

Urgent need for sustainable response amidst increasing violence and persistent climate shocks

September 2024 | Haiti

KEY MESSAGES

- The **resurgence of cycles of violence** caused by armed groups has led to a severe deterioration of humanitarian conditions and is hampering reconstruction and stabilisation efforts, in addition to blocking the delivery of humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations.
- **The persistent and devastating impact of climatic hazards, combined with structural problems** such as the weakness of institutions and service delivery, lack of essential infrastructure and limited access to education and health, has weakened the resilience capacities of already vulnerable, at risk, communities.
- **The severity of multi-sectoral needs requires an immediate emergency response** to start mitigating the immediate impacts of this multidimensional crisis. However, given the persistence, and potential increase in vulnerabilities forecast, humanitarian actors must work to **address the root causes of this crisis through an inclusive approach to aid and service delivery**, to ensure a sustainable humanitarian and development response.

CONTEXT

The humanitarian situation in Haiti in 2024 has seen an increase in people in need, as anticipated by the [2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan](#). The challenges faced by Haitians have been exacerbated by the significant [resurgence of violence since February](#), political and social instability as well as structural vulnerabilities related to the lack of essential infrastructure, undermining the resilience of vulnerable populations to persistent shocks.

Armed groups, through the formation of coalitions have intensified their attacks on public institutions, [including police stations, prisons, airports and seaports, particularly in Port-au-Prince](#). This escalation has also sparked a [surge in defense activity](#), signaling a worrying normalisation of violence in Haitian society with a sharp [increase in casualties during the first three months of 2024](#).

The context of cycles of violence is severely disruptive to key supply chains, leading

to difficulties in accessing food and other essential resources. Furthermore internal displacement has increased, complicating access to food and leading to loss of livelihoods, a [sharp increase in the cost of living](#) and a [rapid deterioration in food security conditions](#).

Since February 2024, road closures imposed by gangs have not only affected the local economy but also [severely hampered humanitarian access](#), leading to delays in operations and the delivery of potentially life saving assistance.

The closure of the port of Port-au-Prince, which is the country's main entry point for cargo and imports has prevented the arrival of adequate humanitarian supplies further restricting any ability to deliver essential food, non food items and key resources.

5.41 M

people, almost half the population are considered in [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\) Phase 3 \(crisis\) or worse](#).

27%

of households in Port-au-Prince had concerns they would be [forced to flee their homes](#).

Humanitarian challenges exacerbated by insecurity

The exponential increase in internal displacement since the beginning of 2024 reveals the deterioration of security conditions in Haiti.¹ This increase is particularly acute in the provinces, leading to **economic and social pressure placed on host communities, and worsening already fragile humanitarian conditions.**²

The majority of IDPs are displaced from areas where **more than 20% of the population are already considered in IPC Phase 4 (emergency)** as shown in the map on page 3. Many people have no choice but to remain in these municipalities where the security situation remains fragile, and humanitarian access continues to be extremely difficult.

The **resurgence of violence since February 2024** has amplified an already **vulnerable population's exposure to high protection risks**, particularly in Port-au-Prince.⁵ **Movement restrictions** caused by armed clashes and/or blockades set up by armed groups severely affect access to basic services, livelihoods and markets.

The impact on the movement of goods and limited access to market has led to an **increase in the price of essential goods**. Between January and May 2024, the **cost of the food basket increased by 27%.⁶**

Insecurity caused by armed groups not only affects Port-au-Prince, but also departments such as Centre and Artibonite, **paralysing the local economy** and drastically increasing both protection (see the quote opposite) and food security needs (see the map below).

29%

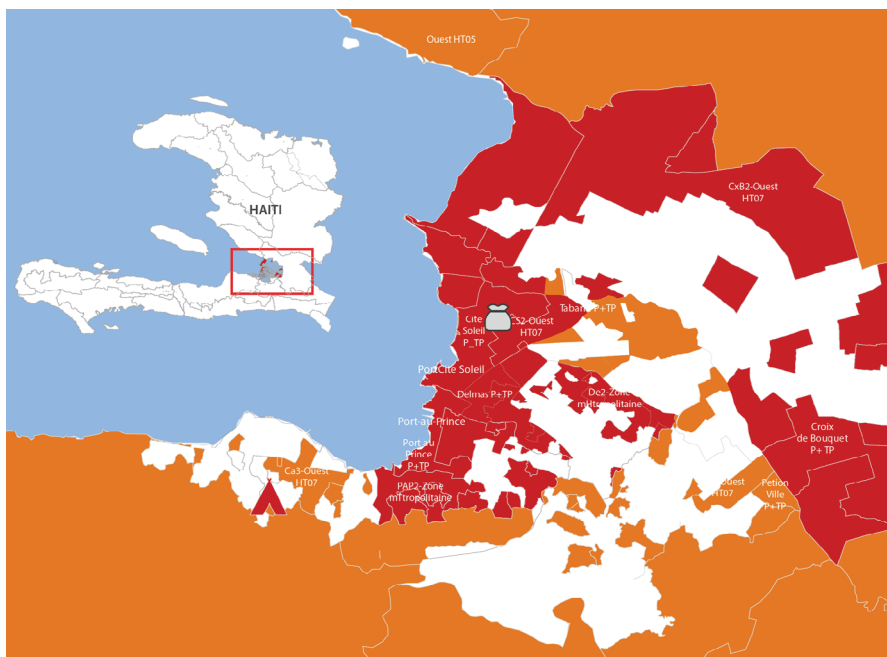
of households in the municipality of **Cité Soleil** and **25% in Carrefour** have a [hunger score considered severe](#) according to the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA).

The **development of durable solutions for displaced populations is compromised by several factors.** Currently people displaced from areas controlled by armed groups are **unable to return to their homes, have lost their sources of income, and cannot rely on host communities or Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) sites to provide them with essential goods and basic services.**³

The IPC analysis found that approximately **6000 people housed in IDP sites were facing phase 5 (catastrophe) conditions, the most severe score possible.**⁴

"Those who risk their lives to go and sell in Pont Sandé pay the price. There are merchants from the area who are in the hands of gangs or kidnapped on the road in Liancourt, when they simply want to sell their products in Pont-Sondé."

Local actor consulted in Artibonite describing the control of armed groups, as part of REACH's Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM).⁷





IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification


(mapped phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
 2 - Stressed
 3 - Crisis
 4 - Emergency
 5 - Famine
 Areas with inadequate evidence
 Areas not analysed

Map Symbols

- map symbols
-  Urban settlement classification
-  IDPs/other settlements classification

Area receives significant humanitarian food assistance
(accounted for in Phase classification)

- 
- >25% of households meet 25-50% of caloric needs through assistance

IPC classification of acute food insecurity phases in Port-au-Prince. Whilst not reflected here it should be noted that IPC analysts declared approximately 6000 IDPs in Port-au-Prince in Phase 5 (Catastrophe)

44%

of households in Port-au-Prince **rely on purchasing on credit** as their main source of food.

Insecurity also affects access to education and health. In Cité Soleil, nearly half of the children aged 3 to 18 have had their **education disrupted by the occupation of schools by armed groups**. In addition, **18%** of households in Cité Soleil and **16%** in Port-au-Prince reported that children's education was disrupted by **schools being used as shelters for IDPs**. As of May 2024, nearly 900 schools have temporarily closed in Port-au-Prince.¹

Access to healthcare is also being undermined. Only 20% of healthcare facilities in Port-au-Prince were operational in May 2024. **The resupply of medicine was severely hampered by disruptions in services to both the international airport and the seaport of Port-au-Prince.**²

Increasing vulnerability in the face of climatic shocks

Recent increases in security concerns have had a disproportionately large impact because they have occurred in a country **already facing a protracted crisis due to repeated climatic shocks**.

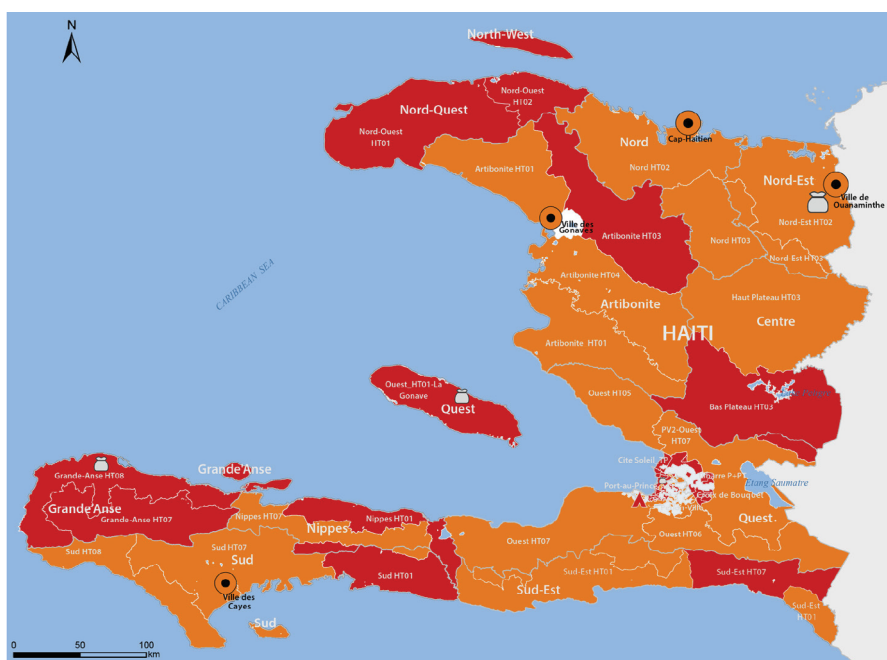
The exposure of vulnerable populations to continued climatic hazards constitutes an incredibly worrying humanitarian challenge in Haiti. **In particular, vulnerable populations are unable to access adequate housing, adequate agricultural conditions and functional sanitation services.**

According to the 2024 MSNA, **Haitian households are still vulnerable to climatic hazards**, including cyclones, tropical storms and floods.³ The conditions of shelters remain precarious and **housing has been reported as inadequate to withstand climatic hazards**, or even regular weather.

Indeed, the most frequently reported housing-related problems were leaks in the event of rain.

Equally, agricultural production has clearly been effected by increasing insecurity and harsh weather conditions, leading to a decrease in dependence on personal production of food from 43% in 2023 to 28% in 2024, according to the MSNA.^{4,5} **Which is a clear contributing factor to the deterioration in food security between the two years.**

Furthermore, the **drought is severely affecting the Centre region** where the main source of income is through agricultural activities and 17% of households are classified in IPC Phase 4 (emergency).⁶



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IPC classification of acute food insecurity phases at departmental level

This combination of shocks, continually exacerbated by a worsening security situation has complicated lives for farmers who are struggling to meet basic needs. As noted throughout HSM research¹, when local actors were asked about their main challenges some highlighted the **lack of functional water infrastructure**, citing maintenance problems, and in particular **lack of cleaning of irrigation canals** to maintain water supply conditions.

"If a pregnant woman is in La Plaine or Colibeu, it can take two or three days to reach the hospital. Because of the lack of roads, she is transported on a stretcher made from wood and fabric, crossing difficult terrain."

Local actor consulted in Centre

These consultations highlighted the desire to **invest in the rehabilitation of essential infrastructure for recovery and sustainable development** in order to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations.

The protests demanding reconstruction of the canal on the Massacre River in Ouanaminthe, and reactivation of the "Head Gate" canal connected to the Artibonite river was clear evidence of this desire for reconstruction, recovery and development.²

"In reality, many young people go to Port-au-Prince and engage in illegal activities to survive. The lack of jobs for all has been going on for a long time. When a person arrives in the city and is offered a weapon in exchange for only two gourdes, he is forced to join these activities to support himself."

Local actor in consulted in Centre

markets because of damage to the roads. Therefore the rehabilitation of essential infrastructure should also be a key priority for local communities and actors in these areas.

These factors in particular weakened the resilience of communities in the face of insecurity and climatic hazards, the consequences of which have a disproportionate and direct impact on the daily lives of children.

Children are often faced with no choice but to leave school early either due to climatic conditions, protection concerns, the need to support family livelihood, or school closures. More than a third of children aged 3 to 18 in Cité Soleil have had their education disrupted by various natural events and disasters. In fact, nearly half of all households have been affected by flooding. This is also the case for **29%** of children in the North-West and **25%** in the South-East and Grand'Anse.³ **These educational disruptions limit the future prospects of young people, exacerbating the cycle of poverty and making them particularly vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.**

Consultations via REACHs HSM has highlighted **how poor road conditions reduce access to basic services** (especially healthcare, education and markets). Furthermore, according to the MSNA, **25%** of households in the Northeast and **10%** of households in Artibonite cannot access

17%

of children aged 3 to 18 **did not attend school at some point during** the 2023-2024 school year.

5000

Haitian gourdes, or about 40USD, is the median monthly income of households from their own production according to the 2024 MSNA.

11%

of households in Centre felt **concerned that a household member would engage in risky activities** due to the economic needs of the household.

Severely limited access to water sources and adequate sanitation facilities amid cholera resurgence

Access to safe drinking water remains a major challenge in Haiti, particularly in rural areas where **more than a third of households use unimproved sources**. In addition, **21%** of households across the country **do not have access to sanitation facilities**, reaching up to one third of households in the South and Grand'Anse.¹

This lack of clean water and adequate sanitation, as shown in the maps below, compromises hygiene and **drastically increases the risk and spread of infectious diseases**.

"There is a serious lack of latrines in the area. In many places (Simonette, Plasaque, etc), almost no one has latrines. These areas are high up and when it rains the water runs off with the faeces into the water sources. This must be the reason why cholera has affected so many people in the area."

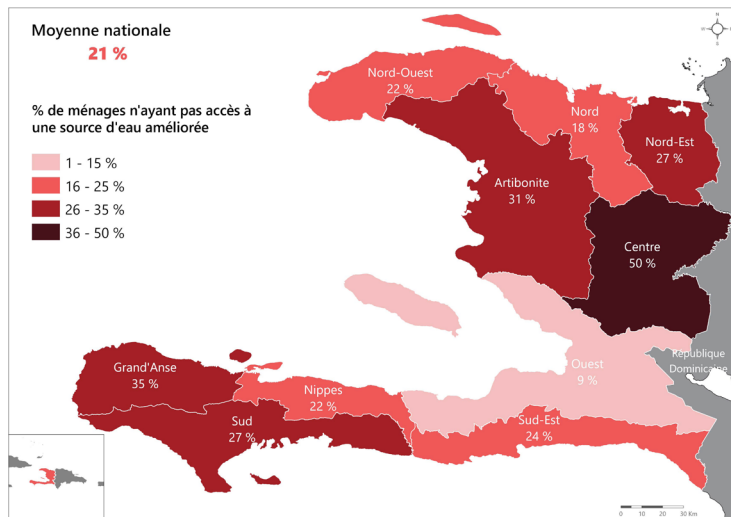
Local actor consulted in Bas-Artibonite, in Médor

The resurgence of cholera since 2022 has severely exacerbated an already delicate humanitarian situation and places entire communities at risk of excess mortality. There are nearly 83,000 suspected cases and over 1,200 deaths reported as of April 2024.³

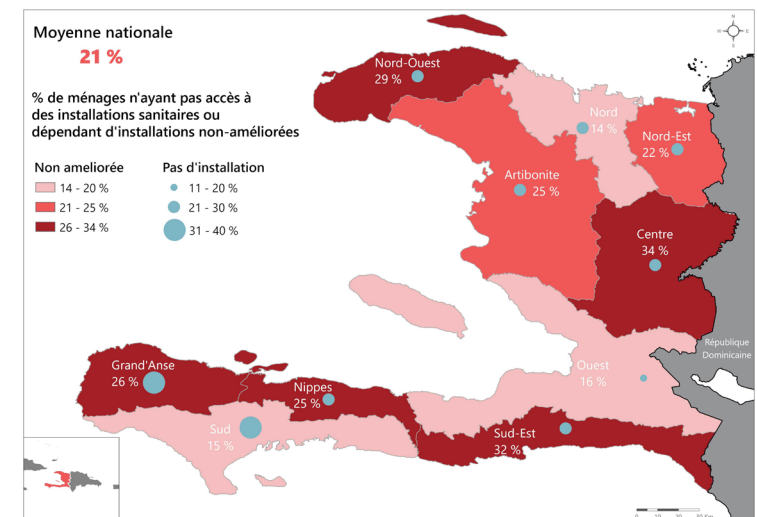
Attacks on health facilities, such as the Mirebalais university Hospital, lead to temporary closures in services, severely hampering the cholera response and allowing the disease to spread through the community.⁴ According to the MSNA, **39% of households in Haiti have required cholera treatment but a third were unable to access treatment**. This situation underscores the urgency of improving access to water, sanitation, healthcare, and basic services.

According to HSM data,² the spread of cholera is attributed to the lack of latrines and sanitation services.

% of households without access to an improved water source



% of households without access to sanitation facilities or relying on unimproved facilities



A targeted response to urgent needs combined with sustainable interventions



Ensuring safe conditions for the development of a sustainable response

Haiti continues to be confronted by the growing influence of armed groups that risk expanding to other territories in the country. Understanding the dynamics that strengthen their financing and social anchoring, while investing in a regional security response to address the root causes of insecurity is essential. In addition, reducing the vulnerability of youth and children to recruitment by providing them with safe access to education, employment and mobility opportunities is curial to strenghtening their resilience.



Addressing extreme food insecurity

An urgent response is needed to address extremely concerning food security needs, particularly for IDPs. Promoting local agricultural production and strengthening farmers' resilience to droughts and storms, will help to create a more sustainable response and recovery. Humanitarian actors must facilitate access to agricultural inputs, and improve vital infrastructure promoting agricultural activity. Furthermore, improving the flow of goods and access to markets will revitalise local economies whilst reducing reliance on expensive imports. Agricultural cooperatives and microcredit programs must be encouraged to diversify incomes and begin to promote stability and strengthen food security.



Preventing threats to public health by improving WASH conditions

Health conditions in Haiti are threatened by several factors (including the potential for a cholera epidemic), and exacerbated by limited access to safe drinking water and sanitation services. It is important to strengthen infrastructure, such as wells and distribution systems, targeting vulnerable areas as a priority. Promoting water purification devices and organising hygiene training is also important. Building latrines in densely populated areas and improving health surveillance systems can serve to help detect potential outbreaks early. Finally, raising awareness about the causes and consequences of infectious diseases such as cholera and typhoid, will help prevent their spread.



Strengthening national ownership of development issues

For the development of sustainable responses, it is essential to strengthen the role of institutions and national actors, particularly Haitian associations and civil services, as well as through the diaspora, which have better access to communities affected by the crises. Training and strengthening of association management capacities will help to promote their effectiveness and use of development structures and tools. This will help to create inclusive responses, better aligned with the priorities and needs of affected populations, whilst strengthening trust between them, and humanitarian aid providers.

ABOUT REACH

The REACH Initiative facilitates the development of tools and information products that strengthen the capacity of humanitarian actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts.

REACH methodologies include primary data collection and in-depth analysis; and all activities are carried out through inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Programme for Training and Research - Operations Satellite Applications (UNITAR-UNOSAT)

FOOTNOTES

For more information on the **Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) 2024** conducted in Haiti, please consult this link for a [presentation of the key results of this assessment](#). Concerning the **Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM)** you can access the reports of the [1st](#) and [2nd](#) cycles of Artibonite and the [3rd cycle in Centre](#).

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- ¹ OIM DTM Haïti, [Rapport sur la situation de déplacement interne en Haïti — Round 7](#), Juin 2024
- ² REACH Haiti, [MSNA Déplacés Internes et Communautés hôtes dans le Sud](#), Août 2024
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ IPC, Haïti : [Analyse IPC de l'insécurité alimentaire aiguë | août 2024 - juin 2025](#), 2024
- ⁵ REACH Haiti, [MSNA tableaux de résultats Zone Métropolitaine de Port-au-Prince](#), Aout 2024
- ⁶ ACAPS, [Haïti: Criminal gang violence in Port-au-Prince](#), 2024
- ⁷ REACH Haiti [Suivi de la Situation Humanitaire \(HSM\) - Cycle 3 Centre](#) - Septembre 2024

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- ¹ OCHA, [Haïti : près de 200.000 enfants privés d'école à Port-au-Prince et dans l'Artibonite en raison de l'insécurité](#), 2024
- ² OCHA, [Urgence Haïti Rapport de situation n° 24 \(au 23 mai 2024\)](#), Mai 2024
- ³ REACH Haiti, [Présentation des résultats clés de l'Evaluation des Besoins Multisectoriels en Haïti](#), 2024
- ⁴ Fewsnets, [L'insécurité persistante continue d'exacerber les déplacements de population et l'insécurité alimentaire en Haïti](#), 2024
- ⁵ REACH Haiti, [Bulletin MSNA 2023](#), 2024
- ⁶ IPC, Haïti : [Analyse IPC de l'insécurité alimentaire aiguë | août 2024 - juin 2025](#), 2024

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- ¹ REACH Haiti, [HSM - Cycle 1 Bas Artibonite - Rapport](#), Octobre 2023
- ² Ibid
- ³ REACH Haiti, [Présentation des résultats clés de l'Evaluation des Besoins Multisectoriels en Haïti](#), 2024

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- ¹ REACH Haiti, [Présentation des résultats clés de l'Evaluation des Besoins Multisectoriels en Haïti](#), 2024
- ² REACH Haiti, [HSM - Cycle 1 Bas Artibonite - Rapport](#), Octobre 2023
- ³ REACH Haiti, [Haïti: public health conditions & the cholera outbreak](#), 2024
- ⁴ UNICEF, [Violence sending shocks around Haiti's collapsing health system](#), 2024