



Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress

HAITI

FACTS IMPORTANT TO DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

POVERTY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Health and well being of population:

- Population 9,035,536. Compared to the world it is 88th out of 232 countries
- Adult AIDS prevalence rate 2.2/100,000. Compared to the world it is 28th.
- Life expectancy 60.78 years. Compared to the world it is 181st
- Literacy (able to read and write at age 15 or older) 52.9%
- Drugs: significant consumers of cannabis/ trade in cocaine
- Major infectious diseases (risk high):
 - Food and water borne: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A and E, and typhoid fever
 - Vector borne diseases: dengue fever and malaria
 - Water contact disease: leptospirosis

Economic status of population

- 80% of the population live under the poverty line; 54% live in abject poverty
- Economic disparity: Household income or consumption by percentage share: Lowest 10% in income have 0.7% of the wealth./ Highest 10% in income have 47.7% of the wealth.

Transportation

- Roadways 4160 km (less than 1/3 paved). Compared to the world: 155th
- Airports 14 (4 paved). Compared to the world: 151st

Religion and Culture

- Languages: French and Creole
- Catholic 80%
- Approx 50% practice Voodoo

(CIA Factbook)

Public safety

There are no "safe" areas in Haiti. There is a persistent danger of violent crime, which can be subject to periodic surges sometimes not obviously explained by events or conditions. Haiti is among the four most important countries for drug transit to the United States. Law and order in Haiti has steadily deteriorated as a result. Kidnapping, death threats, murders, drug-related shootouts, armed robberies, home break-ins and car-jacking are common in Haiti. Generally,

these crimes are committed by Haitians against other Haitians, although several foreigners and U.S. citizens have been victimized.

The Haitian police are understaffed, poorly equipped and unable to respond to most calls for assistance. There are continued allegations of police complicity in criminal activity. The unsatisfactory response and enforcement capabilities of the Haitian national police and the weakness of the judiciary frustrate many victims of crime in Haiti. Approximately 8000 UN peacekeepers are stationed in Haiti.

Roads are generally unmarked, and detailed and accurate maps are not widely available. Lanes are not marked and signs indicating the direction of traffic flow seldom exist. This lack of organization, along with huge potholes that appear without warning, may cause drivers to execute unpredictable and dangerous maneuvers in heavy traffic. The Haitian government lacks adequate resources to assist drivers in distress or to clear the road of accidents or broken-down vehicles blocking the flow of traffic. While drinking and driving is illegal in Haiti, people frequently drive after drinking, especially at night.

Health Care

Medical facilities in Haiti are scarce and for the most part sub-standard; outside the capital standards are even lower than in Port-au-Prince. Medical care in Port-au-Prince is limited, and the level of community sanitation is extremely low. Life-threatening emergencies often require evacuation by air ambulance at the patient's expense. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services.

(State Department, 2010)

Caring for the Dead

A funeral now costs around \$540 — more than most Haitians earn in a year. Cremation is only for the wealthy. Haiti's largest public morgue, built to hold 390 cadavers, often has nearly 500, many strewn on the cement floor for lack of space. The dead include shooting victims, AIDS victims and babies who never saw their first birthday. It costs a relative \$27 just to pick up a body if it was dropped off at the morgue, and \$47 if the morgue had to collect it off the street. As a result, few bodies are ever claimed by relatives. They end up in a common grave outside the capital, along with those dumped at the Titanyen field.

(Associated Press, 2007)

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CSTS is the academic arm and a partnering Center of the Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.