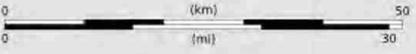


Haiti

RAIO Research Unit
July 2021

- Frontière internationale
 - Limite de département
 - Agglomérations
 - ★ Capitale nationale
 - ✦ Chef-lieu de département
 - Autres villes
- Projection UTM - WGS84 Datum



19°N



REPUBLIQUE DOMINICAINE

Population

- ▶ Population of approximately 11.2 million in a country the size of Maryland (pop. 6 million)
- ▶ 57% in cities
- ▶ About 2/3 of population do not hold formal jobs

Poverty

- ▶ “For decades, Haitians have experienced a seemingly intractable state of poverty, accompanied by malnutrition and high rates of acute and chronic illness. More than 50% of Haitians live on less than a dollar a day, and more than 60% of its young children have nutritional anemia.”
 - National Center for Disaster Preparedness, Columbia University
- ▶ “Haiti has one of the highest levels of food insecurity in the world. [...] Many people don’t have easy access to electricity, water, sanitation or healthcare. Two children out of ten do not attend primary school, and the literacy level of the population over 10 years of age is 61 percent.”
 - UN World Food Program

Natural Disasters

- ▶ 2010 Earthquake
 - ▶ 7.0 magnitude
 - ▶ Caused massive damage to Port-au-Prince
 - ▶ Approximately 300,000 deaths
 - ▶ Extensive damage to infrastructure
- ▶ 2016 Hurricane Matthew
 - ▶ Category 4
 - ▶ Affected over 2 million people or 20% of population, primarily in the poorest regions of the country
 - ▶ 35,000 left homeless
 - ▶ Flooding, landslides, and extensive destruction of infrastructure

Political History

- ▶ 46 leaders since the country achieved independence from France in 1804
 - ▶ 23 were overthrown
 - ▶ 3 were assassinated
 - ▶ 1 committed suicide
 - ▶ 1 was executed
 - ▶ 7 died in office
 - ▶ 11 completed a full term in office, whether as an interim leader or elected president
- ▶ Ranks 170 out of 180 on Transparency International Corruption Index

Political History

Francois Duvalier: Papa Doc

- Dictator, “president for life”
- Formed paramilitary group known as the Tontons Macoutes or Tontons to violently repress opposition
- Renamed in 1971 as the Milice de Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale [MVSN] [Volunteers for National Security]

1957-1971

Jean-Claude Duvalier: Baby Doc

- Took power as “president for life” at the age of 19 when his father died
- Ruled until he was overthrown in 1986
- Returned to Haiti in 2011 after a 25-year exile in France (1986-2011)
- Allegations of corruption, had accounts worth hundreds of millions of dollars

1971-1986

Jean-Bertrand Aristide

- Lavalas Party
- Former Catholic priest, left priesthood while in office at urging of Vatican
- Elected, overthrown, reinstated, overthrown again, exiled
- Returned to Haiti in 2011

1991, 1994-1996, 2001-2004

René Préval

- Followed Aristide twice
- Elected, completed both terms
- Handed off presidency to a constitutionally elected successor both times

1996-2001, 2006-2011

- ▶ “Haiti’s elections are regularly subject to delays, fraud, and violence, and the political system as a whole is undermined by corruption.”
-Freedom House, 2019
- ▶ “As a result of political instability, street protests, and rampant gang violence, the Haitian government struggles to meet the most basic needs of its citizens. The criminal justice system lacks the resources, independence, and integrity to uphold due process and ensure physical security for the population. Antigovernment protests often result in excessive use of force by police.”
-Freedom House, 2021

Political System

Political System (cont.)

- ▶ **Assemblée Nationale [National Assembly]: Bicameral parliament**
 - ▶ **Sénat: upper house**
 - ▶ 30 members: 3 senators for each of the 10 departments
 - ▶ elected for terms of 6 years in staggered elections; 1/3 of seats are contested every 2 years
 - ▶ **Chambre des députés: lower house**
 - ▶ 119 members
 - ▶ elected for four-year terms

Political System (cont.)

- ▶ Multiparty political system
- ▶ President is elected and chooses a prime minister of the party that holds the majority in the National Assembly
- ▶ Prime minister is the head of government
- ▶ The most recent national legislative elections were held in 2016; international observers considered the elections free and fair
- ▶ Legislative elections postponed since October 2019

Election Cycle

- ▶ “Elections are never easy in Haiti. If presidents in Haiti are not trying to delay the vote, they are being accused of trying to stack the deck in their favor, while opposition parties also seek their own advantage by boycotting talks and refusing to register with the Provisional Electoral Council. Meanwhile, the holding of legislative elections has often been the death-knell of elected presidents following accusations of electoral fraud.” -Jaqueline Charles, Reporter for the Miami Herald
- ▶ Conseil électoral provisoire (CEP) [Provisional electoral council]
 - ▶ Haiti's electoral management body
 - ▶ President Jovenel Moïse appointed 9-member council by presidential decree in September 2020
 - ▶ Expected to handle municipal, legislative, and presidential elections + constitutional referendum

Jovenel Moïse and Tet Kale (PHTK)

- ▶ Jovenel Moïse: assassinated July 7, handpicked successor of previous president Michel Martelly
 - ▶ Won the 2015 presidential election, but results were nullified due to fraud
 - ▶ Won 2016 repeat election with 55.6 percent of the vote
 - ▶ Inaugurated in early 2017 after an electoral tribunal verified the election result, citing irregularities but no evidence of widespread fraud
 - ▶ Civil society groups claimed fraud in the vote tally, inconsistent voter registration lists, voter disenfranchisement
 - ▶ Low voter turnout: 21%
- ▶ Moïse had ruled by presidential decree since January 2020
- ▶ Frequent changes in prime minister

Why Were the 2019 Parliamentary Elections Postponed?

- ▶ “Haiti’s 1987 constitution is seen by many observers as excessively dividing power between the executive and legislature in a way that fuels the country’s political instability and frequent deadlock. ... [T]he country was unable to hold parliamentary elections because the parliament did not approve the budget necessary to hold the vote.”-AP
- ▶ President Moïse wanted a new constitution and did not want to hold elections until the new constitution was written
- ▶ Will there be elections in the near future?

2021 Protests

- ▶ Calls for Moïse to step down in February 2021 based on 5-year term running from 2016
- ▶ Moïse did not take office until 2017 and planned to stay in office until February 2022, a position supported by the Organization of American States
- ▶ Opposition protests began in the days leading up to February 7
 - ▶ Arrests of 23 people Moïse accused of plotting to assassinate him
 - ▶ Forced retirement of Supreme Court judges
 - ▶ Agreed that they wanted Moïse to leave but no agreement on how to move forward

Moïse's Assassination

- ▶ 26 Colombians and several Haitian-Americans accused of involvement
 - ▶ Some may have believed they were there only to arrest Moïse, different instructions may have been given to a small group
- ▶ Head of palace security arrested on July 15
- ▶ One arrest made in Florida
- ▶ Security for Moïse did not appear to have taken steps to prevent entry of attackers
- ▶ Ongoing investigation; many details unknown

Fallout from the Assassination

- ▶ Multiple people vying for control of the country
 - ▶ Former prime minister
 - ▶ His recently named replacement
 - ▶ Head of the Senate
- ▶ Don't know when new elections will be
- ▶ Gang activity continues
- ▶ Gas Shortages

Political System: Parties

- ▶ Political parties were banned during Duvalier era. When the dictatorship collapsed, parties proliferated and were frequently associated with a single candidate
- ▶ Party system in Haiti is dynamic and parties generally represent the interests of individual politicians
- ▶ 24 parties in the Chamber of Deputies after the last election
 - ▶ CEP received applications from 188 political parties or organizations for registration in the 2015 elections
 - ▶ 128 political parties had candidates registered to run in the 2015 legislative elections

Parties that won seats in the 2015-2016 legislative elections

- ▶ Haitian Party Tèt Kale (Parti haïtien Tèt Kale, PHTK),
 - ▶ Leaders: Jovenel Moïse (Haitian president) and Ann Valérie Timothée Milfort (Party President)
 - ▶ Won 6 seats in the Senate and 31 in the Chamber (37 total)
- ▶ Organization of the Struggling People (Organisation du peuple en lutte, OPL)
 - ▶ Won 3 Senate seats and 17 Chamber seats; (20 total)
- ▶ Convention for Democratic Unity (Konvansyon Inite Demokratik, KID)
 - ▶ Won 3 Senate seats and 8 in the Chamber (11 total)
- ▶ The Lavalas Family (La Fanmi Lavalas, FL)
 - ▶ Leaders: Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Luis Gérard-Gilles, Maryse Narcisse, and Joel Vorbe
 - ▶ Won 1 Senate seat and 8 in the Chamber (9 total)

Parties that won seats in the 2015-2016 legislative elections (cont.)

- ▶ Haiti in Action (Ayiti an Aksyon, AAA)
 - ▶ Won 1 Senate and 6 Chamber seats (7 total)
- ▶ Unity (Inite)
 - ▶ Won 1 Senate seat and 4 Chamber seats (5 total)
- ▶ Haitian Social-Democratic Fusion Party (Parti fusion des sociaux-démocrates haïtiens, PFSDH or Fusion)
 - ▶ Won 4 seats in the Chamber
- ▶ Alternative League for Haitian Progress and Empowerment (Ligue alternative pour le progrès et l'émancipation haïtienne, LAPEH)
 - ▶ Won 3 seats in the Chamber

Where can I find a list of political parties in Haiti?

- ▶ CIA World Factbook/Government/Political Parties and Leaders Section (lists many but is not comprehensive)
 - ▶ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>
- ▶ CIA World Leaders page lists cabinet level positions by country
 - ▶ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/world-leaders-1/HA.html>
- ▶ Query Response from Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
 - ▶ <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/country-information/rir/Pages/index.aspx?doc=458131&pls=1>
- ▶ Keep in mind that political parties change with great frequency in Haiti
- ▶ Nearly 200 applied for registration with the CEP in the last election

Neighborhood Committees/Gwoupman Katyè

- ▶ Neighborhood committees manage community governance to varying degrees
- ▶ Handle variety of tasks based on need
 - ▶ May fill the gaps in police presence
 - ▶ Engagement with aid groups
 - ▶ Sanitation: location of latrines, trash receptacles, and community water taps
 - ▶ Fill in potholes
 - ▶ Kotizasyon: fees collected by committee for use of shared resources
 - ▶ Ti sourit: block parties organized by committee that may be used to share information/generate discussion
- ▶ Konbit: traditional concept of communal labor to complete community projects
- ▶ Numbers and variety of committees increased with the fall of the Duvaliers in the mid-1980s to fill gaps in government services and because social organization had been prohibited
- ▶ Committee leaders may be recognizable

- ▶ Haiti has a history of political violence
 - ▶ Tonton Macoutes (Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale)
 - ▶ Leopard Corps: 700 members, 1970s, based in Petionville, counterinsurgency force
 - ▶ Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH)
- ▶ 2019 Protests: Extrajudicial killings by the Haitian National Police reported from September to November 2019. Some allegations resulted in administrative discipline, but there were no reports of criminal proceedings against police
- ▶ From July 2018 to December 2019, 187 protesters and 44 police died

Politically-Motivated Violence

Petro Caribe Protests

- ▶ PetroChallengers, Nou Pap Domí
 - ▶ Social media
 - ▶ #PetroCaribeChallenge/#KotKòbPetwoKaribea
 - ▶ Where is the Petrocaribe money?
 - ▶ Organized protests on October 17, 2018 and November 18, 2018
 - ▶ Protesting corruption and impunity

Protests Continued through 2021

- ▶ Why did they happen?
 - ▶ Corruption and economic situation
 - ▶ Petrocaribe program: Discount oil program funded by Venezuela. Savings on oil was supposed to be spent on improvements after earthquake
 - ▶ 10 years later: there is no evidence that the savings were spent on improving conditions, \$2 billion USD in loans from Venezuela was misused
 - ▶ Not enough fuel supply to meet demand; prices are high, blackouts common, gas station fuel supplies run out frequently
 - ▶ Widespread food insecurity

Security Forces

- ▶ Haitian National Police (PNH)
 - ▶ 15,000 members, 17 specialized units
 - ▶ Low pay, uneven distribution of equipment, lack ammunition and armored vehicles
 - ▶ Some ex-soldiers were integrated into national police
- ▶ Armed Forces:
 - ▶ Disbanded in 1995, reinstated in 2017
 - ▶ “After Haiti’s independence, the military mounted dozens of coups and its forces were accused of rampant human rights abuses.” -Reuters
 - ▶ Michel Martelly initiated reinstatement when he became president in 2011, recruitment began in 2017
 - ▶ Jovenel Moïse appointed people to leadership positions who had been accused of human rights abuses as part of the previous military
- ▶ In Feb. 2020, police protested low pay and had a violent confrontation with the military in Port-au-Prince
- ▶ Those who can afford it use private security

Lynching

- ▶ Lynchings account for about 1 in 10 homicides
- ▶ Police report the primary reasons for lynching as theft, homicide and witchcraft
- ▶ Occur as the result of lack of rule of law; ineffective judicial system
- ▶ “The State’s inaction, as it relates to lynching, suggests that it is reluctant, at best, to intervene in such cases or, at worst, tolerant of such practices.”

-Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development

Gangs

- ▶ Activity has increased significantly since late June 2021
- ▶ “Across the country, there are 177 territorial gangs, 95 of which are in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, according to confidential reports obtained from United Nations staff in the capital. These gangs, which are better equipped than the national police, maintain patronage relationships with organized crime and with political and economic sectors. As a result, collusion is emerging around common political, economic, and criminal interests. To gain or retain power, political actors rely heavily on armed gangs, while economic elites employ gang leaders to protect their businesses or establish monopolies.”-NACLA, March 2021

Gangs

- ▶ “Politicians and some in the private sector rely heavily on the gangs to control territory and protect their businesses and interests.”-InSight Crime
- ▶ “[G]angs play a role in providing services traditionally offered by the state, which generates additional revenues for them, while expanding their sphere of influence in the neighbourhood.”-IRBC
- ▶ Have reportedly obtained ammunition and weapons through corrupt police officers and politicians
- ▶ Gangs “bolster the political interests of their protectors by attacking the population, especially in neighborhoods known as strongholds of political opposition that support anti-government demonstrations”- Haitian National Human Rights Defense Network testimony before Congress

Gangs

- ▶ Arnel/AnelJoseph, leader of the Village de Dieu gang [Bicentenaire zone]
 - ▶ Marchand Dessalines or Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite
- ▶ Serge Alectis, aka Ti Junior
 - ▶ leader of the Base Nan Chabon
 - ▶ Some reports indicate this is a paramilitary force with links to PHTK
- ▶ Jimmy Cherizier/Cherisier, aka Barbecue
 - ▶ a former police officer in the Delmas 4 or Delmas 6 neighborhood
- ▶ Black Satan and Valès
 - ▶ Canaan 50, Corail Cesselesse
- ▶ Iscar Andris, aka Isca
 - ▶ leader in the Belekou neighborhood in Cité Soleil
- ▶ Ti Ougan
 - ▶ Boston neighbourhood in Cité Soleil
- ▶ Gabriel
 - ▶ lower city Cité Soleil

Gangs

- ▶ Jimmy Cherizier, aka “Barbecue”
 - ▶ Former police officer who allegedly orchestrated G9 alliance; reportedly amassed significant power through territorial control, government support, supply of money and weapons.
 - ▶ “This is an armed revolution. [...] We will put guns in the hands of every child if we have to.”
 - ▶ Called for revolution again in June 2021 amid increasing violence
- ▶ Former Minister of Justice and Public Security fired by Moïse in July 2020 hours after saying police would go after gangs

Gangs

- ▶ Cherizier implicated in massacres at Grand Ravine, La Saline, and Bel Air
 - ▶ Grand Ravine: November 2017, police attacked community members inside a school, killing 9 people. Some were executed, several appeared to have been shot in their homes nearby and then dragged to the school. The operation was supposedly launched by police in response to gang activity
 - ▶ La Saline: November 2018, “over a four-day period, armed gangs killed at least 71 Haitians in the La Saline Massacre. The gangs also brutalized women and children, and destroyed over 400 homes, leaving many displaced and in precarious living conditions. Yet, despite credible reporting from Haitian human rights groups, the United Nations, and the country’s judicial police, those implicated have not faced charges for these gruesome attacks”
 - ▶ La Saline is reportedly a predominately Lavalas neighborhood. The implication is that the government is not prosecuting these crimes because they were committed against the opposition
 - ▶ Bel Air: 3 attacks since 2019; homes burned, 20+ killed.

Gangs

- ▶ G9 Alliance: 9 major gangs entered into an alliance in June 2020
 - ▶ Reportedly brokered by a corrupt former police officer with a history of committing human rights violations
 - ▶ InSight Crime: “The G9 alliance has reportedly benefited from strong ties to the government of President Jovenel Moïse. The gang leaders are seemingly free from persecution so long as they help keep the peace in the neighborhoods they control. In exchange, Moïse’s government has found in them loyal foot soldiers quelling insecurity, stamping out opposition voices and shoring up political support across the capital.”

Penal Code Reform

- ▶ Haiti's penal code is 185 years old (est. 1835)
- ▶ Moïse issued a reform in late June 2020 by executive order which would go into effect in 2022. Legislators worked on a new penal code prior to the expiration of their terms, but the presidential decree voids their effort
- ▶ Reform had international support but was met with disapproval by some of the population as well as the Catholic and Evangelical churches due to changes on abortion and LGBTQ issues
- ▶ A Change.org petition demanding that the reform be discarded describes it as “attacks by the government on the morality of Haitian society, on its customs and culture, while ignoring the real needs of the population”

Land Rights

- ▶ Land disputes are a long-standing problem but have been a low priority for the government
- ▶ France has helped to fund Haiti's land-management office; the Haitian government has not allocated sufficient resources to survey the country's land
- ▶ Land records are not computerized; fraudulent claims and scams occur frequently
- ▶ Land has reportedly been seized by mayors, senators, private individuals, and even the current president, who seized a large estate to build a school without compensating the owners
- ▶ Some reports indicate that people are violently attacked in attempts to confiscate land

Land Rights & the 2010 Earthquake

- ▶ Earthquake displaced about 1.5 million people from cities in the south including Jacmel, Léogâne, and Port-au-Prince
- ▶ René Prével declared 3 square miles of land outside of Port-au-Prince public domain so that shelters could be built to receive the displaced; never properly compensated the original owner
- ▶ People thought they could claim the land and start farming; many came to be first-time “homeowners” but had no title to the land
- ▶ Now known as Canaan and maintained by the 200,000+ people who live there and have established some basic services like electricity; hundreds of neighborhood committees have been formed to undertake urban planning and settle disputes
- ▶ Neighboring municipalities want to control the area, have tried to charge taxes, their police reportedly have entered Canaan to make arrests

Factors Affecting Ability to Relocate

- ▶ Small land mass, the size of Maryland, with almost 2x the population
- ▶ The country has suffered 2 major natural disasters over the past 10 years with limited reconstruction
- ▶ Extreme poverty
- ▶ Ineffective government
- ▶ Women may have a particularly difficult time establishing themselves in a new place on their own due to machista attitudes

Internal Displacement

- ▶ “Haiti’s social, economic and political crisis deteriorated in the first half of 2020. Discontent with the government over falling living standards and price increases caused by the devaluation of the currency have fuelled nationwide protests and civil unrest since January 2019.”
- ▶ “Last year, and for the first time, about 2,100 new displacements associated with criminal violence were reported in the country. Security conditions have worsened and gang violence has flourished. [...] Violence also spread further across the country from the metropolitan area of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and Artibonite department.”
- ▶ “Local media reported on clashes among armed groups, as well as between them and security forces, triggering displacement including in Port-au-Prince and the departments of Nord and Ouest. However, the lack of systematic monitoring of displacement hampers a comprehensive assessment of the situation.”

-Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

Migration: Relationship with the Dominican Republic

- ▶ Dominican Republic won independence from Haiti in 1844
 - ▶ Haiti occupied the Dominican Republic for 22 years in the 1800s
 - ▶ Rafael Trujillo, (Dominican dictator from 1930-1961) promoted anti-Haitianism, the idea that Haitians were the eternal enemy of the Dominican Republic
 - ▶ Trujillo ordered the Parsley Massacre (El Corte, El Desalojo) in 1937
 - ▶ "The massacre cemented Haitians into a long-term subversive outsider incompatible with what it means to be Dominicans." -Border of Lights
- ▶ Documentation Issues
 - ▶ 2013 ruling stripping people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic of citizenship because their parents had come without documentation, subsequent deportations
 - ▶ Rounded up and removed 70,000-80,000 people over a period of 3 years
 - ▶ In Sept. 2020, a decree was issued to allow approx. 750 children born in the Dominican Republic to Haitian parents to naturalize

Migration: Haitians in Chile

- ▶ Nearly 1% of Haiti's population has migrated to Chile
- ▶ Why Chile?
 - ▶ Jobs pay better than in Haiti, security, free education, and the migratory system used to be one of the most permissive in the region
- ▶ Subject to racism. Immigration of Afro-Colombians and Haitians began only in the past 10 years
- ▶ Degrees are not recognized; difficult for Haitians to obtain professional employment despite qualifications
- ▶ Immigration system was reformed in 2018: includes special rules for Haitians
 - ▶ As of 2018, Haitians are required to obtain a tourist visa before traveling to Chile
 - ▶ Must present criminal record in order to obtain a tourist visa
 - ▶ Difficult to obtain permanent residency after entry on tourist visa

Migration: Smuggling through South America

- ▶ Arrests of Haitian migrants in Bolivia and Chile
- ▶ Investigations initiated against smugglers: 3 Haitian nationals with legal residency in Bolivia were of partially organizing the scheme; Bolivian drivers transported the migrants
- ▶ Route: Cross to the Dominican Republic, then fly to Guyana, then through Brazil and Bolivia into Chile
- ▶ Migrants reportedly pay \$3,000 each to leave Haiti plus additional costs as they move through different countries
- ▶ Selling everything in Haiti to start over in Chile

Women: Poto
Mitan

“Backbone of
society” concept

vs.

the actual
treatment of women

Gender-Based Violence

- ▶ Evelyne Sincère: High-school student who was kidnapped, tortured, murdered and left at a trash dump on November 1, 2020
- ▶ Anise Boisrond found decapitated and dismembered on November 10, 2020
- ▶ Student protests erupted after Evelyne's body was found
- ▶ 62 kidnappings in 2020 as of Nov. 9
 - ▶ 55 women
 - ▶ 12 girls under 18

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-Based Violence

- ▶ Legislation/Effectiveness of State actors:
 - ▶ “Gender-based violence is a widespread problem. Haiti does not have specific legislation against domestic violence, sexual harassment, or other forms of violence targeted at women and girls. Rape was only explicitly criminalized in 2005, by ministerial decree.” –Human Rights Watch
- ▶ Women and girls who were gang-raped in the November 2018 La Saline massacre received no medical support or counseling
- ▶ Abortion prohibited in all circumstances, including cases of sexual violence
- ▶ Moise’s penal code reform lowers the age of consent from 18 to 15

Gender Violence

- ▶ Referring cases to the police and justice services is difficult
 - ▶ Police lack training to handle cases
- ▶ “Victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence faced major obstacles in seeking legal justice, as well as in accessing protective services such as women’s shelters. While women were more likely to report cases of sexual and domestic violence than in the past, [...] many victims failed to report such cases due to a lack of financial resources. Due to familial responsibilities, victims were usually unable to dedicate the time necessary to follow through with legal proceedings”
- ▶ [M]any local nonprofit organizations that provided shelter, medical and psychological services, and legal assistance to victims had to reduce services due to a lack of funding. There were reports that in rural areas, criminal cases, including cases of sexual violence, were settled outside of the justice system.”

-Dept. of State

Women

- ▶ Women do not have the same social and economic status as men (wage gap)
- ▶ Ministry for the Status of Women and Women's Rights has limited budget and is ineffective
- ▶ Bias in employment; lack access to financial services to start their own businesses

Sexual Minorities

- ▶ LGBTQ individuals are targets of harassment and physical attacks
- ▶ Head of organization KOURAJ was murdered in 2019
- ▶ HNP Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) unit understaffed in all 10 departments
- ▶ “Some politicians, societal leaders, and organizations actively opposed the social integration of LGBTQ persons and discussion of their rights.”-State
- ▶ LGBTQ groups have reported that police and judicial authorities “were inconsistent in their willingness to document or investigate complaints LGBTQ persons’ claims of abuse” -IRBC

Children's Issues

- ▶ Restavek (“reste avec” or “stay with”): form of modern slavery
 - ▶ Children sent by their parents to live with and work for other families. Parents may believe that their child will be educated
 - ▶ Responsible for all domestic tasks
 - ▶ Reports of little or no pay, bad living conditions
 - ▶ Sending families tend to be poor families in rural areas
 - ▶ Occurs throughout the country
 - ▶ Reported victimization by president of Haiti's soccer association

Children's Issues (cont.)

- ▶ Children are subject to violence both in the home and by authority figures such as teachers and police
- ▶ Orphanages
 - ▶ Children in orphanages may not really be orphans: sometimes their parents cannot afford to care for them
 - ▶ Often operate out of houses
 - ▶ May not be able to adequately provide food for children living there

Nationality & Documentation

- ▶ Haiti allows dual nationality as of June 2012 through an amendment to the 1987 constitution
 - ▶ Cannot run for president or hold offices of prime minister, police chief or Supreme Court judge
- ▶ “Bureaucratic obstacles and a lack of coordination between these agencies made obtaining official documentation complex and costly for most citizens. Due to these systemic deficiencies, many Haitians living abroad without other citizenship or permanent residency were effectively stateless or at risk of statelessness in their country of residence. The International Organization for Migration reported that 65 percent of Haitians who went through their four resource centers along the border with the Dominican Republic in 2018 had no official documentation.”-Dept. of State
 - ▶ “Persons with disabilities had difficulty obtaining a national identification card, a requirement to vote, because the National Identification Office was inaccessible to persons with disabilities.”
- ▶ [Reciprocity Table](#) for information on individual documents
- ▶ ID kiosk in airport in Port-au-Prince for those living abroad to obtain new ID upon arrival

- ▶ 2% of population report practicing Vodou but people who identify as belonging to other religions may also utilize Vodou rituals in their other religious practices
- ▶ Vodouisants believe that everything that happens is caused by the Iwa
- ▶ “Extensive knowledge of herbalism and the use of diagnostic rituals are central to healing in Vodou.”
- ▶ Practitioners may refer patients whose cases are beyond their scope of expertise to doctors who practice Western medicine

Vodou

Vodou (cont.)

- ▶ “We were taught our culture and our sensibilities, our way of seeing the world, our way of establishing community is not valid by people who were our historic oppressors. And then after a few centuries you begin to internalize that too and it becomes manifest in the rejection of oneself and one’s culture.”-Dowoti Desir, Haitian-American Vodou scholar and priestess
- ▶ Banned in 1930s and not recognized as an official religion until 2003
- ▶ 45 Vodou priests were killed after cholera outbreak following the 2010 earthquake; accused of causing it through their “spells”
- ▶ Leaders of Vodou religious community have appeared on radio and television to clarify that they did not conjure the coronavirus

Zonbi

- ▶ Belief that under some circumstances a dead person may be revived by a bòkò as a zonbi who remains under the control of the bòkò
- ▶ Death rituals in Haiti are ‘primarily directed against physical resurrection’
- ▶ Concept of “zombies” has been appropriated by Western culture and misinterpreted
- ▶ In Haiti, zonbi are meant to perform “arduous agricultural labor, harkening back to Haiti’s heritage of plantation slavery”
- ▶ A zonbi is “nothing more than a body deprived of its conscious powers of cerebration... moral judgment, deliberation and self-control”
- ▶ A 1997 study of 3 cases of purported zombification found they “involved individuals with intellectual disability or severe mental disorder who were misidentified as being a lost or deceased family member; in some cases, there were apparent personal, social or economic reasons why this misidentification took place.”

- ▶ Doktè fèy, medsen fèy (leaf doctor) or herbalists often treat illnesses such as colds, worms, diarrhea, and stomach ache
- ▶ Oungan (Vodou priest) or manbo (Vodou priestess) treat many conditions
- ▶ Doktè zo (bone setters) treat broken bones, musculoskeletal or joint discomfort
- ▶ Pikirist (injectionists) administer preparations of herbal or Western medicine
- ▶ Fanm saj (midwives) perinatal care

Traditional Healers

- ▶ Lack of reliable data on prevalence of mental health problems in Haiti
- ▶ Limited mental health resources; available mainly in Port-au-Prince
- ▶ Only 23 psychiatrists and 124 psychologists in the entire country
- ▶ Depression may be seen as a Vodou curse; rarely treated by medical professionals
- ▶ Mental health services are not well-funded by the government; government provides the majority of medical services in Haiti
 - ▶ Government investment in health resources in general dropped from 16.6% (2004) to 4.4% (2017)

Mental Health

- ▶ Slow vaccine roll out
- ▶ Cases began to spike in early June 2021
- ▶ Reports of coronavirus patients being harassed into leaving their homes by neighbors afraid of spread of virus
- ▶ One of Haiti's few well-equipped hospitals canceled plans to open a coronavirus treatment center because local residents feared it would be a contagion point

COVID-19

▶ Dept. of State Human Rights Report

- ▶ “Stigma against persons with HIV or AIDS was strong and widespread. UNAIDS reported 70 percent of persons would not use the same toilet as someone with HIV, and 67 percent would not employ or recommend for employment someone whom they know with HIV.”
- ▶ “The Demographic and Health Survey 2016-17, published in 2018, reported 57 percent of women and 52 percent of men who heard about HIV said they would deny school entrance to HIV-positive children, and 65 percent of women and 62 percent of men said they would not buy vegetables from persons with HIV.”

HIV Stigma