

RELEASE IN  
FULL**APPENDIX: Haiti Narrative 2009****HAITI (Special Case)**

Haiti has had a weak government since widespread violence and political instability led to the resignation of the president in 2004. National elections in 2006 elected a president and a Parliament that replaced an appointed interim government, but the effectiveness of state institutions remained severely limited. Civil unrest in April 2008 left the country without a government for five months. The Government of Haiti's ability to provide basic services and security for citizens, and to control rampant crime in the capital, Port-au-Prince, continues to be compromised by limited resources, an untrained and poorly equipped police force, entrenched government corruption, and perennially weak government institutions.

The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) continued to maintain more than 6,950 troops and 1,900 police throughout the country to provide security. Haiti remains a Special Case for the fourth consecutive year as the new government formed in September 2008 has not yet been able to address the significant challenges facing the country, including human trafficking. The U.S. government, however, notes the progress of Haiti's government, and urges the Government of Haiti to take immediate action to address its serious trafficking-in-persons problems. The following background and recommendations are provided to guide government officials.

**Scope and Magnitude:** Haiti is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and sexual exploitation. Haitian women, men, and children are trafficked into the Dominican Republic, The Bahamas, the United States, Europe, Canada, and Jamaica for exploitation in domestic service, agriculture, and construction. Trafficked Dominican women and girls are forced into prostitution. Some may be patronized by UN peacekeepers in Haiti, although MINUSTAH is implementing programs among its personnel to suppress this practice. Several NGOs noted a sharp increase in the number of Haitian children trafficked for sex and labor to the Dominican Republic and The Bahamas during 2008.

The majority of trafficking cases are found among the estimated 90,000 to 300,000 restaveks in Haiti, and the 3,000 additional restaveks who are trafficked to the Dominican Republic. Poor, mostly rural families send their children to cities to live with relatively wealthier "host" families, whom they expect to provide the children with food, shelter, and an education in exchange for domestic work. While some restaveks are cared for and sent to school, most of these children are subjected to involuntary domestic servitude. These restaveks, 65 percent of whom are girls between the ages of six and 14, work excessive hours, receive no schooling or payment and are often physically and sexually abused. Haitian labor laws require employers to pay domestic workers over the age of 15, so many host families dismiss restaveks before they reach that age. Dismissed and runaway restaveks make up a significant proportion of the large population of street children, who frequently are forced to work in prostitution or street crime by violent criminal gangs. Women and girls from the Dominican Republic are trafficked into Haiti for commercial sexual exploitation. Some of the Haitians who voluntarily migrate to the Dominican Republic, The Bahamas, the United States, and other Caribbean nations, subsequently face conditions of forced labor on sugar-cane plantations, and in agriculture and construction.

**Government Efforts:** Haitian officials recognize that human trafficking is a serious problem in the country, including the exploitation of restavek children as domestic servants. As a policy matter, however, the national police child protection unit, the Brigade for the Protection of Minors (BPM), does not pursue restavek trafficking cases because there is no statutory penalty against the practice. Haitian law also does not specifically

prohibit trafficking in persons, which limits its ability to punish traffickers and protect victims. It did shut down a number of unregistered orphanages whose residents were believed to be vulnerable to trafficking.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST) should make every effort to complete its revision of and resubmit to Parliament its comprehensive anti-trafficking bill; Parliament should consider it, and then pass a law prohibiting all forms of human trafficking. Until then, authorities could begin to enforce existing criminal statutes penalizing slavery, kidnapping, forced prostitution and forced labor to prosecute trafficking offenses. Judges, police, and prosecutors throughout the country need additional anti-trafficking training before they can effectively prosecute and punish trafficking offenders. Lacking its own resources, the government cooperates with numerous NGOs to assist victims and to train officials about trafficking issues. Haitian immigration officers working with MINUSTAH proactively identified potential child trafficking victims at airports and the border with the Dominican Republic.

The Office of National Identification, with technical assistance from the Organization of American States and the Government of Canada, began to provide national identity cards to persons who reached the legal voting age since the last election. It continued to provide birth certificates to citizens who had not previously been issued official identity documents. The government does not follow systematic victim identification procedures, though Haitian authorities work closely with NGOs to refer identified victims -- primarily children -- and coordinate protective services as needed. Shelter services for adult trafficking victims do not exist, and the government should make every effort to open or support facilities which could provide men and women with appropriate assistance.

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**From:** CdeBaca, Luis  
**Sent:** Monday, July 27, 2009 2:50 PM  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D  
**Subject:** Cheryl, here is a quick backgrounder on child slavery in Haiti

Hi Cheryl,

The Secretary asked me to send her, through you, an informal paper that she could share with President Clinton on the restavek problem. I was in Africa and then out of pocket much of last week, but I wanted to make sure that you have it before you go to Haiti.

If I don't see you before then, have a great trip!

LOU