

= Slavery in Haiti =

Slavery in Haiti has existed since Christopher Columbus arrived on the island in 1492 . The practice was so devastating to the native population that the Spanish began importing African slaves . During the French colonial period beginning in 1625 , the economy of Haiti (then known as Saint @-@ Domingue) was based on slavery , and the practice there was regarded as the most brutal in the world . The Haitian Revolution of 1804 , the only successful slave revolt in human history , precipitated the end of slavery not only in Saint @-@ Domingue , but in all French colonies . However , several Haitian leaders following the revolution employed forced labor , believing a plantation @-@ style economy was the only way for Haiti to succeed , and building fortifications to safeguard against attack by the French . During the U.S. occupation between 1915 and 1934 , the U.S. military forced Haitians to work building roads for defense against Haitian resistance fighters .

Slavery is still practiced in Haiti today . As many as half a million children are unpaid domestic servants called *restaveks* , who routinely suffer physical and sexual abuse . Additionally , human trafficking , including child trafficking is a significant problem in Haiti ; trafficked people are brought into , out of , and through Haiti for forced labor , including sex trafficking . The groups most at risk include the poor , women , children , the homeless , and people migrating across the border with the Dominican Republic . The devastating earthquake in 2010 displaced many , rendering them homeless , isolated , and supremely vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers . The chaos following the quake also distracted authorities and hindered efforts to stop trafficking . The government has taken steps to prevent and stop trafficking , ratifying human rights conventions and enacting laws to protect the vulnerable , but enforcement remains difficult .

= = History = =

= = = Spanish Hispaniola (1492 ? 1625) = = =

The natives living on the island that would come to be called Hispaniola were peaceful and not trained in military tactics . In the Pre @-@ Columbian era , other Caribbean tribes would sometimes attack the island to kidnap people into slavery . However , when Columbus arrived in 1492 , slavery on the island turned into a major business : colonists quickly began establishing sugar plantations dependent on slave labor . The practice of slavery in the Spanish New World colonies would become so large scale in Spain 's colonization of the Americas that imports of African slaves outnumbered Spanish immigration to the New World by the end of the 1500s .

When Columbus arrived in what is today Haiti in December 1492 and met the native Taino Arawak people , they were friendly , exchanging gifts with the Spaniards and volunteering their help . But Columbus was already planning to enslave them . He wrote in a letter to Queen Isabella of Spain that the natives were " tractable , and easily led ; they could be made to grow crops and build cities " .

When Columbus returned to Europe in 1493 , 30 of his soldiers stayed to build a fort there called La Navidad . They began stealing from , raping , and enslaving the natives ? in some cases they held native women and girls as sex slaves . Finding gold was a chief goal for the Spanish ; they quickly forced enslaved natives to work in gold mines , which took a heavy toll in life and health . In addition to gold the slaves mined copper , and they grew crops for the Spaniards . In response to the brutality , the natives fought back . Some Taino escaped into remote parts of the island 's mountains and formed communities in hiding as " maroons " , who organized attacks against Spaniards ' settlements. the Spanish responded to the native resistance with severe reprisals , for example destroying crops to starve the natives . The Spaniards brought to the island dogs trained to kill the natives and unleashed them upon those who rebelled against enslavement . In 1495 Columbus sent 500 captured natives back to Spain as slaves , but 200 did not survive the voyage , and the others died shortly afterwards . In the late 1490s he planned to send 4000 slaves back to Spain each year , but this expectation failed to take into account the rapid decline the native population would soon

suffer and was never achieved .

It is not known how many Taino people were on the island prior to Columbus 's arrival ? estimates range from several thousand to eight million ? but overwork in slavery and diseases introduced by the Europeans quickly killed a large part of the population . Between 1492 and 1494 , one third of the native population on the island died . Two million had been killed within ten years of the Spaniards ' arrival , and by 1514 , 92 % of the native population of the island were killed by enslavement and European diseases . By the 1540s the culture of the natives had disappeared from the island , and by 1548 the native population was under 500 . The rapid rate at which the native slaves died necessitated the import of Africans , for whom contact with Europeans was not new and who therefore had already developed some immunity to European diseases . Columbus 's son Diego Columbus started the African slave trade to the island in 1505 . Some newly arrived slaves from Africa and neighboring islands were able to escape and join maroon communities in the mountains . In 1519 Africans and Native Americans joined forces to start a slave rebellion that turned into a years @-@ long uprising which was eventually crushed by the Spanish in the 1530s .

Spanish missionary Bartolomé de las Casas spoke out against the enslavement of the natives and the brutality of the Spaniards . He wrote that to the natives , the Christianity brought by the Spaniards had come to symbolize the brutality with which they had been treated ; he quoted one Taino cacique (tribal chief) , " They tell us , these tyrants , that they adore a God of peace and equality , and yet they usurp our land and make us their slaves . They speak to us of an immortal soul and of their eternal rewards and punishments , and yet they rob our belongings , seduce our women , violate our daughters . " Las Casas commented that the Spaniards ' punishment of a Taino man by cutting off his ear " marked the beginning of the spilling of blood , later to become a river of blood , first on this island and then in every corner of these Indies . " Las Casas ' campaign led to an official end of the enslavement of Tainos in 1542 ? however it was replaced by the African slave trade . As Las Casas had presaged , the Spaniards ' treatment of the Tainos was the start of a centuries @-@ long legacy of slavery in which abuse such as amputating body parts was commonplace .

= = = French Saint Domingue (1625 ? 1789) = = =

The Spanish ceded control of the western part of the island of Hispaniola to the French in the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 ; France named its new colonial possession Saint Domingue . The colony , based on the export of slave @-@ grown crops , particularly sugar , would become the richest in the world . Known as the " Pearl of the Antilles " , the colony became the world 's foremost producer of coffee and sugar cane . The French , like the Spanish , imported slaves from Africa . In 1681 there were 2 @, @ 000 African slaves in the future Saint Domingue ; by 1789 there were almost half a million .

French plantation @-@ owners worked their African slaves so hard that half died within a few years ; it was cheaper to import new slaves than to improve working conditions enough to increase survival . The rate of death of slaves on Saint Domingue 's plantations was higher than anywhere else in the western hemisphere . Over the French colony 's hundred @-@ year course , slavery killed about a million Africans , and thousands more chose suicide . Slaves newly arrived from Africa , particularly women , were especially likely to kill themselves ; some thought that in death they could return home to Africa . Pregnant slaves usually did not survive long enough or have healthy enough pregnancies to have live babies , but if they did the children often died young . Food was insufficient , and slaves were expected to grow and prepare it for themselves on top of their already crushing , 12 @-@ hour workdays . It was legal for a slaveholder to kill a slave who hit a white person , according to the 1685 Code Noir , a decree by the French king Louis XIV regulating practices of slaves and slavers . Torture of slaves was routine ; they were whipped , burned , buried alive , restrained and allowed to be bitten by swarms of insects , mutilated , raped , and had limbs amputated . Slaves caught eating the sugar cane would be forced to wear tin muzzles in the fields .

The Catholic Church condoned slavery and the practices used in the French colony , viewing the institution as a way to convert Africans to Christianity .

About 48 000 slaves in Saint Domingue managed to escape ; slaveholders hired bounty hunters to catch these maroons . Those who were not caught and re enslaved established communities away from settled areas . Maroons would organize raids called mawonag on plantations , stealing supplies that their communities needed to survive , such as food , tools , and weapons . One famous maroon , François Mackandal , escaped into the mountains in the middle of the 18th century and went on to plan attacks on plantation owners . Mackandal was caught and burned at the stake in 1758 , but his legend lived on to inspire rebellion among slaves ? and fear among slaveholders . In addition to escaping , slaves resisted by poisoning slaveholders , their families , their livestock , and other slaves ? this was a common and feared enough occurrence that in December 1746 the French King banned poisoning in particular . Arson was another form of slave resistance .

The rapid rate of death of slaves during this period set the stage for the Haitian revolution by necessitating the import of more slaves from Africa . These were people who had known freedom , some of whom had been captured as soldiers and had military training . Before the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789 there were eight times as many slaves in the colony as there were white and mixed race people put together . In 1789 the French were importing 30 000 slaves a year and there were half a million slaves in the French part of the island alone , compared to about 30 000 whites .

== Revolutionary period (1789 ? 1804) ==

Sex between male masters and female slaves was so common in Saint Domingue that a separate class had emerged consisting of the mixed race children of these encounters . It was standard for fathers to free these children , leading them to become a new class more privileged than slaves but less so than whites ; they were called gens de couleur , " free people of color " . Some of these free people of color were quite wealthy and some owned slaves .

The French Revolution in 1789 presented an opportunity for Haiti 's middle class , who organized a revolt , which was followed shortly thereafter by a general slave revolt . In 1791 , slaves staged a revolt , massacring whites and torching plantations . By 1801 , the revolt had succeeded , putting Toussaint Louverture into power as Governor General of Haiti . Although slavery was outlawed , Louverture , believing that the plantation economy was necessary , forced laborers back to work on the plantations using military might .

With a view towards re establishing slavery , Napoleon Bonaparte sent his brother in law , Charles Leclerc to regain control of Haiti , along with a fleet of 86 ships and 22 000 soldiers . The Haitians resisted the soldiers , but the French were more numerous and better positioned , until the rainy season brought yellow fever . As French soldiers and officers died , black Haitian soldiers who had allied themselves with the French began to defect to the other side .

== Jean ? Jacques Dessalines ==

In 1802 , Louverture was arrested and deported to France , where he later died in prison , leaving leadership of the military to Jean ? Jacques Dessalines . In 1804 , the French were defeated . France officially gave up control of Haiti , making it the second independent country in the Americas (after the US) and the first successful slave revolt in the world . Dessalines was the country 's leader , first naming himself Governor General for life , then Emperor of Haiti .

After the revolution , newly freed slaves were violently opposed to remaining on plantations , but Dessalines , like Louverture , used military might to keep them there , thinking that plantation labor was the only way to make the economy function . Most ex slaves viewed Dessalines ' rule as more of the same oppression they had known during de jure slavery . Dessalines was killed by a mob of his own officers in 1806 .

== Henri Christophe ==

Dessalines' successor was King Henry Christophe, another general in the revolution. Christophe, fearing another French invasion, continued in Dessalines' footsteps fortifying the country. For the construction of one citadel, La Citadelle Laferrière, Christophe is thought to have forced hundreds of thousands of people into laboring on it, killing an estimated 20,000 of them.

Also like his predecessors Louverture and Dessalines, Christophe used military might to force former slaves to stay on the plantations. Plantation workers under Louverture and Christophe were not unpaid? they received one quarter of what they produced, paying the rest to plantation owners and the government. Under Christophe's rule it was also possible for black people to rent their own land or work in government, and agricultural workers on plantations could make complaints to the royal administration about working conditions. These ex-slaves may also have sometimes had a choice about what plantation they would work on? but they could not choose not to work, and they could not legally leave a plantation they were "attached" to. Many ex-slaves were probably forced to work on the same plantations they had worked on as slaves.

The population's staunch resistance to working on plantations? owned by whites or otherwise? made it too difficult to perpetuate the system, despite its profitability. Christophe and other leaders enacted policies allowing state land to be broken up and sold to citizens, and the plantation system largely gave way to one in which Haitians owned and farmed smaller lots.

== Jean-Pierre Boyer ==

In 1817, a Haitian ship seized a Spanish slave ship bound for Cuba which had entered Haiti's waters, and, acting on standing government orders, brought it ashore. All 171 captive Africans were liberated and joyfully accepted into Haitian society, and President Jean-Pierre Boyer himself served as their godfather. The ship's captain, and later Cuban officials, protested to Boyer that his trade was legal, but Boyer maintained that the 1816 constitution decreed that there could be no slaves in Haitian territory, and no reimbursement could be given for their value. Slave ships had also been seized and their human cargo freed under previous leaders Christophe and Alexandre Pétion, and slaves who managed to take control of ships and arrive in Haiti were given asylum. Slavers quickly learned to avoid Haiti's waters.

In 1825 France sent an armada to Haiti and threatened to blockade the country, preventing trade unless Boyer agreed to pay France 150,000,000 francs to reimburse it for losses of "property"? mostly its slaves. In exchange, France would recognize Haiti as an independent nation, which it had so far refused to do. Boyer agreed without making the decision public beforehand, a move which met with widespread outrage in Haiti. The amount was reduced to 90,000,000 francs in 1838, equivalent to USD \$ 19 billion in 2015. Haiti was saddled with this debt until 1947, and forced to forgo spending on humanitarian programs such as sanitation. In 1838, an estimated 30% of the country's yearly budget went to debt, and in 1900, the amount had risen to 80%. Haiti took out loans from Germany, the US, and France itself to come up with this money, further increasing its debt burden and those countries' centrality in the Haitian economy.

Under new pressure to produce money to pay the debt, in 1826, Boyer enacted a new set of laws called the Code Rural that restricted agricultural workers' autonomy, required them to work, and prohibited their travel without permission. It also reenacted the system of Corvée, by which police and government authorities could force residents to work temporarily without pay on roads. These laws met with widespread resistance and were difficult to enforce since the workers' access to land provided them autonomy and they were able to hide from the government.

The United States passed laws to keep Haitian merchants away from US soil because slaveholders there did not want their slaves getting ideas about revolt from the Haitians. However the two countries continued trade, with Haiti purchasing the weapons it needed, albeit at disadvantageous prices. The US embargo of Haiti lasted 60 years, but Lincoln declared it unnecessary to deny the country's independence once the institution in the US began to be ended. He encouraged newly freed slaves to emigrate there to attain a freedom he did not deem possible in the US.

== US occupation ==

In July 1915 , after political unrest and the mob murder of Haiti 's president Vilbrun Guillaume Sam , United States marines invaded Haiti . Prior to the occupation peasants had staged uprisings to resist moves by US investors to appropriate their land and convert the style of agriculture in the area from subsistence back to a plantation @-@ like system ? the idea of going back to anything like the plantation system faced fierce resistance . Haitians had been afraid that US investors were trying to convert the economy back into a plantation @-@ based one since US businesses had been amassing land and evicting rural peasants from their family land . Rural Haitians formed armies that roamed around the countryside , stealing from farmers and raping women . The motivation of the US occupation of Haiti was partly to protect investments and to prevent European countries from gaining too much power in the area . One stated justification for the occupation had been the practice of enslaving children as domestic servants ; however the US then reinstituted the practice of forced labor under the *corvée* system .

As had occurred under the regimes of Dessalines and Christophe , unfree labor was again employed in a public works program , this time ordered by the US Admiral William Banks Caperton . In 1916 , the US occupiers employed the *corvée* system of forced labor allowed by Haiti 's 1864 Code Rural until 1918 . Since the Cacos , Haitian resistance fighters , hid out in remote , mountainous areas and waged guerrilla @-@ style warfare against the marines , the military needed roads built to find and fight them . To build these roads , laborers were forcibly taken from their homes , bound together with rope into chain gangs , sometimes beaten and abused , and resisters were executed . Peasants were told they would be paid for their labor and given food , working near their homes ? but sometimes the promised food and wages were meager or altogether absent . *Corvée* was highly unpopular ; Haitians widely believed that whites had returned to Haiti to force them back into slavery . The brutality of the forced labor system strengthened the Cacos ; many Haitians escaped to the mountains to join them , and many more lent their help and support . Reports of the abuses led the commander of the marines to order an end to the practice in 1918 ; however it continued illegally in the North until it was discovered ? no one faced punishment for the infraction . When *corvée* was no longer available , occupiers turned to prison labor , sometimes having men arrested for the purpose when they had too few laborers . The occupation lasted until 1934 .

= = Modern day = =

Slavery is still widespread in Haiti today . According to the 2014 Global Slavery Index , Haiti has an estimated 237 @, @ 700 enslaved persons making it the country with the second @-@ highest prevalence of slavery in the world , behind only Mauritania . Haiti has more human trafficking than any other Central or South American country . According to the United States Department of State 2013 Trafficking in Persons Report , " Haiti is a major source , passage , and destination country for men , women , and children subjected to forced labor and sex slavery . " Haitians are trafficked out of Haiti and into the neighboring Dominican Republic , as well as to other countries such as Ecuador , Bolivia , Argentina , Brazil , and North American countries as well . Haiti is also a transit country for victims of trafficking en route to the United States . After the 2010 Haiti earthquake , human trafficking has drastically increased . While trafficking often implies moving , particularly smuggling people across borders , it only requires " the use of force , fraud , or coercion to exploit a person for profit , " and it is understood to be a form of slavery .

= = = Children = = =

Child trafficking is a substantial part of the human trafficking crisis in Haiti . One major form of child trafficking and child slavery , affecting an estimated 300 @, @ 000 Haitian children , is called the *restavek* system , in which children are forced to work as domestic servants . The *restavek* system accounts for the lion 's share of human trafficking in Haiti . Families send the children into other households , exchanging their labor for upbringing . Impoverished rural parents hope for education

and a better life for their children in the city , sending them to wealthier (or at least less poor) households . Increasingly , children enter domestic servitude when a parent dies . Paid middlemen may act as recruiters , fetching the children for the host families . Unlike slaves in the traditional sense , restaveks are not bought or sold or owned , could run away or return to their families , and are typically released from servitude when they become adults ; however , the restavek system is commonly understood to be a form of slavery .

Some restaveks do receive proper nutrition and education , but they are in the minority . Restaveks ' labor includes hauling water and wood , grocery shopping , laundry , house cleaning , and childcare . Restaveks work long hours (commonly 10 to 14 a day) under harsh conditions , are frequently denied schooling , and are at severe risk of malnutrition and verbal , physical , and sexual abuse . Beatings are a daily occurrence for most restaveks , and most of the girls are sexually abused , which puts them at an elevated risk for HIV infection . Those who are thrown out or run away from their host homes become street children , vulnerable to exploitation including forced prostitution . Those who return to their families may be unwelcome as an added economic burden or shamed and stigmatized for having been a restavek . The trauma of abuse and the deprivation of free time and normal childhood experiences can stunt a child 's development and have long @-@ lasting effects .

The term restavek comes from the French " to live with " , *rester avec* . The practice has been around since the end of the revolution but became common in the 20th century as a way for rural people to cope with poverty . The number of restaveks increased after the 2010 earthquake , when many children became orphans or were separated from their families . The US Department of State estimated in 2013 that between 150 @,@ 000 and 500 @,@ 000 children were in domestic servitude , accounting for most of Haiti 's human trafficking . About 19 % of Haitian children ages 5 to 17 live away from their parents , and about 8 @.@ 2 % are considered domestic workers . In one survey , restaveks were present in 5 @.@ 3 % of households by their heads ' own admission . In one study , 16 % of Haitian children surveyed admitted to being restaveks . It is estimated that an additional 3 @,@ 000 Haitian children are domestic servants in the Dominican Republic .

Children are also trafficked out of Haiti by organizations claiming to be adoption agencies , into countries including the US ? but some are actually kidnapped from their families . This practice was particularly widespread in the chaos following the 2010 earthquake . While women migrants were vulnerable during this time , the situation of children was underscored because of the phenomenon of irregular adoptions (one facet of human trafficking) of supposed ? orphans ? through the Dominican Republic . International outcry arose when on January 29 , 2010 , ten members of the American New Life Children 's Refuge were arrested trying to take 33 Haitian children out of the country to an orphanage ? but the children were not orphans . Traffickers pretending to be workers from legitimate charitable organizations have been known to trick refugee families , convincing them that their children would be taken to safety and cared for . In some cases , traffickers run " orphanages " or " care facilities " for children that are difficult to distinguish from legitimate organizations . Children may be smuggled across the border by paid traffickers claiming to be their parents and subsequently forced into laboring for begging rings or as servants . Child trafficking spurred Unicef to fund the Brigade de Protection des Mineurs , a branch of the national police that exists to monitor cases of child trafficking , to watch borders and refugee camps for such activity . Children in refugee camps are in particular danger of other kinds of trafficking as well , including sexual exploitation .

= = = Sex slavery = = =

Although a majority of the modern day slavery cases in Haiti are due to the practice of the restavek system , trafficking for Sexual exploitation in Haiti is a widespread and pressing issue . In recent years , Haiti has become a magnet for sex tourists . Sex slavery includes the practices of coercion , forced prostitution , and trafficking for any sexual purposes . Sheldon Zhang defines sex trafficking as ? migrants [who] are transported with the intent to perform sexual services ... and in which the smuggling process is enabled through the use of force , fraud , or coercion . ? Most victims are

trafficked for prostitution , but others are used for pornography and stripping . Children tend to be trafficked within their own countries , while young women may be trafficked internally or internationally , sometimes with the consent of their husbands or other family members .

Suspicion was raised in 2007 that UN peacekeeping forces (deployed in 2004 to quell political instability) were creating an increased demand for sex trafficking after 114 UN soldiers were expelled from Haiti for using prostitutes . In its 2007 yearly report , the US state department found an increase in sex trafficking into Haiti of women and girls to work as prostitutes for peacekeepers . It was the first mention in such a report of women being trafficked into Haiti from the Dominican Republic for sex work .

== = Haitian ? Dominican border == =

For decades Haitians have been crossing the Haitian @-@ Dominican border for various reasons , including voluntary and involuntary migration , long- and short @-@ term residence in the Dominican Republic , legal and illegal entry , smuggling , and human trafficking . Haitians move across the Haitian @-@ Dominican border in search of opportunities and they are highly vulnerable to exploitation . In fact , the Dominican Republic has one of the worst records of human rights abuses , including human trafficking , against migrant workers in all of the Caribbean . Haitians in the Dominican Republic are widely disparaged as a migrant minority because of the countries ' proximity . During the dictatorial reign of Jean @-@ Claude Duvalier in the 1970s and 80s , he sold Haitians at bulk rates to work on sugar plantations in the Dominican Republic .

Most people who move across the border are women and girls . The migration of Haitian women to the Dominican Republic is intrinsically linked to the ? feminization of migrations ? which is in turn part of the ? new Haitian immigration , ? brought about by changes in labor markets as well as by the fragile situation of women and their families in Haiti . Women migrants are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking , violence and illicit smuggling . When attempting to cross the border , Haitian women are at risk of being robbed , assaulted , raped and murdered , at the hands of smugglers , delinquents and traffickers , both Dominican and Haitian . Given this threat of violence , women turn to alternative , unofficial routes and dependence upon hired buscones (informal scouts) , cousins and other distant family to accompany them across the border . These hired smugglers who have promised to help them , often through force and coercion , trick them instead into forced domestic labor in private homes in Santo Domingo , the capital of Dominican Republic . Hired buscones also sell women and children into the sex slave trade within the Dominican Republic (brothels and other venues) or into sexual slavery as an export . Often , mothers need their young children to help provide for the family , which puts the children in vulnerable positions and allows them to fall prey to predators and traffickers . The number of children smuggled into the Dominican Republic is not known , but a UNICEF estimate placed the number at 2 @,@ 000 in 2009 alone . Haitian officials report that there are three main fates met by children trafficked out of Haiti : domestic work , prostitution , and organ harvesting .

Women from the Dominican Republic have also reportedly been trafficked into Haiti to be sex slaves .

== = Government action == =

The 2014 US Trafficking in Persons Report has placed Haiti on the Tier 2 Watch list . The Tier 2 Watch List placement is given to countries whose governments do not fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act ? s (TVPA) minimum standards , but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards , and the number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or significantly increasing . Some of Haiti 's efforts to combat modern day slavery include ratifying several key conventions , including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UHDR) , the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) , the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour , and the ILO Minimum Age

Convention . In 2014 Haiti ratified the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children . Conventions such as these , if enforced , could help to combat human trafficking . In 2000 , Haiti signed the UN Protocol to Prevent , Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons , especially Women and Children , but has not ratified it . Haiti has not ratified the Convention on Domestic Workers .

= = = = Anti @-@ restavek action = = = =

In accordance with these international conventions , Haitian law prohibits abuse , violence , exploitation , and servitude of children of any kind that is likely to harm their safety , health , or morals . Additionally , it declares that all children have the right to an education and to be free from degrading and inhumane treatment . Enacted in 2003 , Article 335 of the Haitian Labor code prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15 . Furthermore , an Act passed in June 2003 specifically outlawed the placement of children into restavek service . The law states that a child in domestic service must be treated in the same manner as the biological children of the family ; however it does not contain any criminal sanctions for those who violate its provisions . Despite the enactment of these laws , the practice of restavek persists and grows . Political instability and lack of resources hinder efforts to curtail trafficking in children .

= = = = Prosecution and protection = = = =

The government took steps to legally address the issue of trafficking of women and children by submitting a bill to Parliament , in response to its ratification of the Palermo Protocol which required it . In 2014 the law CL / 2014 @-@ 0010 was passed , criminalizing trafficking with penalties of up to 15 years of imprisonment . However , enforcement remains elusive . Impediments to combating human trafficking include widespread corruption , the lack of quick responses to cases with trafficking indicators , the slow pace of the judicial branch to resolve criminal cases , and scant funding for government agencies .

People displaced by the 2010 earthquake are at an increased risk of sex trafficking and forced labor . The international protections in place for the internally displaced , primarily the 1998 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement , do not apply to earthquake survivors who have crossed an international border . There is nothing protecting the externally displaced , which creates significant protection gaps for those most vulnerable to trafficking ? girls and young women ? who are treated as migration offenders rather than forced migrants in need of protection . No temporary protected status has been created or granted in the Dominican Republic .

Since the 2010 Haiti earthquake , international aid and domestic effort has been focused on relief and recovery , and as a result few resources have been set aside for combating modern day slavery . There are no government @-@ run shelters to aid human trafficking victims . The government refers victims to non @-@ governmental organizations (NGOs) for services like food and medical care . The majority of victim services are provided by Haitian NGOs such as Foyer I ? Escale , Centre d ? Action pour le Developpement and Organisation des Jeunes Filles en Action that provide accommodation , educational and psycho @-@ social services to victims . Additionally , the IOM has been cooperating with local NGOs and the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs , the Institute for Social Welfare and Research or the Brigade for the Protection of Minors of the Haitian national police to tackle human trafficking .

= = = = Prevention = = = =

The government has made efforts to prevent and reduce human trafficking . In June 2012 , the IBESR (Institut du BienEtre Social et de Recherches) launched a human trafficking hotline and conducted a campaign to raise public awareness about child labor , child trafficking , and child sexual abuse . The government made a hotline to report cases of abuse of restaveks . In December 2012 , the government created a national commission for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of

Child Labor , which involved launching a public awareness campaign on child labor , and highlighting the national day against restavek abuse . In early 2013 , the government created an inter @-@ ministerial working group on human trafficking , chaired by the Judicial Affairs Director of the foreign affairs ministry , to coordinate all anti @-@ trafficking executive branch initiatives .

= = = Contributing factors = = =

The 2013 Trafficking in Persons Report has identified several individual and structural factors that contribute to the persistence of human trafficking to , through , and out of Haiti , as well as throughout Latin America and the Caribbean . The Haitians at gravest risk of victimization by human traffickers are its poorest people , particularly children . In Haiti , the poorest country in the western hemisphere , over half the population lives on less than a dollar a day and over three quarters live on less than two dollars a day . Severe poverty , compiled with a lack of social services such as education and basic healthcare increases a child ' s vulnerability to modern slavery . Factors that increase a child ' s likelihood of becoming a restavek include illness or loss of one or both parents , lack of access to clean water , lack of educational opportunities , and having access to family in a city . In addition to poverty , individual factors that can lead to exploitation include unemployment , illiteracy , poor educational opportunities , a history of physical or sexual abuse , homelessness , and drug abuse . These individual factors ? push ? people towards pathways of human trafficking and modern day slavery . Oftentimes men , women and children accept slave @-@ like work conditions because there is little hope for better and they need to survive . Some cross national borders in search of positive opportunities , but instead find themselves a part of the exploited work force . Additionally , factors that make people easy targets for traffickers make enslavement more likely . One group at high risk for sexual enslavement and other types of forced labor is internally displaced persons , particularly women and children living in refugee camps , which offer little security . The estimated 10 % of undocumented Haitians , whose births go unreported , are at especial risk of enslavement .

Human trafficking along the Haitian @-@ Dominican border persists because both sending and receiving countries have a huge economic stake in continuing the stream of undocumented migration which directly leads to trafficking . Trafficking is a profitable business for traffickers both in Haiti and the Dominican Republic . As long as large economic and social disparities such as poverty , social exclusion , environmental crisis , and political instability exist between the two countries , the trade will continue .

There are also structural factors outside of the individual that explain the persistence of modern day slavery in Haiti . The US state department ' s Trafficking in Persons report has identified the following eight structural factors that contribute to human trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean : (1) the high demand for domestic servants , agricultural laborers , sex workers , and factory labor ; (2) political , social , or economic crises , as well as natural disasters such as the January 2010 earthquake ; (3) lingering machismo (chauvinistic attitudes and practices) that tends to lead to discrimination against women and girls ; (4) existence of established trafficking networks with sophisticated recruitment methods ; (5) public corruption , especially complicity between law enforcement and border agents with traffickers and smugglers of people ; (6) restrictive immigration policies in some destination countries that have limited the opportunities for legal migration flows to occur ; (7) government disinterest in the issue of human trafficking ; and (8) limited economic opportunities for women . The restavek tradition is perpetuated by widespread tolerance for the practice throughout Haiti . Other contributing factors to the restavek system include poverty and lack of access to contraception , education , and employment in the countryside . Poor rural families with many children have few opportunities to feed and educate them , leaving few options other than servitude in the city .