

Haiti

Head of state **René García Préal**
Head of government **Jean-Max Bellerive**
Death penalty **abolitionist for all crimes**
Population **10.2 million**
Life expectancy **61.7 years**
Under-5 mortality (m/f) **90/80 per 1,000**
Adult literacy **61 per cent**

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January's earthquake left nearly 2 million people homeless and triggered an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. At the end of 2010, more than a million people remained displaced in makeshift camps where violence against women and girls was increasing. The large number of unaccompanied and orphaned children provoked fears that many were being trafficked to the neighbouring Dominican Republic or other countries. The destruction and depletion of state institutions meant there was virtually no access to justice or remedy for abuses. Haitian police shot dead 12 prisoners in Les Cayes during an attempted prison breakout in January.

Background

On 12 January, an earthquake destroyed large swathes of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, as well as towns and outlying areas in the south of the country, triggering an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Government estimates put the number of dead at more than 230,000, with a further 300,000 people injured. Public institutions and offices were severely affected: 15 out of 17 ministry buildings, 1,500 schools and 50 hospitals and clinics were destroyed. UN mission headquarters were also destroyed. The international community and humanitarian agencies responded promptly with emergency humanitarian aid, but this was slow to arrive in some of the worst affected communities.

In March, more than 150 donor countries and international organizations met in New York and pledged US\$5.3 billion over 18 months to finance Haiti's post-earthquake reconstruction. However, the clearing of rubble and construction of temporary shelters for earthquake survivors progressed slowly. At the end of the year, more than a million people were still living in some 1,110 formal and informal camps, often in dire conditions. A hurricane in October caused further damage to shelters in the camps.

In September, a cholera epidemic broke out in communities along the Artibonite River and spread rapidly to other parts of the country. The UN set up an independent panel of experts to investigate the origin of the outbreak. By December, more than 100,000 cases of cholera had been reported and the death toll had exceeded 2,400.

The first round of general elections to elect Haiti's president, parliament and senate, took place on 28 November. Irregularities and alleged fraud by the Provisional Electoral Council led to demonstrations across the country. National electoral observers expressed concern at the publication of partial results disqualifying Michel Martelly from the presidential run-off scheduled for January 2011 in favour of the ruling party candidate.

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Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls was pervasive in and around formal and informal camps. Lack of security and effective protection mechanisms increased the risks of rape and other forms of sexual violence. Impunity for these crimes remained a source of concern as very few cases were investigated or prosecuted. Many rape survivors had to overcome fear, discrimination and a lack of financial resources in order to get access to medical care. The

National Association for the Protection of Haitian Women and Children, a women's rights organization working with sex workers in Port-au-Prince, reported an increase in the number of girls involved in sex work since the onset of the humanitarian crisis.

- KOFAVIV, a grassroots organization of rape survivors, documented more than 250 cases of sexual violence in 15 camps during the first five months following the earthquake. The organization also reported sexual abuse of unaccompanied girls in exchange for food or shelter in camps.

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Internally displaced people

At the end of the year, more than a million people were still living in appalling conditions in both formal and informal camps. The vast majority of displaced people did not have access to adequate shelter. Construction of transitional shelters was slow, hampered by the fact that suitable land was not made available by the authorities. There was a lack of clear information on the government's plans and policies for the relocation of displaced people into adequate longer-term housing.

Forced evictions

Displaced people occupying private land were forcibly evicted by landowners, on most occasions with the assistance of the police or armed men. In April, the government announced a six-week freeze on forced evictions of displaced people, but it lacked the capacity to enforce the measure.

- In March, nearly 10,000 displaced people were evicted from Sylvio Cator stadium by Haitian police officers. The expulsion took place without a court order and without any information or alternatives being offered to the earthquake survivors. Police officers entered the stadium at night and started pulling down shelters and forced survivors to leave the premises.

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Children's rights – trafficking in human beings

Trafficking of children remained a source of concern and efforts to prevent it were stepped up. The Minors Protection Brigade, a specialized Haitian police unit, deployed officers at crossing points with the Dominican Republic to prevent children being trafficked.

The Haitian government increased scrutiny of international adoption applications as a measure to prevent trafficking.

- In January, 33 children aged between two months and 12 years were intercepted at the border by Haitian authorities. A group of missionaries was attempting to take the children into the Dominican Republic without documentation. The missionaries were charged with "kidnapping" the children and "association to commit a crime"; the crime of trafficking is not on Haiti's statute books. The 10 missionaries were released in February and allowed to leave the country pending investigation.

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Extrajudicial execution of prisoners

- On 19 January, an uprising and breakout took place in Les Cayes prison, and Haitian National Police officers were called to assist prison guards. The operation resulted in the killing of 12 unarmed inmates; 14 others were injured. A joint Haitian-UN investigation panel into the incident was reported to have concluded that most of the dead were "summarily executed" and that police officers opened fire "deliberately and

without justification". Fourteen police officers and prison officers were detained pending investigation. At the end of the year, no further information was available on the investigation.

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