in Haiti.

Additionally, The EU has donated more than 20 million in humanitarian emergencies, created a new humanitarian air bridge to provide supplies, transported 24 tons of medicine, sanitation, and water through Panama and has provided aid to the main victims of the crises in Haiti such as violence, earthquakes, COVID-19 and malnutrition, the EU has also provided humanitarian aid with issues such as the effects of the 2021 earthquake, the ongoing violence, food shortages and the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **UN Actions**



The UN has helped Haiti multiple times by carrying out missions such as the UNSMIH that was put into action in the years of 1996 to 1997 to combat gangs and to establish a secure environment in order to help a democratic government in Haiti. The UN has also given usable water, something very necessary to avoid contracting diseases, humanitarian assistance and support for the Haitian police, as well as it has helped with the famine. Furthermore, UNHCR has been addressing migrants needs, providing shelter, security, access to basic needs, facilitating reintegration to the communities, advocating rights for the displaced people, coordinating with other organizations to achieve this and providing humanitarian aid and assistance to the internally displaced people.

The UN World Food Program has also provided assistance, giving food to over 500,000 people, being in Port-au-Prince one of the localities where most of the food was provided, also 290,000 children received hot meals in their school. In the 2010 earthquake, it provided effective support to the government in emergency and recovery phases, it used the global supply chain to supply 80 tons of medical products and services costing 1.2 million dollars, and also provided psychological support. The IOM has provided emergency assistance too, such as psychological support, medical aid and helping families to reunify, this aid has been guaranteed to Haitians in extremely vulnerable situations, IOM has also helped to coordinate the displacement, providing



water, shelter, and health services to internally displaced people, also assisting with the reintegration to society and providing food and guaranteeing IDPs with security.

Lastly, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is actively involved in Haiti by providing training to 230 individuals, including 130 women, who have received care from mobile clinics. The UNFPA supports sexual and reproductive health services by distributing kits to manage abortion complications and address sexual violence. They also provide essential medical supplies for maternal health and hygiene items, such as sanitary pads. Additionally, UNFPA offers psychological support to women and girls.



#### **Points to Discuss**

#### 1. Context

- a. Guaranteeing displaced people's security
  - i. Providing people who receive displaced people resources
    - 1. Shelter
    - 2. Food
    - 3. Health Services
- b. Addressing the causes of racism and social isolation of displaced people
- c. Addressing unequal opportunities for Haitians in comparison to The Dominican Republic
- d. Addressing the effects of the Independence debt nowadays
- e. Ensuring the presence of a political authority
- f. Guaranteeing security
  - i. Addressing the prisoners who are free under illegal conditions
  - ii. Ensuring the power of authorities over gangs
  - iii. Ensuring the already existing security authorities
    - 1. Army
    - 2. Police



g. Addressing the repayment of the debt from France

#### 2. Development

- a. Addressing the causes for displacement
  - i. Food insecurity
    - 1. Ensuring fair and accessible prices for the population
  - ii. Economic crisis
    - 1. Ensuring equal commerce opportunities
  - iii. Health crisis
    - 1. Ensuring access to health services
    - 2. Addressing causes of vulnerability to diseases
      - a. Famine
      - b. Difficult access to clean water
  - Reaffirming the correct democratic processes
  - v. Addressing and facing causes for racism to
    - 1. Prevent the returning of refugees
    - 2. Prevent the improvised shelter
    - 3. Ensuring equal opportunities



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Vía Atlixcáyotl 5718 Col. Reserva Territorial Atlixcáyot 72453 Puebla, Pue, México linfo@muntcp.org.mx | www.muntcp.org.mx | +52 (222) 4248204



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