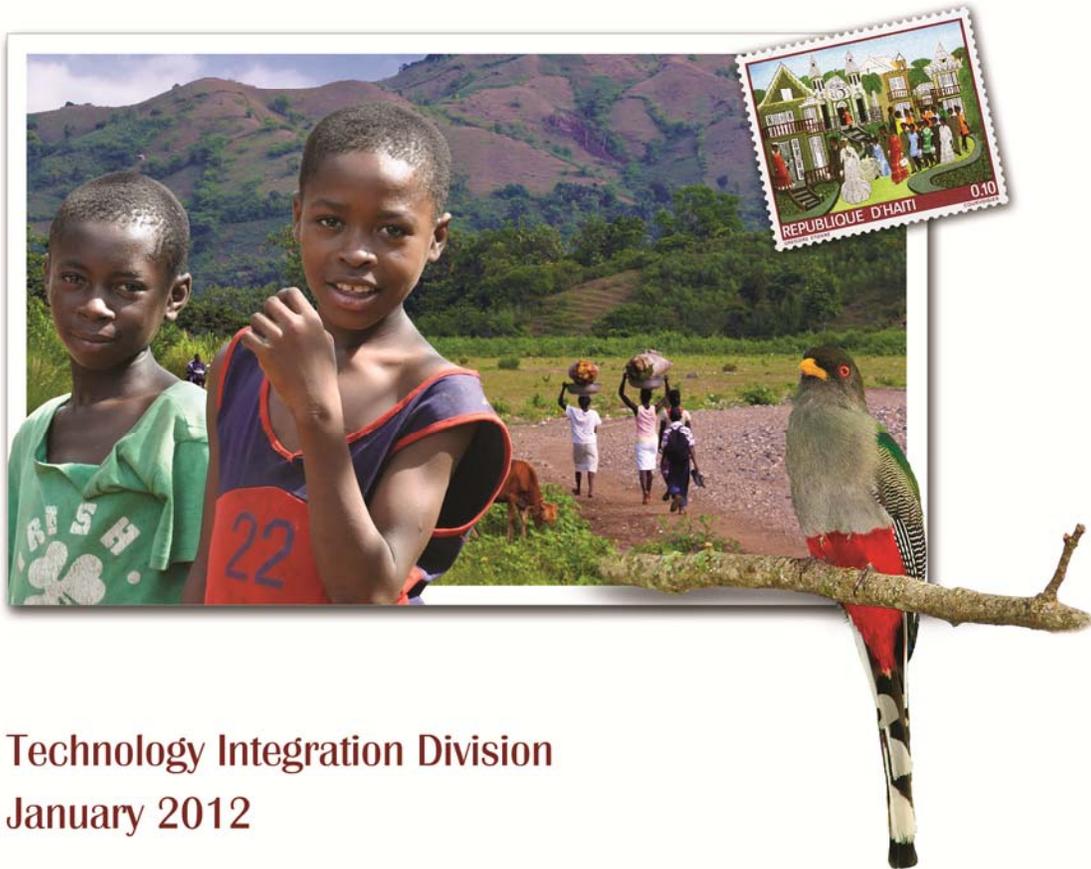


# HAITI in Perspective

## An Orientation Guide



Technology Integration Division  
January 2012



DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER

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## CHAPTER 1: GEOGRAPHY

### Introduction

Rugged cliffs, volcanic formations, limestone caves, and subterranean rivers characterize the island nation of Haiti, whose name comes from an indigenous word meaning “mountainous.”<sup>1</sup> Once a safe haven for pirates preying on international shipping, the former slave colony of Spain and France is today overrun by drug traffickers, plagued by poverty, and home to about 8,000 UN peacekeepers charged with maintaining civil order.<sup>2</sup>



© United Nations / flickr.com  
UN Peace keepers

Haiti occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola, the second-largest island in the Caribbean. It shares the island with the Dominican Republic to the east and is separated from Cuba on the west by the Windward Passage, a 90-km-wide (56-mi-wide) channel that connects the North Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea.<sup>3</sup> The channel is a major shipping lane between the east coast of the United States and the Panama Canal.<sup>4</sup> Two peninsulas extend west from the island like pincers gripping the Gulf of Gonâve. The Bahamas lies northwest of the northern peninsula; the southern peninsula points west toward Jamaica.

### Geographic Regions and Topographical Features

Roughly the size of Maryland, Haiti has four major mountain ranges that run east–west and account for most of its landmass. These are the Massif du Nord (Northern Massif Mountains), the Montagnes Noires (Black Mountains), the Chaîne des Matheux (Matheux Range) in central Haiti, and the Massif de la Selle and Massif de la Hotte in the south, both part of a mountain chain that extends from the Dominican Republic.<sup>5</sup> Most Haitians live in the valleys and plains between these ranges.



© Garrett Crawford  
Mountains of Haiti

#### *Mountains*

Running along the northern peninsula to the Dominican Republic, the Massif du Nord (Northern Massif Mountains) is part of the Cordillera Central range, which accounts for nearly a third of

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>2</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti,” in *The World Factbook*, 23 August 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>3</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 243.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Windward Passage,” 2011, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/645262/Windward-Passage](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/645262/Windward-Passage)

<sup>5</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 243–244.

Hispaniola's landmass.<sup>6</sup> Elevations in the Northern Massif Mountains on Haiti's side of the border range from 600–1,100 m (1,968–3,609 ft).<sup>7, 8</sup>

Branching south and east from the Massif du Nord is a shorter range, the Montagnes Noires (Black Mountains). Elevations in this range reach about 610 m (2,000 ft). To the south is the Chaîne des Matheux (Matheux Range), running parallel to the Black Mountains until it crosses the Dominican border to become part of the Sierra de Neiba Range.<sup>9</sup>

The Massif de la Hotte in the west and Massif de la Selle in the east, which are on Haiti's southern peninsula, are an extension of the Sierra de Baoruco mountain chain in the Dominican Republic. This range features the highest point in Haiti, Morne de la Selle, which soars to 2,715 m (8,900 ft). Elevations in the Massif de la Hotte vary from 1,270–2,255 m (4,167–7,398 ft).<sup>10, 11</sup>

Widespread timber-harvesting and clearing for agriculture have resulted in deforestation and soil erosion throughout Haiti, which was once covered in rain forest.<sup>12</sup>

### Plains

Haiti's most densely populated and fertile areas lie in four major low-lying plains: the Plaine du Nord (Northern Plain), the Plateau Central (Central Plateau), the Plaine de l'Artibonite (Artibonite Plain), and the Plaine du Cul-de-Sac (Cul-de-Sac Plain).<sup>13</sup>

The coastal Plaine du Nord, the site of the island's first French settlements, lies between Haiti's north coast and the Massif du Nord.<sup>14</sup> The area is mostly agricultural, but—as the location of the slave insurrection that led to



© Lee Cohen  
Haiti rice fields

<sup>6</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 22.

<sup>7</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001),

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, ed., "Geography," in *Haiti: A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), <http://countrystudies.us/haiti/19.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Amy Harris, "Famous Landforms in Haiti," *USA Today*, n.d., <http://traveltips.usatoday.com/famous-landforms-haiti-59326.html>

<sup>10</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, ed., "Geography," in *Haiti: A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), <http://countrystudies.us/haiti/19.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001),

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 318,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Robert Lee Hadden and Steven G. Minson, "The Geology of Haiti: An Annotated Bibliography of Haiti's Geology, Geography and Earth Science" (annotated bibliography, Alexandria, Virginia: Army Geospatial Center, 2010), 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Haiti," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

Haiti's independence and the site of two major Vodou pilgrimages every summer—it holds great historic and cultural significance. Extending 2,000 sq km (772 sq mi), it is Haiti's largest plain.<sup>15, 16</sup>

The Plateau Central, largely cut off from the rest of Haiti by the Massif du Nord and the Montagnes Noires on the west and south, is part of the San Juan Valley, which stretches into the Dominican Republic.<sup>17</sup> The Haitian part of the plateau is 390 sq km (150 sq mi) and contains some of the country's most fertile land.<sup>18</sup> The border crossing at Belladère in the Plateau Central, one of only three crossings from Haiti into the Dominican Republic, is popular with Haitians who want to attend the Haitian market in Elías Piña on the Dominican side of the border. Because of problems with illegal immigration, the Dominican Republic strictly monitors this crossing.<sup>19</sup>

Sandwiched between two mountain ranges, the wedge-shaped Plaine de l'Artibonite is Haiti's most productive region for cultivating rice.<sup>20, 21</sup>

The Plaine du Cul-de-Sac is a valley that runs from the Dominican border to Port-au-Prince.<sup>22</sup> It is an intensely cultivated area and a source of many cash crops.<sup>23</sup> Port-au-Prince is at the edge of the plain, in a depression between the Chaîne des Matheux and the Massif de la Selle.<sup>24</sup> This area was once a sea channel dividing Haiti's southern peninsula from the rest of the island.<sup>25</sup> Fault lines where these landmasses meet cause much of Haiti's seismic activity, including the 2010 earthquake.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Lee Hadden and Steven G. Minson, "The Geology of Haiti: An Annotated Bibliography of Haiti's Geology, Geography and Earth Science" (annotated bibliography, Alexandria, Virginia: Army Geospatial Center, 2010), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 320.

<sup>17</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Haiti," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>18</sup> Robert Lee Hadden and Steven G. Minson, "The Geology of Haiti: An Annotated Bibliography of Haiti's Geology, Geography and Earth Science" (annotated bibliography, Alexandria, Virginia: Army Geospatial Center, 2010), 4.

<sup>19</sup> Gary Prado Chandler and Liza Prado Chandler, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> USAID, "Haiti Food Security Outlook," January–June 2011, [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADU881.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADU881.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Inter-American Development Bank, "Haiti: Supplemental Financing for the Agricultural Intensification Program," (grant proposal, 5 November 2007), <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1231835>

<sup>22</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001),

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Amy L. Hylkema, "Haiti Soil Fertility Analysis and Crop Interpretations for Principal Crops in the Five WINNER Watershed Zones of Intervention" (University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, May 2011), 1, 5, <http://soils.ifas.ufl.edu/academics/pdf/Non-Thesis%20Projects/Amy%20Hylkema.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 244.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 240.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Geological Survey, "USGS Issues Assessment of Aftershock Hazards in Haiti," 21 January 2010, <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=2385>

## Islands

Several islands lie near Haiti's coast, although (with the exception of Gonâve Island) they are sparsely populated. Facing Port-au-Prince in the Gulf of Gonâve, Gonâve Island offers the city protection from the open sea.<sup>27</sup> Nearly 80,000 people live on the island, even though fresh water is scarce.<sup>28, 29</sup> Vache Island, off the southern coast, is primarily a tourist destination.<sup>30</sup> Tortuga Island to the north was once home to a thriving community of pirates and buccaneers, but today few people live there.<sup>31</sup>

## Bodies of Water

During dry seasons, many of Haiti's rivers and streams slow to a trickle or dry up. Only a handful exist year round, and none can be navigated completely by boat.<sup>32</sup>

The Artibonite River is Haiti's longest river, running 400 km (250 mi) through central Haiti from the Dominican border to the Gulf of Gonâve.<sup>33</sup> Completed in 1956, the Péligré Dam was built on the river as part of a large-scale irrigation project in the Artibonite Valley. The reservoir created by the dam, Lake Péligré, is Haiti's second-largest lake. A hydroelectric power station was added to the dam in 1971.<sup>34</sup>



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Guayamouc River

The Guayamouc River runs 95 km (59 mi) through the Plateau Central to the Dominican Republic, where it empties into the Artibonite River.<sup>35</sup>

Haiti's largest lake, Étang Saumâtre, or Lake Azueï, is part of a chain of salty lakes and wetlands that extends from the eastern edge of the Cul-de-Sac Plain into the Dominican Republic.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Port-au-Prince," 2011, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/470825/Port-au-Prince](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/470825/Port-au-Prince)

<sup>28</sup> Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique, "Population Totale, Population de 18 Ans et Plus Estimées en 2009," March 2009, [http://www.ihsi.ht/pdf/projection/POPTOTAL&MENAGDENS\\_ESTIM2009.pdf](http://www.ihsi.ht/pdf/projection/POPTOTAL&MENAGDENS_ESTIM2009.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Image Science and Analysis Laboratory, NASA-Johnson Space Center, "The Gateway to Astronaut Photography of Earth," n.d., <http://eol.jsc.nasa.gov/sseop/EFS/photoinfo.pl?PHOTO=STS060-84-56>

<sup>30</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 325.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 341.

<sup>32</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 244.

<sup>33</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 244.

<sup>34</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Artibonite River," 2011, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/37073/Artibonite-River?anchor=ref940955](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/37073/Artibonite-River?anchor=ref940955)

<sup>35</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 244.

<sup>36</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 244.

## Climate

Haiti's climate is semitropical to tropical with hot, humid weather throughout the year. In winter, temperatures rarely drop below 15°C (59°F); in summer, average temperatures hover around 30°C (86°F). But many microclimates exist throughout the country.<sup>37</sup> Valleys and coastal plains are warmer and drier than areas at higher elevations, where frost can form on the highest peaks.

Although Haiti receives 1,400–2,000 mm (55–79 in) of rainfall each year, the distribution is not uniform.<sup>38</sup> Strong trade winds drive Atlantic storms across the island, where they deposit moisture on the northern and eastern slopes of mountain ranges in both nations. Lying in “rain shadows,” south- and west-facing slopes receive less rainfall.<sup>39</sup> Mountains in the east of the country support tropical rain forests, while other areas, especially along the Gulf of Gonâve, experience desertlike conditions.<sup>40</sup>

Haiti has several rainy seasons. In the north, most rain falls from November–March, while the rainy season lasts from April–November in the south, with a brief break in July. Haiti experiences hurricanes and heavy tropical storms between August and October.<sup>41</sup>

## Major Cities

### *Port-au-Prince*

About a quarter of Haiti's population lives in the greater Port-au-Prince area.<sup>42</sup> The city is the country's economic hub and home to most of its schools, universities, and hospitals.<sup>43</sup>

Port-au-Prince, established on the Gulf of Gonâve in 1749, replaced Cap-Haïtien as the capital of Haiti in 1770.<sup>44</sup> Building styles resemble those in New Orleans, another former French colony, but earthquakes, hurricanes, and other disasters have damaged much of its



© BBC World Service / flickr.com  
Slum life in Cite Soleil

<sup>37</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 344.

<sup>38</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 245.

<sup>39</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 245.

<sup>40</sup> World Wildlife Fund, “WildFinder,” n.d., <http://gis.wwfus.org/wildfinder/>

<sup>41</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 344.

<sup>42</sup> Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique, “Population Totale, Population de 18 Ans et Plus Estimées en 2009,” March 2009, [http://www.ihsi.ht/pdf/projection/POPTOTAL&MENAGDENS\\_ESTIM2009.pdf](http://www.ihsi.ht/pdf/projection/POPTOTAL&MENAGDENS_ESTIM2009.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Government of the Republic of Haiti, “Haiti Earthquake PDNA: Assessment of Damage, Losses, General and Sectoral Needs,” annex to the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti, March 2010, 43, [http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA\\_Working\\_Document.pdf](http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA_Working_Document.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Port-au Prince,” 2011, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/470825/Port-au-Prince](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/470825/Port-au-Prince)

historic architecture, including the National Palace, which collapsed during the 2010 earthquake.<sup>45</sup> Civil unrest has also taken a toll on the city. During the rule of “Papa Doc” Duvalier, many companies left Haiti, which led to high unemployment rates that persist today.

About 67% of the housing in Port-au-Prince is in unplanned communities. Shantytown dwellings are improvised from available materials. They usually feature post-and-beam construction on cement slabs. Although these houses have proved somewhat hurricane proof, many collapsed during the 2010 earthquake.<sup>46</sup>

These unplanned communities often lack basic infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, running water, and access to the sewer system.<sup>47</sup> Only around two-thirds of the city’s poorest residents have access to clean drinking water, and raw sewage runs in the streets.<sup>48</sup>

Cité Soleil, the most notorious of Haiti’s slums, is north of the city. One of the largest slums in the Western Hemisphere, it contains more than 200,000 people in a few-square-mile area.<sup>49, 50</sup>

On the hills east of the city, Pétienville stands in stark contrast to the slums it overlooks.<sup>51</sup> In this wealthy suburb, nearly 95% of the residents have electricity, and about 80% have access to piped water.<sup>52</sup> Several displacement camps were set up in Pétienville following the 2010 earthquake.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Port-au Prince,” 2011, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/470825/Port-au-Prince](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/470825/Port-au-Prince)

<sup>46</sup> Government of the Republic of Haiti, “Haiti Earthquake PDNA: Assessment of Damage, Losses, General and Sectoral Needs,” annex to the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti, March 2010, 73, [http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA\\_Working\\_Document.pdf](http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA_Working_Document.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Government of the Republic of Haiti, “Haiti Earthquake PDNA: Assessment of Damage, Losses, General and Sectoral Needs,” annex to the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti, March 2010, 73, [http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA\\_Working\\_Document.pdf](http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA_Working_Document.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Dominique Zéphyr and Abby Córdova, “Haiti in Distress: The Impact of the 2010 Earthquake on Citizen Lives and Perceptions” (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University/USAID, 2011), 169.

<sup>49</sup> Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d’Informatique, “Population Totale, Population de 18 Ans et Plus Estimées en 2009,” March 2009, [http://www.ihsi.ht/pdf/projection/POPTOTAL&MENAGDENS\\_ESTIM2009.pdf](http://www.ihsi.ht/pdf/projection/POPTOTAL&MENAGDENS_ESTIM2009.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 344–45, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Port-au-Prince,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/470825/Port-au-Prince>

<sup>52</sup> Dominique Zéphyr and Abby Córdova, “Haiti in Distress: The Impact of the 2010 Earthquake on Citizen Lives and Perceptions” (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University/USAID, 2011), 164, 169.

<sup>53</sup> Deborah Sontag, “Tent City at a Golf Club Dramatizes Haiti’s Limbo,” *New York Times*, 21 March 2010.

### Cap-Haïtien

Cap-Haïtien has a more relaxed character than Port-au-Prince, although it shares many of the same problems: slums in which unemployment rates are high and access to water and sanitation is limited.<sup>54, 55</sup>



© Nick Hobgood / flickr.com  
Cap Haitien city view

Founded in 1670 by the French, Cap-Haïtien (formerly Cap-Français) was the capital of Haiti during French colonial rule. With elegant buildings and regularly laid out streets, this port city was once known as the “Paris of the Antilles.” But the city retains little of its former grandeur after being sacked in 1791 during a slave revolt, burned to the ground in 1802, leveled by an earthquake in 1842, and hit by a hurricane in 1928.<sup>56</sup>

Cap-Haïtien struggled economically as a port city in the 19th century. Before independence in 1804, Haiti had been the world’s leading exporter of sugar and coffee. After independence, the export business dried up as former slaves abandoned the export-producing plantation system for subsistence farming.<sup>57</sup>

Today, the city handles about 11% of Haiti’s exports. It has a growing tourist industry and is a market hub for local produce growers (the surrounding area produces the bitter oranges used in some liquors).<sup>58</sup>

### Gonaïves

Situated on the northeast coast of the Gulf of Gonâve, Gonaïves is the economic hub of the Artibonite Valley. Coffee, sugar, and mangoes raised in the valley are exported through Gonaïves.<sup>59</sup>



© Nite\_Owl / flickr.com  
Flood waters in Gonaïves

Haiti’s second-largest city, Gonaïves is known as the “City of Independence.”<sup>60</sup> Haitian revolutionary leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared Haiti’s independence in Gonaïves on 1 January 1804. Each year on New Year’s Day, Haiti’s president gives a speech in Gonaïves to mark

<sup>54</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 331.

<sup>55</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 344, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 331.

<sup>57</sup> David Geggus, “Why is Haiti so Poor?” (video lecture, University of Florida Libraries, Tallahassee, 2011)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfcOIyhk9E8>

<sup>58</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Cap-Haïtien,” 2011, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/93433/Cap-Haitien](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/93433/Cap-Haitien)

<sup>59</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Gonaïves,” 2011,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/238292/Gonaives>

<sup>60</sup> City Population, “Haiti,” 15 March 2010, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Haiti.html>

the occasion.<sup>61</sup>

The city has been at the center of political upheaval in modern times. Protests that led to the fall of “Baby Doc” Duvalier began in Gonaïves in 1986.<sup>62</sup> In 1994, government troops massacred 27 people in the seaside slum of Raboteau, a stronghold for supporters of exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Anti-Aristide rebels stormed the town 10 years later, killing 11 police officers and 7 civilians and sparking the coup that forced Aristide to resign in 2004.<sup>63</sup>

Gonaïves is prone to frequent, devastating floods. Heavy runoff from the surrounding mountains sends torrents of water into the low-lying areas of the city. In September 2004, Hurricane Jeanne killed more than 3,000 people in the city and surrounding area. Hundreds more were killed in 2008 when four major storms—including Hurricane Hanna—hit the area in one month.<sup>64</sup>

### *Les Cayes*

Facing the Caribbean Sea on Haiti’s southern peninsula, Les Cayes is Haiti’s fourth-largest city.<sup>65</sup> Founded in the 18th century on the site of a Spanish settlement, it is famous for its rum and as the birthplace of artist and naturalist John James Audubon.<sup>66, 67</sup>

For much of its history, Les Cayes was isolated from the capital. In spite of its isolation, unrest sweeping through Haiti has periodically come to Les Cayes. In 1986 anti-Duvalier riots broke out in the city.<sup>68</sup> More recently, Les Cayes has been the site of food riots and political protests.<sup>69, 70</sup>



© voso / flickr.com  
On the Pier in Jérémie

Today, National Route 2 connects the city to the rest of the country.<sup>71</sup> After the 2010 earthquake, thousands of Haitians took buses to Les Cayes to escape the chaos in the capital. The Cuban

<sup>61</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hotspot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 190, 192.

<sup>62</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Gonaïves,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/238292/Gonaives>

<sup>63</sup> Mark Curnutte, *A Promise in Haiti: A Reporter's Notes on Families and Daily Lives* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), 36–39.

<sup>64</sup> Mark Curnutte, *A Promise in Haiti: A Reporter's Notes on Families and Daily Lives* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), 41–43.

<sup>65</sup> City Population, “Haiti,” 15 March 2010, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Haiti.html>

<sup>66</sup> Elisée Reclus, *The Earth and Its Inhabitants: The Universal Geography* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1891), 414.

<sup>67</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “John James Audubon,” 2011, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/42629/John-James-Audubon](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/42629/John-James-Audubon)

<sup>68</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 237.

<sup>69</sup> BBC News, “Food Riots Turn Deadly in Haiti,” 5 April 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7331921.stm>

<sup>70</sup> NPR, “Haiti's Capital Seethes at Disputed Election Results,” 8 December 2010, <http://www.npr.org/2010/12/10/131894167/two-candidates-advance-in-haiti-presidential-race>

<sup>71</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Les Cayes,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/337049/Les-Cayes>

government also established a field hospital in the city, making it a major center for earthquake relief.<sup>72, 73</sup>

### *Jérémie*

Jérémie, once known as the “City of Poets,” was the enclave of Haiti’s mulatto elite as well as celebrated artists. (General Thomas-Alexandre Dumas, father of French author Alexandre Dumas, was born here.)<sup>74</sup>

The city suffered a crushing blow in 1964 when Haitian President “Papa Doc” Duvalier ordered the deaths of the families and friends of 13 insurgents seeking to overthrow him. It is estimated that several hundred people were killed in what became known as the “Vespers of Jérémie.”<sup>75</sup> As part of his retaliation, Duvalier also closed the city’s port, strangling the local economy. Although the port has partially reopened, an abundance of empty and run-down buildings shows that the city has not yet recovered.<sup>76</sup>

Because airports near Port-au-Prince were damaged in the 2010 earthquake, aid agencies used the Jérémie airport—despite its remote location and unpaved runways—to deliver food and medical supplies.<sup>77, 78</sup>

### **Environmental Issues**

Deforestation is Haiti’s leading environmental issue. Lush forests once covered most of the island, but today only about 2% of Haiti’s forests remain. Tree harvesting—which began centuries ago with the clearing of land for plantations—continues as Haitians use trees to produce charcoal, Haiti’s leading source of fuel.<sup>79, 80</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Mary Beth Sheridan and William Booth, “Haiti Earthquake Relief Is Stifled by Chaos in Port-au-Prince” *Washington Post*, 19 January 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/18/AR2010011802010.html>

<sup>73</sup> Raymundo Gómez Navia, “Cuba Abrirá su quinto Hospital de Campaña en Haití,” trans. Google Translate, Agencia Cubana de Noticias, 4 February 2010, <http://www.ain.cu/2010/febrero/04cv-haiti-hospitales.htm>

<sup>74</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 327.

<sup>75</sup> Edwidge Danticat, excerpt, “Create Dangerously,” *New York Times Sunday Book Review*, 8 October 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/10/books/review/excerpt-create-dangerously.html?pagewanted=all>

<sup>76</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 327.

<sup>77</sup> Shaila Dewan, “Volunteers Fly Supplies into Hard-to-Reach Areas,” *New York Times*, 4 February 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/05/world/americas/05planes.html>

<sup>78</sup> Paisley Dodds, “Haiti Food Convoy Attacked,” *Deseret News*, 3 February 2010, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700006705/Haiti-food-convoy-attacked.html>

<sup>79</sup> Joel K. Bourne, Jr., “Dirt Poor: Haiti Has Lost Its Soil and the Means to Feed Itself,” *National Geographic Magazine*, September 2008, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2008/09/soil/bourne-text>

<sup>80</sup> Chemonics International and U.S. Forest Service, “Environmental Vulnerability in Haiti: Findings & Recommendations” (document produced for review by USAID, April 2007), 101–2, [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADN816.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADN816.pdf)

Haiti is prone to frequent storms and hurricanes, and deforestation compounds the damage from these disasters. An estimated 6,070 hectares (15,000 acres) of topsoil are washed away every year, leaving some areas bare to the bedrock.<sup>81, 82</sup> In central Haiti, some of this topsoil ends up in Lake Péligre, silting up the dam and making it harder to regulate water flow.<sup>83</sup> The dam's power plant, which once supplied much of Haiti's electricity, functions at about 50% of its original capacity. Heavy runoff regularly overwhelms irrigation channels in the Artibonite Valley, leading to flooding and causing further damage to the system.<sup>84, 85</sup>



© Karl Jansen  
Topsoil washed away

The loss of trees also has resulted in decreased habitat for plants and animals, many of which are now disappearing from Haiti. Some, such as the Ricord's iguana, are in danger of extinction.<sup>86</sup>

## Natural Hazards

Although Haiti is in an area of high seismic activity, major earthquakes, such as the one that struck the Port-au-Prince area in January 2010, occur less than once a century. Small earthquakes may be felt but usually do not cause much disruption or property damage.<sup>87</sup>

By comparison, hurricanes frequently hit the island and cause severe flooding in low-lying areas. Deforestation exacerbates the impact of hurricanes. Without soil or vegetation to absorb water, runoff flows freely into low-lying areas.<sup>88</sup> In 2004, flash floods following heavy storms killed an estimated 5,000 people in Haiti.<sup>89, 90</sup>

Haitians are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters because of high levels of poverty and the concentration of resources in Port-au-Prince. The country lacks a system for managing large-

<sup>81</sup> USAID, "Activity Data Sheet: Haiti: Environmental Degradation Slowed, 521-S002," 14 July 1999, <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/cp2000/lac/haiti.html>

<sup>82</sup> Joel K. Bourne, Jr., "Dirt Poor: Haiti Has Lost Its Soil and the Means to Feed Itself," *National Geographic Magazine*, September 2008, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2008/09/soil/bourne-text>

<sup>83</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Artibonite River," 2011, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/37073/Artibonite-River?anchor=ref940955](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/37073/Artibonite-River?anchor=ref940955)

<sup>84</sup> Inter-American Development Bank, "Haiti: Péligre Hydroelectric Plant Rehabilitation Program" (grant proposal, 2008), 6, <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1822848>

<sup>85</sup> Inter-American Development Bank, "Haiti: Supplemental Financing for the Agricultural Intensification Program," (grant proposal, 5 November 2007), 9–10, <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1231835>

<sup>86</sup> World Wildlife Fund, "WildFinder," n.d., <http://gis.wwfus.org/wildfinder/>

<sup>87</sup> U.S. Geological Survey, "USGS Issues Assessment of Aftershock Hazards in Haiti," 21 January 2010, <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=2385>

<sup>88</sup> Richard Black, "Haiti's Vicious Circle," BBC News, 21 September 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3750473.stm>

<sup>89</sup> Mark Curnutte, "A Promise in Haiti: A Reporter's Notes on Families and Daily Lives" (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), 42–43.

<sup>90</sup> BBC News, "Haiti Relief Effort Under Review," 1 June 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3765087.stm>

scale disasters; people living on less than USD 2 a day have few resources during times of crisis.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Crystal Andrea Felima, “Haiti’s Disproportionate Casualties After Environmental Disasters,” *Journal of Haitian Studies* (Spring/Fall 2009): 7–24.

## Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Hispaniola used to be two islands separated by a sea channel.

**True**

Haiti's southern peninsula was once separated from the rest of Hispaniola by a sea channel. Fault lines where these landmasses meet are the source of much of Haiti's seismic activity, including the 2010 earthquake.

2. Jamaica is Haiti's closest neighbor.

**False**

Haiti shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. Cuba is its next closest neighbor, lying 90 km (56 mi) to the west across the Windward Passage.

3. Port-au-Prince is Haiti's "City of Independence."

**False**

Gonaïves is Haiti's "City of Independence." Revolutionary leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared Haiti's independence from France in Gonaïves in 1804.

4. Northern and eastern slopes of mountains in Hispaniola receive more rainfall than southern and western slopes.

**True**

Atlantic storms drop most of their moisture on the northern and eastern slopes of mountain ranges in Haiti and the Dominican Republic; slopes facing south and west receive less rainfall.

5. The Guayamouc River is Haiti's longest river.

**False**

The Guayamouc River is a major tributary of the Artibonite River, Haiti's longest river.

## CHAPTER 2: HISTORY

### Introduction

The history of the Republic of Haiti, a nation primarily made up of the descendants of African slaves, is marked by political instability, racial violence, and natural disasters.<sup>92, 93</sup> Of the more than 50 people to assume leadership of Haiti since its independence in 1804, 23 were overthrown, 2 were assassinated, and 1 committed suicide. Seven have died in office, and nearly half have served for one year or less; only three democratically elected leaders have served their full term in office.<sup>94, 95</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
France's stronghold on Haiti

Tension between the poor African blacks and the elite, mixed-race mulattoes—who have either “held the presidency or managed to install puppet black presidents who served their interests”—has been the source of much of the political infighting that has often divided the nation and led to bloodshed.<sup>96</sup>

Although Haiti has the distinction of being the world’s first black republic, France, its former colonial master, shackled the nation with debt until the mid-20th century.<sup>97, 98, 99</sup> The country’s history of dictatorships and human rights violations—including the wholesale slaughter of white colonists and the use of military force against its own people—has contributed to Haiti’s political isolation from the international community.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 1, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>93</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti: Introduction,” in *The World Factbook*, 23 August 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>94</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>95</sup> Embassy of Haiti, Washington, DC, “List of Haitian Heads of State,” 2011, [http://www.haiti.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=67&Itemid=114](http://www.haiti.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=67&Itemid=114)

<sup>96</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 4, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>97</sup> David Geggus, “Why is Haiti so Poor?” (video lecture, University of Florida Libraries, Tallahassee, 2011), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfcOlyhk9E8>

<sup>98</sup> BBC News, “Haiti Country Profile,” 16 August 2011, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country\\_profiles/1202772.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1202772.stm)

<sup>99</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti: Introduction,” in *The World Factbook*, 23 August 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>100</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 213–14.

## Early History

For 700 years before the arrival of Christopher Columbus, a group of Arawak Indians known as the Taino inhabited the Caribbean island of Hispaniola. Unlike the fierce Carib people of the eastern Caribbean, the Arawaks, who lived throughout Central America and the Greater Antilles, had a reputation for being friendly.<sup>101</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
Columbus landing on Hispaniola

After Europeans arrived in the Caribbean, the Tainos—skilled fishers and farmers who lived in villages of up to 3,000 people—began to die in large numbers from conditions of forced servitude and resistance.<sup>102, 103</sup> They disappeared in less than a generation after Columbus' first landing, but their legacy includes introducing Europeans to tobacco and to Taino words such as “canoes,” “hammocks,” and “barbecue.”<sup>104, 105, 106</sup>

## Columbus Arrives in the Caribbean

Toward the end of his first voyage to the New World, in late December 1492, one of Columbus' ships hit a coral reef near present-day Cap-Haïtien. Although the *Santa Maria* was lost, the Taino Indians welcomed the visitors. Columbus established the outpost of La Navidad (in honor of Christmas) on Hispaniola, the first European settlement in the Americas.<sup>107</sup> After attempts to settle the north coast failed, Columbus' brother, Bartholomew, established the colony of Santo Domingo in 1496 in what is now the Dominican Republic.

When the Spanish tried to force the Taino people to work in gold mines and on plantations, their initial friendliness changed to fierce resistance. Harsh working conditions, starvation, disease, and mass suicide eventually wiped out their entire population.<sup>108</sup>

The loss of the Tainos led the Spanish to introduce African slaves to the island in 1520 to work the plantations. By 1568 there were 20,000 African slaves; by the time the Haitian revolution began in the early 1800s, there were more than half a million.<sup>109, 110</sup>

<sup>101</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Carib,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/95780/Carib>

<sup>102</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti: Introduction,” in *The World Factbook*, 23 August 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>103</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 17–18.

<sup>104</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti: Introduction,” in *The World Factbook*, 23 August 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>105</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 1, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>106</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 15.

<sup>107</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 16.

<sup>108</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 17–18.

<sup>109</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 18.

## The French Gain a Foothold

Hispaniola turned out to be a disappointment for the Spanish. Columbus had expected to find vast quantities of gold, but the island's gold deposits were quickly exhausted; at the same time, labor shortages hampered the productivity of plantations. After the Spanish conquest of the kingdoms of Central America, with their wealth of Incan gold, Santo Domingo's status dwindled. By the end of the 16th century, it was little more than a refueling station for ships crossing the Atlantic.<sup>111</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
17th century drawing Tortuga

French and British privateers (sailors who commit state-sanctioned acts of piracy) soon established a base of operation on Tortuga Island, off the north coast of Hispaniola, to target the gold-laden ships returning to Spain. (These privateers came to be called “buccaneers,” after the Taino word for “smoking meat,” because that is what they did when they were not raiding Spanish vessels.)<sup>112</sup>

The presence of the pirates discouraged Spanish ships from landing in Santo Domingo, leaving Spanish settlers stranded on the island with little choice but to join the French and British in illegal trade.<sup>113</sup> By the mid-1600s, the French had established several villages on the northwest coast of Hispaniola. The Spanish attempted to drive the buccaneers out, but wars in Europe, Africa, and the West Indies left them without military resources to secure the entire island. In 1697, as part of the Treaty of Rijswijk, Spain ceded the western third of the island to France.<sup>114</sup>

## Pearl of the Antilles

Under French rule, the colony of Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti), grew to be the most prosperous in the New World. By the end of the 18th century, the “Pearl of the Antilles” was producing 60% of the world's coffee and 40% of the world's sugar, accounting for 40% of France's foreign trade.<sup>115, 116</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 206.

<sup>111</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 205.

<sup>112</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 205.

<sup>113</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 18.

<sup>114</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 2, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>115</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 2, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>116</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 206.

This wealth came at the cost of thousands of lives. Slaves died every year on the plantations, only to be replaced by new slaves who had to endure the horrors of the “middle passage”—the months-long voyage from the coast of Africa to the Americas that claimed one in five lives.<sup>117, 118</sup>

On the plantations of Saint Domingue, few slaves lived long enough to have children, but those that did often had children fathered by white colonists. This mixed-race offspring, known as mulattoes, formed the middle level of Haitian society: they were free but lacked full French citizenship and faced discrimination.<sup>119</sup> Mulattoes and other free blacks were barred from certain professions and could not wear certain types of clothing, carry weapons, and fraternize with white people. But these restrictions did not prevent them from sharing in Haiti’s prosperity. They could own property, and many gained considerable wealth as landowners and moneylenders.<sup>120</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
Mulatto man

## The Slaves Revolt

Although the colony prospered, people lived segregated lives on Saint Domingue and race relations were tense. Violent rebellions were common, but they were usually small in scale. Slaves outnumbered whites and free blacks (including mulattoes) by about 10 to 1.<sup>121</sup> Bands of maroons (escaped slaves) engaged in guerilla attacks on plantations, but they lacked the coordination and leadership necessary for a full-scale revolution.<sup>122, 123</sup>

Despite their small numbers, white colonists maintained power by stirring up tensions between slaves and mulattoes. After the French Revolution in 1789, the French Assembly in Paris granted suffrage to land-owning and tax-paying free blacks.<sup>124</sup> But Haiti’s white colonists



Courtesy Wikipedia  
Georges Biassou,  
revolt leader

<sup>117</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 2, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>118</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 19.

<sup>119</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 2, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>120</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 207.

<sup>121</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>122</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 2, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>123</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 207.

<sup>124</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 2, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

refused to recognize the actions of the assembly, leading to a major mulatto uprising in 1790.<sup>125</sup>  
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Although the rebellion was quickly put down, it divided the free population of the island and distracted the colonists from bigger trouble brewing on the plantations. In August 1791, a large-scale slave rebellion began near Cap-Français (now Cap-Haïtien). Whites were slaughtered, plantations burned, and sugar factories destroyed. Tens of thousands of slaves marched on Cap-Français, only turning back after taking heavy fire from a group of well-armed colonists. Although the rebellion ultimately failed, it left 12,000 people dead—2,000 of them white—and caused the destruction of more than 1,000 plantations.<sup>127</sup>

### Toussaint Louverture and the End of Slavery

In the aftermath of the rebellion, various factions struggled for control of the island. White colonists, dismayed by the French Revolution, struggled to maintain their status. Envoys from Paris sent to smooth over matters sided with the mulattoes against “royalist” colonists. Both sides recruited slaves to fight.<sup>128, 129</sup>

Some blacks, trusting neither the French Republic nor the white colonists, joined forces with the Spanish who, along with the British, hoped to destabilize the colony and regain control of the whole island.<sup>130</sup> British troops landed on the southern peninsula in 1793 while Spanish troops pushed west from Santo Domingo.<sup>131</sup>

By the end of 1793, François Dominique Toussaint Louverture, a former slave fighting under the banner of Spain, effectively controlled large portions of northern and central Haiti. Although Spain promised to free Haiti’s slaves, Louverture was skeptical.<sup>132</sup> When the French Assembly formally abolished slavery in France and its colonies in 1794, he switched his allegiance to France, tipping the balance in France’s favor.<sup>133, 134</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
Toussaint L'Ouverture

<sup>125</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 2, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>126</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 208.

<sup>127</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 209.

<sup>128</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 2, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>129</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 209–10.

<sup>130</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 209–10.

<sup>131</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 39.

<sup>132</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 210–11.

Later that year Spain ceded its portion of Hispaniola to France, and Louverture, a national hero, was soon named governor of the entire island.<sup>135</sup> Louverture moved quickly to drive out people he saw as a threat. He established economic reforms, including the *fermage* system, which forced former slaves back onto plantations but rewarded them with shares of the profits.<sup>136</sup> His actions were admired by some, but they caused friction with others, including France's leader, Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>137</sup>

## The Fight for Independence

After successfully repelling the British invasion in the south, mulatto general Andre Rigaud became Louverture's main rival for control of Haiti. From 1798–1800, the two were involved in a bloody civil war that ended when Rigaud was driven from Haiti.<sup>138</sup> In 1801 Louverture declared himself “governor-general for life.”<sup>139</sup>

In January 1802, Napoleon Bonaparte sent troops to Saint Domingue to take back control of the colony. Helped by white colonists and disgruntled mulattoes (including Rigaud), the French quickly overwhelmed Louverture's troops. In May, Louverture was forced to accept an armistice, which the French promptly broke; in June, he was seized and taken to France where he died in prison less than a year later.<sup>140, 141</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
Jean Jacques Dessalines  
1804

Louverture's chief lieutenants, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe, resumed fighting the French, whose ranks had been diminished by outbreaks of yellow fever.<sup>142</sup> When badly needed reinforcements failed to arrive in November 1803, the French commander fled to Jamaica. On 1 January 1804, Dessalines officially declared Haiti's independence.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 2, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>134</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 210–11.

<sup>135</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 211.

<sup>136</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 62.

<sup>137</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 212.

<sup>138</sup> Jerome R. Adams, *Liberators, Patriots and Leaders of Latin America: 32 Biographies*, 2nd ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2010), 20–21.

<sup>139</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>140</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 212.

<sup>141</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>142</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 3, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>143</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 213.

## Post-independence Struggles

By the time Dessalines assumed leadership of Haiti in 1804, more than a decade of fighting had killed nearly half the population.<sup>144</sup> Setting the pattern that would plague future Haitian politics, he ordered the slaughter of all white colonists, which provoked other countries to shun Haiti and left the new country politically and economically isolated. Dessalines also angered the mulattoes when he declared himself “Emperor Jacques I” in 1805. His brief reign was marked by corruption and the use of military force against his own people. His alienation of almost every segment of Haitian society led to his assassination in 1806.<sup>145, 146</sup>

After Dessalines’ death, Haiti split into rival factions struggling for control. Eventually an uneasy peace was declared between Henry Christophe, who controlled the north, and Alexander Pétion, who ruled in the south.<sup>147, 148</sup>

## Haiti in the 19th Century

Under Christophe’s leadership, the economy in the north expanded. Christophe reinstated the plantation system (forced labor on large plantations to cultivate cash crops for export). Money raised from exports financed public works, including a network of public schools and the Citadelle Laferrière, one of the most impressive defensive structures ever built. But former slaves, denied the prospect of owning land, remained unhappy under his rule. Facing insurrection, Christophe committed suicide in 1820.<sup>149</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
Citadelle Laferrière

By comparison, Pétion abandoned the despised plantation system and parceled out the land to former slaves. Although subsistence farming brought little wealth to the country, and did nothing to raise the quality of life, it made people more content. Pétion was widely mourned when he died in 1818.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 3, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>145</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 3, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>146</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 213–14.

<sup>147</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 3, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>148</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 61–62.

<sup>149</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 62–63.

<sup>150</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 62–63.

His successor, General Jean Pierre Boyer, united Haiti in 1820 and two years later invaded the neighboring nation of Santo Domingo, expelling the Spanish.<sup>151, 152</sup> Under Boyer's tenure, Haiti received diplomatic recognition from France, although at the price of a heavy indemnity (150 million gold francs, later reduced to 60 million) that kept Haiti deeply in debt until the middle of the 20th century.<sup>153, 154</sup>

After Boyer was overthrown in 1843, Haiti began a long downward spiral into chaos.<sup>155, 156</sup> The political instability led to the loss of Santo Domingo. The former Spanish colonists, resentful of Haitian rule, took advantage of the confusion following Boyer's overthrow to declare their independence as the Dominican Republic.<sup>157, 158</sup>

## Haiti and the United States

The United States, which had not recognized Haitian sovereignty until 1862, watched events in the nation with alarm as World War I began.<sup>159</sup> Between 1912–1915, two presidents had died in office and three others had been overthrown in quick succession.<sup>160</sup> Because of the instability in Haiti—a nation only 1,126 km (700 mi) from U.S. shores—Americans were concerned that a hostile European power might use it as a staging point for an invasion of their country.<sup>161, 162</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
Marines in Haiti 1921

<sup>151</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 3, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>152</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 218.

<sup>153</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 3–4, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>154</sup> David Geggus, "Why is Haiti so Poor?" (video lecture, University of Florida Libraries, Tallahassee, 2011), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfcOIyhk9E8>

<sup>155</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 4, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>156</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 219.

<sup>157</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 4, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>158</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Dominican Republic," 2011, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/168728/Dominican-Republic](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/168728/Dominican-Republic)

<sup>159</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 4, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>160</sup> Embassy of Haiti, Washington, DC, "List of Haitian Heads of State," 2011, [http://www.haiti.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=67&Itemid=114](http://www.haiti.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=67&Itemid=114)

<sup>161</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 4, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>162</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 78.

Events came to a head in 1915 when Haitian President Guillaume Sam was dragged from the French Embassy in Port-au-Prince by an angry mob and torn to pieces on the street.<sup>163</sup> Disturbed by the gruesome nature of the incident and the violation of a foreign embassy, the American ambassador called in the U.S. Navy to restore order.<sup>164, 165</sup>

During the 19 years of American occupation, Haiti was relatively peaceful. For the first time since independence, exports increased, and by 1922 Haiti had paid off its foreign debts (except for its indemnity to France, which was paid off in 1947). Americans reintroduced the *corvée*, a system that allowed Haitians to work on public projects instead of paying taxes.<sup>166</sup> Although the system was generally resented as a form of forced labor, it resulted in 210 new bridges, 1,609 km (1,000 mi) of all-weather roads, 9 airstrips, and 11 modern hospitals, and improvements to the ports and the telephone system.<sup>167</sup>

Despite the relative peace that prevailed during the occupation, Haitians resented the interference of a country they viewed as racist. More than 2,000 Haitians were killed in an uprising in 1918, and in 1929, U.S. Marines opened fire on a group of protestors in Les Cayes, killing at least 10. The United States, under increasing pressure from other countries to end the occupation, withdrew in 1934.<sup>168</sup>

During the occupation the Americans organized and trained a Haitian army, which was to be politically neutral and serve democratically elected leaders. But shortly after the Americans left, the military became corrupt, realigning itself to serve the interests of the politically ambitious.<sup>169</sup>

### “Papa Doc” Duvalier

Pro-black nationalist François “Papa Doc” Duvalier was elected president in 1957 with strong support from military leaders, who disqualified a popular rival and likely rigged the election.<sup>170</sup> Duvalier, a country doctor, was expected to be little more than a figurehead for a military-controlled government. But after he took office, he purged the higher ranks of the military, replacing top officers with men loyal to him, and ordered the arrest of his political rivals. Like

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<sup>163</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 223.

<sup>164</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 4, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>165</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 77.

<sup>166</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 81.

<sup>167</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 84.

<sup>168</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 225–26.

<sup>169</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 227.

<sup>170</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 5, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

many Haitian presidents, Duvalier produced a new constitution that he promptly violated; he was fraudulently reelected in 1961 and declared himself “president for life” in 1965.<sup>171, 172</sup>

A 1958 coup attempt prompted Duvalier to create, as insurance against a military overthrow, the rural Volunteers for National Security (VSN), a national police force that answered directly to him. More commonly known as the *tonton makouts*, Creole for “bogeymen,” the VSN used blackmail, violence, and torture to control Haitian citizens.<sup>173, 174</sup>

Duvalier’s tactics of intimidation were also used to neutralize the press, trade unions, and the Catholic Church. To boost his standing with rural Haitians, he reinforced rumors that he was a powerful Vodou sorcerer and an indigenous spirit being.<sup>175</sup> As part of his attempt to rule through fear, Duvalier appeared in public in a top hat and a black suit with long tails, an outfit that reminded Haitians of the Vodou spirit guardian of graveyards.<sup>176</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
Papa Doc Duvalier

Corruption was rampant; Duvalier used bribery and intimidation to enrich himself and ensure the loyalty of those around him.<sup>177</sup> Some of his funds came from the sale of Haitian workers to the Dominican Republic for USD 50 a person.<sup>178</sup> Duvalier’s regime received millions of dollars from the United States each year in exchange for being anti-Communist.<sup>179</sup> But in 1962, U.S. President John F. Kennedy suspended aid to Haiti after learning that Duvalier was pocketing the money instead of using it to finance public works.<sup>180</sup> According to estimates, the Duvalier government murdered more than 30,000 Haitians for political reasons during its reign of terror.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 5, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>172</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 232.

<sup>173</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 5, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>174</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 232–33.

<sup>175</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 233–34.

<sup>176</sup> Global Security, “Military: Voodoo,” 2011, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/haiti/voodoo.htm>

<sup>177</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 233–34.

<sup>178</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 99.

<sup>179</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 100.

<sup>180</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 233–34.

<sup>181</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 234.

## “Baby Doc” Duvalier

Before his death of natural causes in 1971, Duvalier named his son as his successor.<sup>182</sup> Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier was 19 years old when he became Haiti’s ninth “president for life.”<sup>183</sup> Although he presented a kinder, gentler brand of Duvalier to the world, he soon followed in his father’s footsteps.<sup>184</sup> In addition to mostly pocketing foreign aid from the United States, which was restored and increased tenfold during his presidency, “Baby Doc” took kickbacks from drug traffickers using Haiti to move drugs through the Caribbean to the United States.<sup>185</sup> He also made money by selling Haitian cadavers and plasma to foreign hospitals.<sup>186, 187</sup>



© a-birdie / flickr.com  
Jean-Claude Duvalier

In the 1970s Haiti became a hot spot for sex tourism and child trafficking; these industries, supported by Duvalier, led to the rapid spread of AIDS.<sup>188, 189</sup> NGOs took over much of the public sector, providing schools and healthcare, building roads and bridges, and heading up much-needed reforestation projects. By the late 1970s, Haitians were dependent on imported food for survival.<sup>190</sup>

Tiring of his elitism and corruption, many Haitians saw Duvalier’s 1982 marriage to a mulatto from a rich Port-au-Prince family as a betrayal of the black middle class; the wedding (costing USD 3 million) further alienated a nation steeped in poverty.<sup>191</sup> Yet it was not until Pope John Paul II visited Haiti in 1983—and declared, “Something must change here”—that Haitians were spurred to action.<sup>192</sup> In 1985 public protests broke out, starting in Gonaïves and quickly spreading to other cities and provinces. In January 1986, intense rioting in Les Cayes spread to

<sup>182</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 99.

<sup>183</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 5, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>184</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 235.

<sup>185</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 100.

<sup>186</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 236.

<sup>187</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 101.

<sup>188</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 102.

<sup>189</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 235.

<sup>190</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti’s Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 101–2.

<sup>191</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 236.

<sup>192</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 236–37.

Port-au-Prince. Lacking military support, Duvalier was persuaded to leave the country on 7 February 1986.<sup>193, 194</sup>

### Jean-Bertrand Aristide

Following approval of a new, progressive constitution in 1987, which called for free elections (although they were not held until 1990 because of political violence), Jean-Bertrand Aristide became Haiti's first freely elected president.<sup>195, 196</sup> But the former Catholic priest, known for his left-wing politics, was ousted by a military coup after less than a year in office.<sup>197, 198</sup>



© @hopersomianonna / flickr.com  
President Jean-Bertrand Aristide

Responding to the Haitian military government, which systematically repressed and killed Aristide supporters and other dissidents, the United States imposed an embargo on Haiti, cutting off many Haitians from the donated food that they relied on.<sup>199, 200</sup> Thousands died at the hands of the military junta that had seized power, and thousands more fled on boats attempting to reach the United States.<sup>201, 202</sup>

After long negotiations, and with the assistance of 20,000 American troops, Aristide resumed his presidency in 1994.<sup>203, 204</sup> As a preemptive move against future military coups, Aristide dissolved the Haitian Army and replaced it with a national police force trained by the United States.<sup>205, 206</sup> In exchange for American support, Aristide had agreed to downsize the government,

<sup>193</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 5,

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>194</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 237–38.

<sup>195</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 330.

<sup>196</sup> BBC News, "Profile: Jean-Bertrand Aristide," 3 March 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-12633115>

<sup>197</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 6,

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>198</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 124.

<sup>199</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 6,

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>200</sup> By 1980, U.S. foreign aid accounted for 70% of Haiti's annual budget. See Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 100.

<sup>201</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 6,

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>202</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 130–31.

<sup>203</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 6,

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>204</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Haiti," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>205</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 6,

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

lower tariffs, and allow NGOs to handle foreign aid.<sup>207</sup> He also agreed to privatize Haiti's public companies, but reneged on that promise in the face of public opposition.<sup>208</sup>

### Aristide's Second Presidency

Aristide was constitutionally barred from serving a second consecutive term; René Préval, Aristide's former prime minister and hand-picked successor, was elected president in 1995—the first peaceful transfer of power in the history of the Haitian republic.<sup>209</sup> But over the next five years, Aristide actively undermined his former protégé by splitting the Lavalas Party, the political party Aristide had created. Foreign aid slowed as the deadlocked legislature failed to pass required reforms.<sup>210</sup>



© Ben Piven  
Aristide supporters rally

In 2000, Aristide was reelected amid charges of election fraud.<sup>211</sup> Political violence became a hallmark of his second term, with numerous political assassinations and armed vigilante gangs roaming the streets, viciously attacking anyone speaking out against Aristide.<sup>212, 213</sup> Aristide blamed Haiti's lack of economic progress on a shortage of foreign aid money, and he called for France to refund the indemnity—with interest—and pay restitution for slavery, a figure he placed at USD 21 billion.<sup>214</sup> Aristide seemed to be gaining private wealth as his country got poorer; his critics observed that this coincided with a sharp rise in drug trafficking.<sup>215</sup>

As Haiti celebrated its bicentennial in January 2004, isolated riots escalated to open rebellion and spread throughout the country. On 29 February 2004, Aristide fled Haiti for the second time as armed rebels marched toward the capital.<sup>216, 217</sup> A coalition of American, French, and Canadian

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<sup>206</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 158.

<sup>207</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 149.

<sup>208</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 166.

<sup>209</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 6, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>210</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 173.

<sup>211</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 7, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>212</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 7, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>213</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 185.

<sup>214</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 191.

<sup>215</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 186, 190.

<sup>216</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Haiti," May 2006, 7, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>217</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 193–94.

troops immediately moved to secure the capital against the rebel forces, while outside Port-au-Prince, armed Aristide supporters and rebel warlords fought for control of the countryside.<sup>218, 219</sup>

### Préval's Second Presidency

The UN established an international peacekeeping force in Haiti and set up a provisional government. Elections scheduled for the end of 2005 were delayed because of kidnappings and gang activity that threatened to keep people from the polls.<sup>220</sup>

In 2006 Préval was elected president for a second term, and relative calm settled over the country.<sup>221</sup> The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) launched a campaign to rid the slums of violent gangs.

Within a year gang activity was on the decline, but the mission was marred by charges of violence and the use of excessive force against civilians. In 2008 the mission came under scrutiny again when MINUSTAH troops fired on a crowd of protesters in Les Cayes, killing several and injuring dozens more.<sup>222</sup>

Later that year, nearly 800 Haitians died when four major storms hit the island in one month. Flooding destroyed crops and left hundreds of thousands homeless, while continued clashes with UN troops hindered aid efforts.<sup>223</sup>



© Presidencia de la República del Ecuador / flickr.com  
Préval greets supporters

### The 2010 Earthquake

On 12 January 2010, a 7.0-magnitude earthquake—the most powerful in recorded Haitian history—struck just outside Port-au-Prince, affecting nearly one-third of the population. The Haitian government reported an estimated 112,000 dead and 194,000 injured.<sup>224, 225</sup>

<sup>218</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 7, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>219</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 194–95.

<sup>220</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>221</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: Haiti,” May 2006, 8, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Haiti.pdf>

<sup>222</sup> BBC News, “Food Riots Turn Deadly in Haiti,” 5 April 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7331921.stm>

<sup>223</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>224</sup> Rhoda Margesson and Maureen Taft-Morales, “Haiti Earthquake: Crisis and Response” (Congressional Research Service Report, 2 February 2010), 2, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41023.pdf>

<sup>225</sup> Robert Muggah and Athena Kolbe, “Haiti: Why an Accurate Count of Civilian Deaths Matters,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 July 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/12/opinion/la-oe-muggah-haiti-count-20110712/2>

The earthquake destroyed more than 100,000 homes and left another 200,000 uninhabitable. More than 1.2 million people were left homeless.<sup>226</sup> Thousands fled the Port-au-Prince area for the countryside as bodies were piled in mass graves on the outskirts of the city.<sup>227</sup> More than 1,000 relief camps or “tent cities,” set up by aid organizations, gave shelter to the nearly 1.5 million people who remained in the city.<sup>228</sup> Nine months after the quake, cholera swept through the country, killing thousands more.<sup>229</sup>

The government was seriously crippled by the loss of the workforce (Port-au-Prince was home to 75% of all civil servants) and key government buildings.<sup>230</sup>

Elections scheduled for February 2010 were delayed until November 2010.<sup>231</sup> Charges of election fraud led to rioting after the primaries, and a runoff election was called for early in 2011.<sup>232</sup> Pop musician Michel Martelly won the presidential election in April 2011 and was inaugurated two months later.<sup>233</sup>



© United Nations / flickr.com  
Earthquake survivors

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<sup>226</sup> Government of the Republic of Haiti, “Haiti Earthquake PDNA: Assessment of Damage, Losses, General and Sectoral Needs” (annex to the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti, March 2010), 73, [http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA\\_Working\\_Document.pdf](http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA_Working_Document.pdf)

<sup>227</sup> Damien Cave, “As Haitians Flee, the Dead Go Uncounted,” *New York Times*, 18 January 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/19/world/americas/19grave.html>

<sup>228</sup> Camp Coordination Camp Management Cluster in Haiti, “Displacement Tracking Matrix, V2.0 Update” (report, International Organization of Migration, 16 March 2011), [http://www.cccmhaiti.info/pdf/DTM\\_V2\\_Report\\_15\\_Mar\\_English%20FINAL3.pdf](http://www.cccmhaiti.info/pdf/DTM_V2_Report_15_Mar_English%20FINAL3.pdf)

<sup>229</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>230</sup> Government of the Republic of Haiti, “Haiti Earthquake PDNA: Assessment of Damage, Losses, General and Sectoral Needs” (annex to the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti, March 2010), 43, [http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA\\_Working\\_Document.pdf](http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA_Working_Document.pdf)

<sup>231</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>232</sup> BBC News, “Haiti Sets Date for Election Results and Second Round,” 29 January 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-12314459>

<sup>233</sup> BBC News, “Haiti Pop Star Michel Martelly Sworn in as President,” 14 May 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-13398689>

## Chapter 2 Assessment

1. The first European settlement in the Americas was on the island of Hispaniola.  
**True**  
Christopher Columbus founded the settlement, La Navidad, on Haiti's north coast during his first voyage to the New World in 1492.
2. Napoleon Bonaparte and Toussaint Louverture had a cooperative relationship.  
**False**  
Friction existed between Louverture and Bonaparte. Hoping to regain control of Saint Domingue, Bonaparte invaded the colony in January 1802. Louverture's troops were defeated, and Louverture died in a French prison.
3. The government of François "Papa Doc" Duvalier used blackmail, violence, and torture to control Haitian citizens.  
**True**  
"Papa Doc" Duvalier created the Volunteers for National Security (VSN), commonly known as the *tonton makouts*, to ensure against a military coup. This paramilitary force used blackmail, violence, and torture to control Haitian citizens. According to estimates, more than 30,000 Haitians were murdered for political reasons during his reign of terror.
4. During the United States' 19-year occupation of Haiti, improvements were made to Haiti's infrastructure.  
**True**  
The Americans reintroduced the *corvée* system, which resulted in 210 new bridges, 1,609 km (1,000 mi) of all-weather roads, 9 airstrips, 11 modern hospitals, and improvements to the ports and the telephone system.
5. Former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide served two full terms in office.  
**False**  
Aristide was elected president twice but was ousted—in 1991 and in 2004—before completing each term. He was succeeded each time by René Préval.

## CHAPTER 3: ECONOMY

### Introduction

The Haitian economy is changing from agrarian to industrial, fueled in part since the 1950s by the rapid urbanization orchestrated by former President François “Papa Doc” Duvalier to consolidate his control.<sup>234</sup> As manufacturing continues to grow in importance, numerous multinational companies are investing in the Caribbean island, championed by development goals of the United Nations and various prominent international organizations.<sup>235</sup>



© Vanessa Bertozzi  
Haitian tailor

The country’s low-wage and unregulated labor pool is competitive with China’s and has attracted multimillion-dollar international investments, including USD 120 million from the U.S. State Department. Yet the nation remains dependent on foreign aid and suffers from a lack of skilled workers, infrastructure, natural resources, and political stability.<sup>236</sup>

### Industry

During the 1970s, manufactured goods overtook agricultural commodities to become Haiti’s main export.<sup>237</sup> Today, the industrial sector—including textiles, electronics assembly, construction, and small-scale manufacturing of consumer beverages and essential oils—employs 11.5% of Haiti’s workforce and accounts for 16% of its GDP (gross domestic product).<sup>238</sup> The textile industry alone produces nearly 90% of Haiti’s exports, although it currently only employs between 25,000–30,000 workers.<sup>239, 240</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, “Haiti Reconstruction: Smart Planning Moving Forward” (hearing, Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Assistance, Economic Affairs, and International Environmental Protection, 111th Congress, 4 February 2010), 6–12, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-111shrg61559/pdf/CHRG-111shrg61559.pdf>

<sup>235</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 398, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>236</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>237</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 398, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>238</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>239</sup> Bernard A. Gelb, “Haitian Textile Industry: Impact of Proposed Trade Assistance,” Haiti Policy (CRS report for Congress, 8 February 2005), <http://haitipolicy.org/CRS-HERO.htm>

<sup>240</sup> Steve Kastenbaum, “Industrial Park Project Will Create 20,000 New Jobs in Haiti,” CNN World, 12 January 2011, [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-12/world/haiti.economy\\_1\\_georges-sassine-garment-sector-haitian-business-leaders?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-12/world/haiti.economy_1_georges-sassine-garment-sector-haitian-business-leaders?_s=PM:WORLD)

As part of international plans to create more jobs and transform the Haitian economy, several multinational companies have been investing in Haiti, especially in the nation's garment industry. These include the WINS Group, the largest conglomerate in the Caribbean, which has partnered with the Haitian government, the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, the Soros Foundation, and other international investors to build an industrial park in Port-au-Prince that could potentially create 20,000 new jobs in the garment industry.<sup>241, 242</sup> In addition to the construction of 5,000 new homes, the project is expected to include the development of Haiti's first textile mill.<sup>243</sup>



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Haiti Apparel Center

Several companies—including Walmart, JCPenney, New Balance, and the Gap—are currently supplied by garments manufactured in Haiti.<sup>244</sup> To attract more business by showcasing the potential of the Haitian garment industry, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored a “Made in Haiti” exhibit in August 2011 at a Las Vegas trade show, reportedly the largest trade event for the garment industry in the United States.<sup>245</sup>

Previously, industry had been slow to develop in Haiti for a number of reasons. During the Industrial Revolution, Haiti was isolated politically from other industrialized countries. Fearful of political and economic imperialism, Haiti passed laws that prohibited non-Haitians from owning property in Haiti and limited opportunities for foreign investment. Political unrest in the 20th century also discouraged high levels of foreign investment in industrial development.<sup>246</sup>

## Agriculture

The role of agriculture in the Haitian economy is also changing. In the 1950s agriculture centered on cash crops, but today the focus is on the production of subsistence food crops such as rice and beans.<sup>247</sup> The percentage of the workforce employed in agriculture has declined from 90% in the

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<sup>241</sup> Steve Kastenbaum, “Industrial Park Project Will Create 20,000 New Jobs in Haiti,” CNN World, 12 January 2011, [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-12/world/haiti.economy\\_1\\_georges-sassine-garment-sector-haitian-business-leaders?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-12/world/haiti.economy_1_georges-sassine-garment-sector-haitian-business-leaders?_s=PM:WORLD)

<sup>242</sup> Jacqueline Charles, “Clinton Welcomes Potential Haiti Investors,” *Miami Herald*, 2 October 2009.

<sup>243</sup> Steve Kastenbaum, “Industrial Park Project Will Create 20,000 New Jobs in Haiti,” CNN World, 12 January 2011, [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-12/world/haiti.economy\\_1\\_georges-sassine-garment-sector-haitian-business-leaders?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-12/world/haiti.economy_1_georges-sassine-garment-sector-haitian-business-leaders?_s=PM:WORLD)

<sup>244</sup> Steve Kastenbaum, “Industrial Park Project Will Create 20,000 New Jobs in Haiti,” CNN World, 12 January 2011, [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-12/world/haiti.economy\\_1\\_georges-sassine-garment-sector-haitian-business-leaders?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-12/world/haiti.economy_1_georges-sassine-garment-sector-haitian-business-leaders?_s=PM:WORLD)

<sup>245</sup> Kendra Helmer, “World of Fashion Crosses Paths with Haiti’s Rebuilding Efforts,” USAID Impact log, 1 September 2011, <http://blog.usaid.gov/2011/09/world-of-fashion-crosses-paths-with-haiti%E2%80%99s-rebuilding-efforts/>

<sup>246</sup> David Geggus, “Why is Haiti so Poor?” (video lecture, University of Florida Libraries, Tallahassee, 2011), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfcOIyhk9E8>

<sup>247</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 387, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

1950s to 38% today, according to 2010 estimates.<sup>248, 249</sup> Accounting for 50% of the nation's GDP and 90% of its exports in the 1950s, Haitian agriculture currently generates 25% of the nation's GDP and 10% of its exports.<sup>250, 251</sup> Unclear land ownership, migration, and environmental degradation have contributed to agriculture's decline.<sup>252</sup>

About half of all land under cultivation is arable. As the population has expanded, farming has crept onto steep mountainous slopes, areas vulnerable to erosion and unsuitable for cultivation.<sup>253</sup>

Deforestation has also driven production levels down. Soil, no longer held in place by the deep root systems of trees, washes away during heavy rain, leaving hillsides bare, creating mudslides, flooding valleys, destroying crops, and damaging irrigation channels.

### Cash Crops

Haiti was once the largest exporter of coffee and sugar, but the production of cash crops dropped sharply when Haitians abandoned large-scale plantation farming for small-scale subsistence farming.<sup>254</sup>

Haiti exported sugar until the 1980s, when the cost of small-scale production drove the product out of the world market; Haiti now imports most of its sugar. Similarly, cotton was produced into the 1980s, but the industry was undermined by the Mexican boll weevil and falling cotton prices worldwide. Haiti still produces sisal, a fiber used for making rope and twine, but the introduction of synthetic fibers has caused demand to level off.<sup>255</sup>

Cash crops are usually grown alongside food crops (coffee bushes thrive in the shade provided by fruit trees, for example) or are alternated with food crops from season to season. Mangoes, the



© Todd Huffman  
Fighting erosion

<sup>248</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 387,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>249</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>250</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 387,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>251</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>252</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 388,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>253</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 388,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>254</sup> David Geggus, "Why is Haiti so Poor?" (video lecture, University of Florida Libraries, Tallahassee, 2011)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfcOIyhk9E8>

<sup>255</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 391–92,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

country's most important agricultural export, are mostly shipped to the United States and annually yield about USD 10 million in revenue.<sup>256, 257</sup>

Coffee has been an important cash crop since the French introduced it to the island in 1726, but today it is produced only on a small scale. Because of the taxes accrued through the involvement of middlemen, it is unprofitable for most farmers to produce coffee in large amounts, although the crop remains one of Haiti's largest agricultural exports.<sup>258</sup>

Essential oils from vetiver (a fragrant grass) and other plants are exported in small amounts.<sup>259</sup>

### *Food Crops*

Population growth has pressured Haitian farmers to shift from cash crops to food crops, although production has failed to keep pace with demand.<sup>260</sup> Haiti only produces about 20% of the food it consumes, leaving the country reliant on imported food.<sup>261</sup>



© treesfff / flickr.com  
Corn ready to harvest

Corn is the leading food crop grown in Haiti. Other food crops include beans, potatoes, rice, and bananas.<sup>262</sup>

### *Forestry, Fishing, and Livestock*

Poor management of Haiti's forests has led to widespread deforestation. Some trees have been replaced by farmland, but charcoal production presents a greater threat to Haiti's remaining forests than agriculture. Since 75% of Haitians rely on charcoal for cooking fuel, cutting down trees to make charcoal is a guaranteed source of quick cash.<sup>263</sup>

Like Haiti's forests, its coastal fisheries have been poorly managed. The fishing industry is small, with only about 10,000 full-time workers. The lack of capital has limited most fishing ventures to shallow-water fishing close to the coast. Because these waters are overfished, Haiti imports

<sup>256</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>257</sup> USAID Press Release, "New Haitian Mango Centers will Increase Production and Incomes for Thousands of Haitian Mango Farmers," 21 October 2010, <http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2010/pr101021.html>

<sup>258</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 391, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>259</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 392, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>260</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 388, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>261</sup> Arché Jean, *The Role of Agriculture in the Economic Development of Haiti: Why Are the Haitian Peasants So Poor?* 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2008), 68.

<sup>262</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 394, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>263</sup> Tim Collie, "We Know That This Is Destroying the Land, but Charcoal Is What Keeps Us Alive," *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, Latin American Studies, 7 December 2003, <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/haiti/charcoal.htm>

fish to meet domestic demand, although it does export modest amounts of lobster and shellfish every year.<sup>264</sup>

Most Haitian farmers own some livestock—usually goats, pigs, chickens, or cattle—that function as a kind of savings account. Animals can be sold or slaughtered to pay for items such as weddings, school tuition, and emergencies. The rural economy suffered a serious setback in the early 1980s when panicked farmers and the Haitian government slaughtered nearly all the country’s pigs in an attempt to contain an outbreak of swine fever. Afterward, chicken replaced pork as the predominant meat eaten by Haitians.<sup>265</sup>

## Energy and Natural Resources

Haiti does not have known oil, natural gas, or coal reserves.<sup>266, 267</sup> Nor does the country have the capacity to refine oil or produce nuclear energy. Most Haitians use wood, which is in decreasing supply, as a principal energy source. The country has a national electrical grid, but service does not extend to most rural areas; the supply of electricity is unstable (often available for only a few hours a day), even in Port-au-Prince, which has the best electrical service.<sup>268, 269</sup>

The government created a national electricity company, Electricité d’Haiti, in 1971 to generate and distribute electricity. In 2006, 70% of Haiti’s electricity was produced from imported diesel fuel, and 30% was generated from the Péligre Dam, which currently functions at 50% of capacity because of mechanical problems and the silting up of the Artibonite River.<sup>270, 271</sup> Four thermal plants near Port-au-Prince supply



© jp\_ns/ flickr.com  
Gathering wood for fuel

<sup>264</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 302,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)  
<sup>265</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 395–96,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)  
<sup>266</sup> Katherine M. Malloy, “Haiti: A Pathfinder to Post-Earthquake Responses for Environmental and Natural Resources,” University of South Carolina School of Law Environmental Law Program, n.d.,

[http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy\\_resources.shtml](http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy_resources.shtml)  
<sup>267</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 400,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)  
<sup>268</sup> Katherine M. Malloy, “Haiti: A Pathfinder to Post-Earthquake Responses for Environmental and Natural Resources,” University of South Carolina School of Law Environmental Law Program, n.d.,

[http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy\\_resources.shtml](http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy_resources.shtml)  
<sup>269</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti: Economy,” in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>  
<sup>270</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 400,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)  
<sup>271</sup> Katherine M. Malloy, “Haiti: A Pathfinder to Post-Earthquake Responses for Environmental and Natural Resources,” University of South Carolina School of Law Environmental Law Program, n.d.,

[http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy\\_resources.shtml](http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy_resources.shtml)

the remaining two-thirds of Haiti's electricity.<sup>272, 273</sup> Because demand for electricity is low, Haiti is able to produce enough to meet the basic needs of those with access to service.<sup>274</sup> People who can afford it rely on diesel-powered generators as an alternative energy source.<sup>275</sup> Haiti imports about 13,000 barrels of petroleum per day for use in vehicles and generators.<sup>276</sup>

To address the lack of energy resources, the government is investigating wind and solar power.<sup>277</sup> Although Haiti is thought to have no known reserves of oil or natural gas, Bloomberg has reported that the 2010 earthquake may have unearthed possible reserves of natural gas. The Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, is believed to have 3 million barrels of oil offshore in a reserve that could extend into Haitian territory.<sup>278</sup> Neighboring Cuba is believed to have extensive offshore oil reserves.<sup>279</sup>

## Trade

Haiti exports roughly USD 500 million of goods each year, with textiles (apparel), mangoes, leather, and assembled electronics as the top exports. More than 80% of these exports are textiles, 90% of which are shipped to Haiti's main trading partner, the United States. As part of the Caribbean Basin Trade Preference Agreement (CBTPA) and the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act (HOPE), Haiti can export goods to the United States duty free. In 2010, the Haitian Economic Lift Program (HELP) almost tripled the quota of textiles that Haiti can annually export to the United States.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 400, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>273</sup> José Ramón Gómez et al., "Haiti: Péligre Hydroelectric Plant Rehabilitation Program" (grant proposal, Inter-American Development Bank, 2008), 6–7, <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1822848>

<sup>274</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>275</sup> Katherine M. Malloy, "Haiti: A Pathfinder to Post-Earthquake Responses for Environmental and Natural Resources," University of South Carolina School of Law Environmental Law Program, n.d., [http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy\\_resources.shtml](http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy_resources.shtml)

<sup>276</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>277</sup> Katherine M. Malloy, "Haiti: A Pathfinder to Post-Earthquake Responses for Environmental and Natural Resources," University of South Carolina School of Law Environmental Law Program, n.d., [http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy\\_resources.shtml](http://law.sc.edu/pathfinder/haiti/energy_resources.shtml)

<sup>278</sup> Jim Polson, "Haiti Earthquake May Have Exposed Gas, Aiding Economy (Update 1)," Bloomberg, 26 January 2010, [http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aUqFB\\_GbhRYM](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aUqFB_GbhRYM)

<sup>279</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Region & Topic Analysis Briefs: Caribbean," March 2011, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=CR>

<sup>280</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

Trade between the two countries totaled USD 1.6 billion in 2010.<sup>281</sup> Half of Haiti's imports come from the United States, with the Dominican Republic accounting for 19% of its imports and China 11%.<sup>282</sup> The dollar amount of these imports equaled USD 2.7 billion in 2010; imported items included grains, soybean oil, meat, vegetables, petroleum, plastics, and manufactured goods.<sup>283</sup> Although customs fees account for the majority of government revenue, Haiti has instituted liberal trade policies and lifted tariffs in the last few decades.<sup>284</sup> Many of the goods imported into Haiti are used items, including secondhand clothing (known as *pèpè*).<sup>285, 286</sup>



© Vanessa Bertozzi  
Haitian man selling pepe

## Services and Tourism

The service sector accounts for about 60% of Haiti's GDP and employs about 50% of the workforce. The service sector includes informal economic activities (such as retail, commerce, and trading) and public sector services, including healthcare, education, legal services, and government administration.

Tourism in Haiti dropped dramatically from its peak in 1980 after rumors surfaced that the AIDS virus had originated on the island.<sup>287</sup> (AIDS was introduced into Haiti by Americans, but, with one of the highest infection rates outside Africa, Haiti is still plagued by this stigma.)<sup>288</sup> Political instability in the last 30 years has also discouraged tourism.<sup>289</sup>

<sup>281</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>282</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>283</sup> Haiti imported USD 1.9 billion of goods in 2009. See Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>284</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>285</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 373, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>286</sup> Brian Schaaf, "A Secondhand Blog: Used Clothes and Haiti," Haiti Innovation, 13 February 2008, <http://haitiinnovation.org/en/2008/02/13/secondhand-blog-used-clothes-and-haiti>. See also video clip at <http://secondhandfilm.com/project.html>

<sup>287</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 406, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>288</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>289</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 406, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

Labadie, a Royal Caribbean resort on Haiti's north coast, is a notable exception to this trend. Cruise ships bring thousands of tourists each year to enjoy the pristine beaches and other amenities, although most people do not really experience Haiti. The resort is not only geographically distant from Haiti's more volatile areas, but it is also walled off from the rest of the island.<sup>290</sup>



© theparadigmshifter / flickr.com  
Labadie, Haiti's north coast

## Banking and Finance

The Bank of the Republic of Haiti (BRH) is the country's central bank and is responsible for issuing currency, formulating fiscal policy, regulating credit and foreign exchange, setting interest rates, and generally serving as the national treasurer.<sup>291</sup> Haiti also has two state-owned commercial banks, the National Bank of Credit and the Haitian People's Bank. Several international commercial banks operate in Haiti, including Citibank, First National Bank of Boston, and the National Bank of Paris.<sup>292</sup>

Haiti's national currency, the gourde (HTG), has been tied to the U.S. dollar since 1919. During the 1980s and 1990s, rising inflation, large budget deficits, and political uncertainty reduced the value of the Haitian currency by 80%.<sup>293, 294</sup> Today the exchange rate is about HTG 40 to USD 1. In addition to the gourde, U.S. dollars are widely used throughout Haiti.<sup>295</sup>



© squidpants / flickr.com  
Haitian money (gourde)

Customs duties account for the majority of government revenue in Haiti.<sup>296</sup> Although Haiti has an income tax, collection rates are low. Only about 10% of taxes owed are paid each year. Tax laws are hard to enforce because of Haiti's large informal economy, inefficient administration, and tradition of tax evasion.<sup>297</sup>

<sup>290</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 339.

<sup>291</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 374, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>292</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 374–75, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>293</sup> Inflation tends to be high, especially during times of crisis. In 2008, food shortages drove inflation up to 20%, although it fell in 2009 and remained stable at about 6% following the earthquake in 2010. See Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>294</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 375, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>295</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>296</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

Remittances from relatives living abroad (an estimated USD 1 billion per year) and foreign aid account for about half of the national budget and 20% of the country's GDP.<sup>298</sup> Haiti receives the equivalent of 5% of its GDP each year in foreign aid.<sup>299, 300</sup>

Debt historically has hindered the nation's economy, but in 2009 the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and The World Bank forgave USD 1.2 billion of Haiti's debt. Following the earthquake in 2010, the IDB forgave an additional USD 480 million in debt.<sup>301, 302</sup>

Economic development has been slowed in part by the limited amount of credit available to the average Haitian, with most commercial credit going into manufacturing and commerce. Small, short-term loans are common between vendors in the informal sector, but interest rates are as high as 70%. Capital loans are difficult to receive, limiting the growth of small business enterprises and agricultural improvements.<sup>303</sup>

### Standard of Living

In 2010, Haiti ranked 146 out of 177 on the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI).<sup>304</sup> The HDI measures factors such as adjusted net saving, literacy, fertility rates, carbon emissions, education enrollment, health and education expenditures, gender inequality, crime rates, internet users, longevity, malnourishment, and unemployment.<sup>305</sup> With 75% of its people living on less than USD 2 a day, Haiti is well known as the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. The country has spent much of its history indebted to its former colonial master, France.<sup>306</sup>



© DFID / flickr.com  
Factory worker

<sup>297</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>298</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>299</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 382,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>300</sup> The World Bank, "Chapter 1: Macroeconomic and Fiscal Context," in *Haiti Public Expenditure Management and Financial Accountability Review* (Herndon, VA: World Bank Publications), 8–10.

<sup>301</sup> The World Bank, "Haiti: Country Brief," January 2011,

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/LACEXT/HAITIEXTN/0,,contentMDK:22251393~pagePK:1497618~piPK:217854~theSitePK:338165,00.html>

<sup>302</sup> The World Bank, "World Development Indicators: 2010," April 2010, 390,

<http://data.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/wdi-final.pdf>

<sup>303</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>304</sup> UN Development Programme, "Haiti: Country Profile: Human Development Indicators," 2011,

<http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/HTI.html>

<sup>305</sup> UN Development Programme, "HDI 2010 Index," 2010, [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/Lets-Talk-HD-HDI\\_2010.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/Lets-Talk-HD-HDI_2010.pdf)

<sup>306</sup> Richard Kim, "The Nation: Haiti's Recovery, A Repeated Tragedy," National Public Radio, 18 January 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122693853>

## Employment Trends

Haiti's workforce, containing about 5 million workers, is characterized by a shortage of skilled labor. About 50% of the workers are in the service sector, about 38% work in agriculture, and about 12% have industrial jobs.<sup>307</sup> Many of these industrial jobs include foreign-assembly operations attracted to the country because of low wages.<sup>308</sup>

About 70% of Haitians do not have formal employment (regular hours, regular pay, benefits), but many create jobs for themselves in the informal economy, working irregular hours in entrepreneurial enterprises such as selling water or street foods. An estimated 83% of women and 73% of men in the workforce are self-employed.<sup>309</sup>

Although labor laws passed in 1961 and revised in 1984 guarantee Haitians a minimum wage and the right to unionize, the government does not enforce many of the provisions; with unemployment high and jobs scarce, collective bargaining is also extremely rare.<sup>310</sup> In 2010, the minimum wage was set at HTG 200 (about USD 5) a day for most workers and HTG 125 (about USD 3.15) for textile workers.<sup>311</sup>

Wages are low—75% of all Haitians live on less than USD 2 a day, and more than 50% are described as extremely poor, living on less than USD 1 a day.<sup>312</sup> On average, women earn half as much as men but head 45% of all households, making them 11% more likely to be among the extremely poor.<sup>313, 314</sup> Not surprisingly, the standard of living for the average Haitian is low, with limited access to electricity, running water, healthcare, and education.

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<sup>307</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>308</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 386, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>309</sup> Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation et al., "Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (English translation, Republic of Haiti, November 2007), 25, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTHAITIINFRENCH/Resources/HaitiDSNCRPEnglish.pdf>

<sup>310</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 386–87, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>311</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>312</sup> The World Bank, "Chapter 1: Macroeconomic and Fiscal Context," in *Haiti Public Expenditure Management and Financial Accountability Review* (Herndon, VA: World Bank Publications), 6.

<sup>313</sup> UN Women, "UNIFEM Fact Sheet: At a Glance: Women in Haiti," July 2010, [http://www.unifem.org/materials/fact\\_sheets.php?StoryID=1146](http://www.unifem.org/materials/fact_sheets.php?StoryID=1146)

<sup>314</sup> The World Bank, "Haiti: Social Resilience and State Fragility in Haiti: A Country Social Analysis," 27 April 2006, 17, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOCIALANALYSIS/1104894-1115795935771/20938696/Haiti\\_CSA.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOCIALANALYSIS/1104894-1115795935771/20938696/Haiti_CSA.pdf)

## Future Outlook

Although reports show some growth in the Haitian economy in recent years (0.8% in 2008 and 2.9% in 2009), the impact of inflation (14.4% in 2008, 3.4% in 2009, and 4.1% in 2010) has affected economic growth, which contracted by -5.1% in 2010.<sup>315, 316, 317</sup> Some analysts believe the Haitian economy will rebound and demonstrate growth in the near future—predicted at 9% in 2011 by the International Monetary Fund, mostly because of reconstruction efforts and foreign investment—but whether or not real growth occurs will depend on the potential offsetting effects of inflation and other variables.<sup>318</sup>



© United Nations / flickr.com  
Construction worker in Haiti

Despite billions of dollars of debt forgiveness by international lenders, the country's public debt, in terms of a percentage of GDP, is expected to reach 12.3% in 2011.<sup>319</sup> Because revenues in 2010 (USD 1.3 billion) continued to be less than expenditures (USD 1.4 billion), Haiti appears to remain in a debt cycle.<sup>320</sup> Despite this circumstance, the United States views Haiti as a nation with economic potential in a wide range of areas, including tourism, light manufacturing, biodiesel, and agriculture.<sup>321</sup> Still, to reach this potential, the country must improve infrastructure and public access to credit, attract investors, and address international concerns about security and political uncertainty.<sup>322, 323</sup>

<sup>315</sup> Following the devastating earthquake in 2010, the Haitian economy contracted by 7%. See Associated Press, "Facts About Haiti a Year After Quake," krqe.com, 11 January 2011, [http://www.krqe.com/dpps/news/world/facts-about-haiti-a-year-after-devastating-quake-wd11-jgr\\_3695049](http://www.krqe.com/dpps/news/world/facts-about-haiti-a-year-after-devastating-quake-wd11-jgr_3695049)

<sup>316</sup> Global Finance, "Haiti Country Report: Data on GDP and Economic Information," 2011, <http://www.gfmag.com/gdp-data-country-reports/260-haiti-gdp-country-report.html#axzz1aateUvPb>

<sup>317</sup> Jane Regan, "Haiti's Rice Farmers and Poultry Growers Have Suffered Greatly Since Trade Barriers Were Lowered in 1994," Heritage Konpa, 2001, <http://www.heritagekonpa.com/archives/Haiti:s%20rice%20farmers%20suffered%20since%20trade%20barrier%20n%201994.htm>

<sup>318</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm>

<sup>319</sup> The country's public debt as a percentage of GDP was as follows for 2007–2010: 34.9% (2007), 37.7% (2008), 24.7% (2009), 15.7% (2010). See Global Finance, "Haiti Country Report: Data on GDP and Economic Information," 2011, <http://www.gfmag.com/gdp-data-country-reports/260-haiti-gdp-country-report.html#axzz1aateUvPb>

<sup>320</sup> The nation's account balance went from -USD 627 million in 2009 to -USD 1.1 billion in 2010. See Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 27 September 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>321</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm>

<sup>322</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm>

<sup>323</sup> Paul Collier, "Haiti: From Natural Catastrophe to Economic Security" (report for the Secretary-General of the UN, Oxford University, January 2009), section 2, <http://www.focal.ca/pdf/haiticollier.pdf>

## Chapter 3 Assessment

1. Agriculture is the biggest contributor to Haiti's GDP (gross domestic product).  
**False**  
The service sector accounts for about 60% of Haiti's GDP, more than twice agriculture's share. Although many Haitians still depend on agriculture for their livelihood, it currently contributes only 25% to the GDP.
2. Haiti has a large fishing industry and exports fish to other countries.  
**False**  
Haiti's fishing industry is small, with only about 10,000 full-time workers. The lack of capital has limited most fishing ventures to shallow-water fishing close to the coast. Because these waters are overfished, Haiti imports fish to meet domestic demand.
3. Lack of capital presents a major obstacle to economic growth in Haiti.  
**True**  
Economic development in Haiti has been slowed in part by the limited amount of credit available to the average Haitian. Capital loans are difficult to receive, limiting the growth of small business enterprises and agricultural improvements.
4. The Haitian tourism industry was badly damaged by the belief that AIDS had originated on the island.  
**True**  
Tourism in Haiti dropped dramatically from its peak in 1980 after rumors surfaced that the AIDS virus had originated on the island, which has one of the highest infection rates outside Africa.
5. Revenue from income taxes covers most government expenses in Haiti.  
**False**  
Only about 10% of taxes owed to the government are collected in Haiti. The government raises the majority of its revenue through customs duties on imported goods.

## CHAPTER 4: SOCIETY

### Ethnicity and Social Order

Nearly all present-day Haitians are descendents of West African slaves brought to the island by French and Spanish colonists. Society in what is now Haiti has been highly stratified since the arrival of the Spanish at the end of the 15th century.<sup>324</sup> At the top of the social order during colonial times was a small ruling class of white Europeans who owned large plantations and held top government positions. At the bottom of the social order were large numbers of African slaves owned by the Europeans, who grew wealthy from agricultural exports.



© Todd Huffman  
Mural celebrating independence

An intermediate class developed from the liaisons of female slaves and male slave owners. These mixed-race individuals, known as mulattoes, were free, able to accumulate property and wealth, and owned one-fourth of the slaves.<sup>325</sup>

#### *The Haitian Upper Class*

After Haiti gained independence in 1804 and the European ruling class had been overthrown, a new ruling class emerged. In the 19th century, the urban elite consisted entirely of mulattoes, while the Haitian military provided an avenue of upward mobility for free blacks.<sup>326</sup>

During colonial times, mulattoes were usually the offspring of unions between white men and female slaves they sometimes kept as mistresses. Because mulattoes had white fathers, they were granted certain privileges: personal freedom, the right to own land and property, and often an upper-class education.<sup>327</sup>

Until Haitian independence in 1804, mulattoes and free blacks constituted an intermediate social class on the island. After independence, many whites fled Haiti when the nation's first ruler, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, ordered their mass slaughter. With the exit of white colonists from Haitian society, mulattoes, and to some degree their free black counterparts, became the dominant class—the only Haitians left with any kind of personal wealth or education.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 329, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>325</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 340, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>326</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 329–30, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>327</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 206–7.

<sup>328</sup> Philippe R. Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 57.

Present-day mulattoes do not primarily represent a distinct ethnic group; they embody a social class whose lifestyle is far removed from the average Haitian. For 200 years, mulattoes have dominated Haitian politics and society, living extravagant lifestyles while their countrymen struggle in abject poverty.<sup>329</sup> Light skin, straight hair, French surnames, and knowledge of the French language and French customs characterize this class, whose members hold the highest positions in trade, industry, real estate, and the professions.<sup>330</sup>

### *The Haitian Middle Class*

A true middle class, as understood by Western standards, did not emerge until the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915–1934), when the development of a professional military, expansion of government, growth of urban areas, and reform of educational policies provided new opportunities for social mobility. The growth of the middle class coincided with the *noirisme* (black identity) movement of the 1930s and continued through the mid-1980s. Members of the Haitian middle class, estimated at 15% of the population in the late 1990s, are characterized by urban residence, upward mobility through education, and knowledge of the French language and French customs.<sup>331</sup>



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Development through education

### *The Haitian Lower Class*

Poor black peasants, whose families in many instances have owned land since the early 19th century, make up most of the Haitian lower class. Most of Haiti's rural poor work as subsistence farmers on small parcels of land. Landless peasants usually migrate to cities, where they live in slums and work informally.<sup>332</sup>

Historically, Haitian peasants have been dominated by the urban elite, denied representation in government, and unfairly taxed.<sup>333</sup> The military junta that ruled Haiti from 1991–1994 often targeted the poor because of their popular support for ousted ruler Jean-Bertrand Aristide.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 273–75.

<sup>330</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 330,  
[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>330</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 330–31,  
[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>331</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 331,  
[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>332</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 332,  
[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>333</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 335,  
[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

## Languages

Since independence, one of the most important status markers in Haitian society has been language. Two main “speech communities” exist in Haiti. The upper and middle classes are literate in French and Creole, while the lower class is linguistically marked by its pervasive use of Creole.<sup>335</sup>

### *Haitian Creole*

French has historically been the language of the ruling class, while Haitian Creole is the language of everyday life. About 5% of Haitians are fluent in French and about 95% speak Creole. According to estimates, another 5% of Haitians speak limited French in addition to Creole.<sup>336, 337</sup>

Since 1987 Haitian Creole has been the official language of Haiti. Because Creole was the language of slaves, there is still resistance to its use in schools; even so, Haitian Creole is increasingly used in business, media, and politics.<sup>338</sup>

Some linguists theorize that Haitian Creole started as a specialized language of commerce among French, English, and Portuguese pirates and traders in the Caribbean and Atlantic during the 16th and 17th centuries.<sup>339, 340</sup> Although it is generally accepted that Haitian Creole is a combination of French and several African languages, with some Spanish and English, it is not a dialect of French but a distinct language in terms of vocabulary and grammar.<sup>341</sup> Creole languages, which often develop in areas where multiple cultures closely interact, are common throughout the Caribbean.<sup>342</sup>

Because Haitian Creole was the language of slaves, it is considered a “non-language” by many Haitians. Until the 20th century, a systemized way of writing in Creole did not exist, a fact that



© squidpants / flickr.com  
Custom forms, French and Creole

<sup>334</sup> Jean-Philippe Belleau, “Massacres Perpetrated in the 20th Century in Haiti,” Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence, 2 April 2008, <http://www.massviolence.org/Massacres-perpetrated-in-the-20th-Century-in-Haiti?cs=print>

<sup>335</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 339, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>336</sup> Michele Burtoff Civan, Féquière Vilsaint, and Gepsie Morisset-Métellus, *Haitians: Their History and Culture* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 1995), 16.

<sup>337</sup> Michele Burtoff Civan, Féquière Vilsaint, and Gepsie Morisset-Métellus, *Haitians: Their History and Culture* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 1995), 16.

<sup>338</sup> Michele Burtoff Civan, Féquière Vilsaint, and Gepsie Morisset-Métellus, *Haitians: Their History and Culture* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 1995), 18.

<sup>339</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haitian Creole,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/252006/Haitian-Creole>

<sup>340</sup> Michele Burtoff Civan, Féquière Vilsaint, and Gepsie Morisset-Métellus, *Haitians: Their History and Culture* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 1995), 17.

<sup>341</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 340, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>342</sup> Michele Burtoff Civan, Féquière Vilsaint, and Gepsie Morisset-Métellus, *Haitians: Their History and Culture* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 1995), 17.

not only undermined its legitimacy as a language but also made instruction in the language impossible. Low literacy rates in Haiti are partly because French was the language of instruction in Haitian schools until the 1980s—so schoolchildren were taught to read and write in a language that they did not speak.<sup>343</sup>

### *French*

French has traditionally been the language of the ruling class, first of white colonists and then of their mulatto descendants.<sup>344</sup> Until recently, French was used in law, business, and education. For this reason, speaking French has always been a hallmark of elevated social class as well as a tool for upward mobility.<sup>345</sup> Even President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's most famous populist leader, spoke fluent French.

## **Religion**

### *Catholicism and Protestantism*

Ever since Christopher Columbus first established a colony on the island in the late 15th century, Roman Catholicism has been the dominant religion in Haiti, especially among the elite.<sup>346</sup> Under the terms of the Code Noir, issued by the French king in 1685, even slaves were required to be baptized as Catholics.<sup>347</sup>

Although Roman Catholicism has been recognized as Haiti's official religion, the relationship between the Church and state has not always been friendly. After independence in 1804, Catholic priests withdrew from most places in Haiti until the Vatican recognized Haiti's statehood in the 1860s.<sup>348</sup> A century later, Catholic priests were persecuted during the rule of President "Papa Doc" François Duvalier (1957–1971) until an agreement with Rome gave the dictator a say in the appointment of Haiti's senior clergy.<sup>349</sup> The 1986 exit from Haiti by Duvalier's son, "Baby Doc" Duvalier, was hastened by Pope John Paul II's decree that the country must change. The ouster of "Baby Doc"



© Thomas Hackl  
Church of Anse-au-veau

<sup>343</sup> Michele Burtoff Civan, Féquière Vilsaint, and Gepsie Morisset-Métellus, *Haitians: Their History and Culture* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 1995), 18.

<sup>344</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 330, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>345</sup> Michele Burtoff Civan, Féquière Vilsaint, and Gepsie Morisset-Métellus, *Haitians: Their History and Culture* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 1995), 16.

<sup>346</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 330, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>347</sup> Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 25.

<sup>348</sup> Richard A. Haggerty, *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 267.

<sup>349</sup> David Nicholls, "Politics and Religion in Haiti," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 3 (1970): 407–11, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3231868>

Duvalier, who ruled Haiti as president from 1971–1986, was followed by the election of a former Catholic priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.<sup>350</sup>

Although Protestantism was introduced in the early days of the colony, this branch of Christianity did not become widely accepted in Haiti until the 1960s and 1970s, when “Papa Doc” Duvalier welcomed Protestant churches to Haiti to counter what he perceived to be the negative influence of Catholicism.<sup>351</sup>

Today, Catholics and most Protestants hold their main religious services on Sunday and may conduct smaller services during the week. Christian holidays, including Christmas, Easter, and All Saints’ Day, are recognized as national holidays. Catholics also observe Mardi Gras/Carnival, Ash Wednesday, and Lent.<sup>352</sup>

### *Vodou*

Vodou is a fusion of Catholicism and West African religions brought to Haiti by slaves. Haitian slaves, who were forcibly baptized Catholic, often had a limited understanding of the religion. Still, Catholicism’s parallels with their own beliefs allowed them to practice their own religion while observing the religion of their masters.<sup>353</sup>



Courtesy Wikipedia  
Vodou ceremony

Like Catholics, slaves from West Africa believed in one supreme god who had to be approached through a mediator. In Catholicism, these mediators come in the form of saints. In Vodou, spirits called *lwa* act as mediators or spirit guides who help worshipers connect with the divine.<sup>354</sup> In the belief systems of Haitian slaves, Catholic saints over time became interchangeable with the *lwa*: St. James with Ogou, the *lwa* of war; St. Peter with Legba, the guardian of the crossroads between worlds; the Black Madonna with Ezili Danto, a *lwa* representing motherhood and love.<sup>355</sup>

Vodou ceremonies address particular *lwa*. Each *lwa* has favorite rhythms, dance steps, songs, colors, and foods that are used to summon the spirit to join the ceremony. A service is considered successful if the *lwa* possesses one of the initiates and gives guidance to the worshipers.

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<sup>350</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 346–47, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>351</sup> David Nicholls, “Politics and Religion in Haiti,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 3 (1970): 412, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3231868>

<sup>352</sup> Scott Doggett and Leah Gordon, *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1999), 343.

<sup>353</sup> David Nicholls, “Politics and Religion in Haiti,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 3 (1970): 401, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3231868>

<sup>354</sup> Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 8–9.

<sup>355</sup> Elizabeth McAlister, “Love, Sex, and Gender Embodied: The Spirits of Haitian Vodou” (paper, Division II Faculty Publications, Wesleyan University, 2000), 134–36.

Possession, when worshipers are believed to commune with the spirit world, is the high point of the service.<sup>356</sup>

Vodou today is tolerated by Christians in Haiti, but in 1896 and 1941 the Catholic Church led militant campaigns against the religion, destroying religious objects and persecuting practitioners of Vodou, which was outlawed by the Haitian government. But organized opposition to Vodou has been inconsistent, and today Vodou is practiced by virtually all Haitians to some degree.<sup>357</sup> Most Haitians consider themselves Catholic, even if they are also devout followers of Vodou.<sup>358</sup>

## Cuisine

Haitian food has been influenced by the country's West African roots as well as French, Spanish, and American cuisines.<sup>359</sup> Like many African dishes, Haitian food is built around a starchy base, usually rice and beans, although cornmeal and other grains are also used. Root vegetables like potatoes, yams, and cassava root accompany many dishes.<sup>360</sup>



© AFSC / flickr.com  
Preparing a meal

Rice and beans are eaten alone or with meat, vegetables, and plantains (known as a “complete plate”). Goat, chicken, pork, and beef are the most common meats.

Meats are often marinated with herbs, spices, and citrus juices or vinegar, then stewed and fried (a useful technique for tougher cuts of meat).<sup>361, 362</sup> The dish is usually served with a peppery sauce on the side.<sup>363</sup>

Twice-fried plantains, a common side dish, can be bought on the street and eaten as a snack. The plantains are cooked until soft, smashed, and then fried again until crispy. Fresh fruits and vegetables, often served in a spicy vinegar mixture, also accompany meals.<sup>364</sup>

In more affluent areas, the cuisine bears a strong French influence. Haitians eat French-inspired salads, vegetables *au gratin* (with a creamy sauce), and pastries, and other sweet dishes.<sup>365</sup>

<sup>356</sup> Ira P. Lowenthal, “Ritual Performance and Religious Experience: A Service for the Gods in Southern Haiti,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 34, no. 3 (Autumn 1978): 400–3.

<sup>357</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 346–47, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>358</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 344, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>359</sup> Food in Every Country, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.foodbycountry.com/Germany-to-Japan/Haiti.html>

<sup>360</sup> Roseline Ng Cheong-Lum and Leslie Jermyn, *Cultures of the World: Haiti*, 2nd ed. (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2005), 127.

<sup>361</sup> Jody Adams, “Meat,” Tati Miya’s Cooking, 15 February 2011, <http://tatimiya.blogspot.com/2011/02/meat.html>

<sup>362</sup> Mona Cassion Ménager, *Fine Haitian Cuisine: A Broad Collection of Haitian Recipes* (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 2005).

<sup>363</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 284.

<sup>364</sup> Food in Every Country, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.foodbycountry.com/Germany-to-Japan/Haiti.html>

## Traditional Dress

Because of the warm climate, Haitians wear loose-fitting clothes made from light cotton or linen. For special occasions, women may wear the traditional *karabela*, a long full skirt with a loose-fitting top, common throughout the Caribbean. The dresses are brightly colored and are usually worn with matching head scarves (although the color most often worn at Vodou ceremonies is white). Men may wear tailored linen shirts known as *guayaberas* for special occasions.

For the average Haitian, shoes are reserved for special occasions. Haitians usually wear sandals, often homemade, or go barefoot.<sup>366</sup>



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Traditional dress

## Gender Issues

Women in Haiti are often called *poto mitan*, after the pole in the center of Vodou temples that represents the tree of life. Women are responsible for raising the children and keeping house for their husbands, who are expected to work to provide for their families.<sup>367</sup> Yet a growing number of Haitian households are headed by women, making them responsible for the financial well-being of the family.<sup>368</sup> Compared to other countries in the region, Haitian women generally work more outside the home.<sup>369</sup>



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Women selling at market

Haitian women are more likely than men to be unemployed or self-employed, often as market vendors.<sup>370</sup> Most women with formal employment work in the service sector, primarily as servants.<sup>371</sup> Women also work in the textile

<sup>365</sup> Jody Adams, “History,” Tati Miya’s Cooking, n.d., <http://tatimiya.blogspot.com/p/history-legacy.html>

<sup>366</sup> Roseline Ng Cheong-Lum and Leslie Jermyn, *Cultures of the World: Haiti*, 2nd ed. (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2005), 61.

<sup>367</sup> Timothy T. Schwartz, “Children Are the Wealth of the Poor: Pronatalism and the Economic Utility of Children,” in *Anthropological Perspectives on Economic Development*, eds. Norbert Dannhaeuser and Cynthia Werner (Oxford: Elsevier Ltd., 2003), 80.

<sup>368</sup> UN Women, “UNIFEM Fact Sheet: At a Glance—Women in Haiti,” July 2010, [http://www.unifem.org/materials/fact\\_sheets.php?StoryID=1146](http://www.unifem.org/materials/fact_sheets.php?StoryID=1146)

<sup>369</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 336–37, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>370</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 337, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>371</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 337, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

and assembly industries, where they make up about 75% of factory workers.<sup>372, 373</sup> Women rarely hold managerial positions.<sup>374</sup> Although they enjoy equal rights under Haitian law, legal inequalities persist. For example, the punishment for adultery is more severe for women.<sup>375</sup>

Violence against women is common. An estimated 80% of Haitian women will be victims of some kind of domestic violence, including sexual assault, during their lifetime.<sup>376</sup> Politics also sparks violence against women; those who support women's-rights groups have been threatened and attacked by the Haitian military and police.<sup>377</sup>

## Arts

### Literature

Until the 1970s, almost all Haitian literature was written in French, a language spoken by only a minority of Haitians. Because a system for writing in Creole did not exist, Haitian writers published in French largely as a matter of practicality.<sup>378</sup> This changed in 1975 with the publication of *Dezafi*, the first novel written entirely in Creole, which opened the door for writers to use Creole as a literary language.<sup>379</sup>

Haiti's earliest literature celebrated the nation's birth. Hoping to convince foreign readers that the violence of the revolution was part of the natural evolution of human society based on Enlightenment ideals, Haitian writers copied French essays, poetry, and plays to produce works that were nationalistic and romantic, especially in their portrayal of Haiti's revolutionary heroes.<sup>380, 381</sup>



© Marshall Segal / flickr.com  
Bible in Creole

<sup>372</sup> The World Bank, "Haiti: Social Resilience and State Fragility in Haiti: A Country Social Analysis," 27 April, 2006, 27, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOCIALANALYSIS/1104894-1115795935771/20938696/Haiti\\_CSA.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOCIALANALYSIS/1104894-1115795935771/20938696/Haiti_CSA.pdf)

<sup>373</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 337, 398, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>374</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Haiti," in *2006 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 6 March 2007, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78895.htm>

<sup>375</sup> Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 337, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_1.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_1.pdf)

<sup>376</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Haiti," in *2006 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 6 March 2007, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78895.htm>

<sup>377</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Rape in Haiti: A Weapon of Terror," Refworld, 1 July 1994, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a7e18.html>

<sup>378</sup> Ulrich Fleischmann, "The Formation and Evolution of a Literary Discourse: One, Two, or Three Literatures?" in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Volume 1: Hispanic and Francophone Regions*, ed. A. James Arnold (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1994), 331.

<sup>379</sup> Charles Arthur and Michael Dash, eds., "Chapter 9: Literature and Language," in *A Haiti Anthology: Libète* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1999), 292.

<sup>380</sup> Ulrich Fleischmann, "The Formation and Evolution of a Literary Discourse: One, Two, or Three Literatures?" in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Volume 1: Hispanic and Francophone Regions*, ed. A. James Arnold (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1994), 322.

The occupation of Haiti by U.S. troops in 1915 inspired a new wave of nationalism. In searching for the essence of Haiti’s soul, Jean Price-Mars became the leading force behind the *noirisme* movement, the idea that Haitian culture was essentially African in character.<sup>382</sup> Price-Mars’ work inspired many young Haitians during the 1930s, including Louis Diaquoi, Lorimer Denis, and future dictator François Duvalier. The three published *Les Griots*, a journal promoting black nationalism, Vodou mysticism, and a nonelitist national culture.<sup>383</sup>

Today, Haiti’s writers produce works in French, Creole, and English, with writers from the Haitian diaspora, such as Haitian-American novelist Edwidge Danticat, making considerable contributions to the body of literature.<sup>384</sup>

### *Oral Traditions*

Haiti has a strong tradition of oral culture—the transmission of stories and information by storytellers. Although Haiti has master storytellers who travel from village to village, Haitians in general love to tell stories and share riddles.

Haitians signal the beginning of a story by calling out “Krik?” If the audience wants to hear the story, it responds with “Kra!” Folktales in Haiti are often dark, but they also reveal the Haitians’ wry sense of humor.

Many “Krik? Kra!” stories feature the high jinks of the clever Ti Malice and his not-so-clever friend, Bouki.<sup>385</sup>



© Thomas Hackl  
Haitian music

### *Music*

Music is a part of everyday life in Haiti, from the songs of organized work parties used to coordinate the movements of workers, to musical political rallies that current President Michel Martelly used so effectively in his political campaign.<sup>386</sup>

Martelly is not the first Haitian president to recognize the importance of music in Haitian culture. President François Duvalier commissioned *rara* songs in his own honor to create the illusion of popular support, while his son conscripted *rara* bands to play outside polling stations.<sup>387</sup>

<sup>381</sup> Léon-François Hoffmann, “Haitian Sensibility,” in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Volume 1: Hispanic and Francophone Regions*, ed. A. James Arnold (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1994), 366.

<sup>382</sup> Charles Arthur and Michael Dash, eds., “Chapter 9: Literature and Language,” in *A Haiti Anthology: Libète* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1999), 290.

<sup>383</sup> Charles Arthur and Michael Dash, eds., “Chapter 9: Literature and Language,” in *A Haiti Anthology: Libète* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1999), 290.

<sup>384</sup> Jeffrey Brown, “Conversation: Haitian Literature Is a Living Art” (transcript, Art Beat, PBS Newshour), 14 January 2011, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/blog/2011/01/conversation-after-earthquake-haitian-literature-holds-strong.html>

<sup>385</sup> Charles Arthur and Michael Dash, eds., “Chapter 9: Literature and Language,” in *A Haiti Anthology: Libète* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1999), 285.

<sup>386</sup> In his role as a popular musician, Martelly is known as “Sweet Micky.” See Elizabeth McAlister, “The Bad Boy Makes Good: What Michel ‘Sweet Micky’ Martelly, Haiti’s Pop Star Turned President, Learned from a Lifetime in Music,” *Foreign Policy*, 8 April, 2011, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/08/the\\_bad\\_boy\\_makes\\_good?page=0.0](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/08/the_bad_boy_makes_good?page=0.0)

*Rara* music—named after the springtime festival that follows Carnival—is the most popular music in Haiti. Each *rara* band has a set of unique drumbeats that it marches to while parading from village to village. Accompanying the drums are *vaksin*, bamboo trumpets cut at different lengths to create different notes. Since each *vaksin* plays only one note, the musicians take turns playing to create a repeating motif. Other handmade instruments might include horns, graters, and rattles, all fashioned from tin cans.<sup>388</sup> Singers and elaborately dressed dancers travel with the bands.<sup>389</sup> The lyrics of *rara* songs tend to be satirical and often feature vulgar commentaries on politics and current affairs—so much so that several Haitian leaders have tried to suppress the music.<sup>390, 391</sup>

### *Dance*

Martelly, before becoming president of Haiti, was known as the “president of konpa,” an upbeat form of music that combines dance, African and Vodou rhythms, and rock.<sup>392</sup>

Drumbeats used in Vodou ceremonies form the basis of much Haitian music. Each *lwa* has a special rhythm that is used to summon the spirit. In Vodou, dancing creates excitement that entices the *lwa*.<sup>393</sup> Some Vodou dances are similar to art forms popular in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. Others are derived from African and Indian dances.<sup>394</sup>

Beyond Vodou ceremonies, dancing is a form of recreation and self-expression. Although Haitian couples may dance the merengue-like konpa “cheek to cheek” (one dance style is described as “shining the belt buckle”), Haitians like dancing in large groups that allow them to lean into one another and dance with abandon, especially during Carnival.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> Michael Largey, “Politics on the Pavement: Haitian Rara as a Traditionalizing Process,” *Journal of American Folklore* 113, no. 449 (Summer 2000): 246, 248, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/542101>

<sup>388</sup> Susan Elizabeth Tselos, “Threads of Reflection: Costumes of Haitian Rara,” *African Arts* 29, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 60, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3337367>

<sup>389</sup> Verna Gillis, *Rara* (video, Wesleyan University, 1978), <http://rara.wesleyan.edu/rara/video/index.php>

<sup>390</sup> Michael Largey, “Politics on the Pavement: Haitian Rara as a Traditionalizing Process,” *Journal of American Folklore* 113, no. 449 (Summer 2000): 245.

<sup>391</sup> Elizabeth McAlister, “The Bad Boy Makes Good: What Michel ‘Sweet Micky’ Martelly, Haiti’s Pop Star Turned President, Learned from a Lifetime in Music,” *Foreign Policy*, 8 April 2011, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/08/the\\_bad\\_boy\\_makes\\_good?page=0.0](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/08/the_bad_boy_makes_good?page=0.0)

<sup>392</sup> Elizabeth McAlister, “The Bad Boy Makes Good: What Michel ‘Sweet Micky’ Martelly, Haiti’s Pop Star Turned President, Learned from a Lifetime in Music,” *Foreign Policy*, 8 April 2011, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/08/the\\_bad\\_boy\\_makes\\_good?page=0.0](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/08/the_bad_boy_makes_good?page=0.0)

<sup>393</sup> Elizabeth McAlister, “Work and Play, Pleasure and Performance,” in *Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 48.

<sup>394</sup> Elizabeth McAlister, “Work and Play, Pleasure and Performance,” in *Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 55.

<sup>395</sup> Elizabeth McAlister, “Work and Play, Pleasure and Performance,” in *Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 49–50.

## Visual Arts

Visual arts are so common in Haiti that they are often taken for granted or dismissed as folk arts and crafts. Murals of historical figures, Vodou symbols, and commentary on current events are found everywhere—on walls, temples, and even on brightly colored vehicles called *taptaps*.<sup>396</sup>



© Stephen Riley  
Taptap bus

Until the U.S. occupation in 1915, there was little formal painting in Haiti. But along with the Americans came the unprecedented opportunity for Haitian artists to interact with the international art community. The United States sent art teachers to Haiti, and Haitian artists traveled to the United States and Europe, where they were exposed to the modern art movement.<sup>397</sup>

Haitian artists came to the attention of the international community after American DeWitt Peters opened the Centre d'Art in Port-au-Prince in 1944. His intention was to encourage Haiti's untrained painters, many of whom used chicken feathers as brushes and cardboard for canvas. The style of these painters is termed "primitive" or "naive" because of their strictly two-dimensional representation of Haitian life and Vodou mythology.<sup>398</sup>

## Sports and Recreation

Soccer is the king of sports in Haiti, as it is throughout much of Latin America. Haiti's national soccer team is a source of pride to many Haitians, although it has not qualified for the World Cup since the 1970s. Soccer is played everywhere, from the streets to stadiums, by virtually everyone.<sup>399</sup> The 2010 earthquake destroyed the headquarters of Haiti's national football club, and 30 people were killed, including the president of the organization and several coaches.<sup>400</sup>



© Alain-Christian  
Soccer practice

<sup>396</sup> Robert Farris Thompson, "Tap-Tap, Fula-Fula, Kíá-Kíá: The Haitian Bus in Atlantic Perspective," *African Arts* 29, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 36–45, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3337365>

<sup>397</sup> J. Michael Dash, "Chapter 8: The Visual Arts and Architecture," in *Culture and Customs of Haiti* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 138.

<sup>398</sup> The Centre d'Art is credited with the discovery of artists such as Philomé Obin, Rigaud Benoit, and Hector Hippolyte, who claimed that his paintings were inspired by visions he saw while possessed by the *lwa* (spirits). See J. Michael Dash, "Chapter 8: The Visual Arts and Architecture," in *Culture and Customs of Haiti* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 139–45.

<sup>399</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 275.

<sup>400</sup> Austin Knoblauch, "At Least 30 Haitian Soccer Federation Members Died in Last Week's Earthquake," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 January 2010, [http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/sports\\_blog/2010/01/haiti-earthquake-soccer-federation-30-members-died.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/sports_blog/2010/01/haiti-earthquake-soccer-federation-30-members-died.html)

Next to soccer, cockfighting is the most popular pastime for Haitians, particularly men. Unlike in other areas in the world, Haitian roosters do not wear spurs or fight to the death. Gambling plays a huge role in Haitian cockfighting.<sup>401</sup> Fights are usually held on Sunday nights in nearly every neighborhood and village.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 275.

<sup>402</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Haiti," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

## Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Most Haitians practice Vodou.  
**True**  
Although Roman Catholicism is the official religion of Haiti, most Haitians, even practicing Catholics, are involved with Vodou.
2. Until 1975, Haitian literature was written primarily in French.  
**True**  
Prior to the 1975 publication of *Dezafi*, the first novel written entirely in Creole, almost all Haitian literature was written in French. *Dezafi* allowed writers to use Creole as a literary language.
3. Rock and Roll is the most popular kind of music in Haiti.  
**False**  
*Rara* is the most popular form of music in Haiti. Named after the spring festival that follows Carnival, it features bands that parade through villages and towns, performing politically charged and satirical songs.
4. Dancing plays an important role in Vodou ceremonies.  
**True**  
Vodou spirits known as *lwa* are summoned with specific drumbeat rhythms. Dancing creates excitement to entice the *lwa*.
5. Haitians prefer baseball to all other sports.  
**False**  
Soccer is the biggest sport in Haiti. It is played everywhere, from the streets to stadiums.

## CHAPTER 5: SECURITY

### Introduction

Motivated by moral and strategic imperatives of national security, the U.S. military entered Haiti to provide humanitarian aid and to repair infrastructure after the devastating January 2010 earthquake.<sup>403</sup> The country's strategic proximity to Cuba, Central America, and the Panama Canal—as well as its political, economic, and social ties to the United States—are key contributors to its importance to U.S. national security.<sup>404</sup>



© Epert Infantry / flickr.com  
US military aid

Although Haiti was largely isolated from the international community in its early years, today it is integrated into the global political-economic-social order. Haiti was a charter member of the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS) and joined the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) in 2002. Haiti works with these organizations to address issues impacting U.S. national security, such as drug trafficking and illegal migration. Threats to Haiti's security are internal, the result of poor economic conditions and weak government institutions.<sup>405</sup>

### U.S.-Haiti Relations

Because of Haiti's proximity to Cuba, Central America, and the United States—and its strategic location along the Windward Passage (a major shipping lane between the east coast of the United States and the Panama Canal)—the United States has taken an active role in Haiti's political and economic development.<sup>406</sup>

The United States is Haiti's main trade partner, receiving 90% of Haiti's exports and providing more than 50% of its imports.<sup>407</sup> The U.S. is also home to the majority of Haitians living overseas, with an estimated 1.4 million living in or near Miami, Boston, and New York City.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti: U.S. Economic and Development Assistance," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>404</sup> Jean Tartter, "Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security," in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 474,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>405</sup> Jean Tartter, "Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security," in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 469,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>406</sup> Robert E. Maguire, "Chapter 9: Haiti: Government and Politics," in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 450,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>407</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 21 October 2011,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

Since the 1970s, Haiti has been dependent on foreign aid. The U.S. has given the Haitian government more than USD 2 billion for security and social services, of which more than USD 1.5 billion has been issued in the last six years.<sup>409</sup>

The United States first politically intervened in Haiti in 1915 when U.S. troops landed in Haiti to restore order following the murder of Haitian President Guillaume Sam. The U.S. feared that instability in the country would attract European powers seeking to spread World War I discord to North America.<sup>410</sup> In 1994 the U.S. intervened again, sending 20,000 troops to reinstate ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Ten years later, the U.S. acted when Aristide was once again forced to flee the country.<sup>411</sup> After the January 2010 earthquake, the U.S. pledged USD 2.6 billion in aid money and provided 20,000 troops, 20 ships, and 130 aircraft for relief efforts.<sup>412</sup>



© Eper Infantry / flickr.com  
US military presence 1994

In terms of national security, the illegal immigration of Haitians to the U.S. has been a long-standing problem between the two countries.<sup>413</sup>

During the years of military rule after Aristide's first departure in 1991, the U.S. intercepted more than 100,000 Haitians attempting to enter the country illegally by boat. More than two-thirds of those fleeing were returned to Haiti, but, after the 2010 earthquake, the U.S. granted Haitians living illegally in the country temporary protected status through 2013.<sup>414</sup>

Another security issue concerns a land dispute over Navassa Island, a small uninhabited island in the Caribbean Sea to the west of Haiti, which both Haiti and the United States claim.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> Caitlin Bell, "Haiti Calling, Calling Haiti: Understanding Information Needs and Communications Patterns Among Haitians Overseas Following the Quake of 12 January 2010," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, n.d., 4,

<http://haiti.humanitarianresponse.info/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=4AOapcw29qs%3D&tabid=149&mid=1045>

<sup>409</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti: U.S. Economic and Development Assistance," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>410</sup> Anne Greene, "Chapter 6: Haiti: Historical Setting," in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 279–80,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_2.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_2.pdf)

<sup>411</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Haiti," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>412</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti: January 12, 2010 Earthquake," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>413</sup> Robert E. Maguire, "Chapter 9: Haiti: Government and Politics," in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 451,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>414</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Haiti," 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>415</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Haiti," in *The World Factbook*, 21 October 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

## Relations with Neighboring Countries

### *Dominican Republic*

Haiti occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. Haiti's relationship with its neighbor has been rocky since French pirates commandeered the west part of Hispaniola to prey on Spanish ships. Haiti has invaded the eastern side of the island multiple times, beginning with the Haitian Revolution in 1804 and continuing through the mid-1800s.



© Inside Disaster / flickr.com  
Haiti / Dominican border

Until 1929, the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic was largely undefined and porous, with Haitians frequently crossing over to settle in Dominican territory. Although people living along the border have had few disputes, the Dominican government harbors fears that Haiti's economic and political problems could engulf its country.<sup>416</sup>

The 20th century saw the rise of *antihaitianismo* (anti-Haitianism) among Dominicans, a bias that grew out of a campaign of nationalist and racist propaganda. In 1937, Dominican President Rafael Trujillo ordered the slaughter of more than 25,000 Haitians living illegally in the Dominican Republic.<sup>417</sup> Twenty years later, Trujillo agreed to pay the Haitian government USD 50 per head for Haitian laborers brought across the border to work in sugar fields—essentially institutionalizing the trafficking and exploitation of Haitians.

Early in Aristide's presidency in 1990, the Dominican Republic forcibly repatriated 50,000 Haitians living within its border, creating a refugee crisis in a country already plagued by high rates of unemployment and poverty. The Dominican government then failed to uphold economic sanctions against the junta that overthrew Aristide in 1991, possibly helping the junta withstand international pressure.<sup>418</sup>

Relations between the two countries have improved over the last decade, although anti-Haitian sentiment is still common in the Dominican Republic, and the poor living conditions and mistreatment of migrant laborers in the Dominican Republic rankle many Haitians. An estimated 1 million Haitians currently live in the Dominican Republic, and Haitians frequently cross the border to attend markets and seek work.<sup>419</sup> The Dominican Republic has instituted tighter border

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<sup>416</sup> Ernesto Sagas, "An Apparent Contradiction? Popular Perceptions of Haiti and the Foreign Policy of the Dominican Republic" (paper, Sixth Annual Conference of the Haitian Studies Association, Boston, 14–15 October 1994), [www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/misctopic/dominican/conception.htm](http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/misctopic/dominican/conception.htm)

<sup>417</sup> Ernesto Sagas, "An Apparent Contradiction? Popular Perceptions of Haiti and the Foreign Policy of the Dominican Republic" (paper, Sixth Annual Conference of the Haitian Studies Association, Boston, 14–15 October 1994), [www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/misctopic/dominican/conception.htm](http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/misctopic/dominican/conception.htm)

<sup>418</sup> Ernesto Sagas, "An Apparent Contradiction? Popular Perceptions of Haiti and the Foreign Policy of the Dominican Republic" (paper, Sixth Annual Conference of the Haitian Studies Association, Boston, 14–15 October 1994), [www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/misctopic/dominican/conception.htm](http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/misctopic/dominican/conception.htm)

<sup>419</sup> Paul Clammer et al., *Lonely Planet: Dominican Republic and Haiti* (Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2008), 51–52.

controls to discourage illegal entry and to prevent illegal wood harvesting and drug trafficking.<sup>420, 421</sup>

### *Cuba*

Located 90 km (56 mi) across the Windward Passage, Cuba is Haiti's closest neighbor (other than the Dominican Republic). The two countries share many cultural ties, including the Creole language. An estimated 400,000 Haitians live in Cuba, although most emigrated prior to the Cuban revolution and do not have strong ties to Haiti.<sup>422</sup>



© United Nations / flickr.com  
Cuban doctor treats patients

Following the Cuban revolution of 1959, Cuba encouraged revolutionaries in nearby countries, even if they were not Communists. Despite a history of good relations between Haiti and Cuba, Haitian President François “Papa Doc” Duvalier cut off diplomatic relations in the 1960s after Haitian exiles living in Cuba attempted to overthrow his government. Duvalier also took advantage of Communist paranoia in the United States by accepting millions of dollars from the United States in exchange for anti-Cuba votes in the UN and the OAS.<sup>423</sup>

Although Haitian President Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier reestablished economic relations with Cuba in the early 1970s, diplomatic ties were not renewed until 1996. (Reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba was Aristide's last act in office before handing over power to his successor, René Préval.)<sup>424</sup>

Cuba, which has been providing aid to Haiti for more than a decade, was among the first responders after the 2010 earthquake, providing 1,200 doctors and healthcare workers operating out of 40 clinics throughout the country. Since 1998, Cuba also has provided free training for nearly 1,000 Haitian doctors.<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Dominican Today, “Dominican Army Conducts Anti-Crime Operations at Haitian Border,” 1 August 2007, <http://www.dominicantoday.com/dr/local/2007/8/1/24925/Dominican-Army-conducts-anti-crime-operations-at-Haitian-border>

<sup>421</sup> Jorge Rodríguez Beruff and Gerardo Cordero, “The Caribbean: The ‘Third Border’ and the War on Drugs,” in *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy*, eds. Coletta A. Youngers and Eileen Rosin, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 321.

<sup>422</sup> Caitlin Bell, “Haiti Calling, Calling Haiti: Understanding Information Needs and Communications Patterns Among Haitians Overseas Following the Quake of 12 January 2010,” UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, n.d., 5, <http://haiti.humanitarianresponse.info/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=4AOapcw29qs%3D&tabid=149&mid=1045>

<sup>423</sup> James D. Rudolph, ed., “Government and Politics,” in *A Country Study: Cuba*, 3rd ed., Foreign Area Studies, The American University (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), 211–12, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Cuba%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Cuba%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>424</sup> Larry Rohrer, “Aristide Hands Power to Successor in Haiti,” *New York Times*, 8 February 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/08/world/aristide-hands-power-to-successor-in-haiti.html?pagewanted=print&src=pm>

<sup>425</sup> Nina Lakhani, “Cuban Medics in Haiti Put the World to Shame,” *Independent*, 26 December 2010, <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/cuban-medics-in-haiti-put-the-world-to-shame-2169415.html>

### *The Bahamas*

Haitians make up the largest immigrant community in the Bahamas, accounting for 10–20% of the population, although the actual size of the Haitian population is unclear because of illegal immigration.<sup>426</sup> Undocumented Haitians living and working in the Bahamas have been a cause of friction between the countries for years. Since the 1950s, Haitians have been arriving in the Bahamas in large numbers to look for work in the relatively prosperous nation. Many are employed as gardeners, domestic servants, and farm laborers.<sup>427</sup>

Laws to discourage employment and restrict citizenship for Haitians, as well as roundups and mass deportations, have had little effect. In 1985, the Bahamian government agreed to grant all Haitians living in the country prior to 1981 legal status, while those arriving later would be deported. Two years later, more than 20,000 illegal Haitian immigrants remained in the country.<sup>428</sup> The government continues to work with Haiti to address the issue of illegal immigration and develop commercial trade.<sup>429, 430</sup>

### **Military**

Haiti was born of revolution in 1804, and its first leaders were military heroes. Haitians, constantly fearful of losing their hard-fought freedom to another international power, supported leaders who ruled on the strength of their personalities and military prowess. Yet throughout the 19th century, the army continually undermined the central government, while armed insurgents dominated the countryside.<sup>431</sup>



© mediahacker / flickr.com  
Haiti's new Army recruits

<sup>426</sup> An estimated 30,000–60,000 Haitians live legally or illegally in the Bahamas, which has a total population of about 354,000. See Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “The Bahamas: Background Notes,” 8 June 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1857.htm>

<sup>427</sup> Mark P. Sullivan, “Chapter 6: The Northern Islands,” in *A Regional Study: Islands of the Commonwealth Caribbean*, eds. Sandra W. Meditz and Dennis M. Hanratty, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), 555–56, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Islands%20of%20the%20Commonwealth%20Caribbean%20Study\\_5.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Islands%20of%20the%20Commonwealth%20Caribbean%20Study_5.pdf)

<sup>428</sup> Mark P. Sullivan, “Chapter 6: The Northern Islands,” in *A Regional Study: Islands of the Commonwealth Caribbean*, eds. Sandra W. Meditz and Dennis M. Hanratty, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), 555–56, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Islands%20of%20the%20Commonwealth%20Caribbean%20Study\\_5.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Islands%20of%20the%20Commonwealth%20Caribbean%20Study_5.pdf)

<sup>429</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: The Bahamas,” 8 June 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1857.htm>

<sup>430</sup> Lindsay Thompson, “Bahamas Gets New Ambassador from Haiti,” *Bahamas Weekly*, 14 October 2010, [http://www.thebahamasweekly.com/publish/bis-news-updates/Bahamas\\_gets\\_new\\_Ambassador\\_from\\_Haiti12750.shtml](http://www.thebahamasweekly.com/publish/bis-news-updates/Bahamas_gets_new_Ambassador_from_Haiti12750.shtml)

<sup>431</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 459, 462, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

During the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915–1934), the United States sought to change the Haitian Army into an apolitical security force. But after the United States left in 1934, the political situation destabilized, and by 1950 the Haitian military had become a major player on the political field. Governments came and went, but the military remained a constant, cohesive presence in Haitian politics.<sup>432</sup>

In the late 1950s, “Papa Doc” Duvalier protected his presidency by checking the power of the military. He purged top-ranking officials, eliminating or exiling those who opposed him. His most powerful tool against military power was the Volunteers for National Security (VSN), or the *tonton makouts*, a 9,000-strong force that protected Duvalier and took on the role of secret police.<sup>433</sup>

In accordance with the 1987 Haitian Constitution, which called for the separation of the military and police, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide tried to overhaul the army during his first months in office. But his attempt to flush out the corruption that had become endemic during Duvalier’s rule backfired, contributing to his ouster from office when the military turned on him less than a year after he took office.<sup>434</sup>

After his return to Haiti in October 1994, Aristide reduced the size of the military from 6,000 to 3,500 and dissolved the military entirely in January of the following year. To replace the military, he created the Interim Public Security Force (IPSF), which would become the Haitian National Police (HNP). About 3,300 former soldiers were accepted into the IPSF.<sup>435</sup>

## Police Force

The Haitian National Police was formed to replace the Haitian military, which President Aristide dissolved in 1995. Until that time, the military had been responsible for national security and law enforcement. After completing nine months of training, the first units of the HNP were active by mid-1995. By late 1999, nearly 7,000 police officers were active, including some former army officers who held supervisory positions.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 459, 462,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>433</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 464,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>434</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 460, 466,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>435</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 468–69,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>436</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government

Today, the HNP has about 8,500 officers, although the UN estimates that Haiti needs at least 14,000 (but recommends 18,000–22,000) to maintain order in the country. Only 10% of the officers are women, but recent efforts have increased the number of female recruits.<sup>437</sup>



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Haitian National Police

The HNP is divided into the administrative force, which staffs city police stations and rural posts; the judicial police, who conduct special investigations on behalf of magistrates; and specialized units that deal with crowd control, drug enforcement, and security for the president.

There also is an inspector general to investigate human-rights violations and crimes allegedly committed by police officers. The force is overseen by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security.<sup>438</sup>

Although the police force has a reputation for corruption, it works closely with international organizations and foreign governments to expand officer training, improve prison conditions, and address corruption. Haitian police are more likely than other government officials to be investigated and prosecuted for violations.<sup>439</sup>

Following the 2010 earthquake, the HNP worked with international peacekeeping troops to police and monitor camps of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and provide security for relief operations.<sup>440</sup> Although the HNP units are small and poorly equipped, its ranks increased by about 10% in April 2011 upon the graduation of a class of 900 officers.<sup>441</sup>

## Issues Affecting Stability

### *International Presence*

President Aristide's return to power in 1994 was backed by a U.S.-led multinational force (MNF) of 21,000 troops. Within six months the force, now known as the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), was reduced to 6,000, with further reductions occurring between 1995–1999.<sup>442</sup>

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Printing Office, 2001), 460,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>437</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Haiti,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/wha/154509.htm>

<sup>438</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 460,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>439</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Haiti,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/wha/154509.htm>

<sup>440</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Haiti,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/wha/154509.htm>

<sup>441</sup> Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2011 INCSR: Country Reports: Croatia Through Haiti,” 3 March 2011, [www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2011/vol1/156360.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2011/vol1/156360.htm)

<sup>442</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Haiti,” 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

As part of its mission, the MNF impounded and destroyed the heavy weapons of the Haitian military.<sup>443</sup> The MNF offered a buy-back weapons program to encourage former Haitian soldiers to give up their weapons. In addition, the U.S. offered job training to former soldiers to help them adjust to civilian life.<sup>444</sup> After the peacekeeping mission ended in 1999, a small “peace-building” mission of technical advisors remained in the country to provide continued assistance with police training.<sup>445</sup>

Following the rebellion in 2004, the UN Security Council created the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to stabilize the country, protect human rights, and support the democratic process.<sup>446</sup> In January 2010, after the quake, the number of MINUSTAH troops was increased from 6,900 to 8,900 and the number of police officers was doubled to 4,400 to help with relief and reconstruction efforts.



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MINUSTAH Port-au-Prince 2010

The MINUSTAH mission has been extended twice, in 2009 and in October 2010, when MINUSTAH forces were tasked to monitor security during presidential elections, held in November 2010 (first round) and March 2011 (second round).<sup>447</sup>

### *Drug Trafficking*

Haiti is a major transit point for drugs moving through the Caribbean to the United States and Europe. It is estimated that about 8% of the cocaine entering the United States annually transits Haiti, whose long coastline and land borders are largely unpatrolled. Drugs are dropped offshore by speedboats from Columbia or brought by planes that land on clandestine airstrips in the mountains. Drugs also enter Haiti via container ships and Haiti’s land border with the Dominican Republic.<sup>448</sup>



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MINUSTAH drug exercise

Drugs are a main source of government corruption in Haiti and are believed to be a major destabilizing factor in Haitian society. Drug smugglers

<sup>443</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 469,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>444</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 468,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>445</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Haiti,” 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>446</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Haiti,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/251961/Haiti>

<sup>447</sup> Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Haiti: January 12, 2010 Earthquake,” 10 August 2011, [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm)

<sup>448</sup> Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2011 INCSR: Country Reports: Croatia Through Haiti,” 3 March 2011, [www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2011/vol1/156360.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2011/vol1/156360.htm)

operated with impunity under former President Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier (1971–1986). After his departure in 1986, several provisional governments ran afoul of military officials seeking to protect their interests in the drug trade. It is believed that the military junta that overthrew President Aristide in 1991 was in the pay of a Columbian drug cartel.<sup>449</sup>

Aristide’s second presidency was marred by accusations of government officials accepting money from drug bosses.<sup>450</sup> Since his overthrow in 2004, 12 leading Haitian government officials have been convicted of drug crimes in U.S. courts, including the former head of the HNP and a former president of the senate. The leader of the 2004 rebellion that ousted Aristide is wanted in the U.S. on drug charges. Drug gangs are believed to have played a role in the food riots of 2008 that left several people dead.<sup>451</sup>

Haiti has been a member of the 1988 United Nations Drug Convention since 1995 and works actively with the United States to combat drug trafficking throughout the country.<sup>452</sup>

But even with assistance and special training from the U.S. and international agencies, the HNP remains understaffed, underfunded, poorly equipped, and at the mercy of inadequate infrastructure.<sup>453</sup> Even when drug shipments can be detected, poor roads often make it impossible for police to locate and intercept drug smugglers.<sup>454</sup>

### Politics

The World Bank has stated that government corruption in Haiti is severe and pervasive, existing in all branches and at all levels of government.<sup>455</sup> Embezzlement, misuse of government funds, and bribery are long-standing problems.<sup>456</sup> Anti-corruption laws are largely ignored in Haiti, which has no transparency laws requiring the government to make documents public. Although government officials and civil servants are required to declare their assets to the Financial Control Information Office, only 10% comply, and those who do not are not



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List of government enemies

<sup>449</sup> Nick Caistor, “Haiti’s Drug Money Scourge,” BBC News, 19 March 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/3524444.stm>

<sup>450</sup> Nick Caistor, “Haiti’s Drug Money Scourge,” BBC News, 19 March 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/3524444.stm>

<sup>451</sup> Chris Hawley, “Haiti Drug Trafficking Likely to Rise in Quake Aftermath,” *USA Today*, 9 February 2010, [www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-02-09-haiti-drug-trafficking\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-02-09-haiti-drug-trafficking_N.htm)

<sup>452</sup> Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2011 INCSR: Country Reports: Croatia Through Haiti,” 3 March 2011, [www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2011/vol1/156360.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2011/vol1/156360.htm)

<sup>453</sup> Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2011 INCSR: Country Reports: Croatia Through Haiti,” 3 March 2011, [www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2011/vol1/156360.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2011/vol1/156360.htm)

<sup>454</sup> Chris Hawley, “Haiti Drug Trafficking Likely to Rise in Quake Aftermath,” *USA Today*, 9 February 2010, [www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-02-09-haiti-drug-trafficking\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-02-09-haiti-drug-trafficking_N.htm)

<sup>455</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Haiti,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/wha/154509.htm>

<sup>456</sup> Robert E. Maguire, “Chapter 9: Haiti: Government and Politics,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 432,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

sanctioned.

Election observers reported numerous irregularities at polling stations during the 2010 presidential primary. Public protests prompted the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) to call in international experts to review the results. (But the CEP itself has not followed proper procedures in electing local councils that provide candidates for the national council.)<sup>457</sup>

### *Crime Rates and Rule of Law*

The crime rate in Haiti is among the highest in Latin America. In the years leading up to the 2010 earthquake, 14% of Haitians reported being victims of crime. After the earthquake the number rose to nearly 20%, placing Haiti only slightly behind Columbia in per capita crimes.<sup>458</sup>

In urban areas the crime rate has reached 26%, with rates at IDP camps reaching 29% for men and 36% for women. Nearly two-thirds of all crimes involved assault of some kind, but fewer than half of all crimes were reported, and only 5% of those were reported directly to the police.<sup>459</sup>

This low rate of reportage underscores a lack of confidence in the police and justice system, which often leads to vigilante actions.<sup>460</sup> The U.S. State Department reports that corruption among Haitian police is high, with officers accepting bribes from prisoners for preferential treatment.<sup>461</sup> There are reports of excessive force leading to the deaths of suspects in police custody; the police are also thought to lack skills for dealing with people in general.<sup>462</sup>

Haitian police regularly fail to follow legal procedures when making arrests—apprehending suspects without warrants and failing to bring them before a magistrate within 48 hours of arrest.<sup>463</sup> The justice system works slowly in Haiti, with some prisoners waiting years to be

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<sup>457</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Haiti,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/wha/154509.htm>

<sup>458</sup> Dominique Zéphyr and Abby Córdova, *Haiti in Distress: The Impact of the 2010 Earthquake on Citizen Lives and Perceptions* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University/USAID, 2011), 59–62, <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/haiti/2010-executive-summary-ENGLISH.pdf>

<sup>459</sup> Dominique Zéphyr and Abby Córdova, *Haiti in Distress: The Impact of the 2010 Earthquake on Citizen Lives and Perceptions* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University/USAID, 2011), 60, <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/haiti/2010-executive-summary-ENGLISH.pdf>

<sup>460</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 461, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>461</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Haiti,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/wha/154509.htm>

<sup>462</sup> Jean Tartter, “Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security,” in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 461, [http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>463</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: Haiti,” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/wha/154509.htm>

brought to trial. Magistrates are often inadequately educated, poorly trained, and open to bribery.<sup>464</sup>

### *Water and Food Security*

Although nearly half of all Haitians do not have regular access to clean drinking water, food insecurity is a greater threat to internal stability.<sup>465</sup> Because of environmental deterioration and economic factors, many Haitian farmers no longer produce enough food to even feed themselves.<sup>466</sup> Imported food accounts for about 50% of Haiti's nutritional requirements.<sup>467</sup>



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Receiving food rations

The worldwide rise of food prices has been devastating in a country in which the majority of the population lives on less than USD 2 a day.<sup>468</sup> In 2008 dollars, one meal costs about USD 2.<sup>469</sup> From April 2007 to April 2008, the prices of rice, beans, and fruit increased by about 50%.<sup>470</sup> Because of the high cost of food relative to total earnings, about one-third of Haitians are considered food-insecure; a post-quake survey revealed that at least 30% of Haitian households had 1 adult who had gone without food for an entire day in the previous 3 months.<sup>471</sup> According to a 2005 survey, about 24% of children under age 5 are chronically malnourished and 8% of adults are acutely malnourished.<sup>472</sup>

In 2008, riots broke out across Haiti in response to rising food prices. In Les Cayes, the riots turned violent when people attacked UN peacekeepers, who returned fire at some of the armed protesters. Four people were killed and dozens were injured. According to Jacques Edouard Alexis, prime minister at the time, the government was aware that the demonstrators had been

<sup>464</sup> Jean Tartter, "Chapter 10: Haiti: National Security," in *Country Studies: Dominican Republic and Haiti*, 3rd ed., ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 461,

[http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study\\_4.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/news/publications/Documents/Dominican%20Republic%20and%20Haiti%20Study_4.pdf)

<sup>465</sup> Government of the Republic of Haiti, "Haiti Earthquake PDNA: Assessment of Damage, Losses, General and Sectoral Needs," annex to the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti, March 2010, 13,

[http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA\\_Working\\_Document.pdf](http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA_Working_Document.pdf)

<sup>466</sup> The high cost of seed and fertilizer is one reason productive land is no longer farmed in Haiti. See UN, "Haiti United Nations Country Team Food Crisis Response Report," July 2008,

[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DD8589A68E4AEA814925748F0004FFC6-Full\\_Report.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DD8589A68E4AEA814925748F0004FFC6-Full_Report.pdf)

<sup>467</sup> World Food Programme, "Haiti: Overview," n.d., <http://www.wfp.org/countries/Haiti/Overview>

<sup>468</sup> About 5.1 million people, out of a population of around 9.8 million, live on less than USD 1 per day. See UN, "Haiti United Nations Country Team Food Crisis Response Report," July 2008, 1,

[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DD8589A68E4AEA814925748F0004FFC6-Full\\_Report.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DD8589A68E4AEA814925748F0004FFC6-Full_Report.pdf)

<sup>469</sup> UN, "Haiti United Nations Country Team Food Crisis Response Report," July 2008,

[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DD8589A68E4AEA814925748F0004FFC6-Full\\_Report.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DD8589A68E4AEA814925748F0004FFC6-Full_Report.pdf)

<sup>470</sup> BBC News, "Food Riots Turn Deadly in Haiti," 5 April 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7331921.stm>

<sup>471</sup> Dominique Zéphyr and Abby Córdova, *Haiti in Distress: The Impact of the 2010 Earthquake on Citizen Lives and Perceptions* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University/USAID, 2011), 171,

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/haiti/2010-executive-summary-ENGLISH.pdf>

<sup>472</sup> UN, "Haiti United Nations Country Team Food Crisis Response Report," July 2008,

[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DD8589A68E4AEA814925748F0004FFC6-Full\\_Report.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DD8589A68E4AEA814925748F0004FFC6-Full_Report.pdf)

infiltrated by “individuals linked to drug dealers and other smugglers.”<sup>473</sup> The food riots have also been linked to the International Monetary Fund, which provided loans to the Haitian government in exchange for allowing highly subsidized U.S. rice to be cheaply sold in Haiti, pushing Haitian rice farmers out of the market.<sup>474, 475</sup>

### *Environment and Natural Disasters*

Haitians are especially vulnerable to hurricanes and tropical storms because of the poor environmental and economic conditions in their country. Deforestation has left many of Haiti’s slopes bare, allowing torrential rain to become destructive runoff that floods low-lying areas.<sup>476</sup>



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Hurricane “Ike” rescue

When floods destroy houses and wipe out harvests, Haitians have few resources to fall back on, and the government is often slow to respond to their needs.<sup>477</sup>

Haitians often lose their savings and livelihoods in these events, and it can take years for them to recover—a seeming impossibility given the frequency of hurricanes.<sup>478</sup>

The 2010 earthquake underscored another vulnerability: the concentration of resources in Port-au-Prince. The city was home to 75% of all government employees and most of the country’s hospitals and schools. The destruction of government buildings and loss of life severely crippled the government’s ability to respond to the disaster and left Haitians in other parts of the country cut off from government services.<sup>479</sup>

### *HIV/AIDS*

Since the discovery of the disease in the early 1980s, Haiti has been stigmatized as a highly infected nation and the possible source of the AIDS virus. Yet infection rates have fallen in the

<sup>473</sup> BBC News, “Food Riots Turn Deadly in Haiti,” 5 April 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7331921.stm>

<sup>474</sup> Bill Quigley, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, “US, IMF Role in Haiti’s Food Riots,” *Inquirer.net*, 3 May 2008, [http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/talkofthetown/view/20080503-134390/US\\_IMF\\_role\\_in\\_Haiti%92s\\_food\\_riots](http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/talkofthetown/view/20080503-134390/US_IMF_role_in_Haiti%92s_food_riots)

<sup>475</sup> Democracy Now!, “The U.S. Role in Haiti’s Food Riots,” 24 April 2008, [http://www.democracynow.org/2008/4/24/the\\_us\\_role\\_in\\_haitis\\_food](http://www.democracynow.org/2008/4/24/the_us_role_in_haitis_food)

<sup>476</sup> Richard Black, “Haiti’s Vicious Circle,” BBC News, 21 September 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3750473.stm>

<sup>477</sup> Crystal Andrea Felima, “Haiti’s Disproportionate Casualties After Environmental Disasters,” *Journal of Haitian Studies* (Spring/Fall 2009): 11.

<sup>478</sup> Danielle Typinski, “Livelihood Recovery Through Microfinance in Flood-Affected Communities in Haiti,” USAID, 12 February, 2005, [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin\\_america\\_caribbean/environment/IEEs/haiti/IEE05\\_04.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/environment/IEEs/haiti/IEE05_04.pdf)

<sup>479</sup> Government of the Republic of Haiti, “Haiti Earthquake PDNA: Assessment of Damage, Losses, General and Sectoral Needs,” annex to the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti, March 2010, 43, [http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA\\_Working\\_Document.pdf](http://www.refondation.ht/resources/PDNA_Working_Document.pdf)

past several years, from a high of 6% in 1993 to less than 2% in 2009. Haiti now has a lower infection rate than many of its neighbors.<sup>480, 481</sup>

Nevertheless, according to 2009 estimates, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Haiti is 120,000, more than in any other country in the region except Mexico. In terms of prevalence among adults, the rate in Haiti (1.9%) is higher than in all the other countries in the region except Belize (2.3%) and the Bahamas (3.10%).<sup>482</sup> The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has characterized the situation in Haiti as a “generalized HIV/AIDS epidemic.”<sup>483</sup>

The Haitian government, in cooperation with NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations), has worked proactively to address what many predicted would be a large-scale epidemic with infection rates similar to those in Africa.<sup>484</sup> It is estimated that more than 60% of Haiti’s HIV positive are receiving antiretroviral treatment, and nearly 60,000 AIDS orphans and vulnerable children receive preventive healthcare and social services.<sup>485</sup>

The disruption of health services caused by the 2010 earthquake and the rise in violent crime have caused concern that rates may again begin to rise, posing a potential risk to national stability.<sup>486</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Swaziland has the highest HIV/AIDS infection rate in the world, followed by Botswana (24.8%), Lesotho (23.6%), South Africa (17.8%), and Zimbabwe (14.3%). See Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti: People and Society,” in *The World Factbook*, 21 October 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>481</sup> Jonathan M. Katz, Associated Press, “From Haiti, a Surprise: Good News About AIDS,” msnbc.com, 6 July 2009, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/31755066/ns/health-aids/t/haiti-surprise-good-news-about-aids/>

<sup>482</sup> According to 2009 estimates, 220,000 people with HIV/AIDS live in Mexico. See Central Intelligence Agency, “Haiti: People and Society,” in *The World Factbook*, 21 October 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

<sup>483</sup> USAID, “Haiti: HIV/AIDS Health Profile,” November 2010, 1, [www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/global\\_health/aids/Countries/lac/haiti.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/aids/Countries/lac/haiti.pdf)

<sup>484</sup> Jonathan M. Katz, Associated Press, “From Haiti, a Surprise: Good News About AIDS,” msnbc.com, 6 July 2009, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/31755066/ns/health-aids/t/haiti-surprise-good-news-about-aids/>

<sup>485</sup> USAID, “Haiti: HIV/AIDS Health Profile,” November 2010, [www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/global\\_health/aids/Countries/lac/haiti.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/aids/Countries/lac/haiti.pdf)

<sup>486</sup> Lisa Armstrong, “After the Earthquake: Looming AIDS Crisis in Haiti,” Daily Beast, 29 November 2010, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2010/11/29/after-the-earthquake-looming-aids-crisis-in-haiti.html>

## Chapter 5 Assessment

1. The United States is Haiti's largest trading partner.

**True**

More than 90% of Haiti's exports go to the United States, and half of all goods imported to Haiti come from the United States.

2. Today, Haiti's military is the main security force protecting the country.

**False**

Haiti's military was dissolved in 1995 and replaced by the Haitian National Police (HNP), which provides for the internal security of the country. In 2004, the UN Security Council created the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to help keep order and protect human rights..

3. Haiti's crime rates are among the lowest in Latin America.

**False**

In 2010 the crime rate in Haiti rose to nearly 20%, slightly less than Columbia's per capita crime rate. Crime rates are even higher in urban areas and in camps of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

4. Drug trafficking poses a serious threat to Haiti's stability.

**True**

Drugs are a main source of government corruption in Haiti and are believed to be a major destabilizing factor in Haitian society.

5. The Haitian government is able to help people affected by natural disasters.

**False**

The Haitian government is often slow to respond to people's needs during natural disasters. The destruction of government buildings and loss of life during the 2010 earthquake significantly crippled its ability to respond.

## FINAL ASSESSMENT

1. Cap-Haïtien is the capital of Haiti.  
**True / False**
2. Deforestation is the greatest environmental concern for Haiti.  
**True / False**
3. Major earthquakes are rare in Haiti.  
**True / False**
4. Haiti experiences one rainy season each year.  
**True / False**
5. The bulk of Haiti's landmass is made up of mountains.  
**True / False**
6. The majority of Haitians are descended from Taino Indians.  
**True / False**
7. The first French settlers on Hispaniola were pirates.  
**True / False**
8. Dessalines successfully established democracy in Haiti after declaring independence in 1804.  
**True / False**
9. Unlike his father, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier proved to be an ethical ruler.  
**True / False**
10. Pope John Paul II played an instrumental role in the overthrow of "Baby Doc" Duvalier.  
**True / False**
11. Mangoes are Haiti's most important export crop.  
**True / False**
12. Most of Haiti's exports are shipped to the United States.  
**True / False**
13. Haiti has no central bank.  
**True / False**
14. Remittances and foreign aid account for a major portion of Haiti's economy.  
**True / False**

15. Most of Haiti's current debt is because of payments to its former colonial master, France.  
**True / False**
16. The majority of Haitians speak French.  
**True / False**
17. Meat provides the basis of Haitian meals.  
**True / False**
18. Haitians have a strong tradition of storytelling.  
**True / False**
19. The U.S. occupation of Haiti had a significant impact on Haitian arts.  
**True / False**
20. Cockfighting is a popular pastime in Haiti.  
**True / False**
21. Haiti has always enjoyed good relations with the Dominican Republic.  
**True / False**
22. Cuba was one of the first countries to send aid to Haiti after the 2010 earthquake.  
**True / False**
23. The Haitian National Police (HNP) is not adequately staffed to maintain order in the country.  
**True / False**
24. Because Haitians grow most of their own food, they are considered highly food-secure.  
**True / False**
25. Haiti's HIV infection rate is the highest in the world.  
**True / False**

## FURTHER READING

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- Égalité for All: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution*. Public Broadcasting Service. 2009.
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