

Key developments and humanitarian impact of the insecurity in the Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest departments, April 2025 to April 2026

OVERVIEW

The humanitarian situation in Haiti has continued to rapidly deteriorate since April 2025, largely because of insecurity driven by the consolidation and strengthening of armed gangs. Having entrenched almost complete control over the capital Port-au-Prince, Ouest department, gangs accelerated their expansion into Centre and Artibonite departments in late 2025 and early 2026, resulting in increased displacement and a rise in armed clashes (IRC 16/04/2026; UN News 16/03/2026; EUAA 13/04/2026).

Haitian security forces have continued to engage gangs in armed clashes, at times supported by a private military company that has deployed explosive drones. Community-level 'self-defence groups' have also increased their activities and level of organisation to counter gang activity (BINUH 30/01/2026; EUAA 13/04/2026; ACLED 03/02/2026).

These key developments and the resulting increase in armed violence are driving escalating humanitarian needs across multiple sectors in Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest departments. The Humanitarian Response Plan for 2026 estimated that, by the start of 2026, 3.1 million people in these three departments would require food assistance (35% of those in need of food aid nationwide); 3.6 million would require health services (73% of the national caseload); and over 1.4 million people would need protection assistance (63% of all those in need across Haiti) (OCHA 18/12/2025; IPC 16/04/2026).

Gang violence has also been the primary driver of a 40% increase in displacement, from 1.04 million to almost 1.5 million IDPs, between December 2024–2025, further heightening humanitarian needs (IOM accessed 27/04/2026). Centre department recorded a 140% increase in the number of IDPs from 2024 to 2025, primarily driven by gang violence, while Artibonite recorded a 77% increase, indicating a shift in new displacements occurring primarily in rural and less densely populated provinces, particularly Artibonite and Centre, rather than Port-au-Prince (IOM 24/02/2026).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Aim

This report analyses key developments in armed violence and associated humanitarian impacts between April 2025 and April 2026. The report aims to detail both the immediate and medium-term humanitarian impacts of gang violence in Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest as well as examine how armed violence has limited humanitarian and governmental response over the past year.

Scope

This report focuses on Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest departments, where gangs are primarily active.

Methodology

This report was compiled using publicly available data tracking violence and displacement from 2023–2026, particularly from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data and IOM, and over 30 reports from humanitarian organisations, think tanks, and local and international media.

Limitations

Given Haiti's insecure context, the information landscape is highly constrained, and the rapidly evolving situation further challenges information gathering and context monitoring.

Data on casualties does not always distinguish between gang and non-gang members. Where possible, this report's protection section highlights information that specifically pertains to casualties affecting non-gang members.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN VIOLENCE: APRIL 2025 TO APRIL 2026

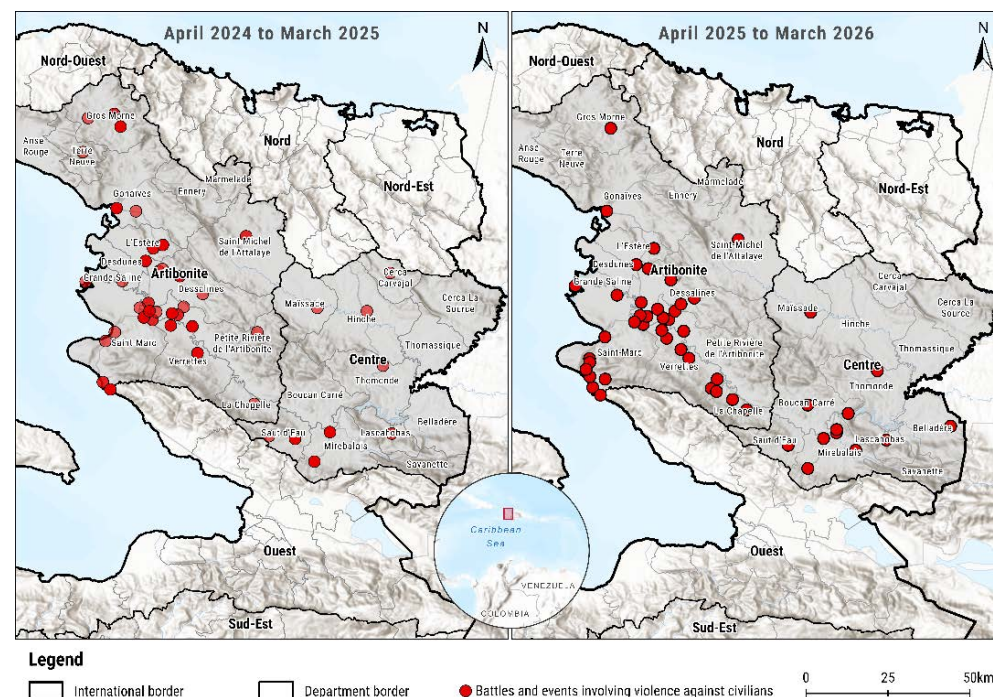
This section outlines key developments affecting the dynamics of violence and associated displacement identified in secondary displacement and recorded attacks datasets and humanitarian sources. The significant humanitarian implications of these developments are discussed throughout the 'Crisis impacts' section below.

Expansion of armed gang territorial control

By the end of 2025, gangs comprising the Viv Ansanm coalition – created in Port-au-Prince in September 2023 after the union of Haiti's two main gang factions, G-9 and G-Pép – had unprecedented levels of military capacity. While exact data is unavailable, Viv Ansanm could collectively have between 12,000–20,000 members, of whom 3,000 are heavily armed. The coalition demonstrates coordinated operational reach and significant organisational cohesion (Govt. of US 25/03/2026; ICG 15/12/2025).

From April 2025, security force and self-defence group operations largely prevented Viv Ansanm, already estimated to be in control of 90% of Port-au-Prince and its metropolitan area, from further expanding its control in the capital (BINUH 30/01/2026; EUAA 13/04/2026). That said, the coalition escalated its expansion campaign in the nearby departments of Centre and Artibonite throughout 2025. This has translated into escalating clashes against both gangs not aligned with Viv Ansanm and self-defence groups (EUAA 13/04/2026; ICG 15/12/2025; UNSC 08/07/2025).

Map 1. Battles and events involving violence against civilians from April 01, 2024, to March 31, 2025, and from April 01, 2025, to March 31, 2026



Source: ACAPs using information from ACLED (Accessed 22/04/2026)

Increasing self-defence group organisation and activity

The Bwa Kale movement of vigilante violence, which emerged in Port-au-Prince in 2023, has produced a range of organised and semi-organised self-defence groups that have become major adversaries to gangs. Since April 2025, the scale and organisation of self-defence activity have increased, with more formalised structures adopted by groups in urban areas of Port-Au-Prince in particular. While Artibonite and Centre departments also see large-scale community mobilisations in response to gang attacks, these mobilisations lack the same level of coordination and formalisation (ACLED 03/02/2026; ICG 29/01/2026 and 15/12/2025).

While primarily defensive in nature, self-defence groups have repelled gang incursions in parts of Port-au-Prince. This has been accompanied by an increase in the number and lethality of operations these self-defence groups have carried out with the police, which has increased their capacity to confront gangs (ACLEDD 03/02/2026).

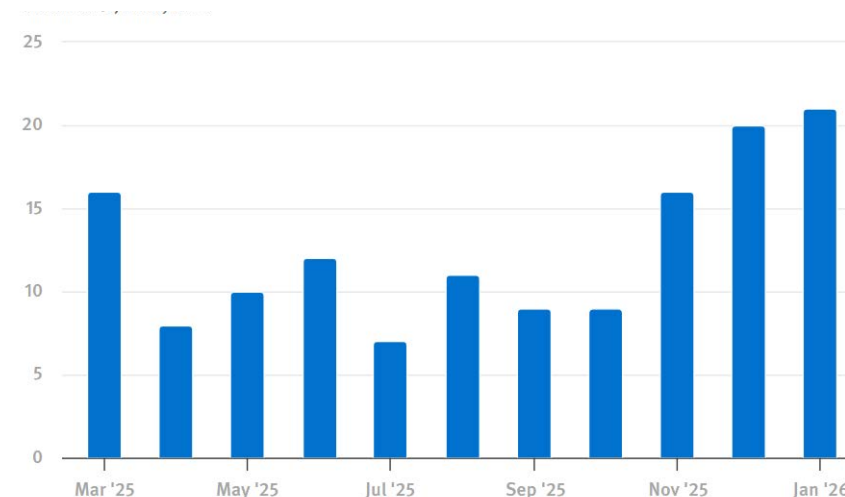
Introduction of the gang suppression force

In September 2025, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution to deploy a new force, the Gang Suppression Force (GSF), to replace the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission and help stabilise the country. While the MSS was mostly composed of and mandated to support the police, the GSF will be primarily military in composition and able to operate independent of Haitian National Police (HNP) Command. With up to 5,500 military and civilian personnel, the GSF will also be much larger than the MSS, which had approximately 1,000 people deployed (The Conversation 11/11/2025; TNH 03/12/2025; EUAA 13/04/2026). The GSF is mandated to 'neutralise' gangs, protect affected populations and critical infrastructure, and facilitate humanitarian access (EUAA 13/04/2026). By 1 April, an advance team of around 400 troops from Chad had been deployed (France 24 23/04/2026; AJ 01/04/2026). The GSF is expected to become fully operational by mid-2026 (ACLEDD 03/02/2026).

Private security involvement and use of drones

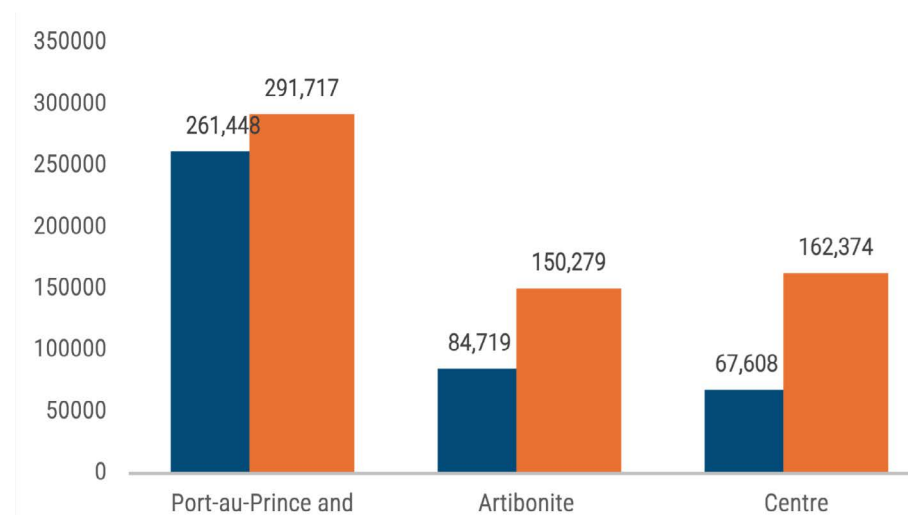
In March 2025, the Prime Minister's Office deployed a special task force, which includes members of a private security firm, to assist the MSS mission. The task force has increased operations using explosive-laden drones, with a particular spike from November recorded in Human Rights Watch data. These operations have increased the number of reported deaths from clashes with suspected gang members by over 50% (ACLEDD 03/02/2026; OHCHR 23/03/2026; TNH 03/12/2025).

Figure 1. Human Rights Watch data on monthly armed drone operations in Haiti from March 2025 to January 2026



Source: HRW (10/03/2026)

Figure 2. Number of IDPs in Port-au-Prince, Artibonite, and Centre departments, 2024 and 2025



Sources: ACAPs using information from IOM (24/02/2026 and 14/01/2025)

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

Armed violence in Centre and Artibonite departments, northwest and north of Port-au-Prince, is expected to intensify in 2026 as gangs from the Viv Ansanm coalition continue to expand their operations in these departments (IOM 04/03/2026; OHCHR 23/03/2026 and 24/03/2026).

The absence of clear oversight of self-defence groups raises the risk that, in the coming months, these groups may continue to evolve into armed militias or adopt a hierarchical structure, including in Artibonite and Centre departments, in response to the increasing gang presence. There is also a risk that self-defence groups, particularly those less organised, will adopt predatory economic practices – including extortion – as a means of sustaining their operations (ACLEDEP 03/02/2026).

The expected deployment of the GSF by mid-2026 represents an additional risk for civilian populations. Equipped with heavier armament and operating under a military structure, the force carries a mandate to suppress and dismantle gangs across Port-au-Prince – an objective that is likely to result in intensified and more heavily armed confrontations (The Conversation 11/11/2025; TNH 03/12/2025; EUAA 13/04/2026).

Taken together, increased gang presence, self-defence group capabilities, and GSF operations are likely to lead to more frequent and intense clashes, increasing the risk of civilian deaths and injuries in the crossfire (The Conversation 11/11/2025; TNH 03/12/2025; EUAA 13/04/2026).

The 2026 lean season (March–June) is likely to compound humanitarian needs, as the 5.6 million people expected to be food insecure by mid-year exhaust their existing food stocks and become increasingly dependent on market purchases and coping mechanisms at a time of rising prices and severely constrained incomes (IPC 10/10/2025; FEWS NET 06/02/2026 and 07/2024; WFP 09/02/2026).

IMPACT

Protection

An estimated 1.4 million people are expected to need protection assistance in Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest departments in 2026, largely as a result of the increase in gang violence over the past year (OCHA 18/12/2025; HDX accessed 22/04/2026). These populations are either directly experiencing or at severe risk of threats, extortion, gender-based violence (GBV) (including a high proportion of gang-related GBV), kidnappings, human trafficking, psychological abuse, and killings and injuries from direct attacks or crossfire (OCHA 18/12/2025; PAHO 13/09/2025; ICRC 23/10/2025; WHO 29/01/2026; Protection Cluster 26/09/2025).

Gangs continue to engage in targeted killings and massacres of non-gang members in areas under their control. This includes the targeted killing of people suspected of ‘challenging’ gang authority, those suspected of collaborating with self-defence groups or the HNP, and those who refuse to pay gang ‘tolls’ at checkpoints (BINUH 30/01/2026; Protection Cluster 26/09/2025). As there is limited humanitarian access to gang-controlled areas and a lack of public casualty data disaggregated between gang and non-gang members, it is not possible to detail the full scale of these killings.

In 2025, non-gang member casualties also occurred during clashes between gangs and the HNP, which sometimes operated in collaboration with the MSS and a private military firm. 17% of the 3,199 casualties from anti-gang operations between January–August 2025 were non-gang members, mostly hit by crossfire in their homes or as they moved through public places (Protection Cluster 26/09/2025; BINUH 30/01/2026). There is no information available on which party(ies) were responsible for these civilian casualties during the clashes.

The increasing use of drones during anti-gang operations by Haitian security forces and private military contractors has contributed to civilian casualties (BINUH 30/01/2026; IJDH 13/03/2026). Human Rights Watch data found that drone strikes in 141 operations, all in the Ouest department, between 1 March 2025 and 1 January 2026 killed at least 43 civilian adults and 17 children. Videos of some of the strikes appear to suggest that drones targeted people apparently not engaged in violence or posing an imminent threat to others at the time of the strike (HRW 10/03/2026). HNP

officers have also been accused of summarily executing an unspecified number of individuals suspected of gang membership, with reported cases of people executed simply because they lived in gang-controlled areas or failed to present identification when asked (Protection Cluster 26/09/2025).

Increasing self-defence group activity also directly and indirectly contributed to non-gang member casualties in 2025. Self-defence groups have been accused of killing an unspecified number of individuals suspected of gang membership or collaboration with gangs, but who were unarmed or not engaged in violence at the time of their killing (Protection Cluster 26/09/2025). This includes people who were arbitrarily identified as suspected gang members based on their clothing, physical appearance, or location (ICG 15/12/2025). Self-defence groups were also implicated in mass killings in 2025, including in Artibonite department. On the other hand, gangs employed indiscriminate violence, including massacres, in reprisal for self-defence activities, increasing risks for people in some communities where self-defence groups operate (ACLEDD 03/02/2026; ICG 29/01/2026 and 15/12/2025).

GBV has reached catastrophic levels across Haiti, particularly in areas affected by gang violence and related displacement. It is extremely challenging to determine the scale of GBV needs because of chronic underreporting driven by fear of retaliation, revictimisation, and social exclusion, along with highly constrained humanitarian access, minimal access to GBV services for survivors, and lack of trust in the justice system (IJDH 13/03/2026; Protection Cluster 26/09/2025; WHO 29/01/2026).

From January–August 2025, armed gangs were identified as perpetrators in the majority (75%) of reported GBV cases for which information on perpetrators is available (Protection Cluster 26/09/2025; UN Panel of Experts 25/09/2025). Nearly half of all GBV cases reported to GBV service providers in this period involved rape – often collective rape. There were also frequent reports of forced and early marriage and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, including sexual slavery (Protection Cluster 26/09/2025; UN Panel of Experts 25/09/2025; IJDH 13/03/2026).

Gangs weaponise rape, particularly by multiple perpetrators (up to 20 at a time), and sexual assault as a means of ‘punishing’ communities perceived as aligned with rival groups, or individuals perceived to have ‘disobeyed’ gangs, including by entering areas controlled by rival gangs. Incidents of rape and sexual assault by gangs are often accompanied by kidnapping, physical violence, and killing (IJDH 13/03/2026; UN

Panel of Experts 25/09/2025). According to the small fraction of rape incidents reported to the UN Integrated Office in Haiti, risks of rape and sexual assault are high during home intrusions by armed gang members, in displacement sites, on public transport, or when survivors are moving through public places, including through gang-controlled checkpoints (IJDH 13/03/2026; BINUH 30/01/2026).

In 2025, reports indicated the vast majority of GBV survivors were women and girls (UN Panel of Experts 25/09/2025). Around 70% of survivors who reported GBV between January–August were IDPs in both displacement sites and host communities, where overcrowding, a lack of privacy and safety measures (e.g. sufficient lighting, locks), and the presence of armed gangs increase the risk (Protection Cluster 26/09/2025). Most cases were reported in Ouest department, followed by Artibonite and Centre (GBV AOR et al. 12/11/2025). This is consistent with the high levels of gang activity in these departments and may also reflect the GBV response presence.

Survivors may face significant physical, social, and psychological consequences and have extremely limited access to GBV services, justice, and effective remedies (Protection Cluster 26/09/2025). GBV risks linked with moving through public places and using public transport are also likely to significantly constrain women’s and girls’ freedom of movement, limiting their access to essential services and assistance.

Entire communities face additional restrictions on their freedom of movement because of gang-controlled checkpoints and the risk of being caught in crossfire. In a commune such as Cité Soleil, in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, basic daily activities – including accessing markets and travelling to work – have been restricted by gangs, as armed groups routinely question residents about their movements and, in many cases, prevent them from leaving their neighbourhoods (WHO 29/01/2026; Protection Cluster 26/09/2025; BBC 04/08/2025).

Movement restrictions for entire communities are further compounded by a sustained pattern of kidnappings (primarily for ransom) by gangs, including kidnappings of boys and girls, with high rates in Artibonite department. Between October–December 2025, The UN Integrated Office in Haiti recorded 156 kidnappings, with over 60% in Artibonite, 36% in Ouest, and 3% in Centre. This figure represents significant underreporting, as many families prefer to negotiate directly with gangs instead of reporting to the police, which is perceived as the slower, riskier route (BINUH 30/01/2026).

Kidnappings are often also accompanied by other forms of violence, including rape

and sexual slavery of women and girls. Kidnapped LGBTQ+ individuals have been subjected to degrading and inhuman treatment, including “forced sexual acts framed as ‘correction’” (Protection Cluster 26/09/2025). The ordeal has severe consequences for survivors and their families, including post-traumatic stress and financial hardship following ransom payments (Protection Cluster 26/09/2025).

Kidnappings in 2025 also targeted humanitarian workers – including the leader of a team providing shelter services to children affected by violence in the commune of Kenscoff, Port-au-Prince – underscoring the acute security risks faced by humanitarian workers operating in areas affected by insecurity (WHO 29/01/2026; Protection Cluster 26/09/2025; BBC 04/08/2025).

Children remain among the most acutely affected populations, facing significant risks of trafficking, primarily for the purposes of armed gang recruitment, criminal activities, and sexual exploitation, the latter of which primarily affects girls. The decline in children’s access to education, described below, has correlated with the increased recruitment of minors, as armed gangs exploit children (primarily boys) who lose the protective environment provided by schools – assigning them roles ranging from messengers and informants to combatants, kidnappers, and extortionists (BINUH 20/02/2026). While no formal assessment of minors within gang structures has been conducted, some estimates suggest that up to 50% of gang members are under the age of 18 (BINUH 20/02/2026; AJ 28/08/2025).

Education

Around one million children and young people (under 18), more than 60% of the national caseload, will require humanitarian assistance to access educational services in 2026 in Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest. This represents a 10% increase on the 933,000 in need in 2025 and includes 145,000 children with physical and cognitive disabilities (OCHA 18/12/2025; HDX accessed 22/04/2026).

By April 2025, at least 1,600 schools in Port-au-Prince and the Artibonite, Centre, and Nord departments were closed for an unspecified period as a result of insecurity in the surrounding community, direct gang attacks on and occupation of schools, or schools being used as IDPs sites. The disruptions affected an estimated 243,000 students (UNICEF 29/07/2025 and 08/10/2025).

IDP children often face greater barriers to educational access than their non-displaced peers, as most public schools were already at capacity in the capital in 2025, while less congested private institutions charge fees that many displaced families cannot afford (Education Cluster 02/05/2025; IOM 24/02/2026).

Food security and livelihoods

1.9 million (17% of the population) of the 5.7 million Haitians expected to be food insecure in 2026 are anticipated to face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity between February–June, particularly in Ouest (553,000 people), Artibonite (355,000), Nord-Ouest (202,000), and Centre departments (167,000) (IPC 10/10/2025). The remaining 3.8 million are expected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity by June (IPC 10/10/2025 and 30/09/2024).

The rapid expansion of gang activity beyond the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area has led to an increased blockade of primary road corridors in and out of the capital, the disruption of commercial supply routes to and from the capital, gang destruction of agricultural assets, the displacement of farming communities, and the seizure of agricultural production zones – particularly in the southern parts of Artibonite, known as the ‘grain basket’ of the country. As a consequence, the availability of staple food items in Port-au-Prince markets – such as rice, corn, beans, and root vegetables – is expected to be lower than average between January–June 2026 (IPC 10/10/2025; OCHA 18/12/2025; UN News 21/01/2026; FEWS NET 06/02/2026; OCHA 19/12/2025).

Household purchasing power in Haiti has also been in sustained decline since April 2025, with an estimated 37% of Haiti’s population living below the extreme poverty line of less than USD 2.15 per day in 2026. Purchasing power is being eroded by reduced agricultural incomes, the rising price of fuel and fertiliser, and limited access to credit. Fuel prices may increase even further as a result of global oil hikes since February (FEWS NET 03/10/2024 and 06/02/2026; NUPI/SIPRI 03/06/2025; AP 17/04/2026).

The residual impact of Hurricane Melissa in October 2025 continues to undermine food production, particularly in Grand Sud. The hurricane destroyed hectares of rice, corn, and sorghum, Haiti’s main staple crops, and blocked key transportation routes, many of which remain closed by debris. This has put additional upward pressure on food prices and contributed to reduced food availability across the country (WFP 04/12/2025; WVI 27/10/2025; FEWS NET 10/12/2025).

Shelter and displacement

By December 2025, over 1.45 million people – equivalent to 12% of Haiti's total population – were internally displaced, marking the highest displacement figure recorded since the escalation of gang violence in 2021 (IOM 24/02/2026). 85% of IDPs are accommodated by host families and communities, while the remaining 15% (approximately 217,000) are sheltering in IDP camps in Port-au-Prince, with little infrastructure to accommodate them, overcrowded and unsanitary facilities, and a shortage of NFIs (IOM 19/03/2026). IDPs' main needs include access to food, shelter (especially for those outside IDP camps), and healthcare and WASH services (IOM 24/02/2026 and 14/10/2025).

The Artibonite department, north of the capital, recorded the most pronounced increase in IDPs in late 2025, rising from 121,900 in September to 150,300 in December – an increase of 23% in three months (IOM 24/02/2026 and 14/10/2025). This sharp rise shows a broader shift in displacement patterns across Haiti, with most of the new displaced people coming from rural and less densely populated areas rather than the capital. They also arrive in areas likely unknown to them and where there is already a pre-existing demand for humanitarian services from IDPs who arrived in 2024 and early 2025 (IOM 24/02/2026 and 14/10/2025).

WASH

2.1 million people are expected to be in need of WASH services in Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest department in 2026, an increase of more than 10% on the almost 1.9 million in need in 2025 (HDX accessed 22/04/2026). Of these 2.1 million, nearly one million are in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area alone (WB 16/12/2024; OCHA 31/01/2025 and 18/12/2025).

Haiti's water and sanitation infrastructure, such as aqueducts and clean water systems, suffers from longstanding underfunding, persistent low levels of electrification, and damage from recurrent climate and natural hazards and recent armed violence. Escalating insecurity also prevents repair of damaged WASH infrastructure, which only functions intermittently in many locations. By December 2024, only an estimated 43% of Haiti's rural population had access to clean water (WB 16/12/2024; OCHA 31/01/2025).

The displaced population sheltering in IDP camps represents one of the most acutely affected groups. In 2025, only 23% of IDP sites had access to safe drinking water, while fewer than half (44%) had functional sanitation infrastructure. This has resulted in overuse of the few existing WASH facilities, which then frequently break down, also as a result limited maintenance (WB 16/12/2024; OCHA 31/01/2025 and 18/12/2025).

Health services

The critical deficits in WASH infrastructure and services across Haiti constitute a primary enabling factor in the sustained transmission of cholera and other waterborne diseases. Between January–October 2025, a period covering Haiti's two rainy seasons (April–June and August–November), Haitian health authorities recorded 4,000 suspected cholera cases, 186 confirmed cases, and 48 deaths, predominantly in IDP sites in the Ouest department, putting even more pressure on the capital's limited health services. Children under the age of nine accounted for more than one-third of all suspected cases, underscoring the disproportionate vulnerability of young children to cholera transmission (HRW 05/11/2025; OCHA 18/12/2025; WB 16/12/2024; PAHO 11/2025).

Rising civilian casualties resulting from gang-related violence also increase the population's health needs. The Hospital Universitaire La Paix, the only major hospital with advanced care capacity still operating in Port-au-Prince, recorded 6,365 trauma cases between January–October 2025, the majority linked to gunshot wounds and explosive injuries, highlighting the high volume of trauma cases. The hospital has seen admissions double since 2024, leaving its teams overstretched. As the violence has increased over the past two years and mobility restrictions imposed by gangs have limited humanitarian access, the full scope of those injured and dead is likely to be higher (OCHA 18/12/2025; PAHO 13/09/2025; ICRC 23/10/2025; WHO 29/01/2026).

In 2026, an estimated 4.9 million people – representing 41% of Haiti's total population – are projected to require humanitarian assistance to access health services, marking an increase of almost 20% compared to 2025. Of those, 3.65 million (74%) are in Ouest (two million), Artibonite (1.08 million), and Centre (572,000) departments (HDX accessed 22/04/2026). At the same time, the health system is near collapse: in 2025, only 37 of 100 inpatient health facilities remained functional in Port-au-Prince

and only 70 of 268 inpatient facilities were fully operational nationwide. This is a consequence of attacks against health facilities and health workers by armed gangs, chronic fuel shortages, limited specialised equipment, widespread looting, and overall economic decline (OCHA 18/12/2025; PAHO 13/09/2025; ICRC 23/10/2025; WHO 29/01/2026). A stark illustration of the impact of violence on Haiti's health system was the forced closure of multiple health facilities and the subsequent evacuation of medical staff following armed gang attacks in the Cité Soleil, Martissant, and Turgeau communes in March, April, and October 2025 (TNH 21/01/2026; MSF 08/04/2025; AJ 23/09/2025; HRW 10/03/2026).

Haiti's health system operates with one of the lowest levels of per capita public health expenditure in the Americas and relies heavily on the private sector, which administered nearly 50% of all health institutions according to the most recent public data from 2017–2018 (around 30% for-profit and 17.5% nonprofit). Private institutions are generally concentrated in urban areas where purchasing power is higher, and are either financially inaccessible for most or already overcrowded by inpatients. This creates substantial access barriers for low-income communities in rural areas in Artibonite, which had the lowest proportion of health facilities relative to population in Haiti in 2021 (12% of health facilities nationwide, 15% of the nation's population), and Centre, where public health facilities are scarce (Frontiers 17/12/2025).

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Access to information

The ability of journalists and international organisations to operate in Haiti has been severely constrained by violence, movement restrictions imposed by armed groups, and acute financial limitations. For example, Reporters Without Borders documented the kidnapping of two journalists in Port-au-Prince in 2026 and an attack on one of the capital's most prominent radio stations in 2025, allegedly by gangs (RSF 17/03/2026 and 14/03/2025). These incidents continue a series of attacks against press workers that include the 2024 attacks on two journalists covering anti-insecurity protests, as well as the looting of Le Nouvelliste – the country's oldest newspaper – and the National Press in April 2024 (UN News 21/01/2026; Freedom House 26/02/2025).

Humanitarian constraints

Armed violence remains the primary driver impeding humanitarian operations and restricting the population's access to basic services and humanitarian assistance across Haiti, particularly in the Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest departments. The deteriorating security environment has necessitated the implementation of stringent security protocols governing the movement of humanitarian personnel, such as negotiations with gangs and self-defence groups before entering high-risk neighbourhoods, regular security assessments to allow humanitarian teams to operate, and meetings with communities to ensure trust (ICRC 04/08/2025; UN News 21/01/2026; GOAL 07/2025).

Armed gang attacks have been accompanied by the looting of humanitarian supplies and direct threats against and attacks on aid workers, further constraining the operational capacity of aid organizations in the Ouest department in particular (Euro News 15/10/2025; CORE 02/08/2023; MSF 08/04/2025; AJ 23/09/2025; HRW 10/03/2026). The blockage of primary road corridors to and from Port-au-Prince represents an additional constraint on humanitarian aid work, as organisations have been forced to negotiate passage. Armed gangs' presence along key arterial routes deters communities and humanitarian workers from using these routes, as they face the risk of direct attack or getting caught in crossfire (ICG 15/12/2025; TNH 21/01/2026).

Funding and response capacity

Cuts to US humanitarian aid funding in early 2025 significantly affected Haiti, with knock-on effects for the delivery of humanitarian and government services, such as government-administered health services, rapid disease surveillance assessments, and state-led protection services (UNAIDS 13/03/2025; OCHA 18/12/2025).

COMPOUNDING/AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Political instability

The surge in armed violence is compounded by acute political instability – characterised by the absence of a functional national Government – which has precipitated the collapse of essential public services (OCHA 18/12/2025; HDX accessed 29/03/2026; UN News 21/01/2026). Since the 2024 coordinated increase in gang violence by the Viv Ansanm coalition, the Haitian Government has lacked both the territorial control and state presence necessary to maintain order in Port-au-Prince or the Centre and Artibonite departments. This vacuum has enabled gangs to establish themselves as the de facto authority across large parts of these areas, imposing their own rules of conduct and fundamentally disrupting the daily lives of affected communities (UNSC 15/01/2026; CFR 04/12/2025).

Presidential elections – scheduled for 2026 and not held for nearly a decade – are already facing significant obstacles, as voter registration has been postponed without a new date set at the time of writing (Reuters 09/04/2026).

Economic collapse

Haiti's economic environment has continued to deteriorate sharply, driven by prolonged political instability, persistent insecurity, widespread business closures, and rising unemployment, translating into an annual inflation rate well above 28% in 2024 and an economic contraction of around 2% in 2025 and more than 8% over the past decade (Focus Economics accessed 09/04/2026; EC et al. 27/01/2025).

Armed gangs' disruption of key transport corridors and supply chains in and around Port-au-Prince, alongside the overall collapse of the Government, have constrained the movement of goods and people (Govt. US accessed 27/03/2023; ICG 15/12/2025; Focus Economics accessed 27/03/2026). Insecurity-driven supply chain disruptions have had severe consequences for Haiti's agricultural sector, which has historically employed around 40% of the country's population. Cumulative output losses resulting from the Government's collapse and insecurity between 2021–2024 were estimated at 4.5% of GDP in 2024, equivalent to approximately USD 1.1 billion (Focus Economics accessed 09/04/2026; EC et al. 27/01/2025).

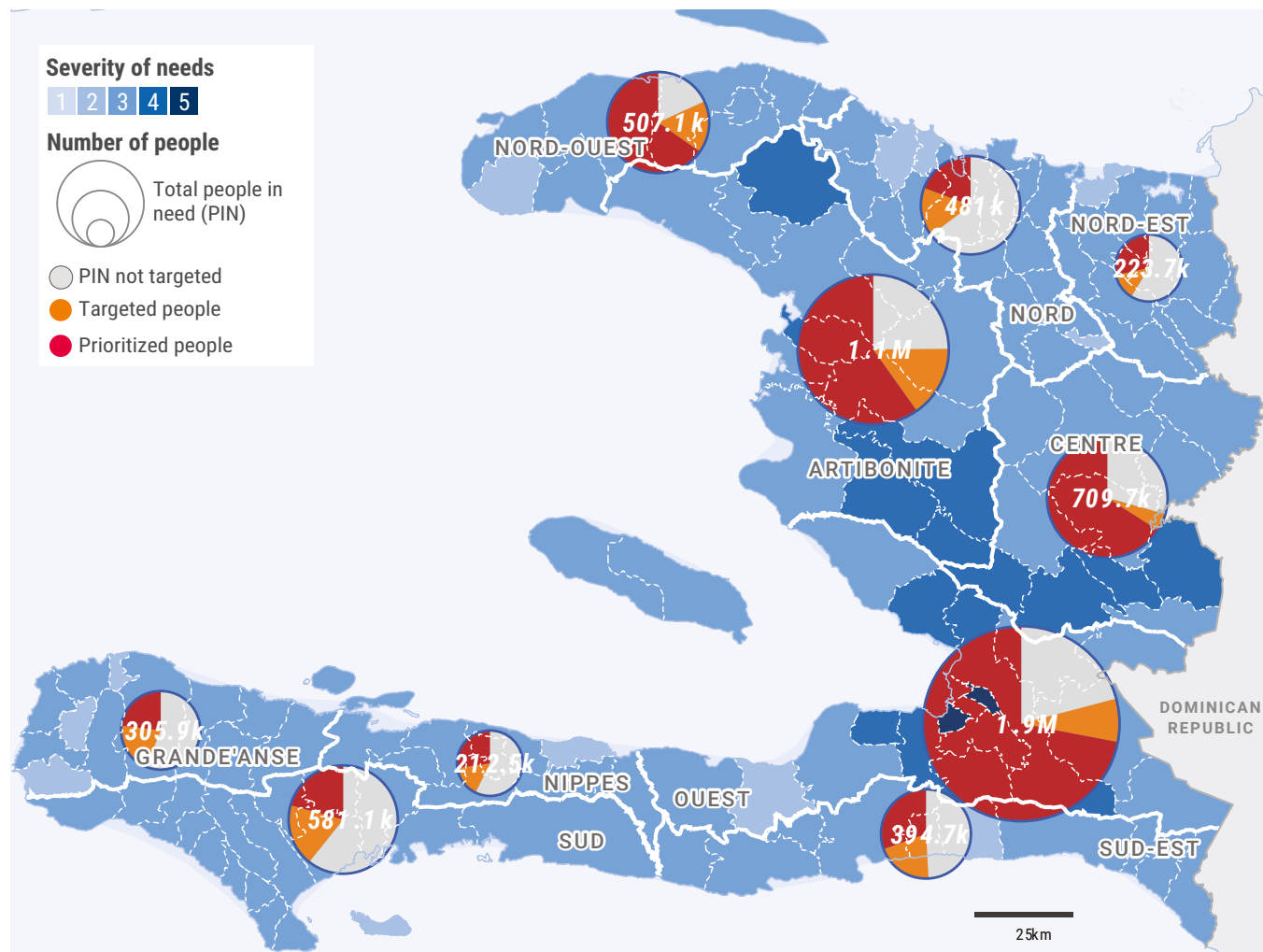
This has created a compounding scenario in which communities lack the economic resources to compensate for the growing deficit in public services delivered by the Government and humanitarian services handled by aid responders. The burden falls most acutely on those already directly affected by the insecurity crisis – including IDPs – who face the pressure of reduced access to employment, additional housing costs, and challenges obtaining food as a consequence of economic contraction (Govt. US 17/03/2023; ICG 15/12/2025; Focus Economics accessed 27/03/2026).

Climate and natural hazards

Located within the Atlantic Hurricane Belt, 96% of Haiti's population is exposed to climate shocks, including hurricanes, floods, drought, landslides, and earthquakes. The country is also affected by the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle: La Niña affected Haiti with above-average rain, floods, and landslides in February–March 2026, particularly in southern Artibonite and Centre, and is expecting a transition to El Niño by mid-2026, which will bring hotter-than-average conditions and drought (NUPI/SIPRI 03/06/2025; FEWS NET 16/04/2026).

As a result, the impact of armed violence is compounded by recurrent and severe natural hazards, most recently Hurricane Melissa in October 2025, which affected over 245,000 people, brought extensive infrastructure damage across the country, and demonstrated Haiti's significant vulnerability to climate and natural hazards and their compounding effects. The departments of Artibonite, Grand 'Anse, Nippes, Nord-Ouest, Ouest, Sud, and Sud-Est – home to almost 90% of all Haitian IDPs – were the worst affected by torrential rains, floods, and landslides (UNICEF 25/11/2025; OCHA 05/02/2026; IOM 24/02/2026).

MAP 2. EXPECTED SEVERITY OF HUMANITARIAN NEEDS ACROSS HAITI IN 2026



People in need, people targeted and people prioritized by sector/cluster



People in need by sex and age



Source: OCHA (19/12/2025)