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Haiti : Violence in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area
Situation Report #3
As of 26 May 2022

This report was prepared by OCHA Haiti with contributions from UN agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organisations, and humanitarian partners. It is based on the latest information available as of 26 May 2022 and covers the period from 24 April to 26 May 2022.

HIGHLIGHTS

- While the increase in clashes between armed gangs in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area appears to have subsided, the situation remains highly volatile.
- Access to violence-affected neighbourhoods remains limited. Humanitarian partners are nevertheless regaining some leeway to carry out assessments and implement response activities.
- Of the 14 makeshift sites for displaced people identified at the height of the crisis, only three remain open: Kay Castor (Tabarre), the Eben-Ezer Adventist Church (Tabarre), and the Terre Noire Classical Centre (Cité Soleil). Partners have observed some backflow.
- According to the latest nutritional survey in Cité Soleil, one in five children under age 5 suffers from acute malnutrition.

KEY FIGURES

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<th>16,828</th>
<th>188</th>
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SITUATION OVERVIEW

Since 24 April 2022, the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area (PAPMA) has been experiencing violent clashes between armed gangs. While the first confrontations were between the ‘400 Mawozo’ and ‘Chen Mechan’ gangs, as part of territorial clashes in the communes of Croix-des-Bouquets, Cité Soleil, and Tabarre, the armed violence, initially localised to the neighbourhoods of Butte Boyer, Croix-des-Mission and Marin, escalated and spread to the neighbourhoods of Santo, Drouillard, Sarthe, Blanchard and, more recently, Pernier in the commune of Pétion-Ville. According to Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data1, between 24 April and 20 May 20222, 61 neighbourhoods were affected by generalised violence (including 15 neighbourhoods in Croix-des-Bouquets, 12 in Cité Soleil, and 11 in Pétion-Ville) and 41 by targeted violence (including 12 neighbourhoods in Pétion-Ville, 11 in Croix-des-Bouquets and 7 in Tabarre). Although the violence appears to have subsided in recent days, the situation remains highly volatile and unpredictable.

The affected populations, forced to flee, have had their livelihoods and access to basic services drastically reduced. The latest DTM report3, covering the period from 14 to 20 May 2022, mentions 11 medical centres and 9 marketplaces closed in the neighbourhoods evaluated. In Tabarre, for example, according to data collected by Save the Children on behalf of

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1 The DMT does not cover the entire PAPMA.
2 Over this period, 229 of the 429 neighbourhoods in the PAPMA were assessed at least once as part of the DTM.
3 See report : Haiti – Système D’alerte Précoce pour les Déplacements (14-20 mai 2022)
the Education in Emergency (EIE) Working Group of the PAPMA and Western Departmental Directorate for Education (WDDE), 442 schools were closed, including several that were burned down and burglarised. While schools in Tabarre have recently reopened, the situation is most worrying in the commune of Croix-des-Bouquets, where 98 per cent of schools were affected by the violence.

Provisional assessments of this outburst of violence indicate that at least 188 people have been killed, including 92 non-gang members and 96 suspected gang members. Some 113 people were injured, 12 are missing and 49 were kidnapped for ransom. However, given the lack of access to areas of concern, which remain constrained, this figure could potentially be higher. Testimonies collected and cited by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights4 Michelle Bachelet describe extreme gang violence, including beheadings, mutilations and burning of bodies, as well as gang rapes, including of young children, used to terrorise and punish people living in areas controlled by rival gangs.

This situation has forced tens of thousands to flee their homes and seek shelter, mostly with host families or in makeshift displacement sites. While the insecurity and instability of the situation make it impossible to establish a comprehensive total of people displaced by the clashes, the figure is at least 16,828 internally displaced people (IDPs). The DTM indicates an estimated 34,598 individual movements between 24 April and 20 May 20225. Most of these flows originate from the communes of Croix-des-Bouquets and Cité Soleil. Those displaced include groups that have been identified as vulnerable, such as people with disabilities, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children heads of households, separated or unaccompanied children and orphans, injured people or people with urgent medical problems, people with chronic illnesses and people living with HIV.

The relative de-escalation in violence correlates to a reduction in displacement flows in recent days, with partners observing people returning to their homes. Of the 14 makeshift sites identified at the height of the crisis, the majority have closed three weeks after the start of the violence. Only three sites remain open: Kay Castor (Tabarre), which hosts 300 people, the Classical Centre of Terre Noire (Cité Soleil), where there are 94 people, including eight pregnant women and six people with reduced mobility, and lastly the Adventist Church of Eben-Ezer (Tabarre), which houses 88 people.

Despite these returns, some have come home to burnt-down homes and the loss of most of their belongings and, in some cases, livelihoods (shops, tools). As mentioned by the Haitian Advocacy and Environmental Sustainability Integrated Network (RIHPED) and Tearfund in their assessment following their visit to the Eben-Ezer Adventist Church site, about half of the 100 homes abandoned were burnt down, mainly in the Haute Cour area in Butte Boyer.

The situation remains uncertain; renewed violence could lead to further displacement. Clashes have continued over the last two days at Canaan on the National Road (RN) 1, while armed assailants have intercepted and hijacked three humanitarian trucks loaded with food supplies on that same road in the last ten days. Additionally, some partners report that their trucks carrying humanitarian assistance have had to pay a fee to access the port Varreux. While gang activity in the Martissant commune has paralysed traffic on the RN 2 for almost a year, this port has become a crucial alternative for transporting goods to the south, including as part of the humanitarian response to the 14 August 2021 7.2-magnitude earthquake. Merchants in Grand Sud, unable to transport their goods safely to and from Port-au-Prince, announced an indefinite strike against insecurity starting 1 June 2022.

**HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES**

Further assessments are required to determine the true extent of the humanitarian needs of those affected during the past weeks’ clashes. Despite the Haitian National Police’s many attempts to regain control over affected neighbourhoods, many of the affected areas remain inaccessible to humanitarian actors.

This situation is limiting partners’ abilities to assess the scope of the crisis and the needs and vulnerabilities of those affected. While humanitarian actors with key local informants (e.g. the DTM) were able to collect data on a regular basis, they nevertheless faced challenges in triangulating the information. Beyond the security considerations, the scattering of affected populations who fled hostile areas to other PAPMA districts or to neighbouring departments, makeshift sites, or host families is also hampering information gathering.

The current apparent lull offers a window of opportunity for humanitarian partners, who have regained some access in some affected areas and could carry out assessments. UNFPA, for instance, is planning to carry out an assessment of gender-based violence (GBV) in makeshift sites this week.

Overall, humanitarian partners are alarmed by the situation, as many people hurriedly left their homes, leaving behind their belongings and livelihoods, to take shelter either in host families already facing an all-around increase in the cost of

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4 See press release: Haiti: Bachelet deeply disturbed by human rights impact of deteriorating security situation in Port-au-Prince

5 This number refers to displacement flows during the reference period. It includes short-term movements, people who might have returned home and secondary movements. Estimating the number of people who remain displaced in the PAPMA is difficult due to ongoing population movements.
living or in makeshift sites with poor living conditions. The latest DTM report corroborates this finding, with key informants reporting that fewer than two out of five people have enough income to cover their needs in 79 per cent of the neighbourhoods surveyed.

During visits to Kay Castor, the largest of the three sites, humanitarian partners noted poor living conditions and below-minimum intersectoral standards in terms of emergency shelter, protection, drinking water, sanitation and hygiene and health. The General Directorate of Civil Protection (GDCP) is active at the site, implementing sanitation activities.

A RIHPED-Tearfund team visited the Eben-Ezer Adventist Church site, and while their report details functional access to water and sanitation, the number of people that can be accommodated remains very limited (88), there are no beds provided and the displaced are sleeping on a partially-covered terrace.

In both sites, displaced peoples' needs are the same: safe housing and money to help them restart their lives and sustain themselves.

A complete census of closed schools and the number of crisis-affected students and teachers is underway. Save the Children, during data collection carried out on behalf of the EIE Sectoral Working Group of the PAPMA and WDDE, identified school supplies and teaching and learning materials as priority needs. Aside from the weeks of missed learning opportunities, the violence has had a marked physical and psychological impact on students and teachers alike.

The violence and its surrounding context are also contributing to the deterioration of the nutritional status of gang-controlled neighbourhoods. A rapid nutritional assessment of a sample of 9,506 children ages 6 to 59 months, carried out jointly by the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP) and UNICEF in the commune of Cité Soleil between 18 and 29 April 2022, indicates that the global acute malnutrition rate is 20 per cent, or at least five percentage points above the WHO emergency threshold. This includes a severe acute malnutrition rate of 5 per cent, which is more than twice the emergency threshold of 2 per cent. Dependency on the actions of humanitarian partners is high, as, NGOs, particularly MSF, cover the vast majority of people in terms of health services despite the predominance of private structures in Cité Soleil (57 per cent of existing health structures)

**HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

The crisis’ impact on access affected response as well. Unable to physically visit most of the makeshift IDP sites, humanitarian partners had to implement remote response plans and monitoring mechanisms.

**Camp Coordination and Camp Management**

Between poor living conditions in makeshift IDP sites and the impossibility of providing the minimum security conditions for action, humanitarian partners are working with local and national authorities to find solutions to improve the daily lives of the affected people. Government counterparts, who have not set up lasting reception sites, support the idea of logistics and monetary support for displaced people to return to their communities, or to relocate to another department or within the PAPMA. Other alternatives are being studied in order to provide rapid and dignified solutions for future displacement surges.

In the meantime, humanitarian actors are working to meet the basic needs of the affected population.

On 30 April 2022, just a few days after the start of the crisis, IOM teams, accompanied by GDCP brigadiers, distributed 350 hygiene kits, 350 kitchen kits, 350 blankets and 50 baby kits funded by the UN Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the United States’ Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) at the Tabarre town hall. Firefighters from the Tabarre fire station also took part in this activity, accompanying vulnerable people (pregnant women, the elderly and people with reduced mobility). IOM strengthened its capacity to provide psychosocial support to adults, take care of people with disabilities and support the rehousing of the most vulnerable families.

To reduce protection risks given the lack of electricity in many makeshift sites, UNFPA delivered 200 solar lamps to the GDCP and 800 to humanitarian partners. A distribution of 200 dignity kits is also planned and a request for 650 additional kits is underway.

For several weeks, Tabarre communal authorities, with the support of the Peasant Animation Centre for Community Action and WFP, have been serving hot meals for displaced people in the Place Clercine area. However, WFP will not be able to support this activity from June onwards.

RIHPED-Tearfund teams distributed 50 mattresses to 25 families sleeping on the ground at the Eben-Ezer Adventist Church site and provided cash assistance of 1,500 gourdes (approximately US$15.00) to 28 people.

**Nutrition**

In response to the nutritional emergency in the commune of Cité Soleil, community health workers are making referrals to health facilities and distributing packs of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), provided by UNICEF, to children...
diagnosed as suffering from acute malnutrition. Children ages 6 to 23 months who are not showing signs of malnutrition received a micronutrient supplement, and those ages 6 to 59 months received a vitamin A supplement.

Another rapid nutritional assessment is planned in the next few days in the commune of Delmas, home to approximately 60,000 children under 5.

NGOs such as CONCERN, Médecins du Monde Canada, and AVSI are particularly active in nutrition in the commune of Cité Soleil. Moreover, partnerships are underway with the SAKALA, OCCD’H and GHESKIO grassroots organizations to implement urgent health responses. Awareness-raising work on the prevention of malnutrition and childhood diseases is also underway.

Health

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Holland deployed a mobile clinic in Tabarre to provide assistance to displaced populations in the area and better understand their needs, carrying out no less than 140 consultations. These consultations reveal that the health situation of the displaced people was not as severe. With the reopening of health centres in the area, MSF Holland has ended its consultations in the area, but remains ready to redeploy should the situation deteriorate again.

Education

Regarding education, partners are implementing several activities. CARE Haiti, faith-based organisations and local organisations are carrying out educational activities and partners are drawing up a minimum rapid response in coordination with the Protection sector. Within this framework, partners are compiling a list of establishments that can act as Temporary Learning Establishments (TLE), and plan to distribute school supplies to students and teachers, as well as teaching kits, recreational kits, and hygiene and sanitation kits to schools.

Partners have dedicated a specific focus to students in the 9th year of basic education and NS4 to support them in preparing for exams. To this end, the Basic Education Department posted on the Ministry’s website previous years’ exams for the 9th grade, which will be printed and distributed to the TLEs. The same approach is being considered for secondary education.

For students in other levels (from pre-school to secondary), partners set up minimum package plans for a summer camp to start at the end of June in the TLEs. The emphasis will be on recreational and educational activities and the rebuilding of the social fabric between children and with the school.

To prepare for the start of the 2022/2023 school year, crisis-affected students at the summer camps will benefit, if needed, from remedial courses from September to November to support them in their transition to the next grade. A cash distribution for teachers involved in the minimum package activities as well as for the most vulnerable families is also under consideration.

Accountability and Community Engagement

The violence is posing several challenges to humanitarian actors’ direct and permanent contact with communities for accountability and community engagement. However, partners activated hotlines to receive complaints from affected people and enable partners to respond where possible and monitor evolving needs. IOM’s toll-free helpline received 224 calls between 20 April and 17 May, mostly from people in the Croix-des-Bouquets and Cité Soleil communities. Callers’ main concerns included relocation assistance (86 per cent of calls received). Vulnerable groups who used the hotline included a large number of single mothers (69 calls), people with physical disabilities (23 calls) and people with serious medical conditions (15 calls).

Potential networks including faith-based networks with strong community roots were also activated to reach affected populations.

RESOURCES

Although the situation seems to have calmed down, the risk of renewed violence in the PAPMA accompanied by flows of displaced people remains high. Humanitarian partners lack flexible financial resources to meet current needs and strengthen response capacities in the face of new crises. At mid-year, humanitarian contributions for Haiti for 2022 amount to US$67.3 million against Humanitarian Response Plan requirements of US$373.2 million.

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