

Humanitarian impact of increased deportations from the Dominican Republic

OVERVIEW

On 2 October 2024, the Government of the Dominican Republic announced that it would begin deporting up to 10,000 Haitian migrants back to Haiti per week (Protection Cluster 09/10/2024; AP 08/10/2024). By 18 November, IOM had documented nearly 40,000 deportations, with around 27,000 in October alone. This constitutes the highest monthly number of returns since the end of 2022, when the Dominican Republic began to increase its deportation of Haitian migrants. All deportations were documented at the four official land border crossings, with around 50% (nearly 20,000) at Belladeres, Centre department; 30% (12,500) at Ouanaminthe, Nord-Est department; 12% (4,700) at Anse-à-Pitres, Sud-Est department; and 8% (3,000) at Malpasse, Ouest department (IOM accessed 05/11/2024).

Deportees and returnees, including pregnant women and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), generally arrive with high pre-existing humanitarian needs. Many are deported without their belongings and experience varied protection threats, including harassment, violence, extortion, and the denial of access to basic services while living in the Dominican Republic and during the deportation process (Protection Cluster 09/10/2024; AI 28/08/2024 and 02/04/2024; KII 13/11/2024; KII 19/11/2024).

Humanitarian assistance and health, protection, and other basic services are limited or unavailable at the border crossings, leaving many needs unmet. Priority needs for deportees and returnees on arrival include emergency shelter, healthcare, food, water, assistance with identification and referral services, and transport (KII 15/11/2024; KII 19/11/2024).

Deportees and returnees also experience high needs after leaving the border, as many have no safe means of transport or safe destination within Haiti. Most deportees and returnees leave the border after several days, hitchhiking, using cash, or receiving transport from humanitarian responders to travel to their communities of origin or other host communities. While information on their destinations is limited, responder monitoring and data from prior returns indicate that most probably intend to travel to departments bordering the Dominican Republic (Centre, Nord-Est, Ouest, and Sud-Est) and to Artibonite department. Others attempt to return to the Dominican Republic immediately, often through smugglers (KII 11/11/2024 a; KII 15/11/2024; KII 08/11/2024; IOM 13/05/2024).

There is no systematic monitoring of returnees' and deportees' needs on arrival in their communities of origin and other destinations, leaving significant information gaps. Given Haiti's pre-existing humanitarian crisis, which severely escalating gang violence since March 2024 has aggravated, these needs will likely increase along with the needs of host communities, who have minimal resources and capacity to support arrivals.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Aim

This report aims to fill information gaps on the humanitarian needs of Haitian migrants recently deported from the Dominican Republic to Haiti, particularly since the beginning of October 2024. It emphasises the increased risks and needs facing deportees, returnees, and host communities given Haiti's longstanding humanitarian crisis and escalating gang violence in 2024. Conversely, the report also aims to address the potential impact of the increase in deportations on the severity of this crisis.

Methodology and structure

This report is based on the secondary data review of publicly available sources, combined with key informant interviews with over a dozen humanitarian responders working to monitor deportations and support deportees and returnees.

The report's structure loosely follows the deportation process. It briefly examines the protection threats and other humanitarian needs Haitian migrants experience when arrested and detained in the Dominican Republic, with an aim to understand their needs upon arrival in Haiti. It then examines the needs of deportees and returnees upon arrival at the border crossings and after leaving for their communities of origin or other destinations.

For information on needs in destination communities within Haiti, the analysis draws on findings from the 2024 REACH Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) completed from June–July. The MSNA surveyed nearly 2,700 households in Haiti's ten departments, along with around 700 households in the Metropolitan Area of Port-Au-Prince (ZMPP) and around 800 IDP and host community households in Sud department (REACH 07/2024). The analysis

also draws on an IOM survey of around 7,400 returnees and deportees who arrived from the Dominican Republic throughout 2023, collected as part of IOM's flow monitoring at the official and unofficial border crossings (IOM 13/05/2024).

Limitations

Minimal humanitarian presence at the border and a lack of clarity about deportees' and returnees' destinations after leaving the border limit information on their current needs. When information on the needs of recent (October–November) deportees and returnees is unavailable, this analysis draws on information on prior deportations from the Dominican Republic since 2022.

There are varying estimates of the number of returnees and deportees who have left the Dominican Republic since the beginning of October, with authorities reporting nearly 61,000 within that month alone (Al Momento 05/11/2024). This analysis uses IOM figures collected at the border in Haiti, where monitoring is more systematic than on the Dominican side.

Terminology

Most secondary sources reviewed for this report refer to Haitian migrants without consideration of their legal status, using the term as a catch-all to include economic migrants in regular or irregular situations, asylum seekers, and refugees. Where further information about their legal status is unavailable, this analysis similarly uses the broad term 'migrants' to describe all Haitians living in the Dominican Republic.

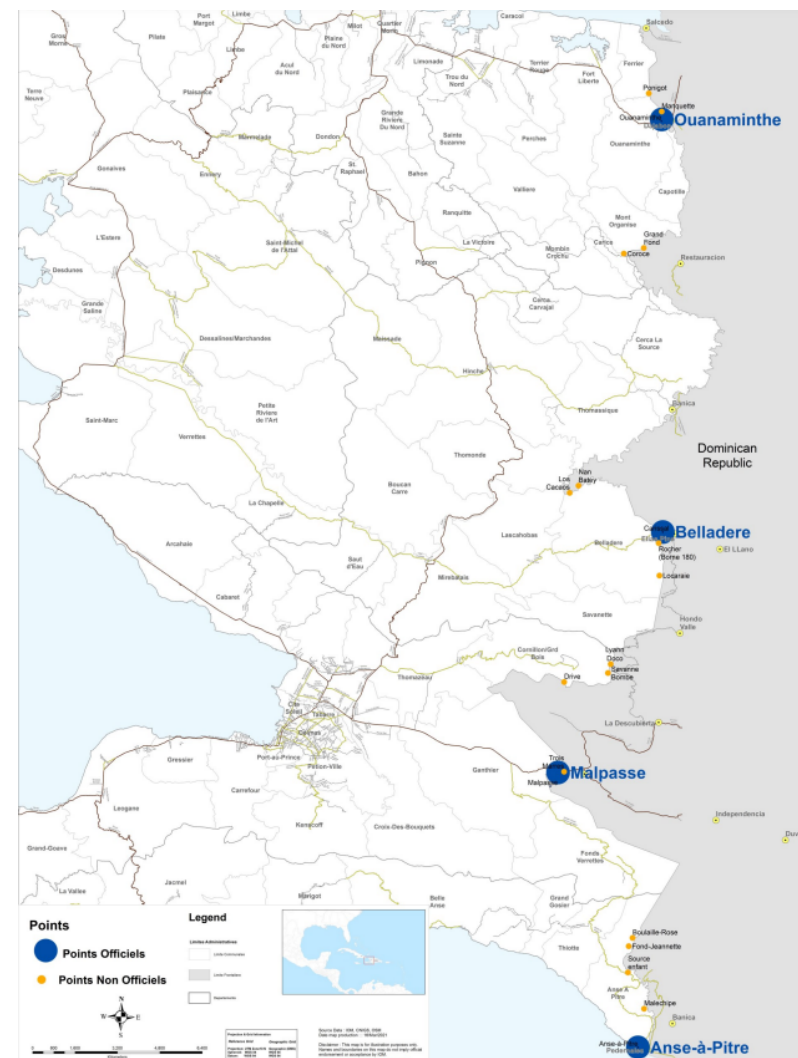
The Government of the Dominican Republic and media sources use varying terms to categorise returns, including 'deportation', 'repatriation', and 'voluntary return', depending on a person's status in the country and the process surrounding their return (DLA 03/11/2024; BBC 09/10/2024; Diario Libre 20/10/2024). Sources often use these terms inconsistently, and they do not always correspond with the reality of a person's experience. For example, many Haitians categorised as 'deported' do not undergo an official deportation process, and returns described as 'voluntary' are often motivated by the fear or experience of violence.

By contrast, IOM classifies return movements along the border according to two categories: spontaneous returns (migration) – where individuals or groups decide on and undertake migration without any outside assistance – and deportation. IOM further separates this latter category into official deportation – when both returnees and Haitian authorities are formally notified about the time and place of deportation, which occurs at official border crossing points during opening hours – and other deportations, which do not follow the above process (IOM accessed 11/11/2024).

Given a lack of clarity surrounding the administrative process involved in the mass return of Haitians from the Dominican Republic since October, this report uses IOM's broader

'deportation' category to describe all relevant movement across the border. It describes Haitians sent back as deportees and returnees to capture both official deportations and other deportations that do not follow a formal process.

Map 1. Official and unofficial border crossing points between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, April 2021



Source: IOM (21/05/2021)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background: Haitian migrants and deportation policy in the Dominican Republic	4
Crisis impacts: During the deportation process in the Dominican Republic.....	4
Crisis impacts: Upon arrival at the border crossings in Haiti.....	5
Crisis impacts: After leaving the border.....	6
Factors compounding humanitarian needs within Haiti.....	8
Response and access constraints at the borders and within Haiti	8

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

At the beginning of November, Haitian authorities reported that deportations had decreased. The Dominican Republic's Minister of Interior and Police denied this claim and announced that the deportation of 10,000 Haitians weekly would continue for an unspecified period (AI Momento 05/11/2024; Listin Diario 05/11/2024). By 18 November, IOM data indicated a lower deportation rate in the first weeks of November than in October (IOM accessed 19/11/2024). While deportation rates will likely continue to fluctuate, Dominican authorities are expected to keep deporting Haitian migrants at high rates, as they have since the end of 2022.

If the Dominican Republic does deport an average of 10,000 Haitians weekly, around 130,000 deportees and returnees, equivalent to over 1% of Haiti's existing population of 11.65 million, will require urgent humanitarian assistance by the end of 2024 (Protection Cluster 09/10/2024; WHO accessed 14/11/2024). Lower deportation rates will still aggravate pre-existing high needs in Haiti, placing an additional burden on the already overwhelmed education system, health facilities, and other basic services (El País 10/10/2024).

Given Haiti's escalating humanitarian crisis, Haitians – including those who have previously been deported – will likely continue to enter the Dominican Republic at high rates in search of security, livelihood opportunities, or (in the case of prior returnees and deportees) the recovery of assets that they were unable to bring upon deportation (KII 19/11/2024). A policy suspending visas for Haitians in the Dominican Republic since October 2023 will leave these new arrivals in an irregular situation and vulnerable to deportation (AI 28/08/2024; Diario Libre 30/09/2024).

Deportations from the Dominican Republic may also lead Haitians to migrate elsewhere in Latin America, fuelling a regional migration crisis and further decreasing their resources and coping capacities (BBC 09/10/2024; KII 08/11/2024).

BACKGROUND: HAITIAN MIGRANTS AND DEPORTATION POLICY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

While there is no official figure for the number of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, estimates range from 500,000–1,000,000. IOM approximates that nearly 500,000 Haitians in the Dominican Republic have irregular status (IOM accessed 11/11/2024; MPI 05/07/2023; DW 11/10/2024). A 2010 constitutional reform denying birthright citizenship to children born to parents with irregular status rendered up to 245,000 Haitians in the Dominican Republic stateless. A 2013 Constitutional Court ruling retroactively applied this reform to people born from 1929 onwards (RFK Human Rights 19/09/2024; Childers 31/05/2023; CMS 23/10/2023). A 2014 law enabling Haitians whose births had been registered in the Dominican Republic to be recognised as nationals, and requiring others to declare themselves as foreigners before being recognised, has faced significant implementation problems and left many unrecognised (AI 19/11/2015; IACHR 31/12/2015; RFK Human Rights 19/09/2024).

Haitians in the Dominican Republic, whether with regular or irregular migration status, regularly face racism, harassment, and violence. Haitians with irregular status are also unable to access social assistance, healthcare, education, and other public services and are particularly vulnerable to mass arrest and deportation. There are reports of deportations since 2022 targeting Haitians with regular status and even non-Haitians from other Caribbean or African countries, motivated by anti-black racism and profiling (RFK Human Rights 19/09/2024; Childers 31/05/2023; KII 08/11/2024; Africanews 14/05/2024).

Since assuming office in 2020, the Dominican Republic's current Prime Minister, Luis Abinader, has advocated and adopted stricter migration policies, including militarising the Dominican Republic's border with Haiti and initiating the construction of a wall along 164km of the 391km-long border (DW 11/10/2024; France 24 02/10/2024). Abinader has also overseen a significant increase in the deportation of Haitian migrants since the end of 2022. IOM documented the forced return of over 208,000 Haitians from the Dominican Republic in 2023, a significant increase compared to 17,000 in 2022 (IOM accessed 08/11/2024). In October 2023, in response to a diplomatic dispute over the Haitian construction of a canal on the shared Massacre River, which the Dominican Republic claimed would affect its farmers and the environment, the Dominican Republic announced an indefinite suspension of visa issuance and renewal for Haitians (AI 28/08/2024; AP 15/09/2023; Fragomen 30/04/2024).

To justify the October 2024 increase in deportations, Dominican authorities have claimed that Haitian migrants burden public schools and the public health system, even though Haitians living with irregular status lack access to public services (SWI 23/10/2024; elCaribe 30/10/2024).

CRISIS IMPACTS: DURING THE DEPORTATION PROCESS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The return process for Haitian migrants varies depending on how and where they enter the Dominican Republic and how and where Dominican authorities apprehend them. Some migrants are apprehended at or near the border and immediately returned, while others are arrested in their homes, workplaces, or public places in Santo Domingo and other parts of the Dominican Republic before being detained and returned. The average length of detention is unknown. Some migrants undergo an official deportation process, although Amnesty International has found that many deportations since the end of 2022 have been collective expulsions that do not involve the individual assessment of cases nor provide opportunities for migrants to seek international protection (AI 28/08/2024; KII 19/11/2024; KII 08/11/2024).

While there is minimal humanitarian monitoring of the deportation process in the Dominican Republic, leaving significant information gaps, it appears that Haitians experience high protection, food, WASH, and health needs when arrested and detained prior to deportation (KII 19/11/2024).

Protection

Protection threats include alleged violence by Dominican authorities during arrests and in detention centres, where Haitians have reported experiencing physical and psychological violence, including sexual violence (ADN Celam 25/10/2024; SWI 08/10/2024; Africanews 13/08/2024; AI 28/08/2024 and 02/04/2024; KII 19/11/2024). There are also reports that Dominican authorities extort Haitian migrants during the arrest and deportation process and steal their belongings, including their identity documentation (AI 28/08/2024; KII 19/11/2024).

Health, food, and WASH

The detention and deportation process poses significant health risks, as authorities often crowd deportees and returnees into overheated vehicles and detention facilities and regularly deny them access to medical assistance, WASH, and adequate food. Amnesty International has verified five videos released between July 2023 and July 2024 showing Dominican detention centres with no beds or chairs and detainees sleeping in heaps on the floor (AI 28/08/2024). There is a high risk of infectious disease transmission in these overcrowded facilities.

Children and pregnant and postpartum women are among those arrested and detained in an unsafe manner. There have been recent reports of authorities arresting and deporting Haitian women seeking antenatal and postnatal care in the Dominican Republic, likely leaving

them with unaddressed reproductive health needs in detention facilities (OHCHR 12/09/2023; AI 28/08/2024). It is unclear whether there is consistent gender segregation in detention facilities, a lack of which increases the risk of gender-based violence.

CRISIS IMPACTS: UPON ARRIVAL AT THE BORDER CROSSINGS IN HAITI

Shelter

The border crossing points at Anse-à-Pitres, Belladeres, and Ouanaminthe have emergency accommodation centres run by national authorities or NGOs, where deportees can stay for up to three nights. There is no shelter available at Malpasse. By November, there were around 200 spaces available at Ouanaminthe, 80 at Belladeres, and 60 at Anse-à-Pitres (KII 11/11/2024 a; KII 08/11/2024; KII 15/11/2024).

These centres do not have the capacity to shelter all arrivals, with limited places generally reserved for UASC and other groups with particularly high humanitarian needs. The centres lack large NFIs, such as mattresses, with particular shortages in basic infrastructure and NFIs at Anse-à-Pitres. There is limited privacy, and by 19 November, only Ouanaminthe had gender-segregated shelters (KII 11/11/2024 a; KII 11/11/2024 b; KII 08/11/2024; KII 15/11/2024; KII 19/11/2024).

Some deportees and returnees who cannot stay in emergency centres are forced to sleep on the streets for several nights before leaving the border-crossing towns. There are reports of some sleeping on the streets for several months if they have nowhere else to stay in Haiti. It appears that few deportees and returnees stay with host families at the border, although this has been observed in Ouanaminthe. Others who seek to return to the Dominican Republic stay with smugglers. By 11 November, there were no reports of ad hoc collective sites at the border-crossing points (KII 11/11/2024 a; KII 08/11/2024; KII 15/11/2024; KII 19/11/2024).

Protection

Most Haitians deported in October 2024 had no resources or identity documentation upon arrival in Haiti (Protection Cluster 09/10/2024; KII 08/11/2024). This leaves them vulnerable to the denial of healthcare, education, shelter, and other basic services (Le National 08/11/2024; VBI 07/11/2024). In some parts of Haiti, authorities suspect people without documentation of gang membership, which may lead to their arrest or rejection from host communities (KII 19/11/2024).

Returnees and deportees are vulnerable to protection risks from criminal violence, including gender-based violence, in border towns (KII 08/11/2024; KII 11/11/2024 a). The border

crossings are between 1–5km from some of the emergency accommodation centres, and transportation options are limited, requiring some deportees and returnees to travel on unlit roads late at night (KII 11/11/2024 a). This has led to high rates of theft and poses a particularly high risk of violence for women and children travelling alone.

Since October, around 3,000 deportees and returnees have arrived in Malpasse, where there is significant gang presence, increasing their vulnerability to violence and gang recruitment (AI 28/08/2024; KII 11/11/2024 a). There are no reports of significant gang presence in Ouanaminthe or Belladeres, although gang activity and insecurity have been increasing in Centre department, where Belladeres is located (OCHA 19/01/2024; REACH 09/2024).

There are reports of UASC among returnees and deportees, with one national civil society organisation estimating that 90 UASC had been returned by 8 November (AP 08/10/2024; ADN Celam 25/10/2024; Listin Diario 05/11/2024; Le National 08/11/2024). This includes reports of the Dominican Republic dropping off UASC at Malpasse, where neither UNICEF nor Haitian child protection authorities have a presence (KII 19/11/2024; KII 13/11/2024). Many returned UASC are teenage boys whose families had sent to the Dominican Republic to work (KII 13/11/2024). This demographic profile may increase their risk of recruitment into armed gangs upon arrival in Haiti.

In total, it is unknown how many UASC were among the over 8,200 Haitian children deported from the Dominican Republic in 2024 (IOM accessed 05/11/2024). Between January–September 2023 alone, however, the Dominican Republic deported at least 1,400 UASC to Haiti with no guarantee of protection, indicating the potential scale of these deportations in 2024 (AI 02/04/2024).

Health and WASH

By 9 October, most deported Haitians who had arrived at the border required medical care (Protection Cluster 09/10/2024). This includes pregnant and lactating women and people with chronic conditions, many of whom likely had minimal healthcare access in the Dominican Republic. Violence during the deportation process has left some deportees and returnees with injuries and led to high mental health and psychosocial support needs (Protection Cluster 09/10/2024; KII 15/11/2024). Despite these needs, deportees and returnees have almost no access to health services upon arrival in Haiti, except for any services humanitarian responders can provide, as host community services lack capacity (KII 08/11/2024; KII 19/11/2024).

Limited shelter and WASH access at the border increases the risk of health problems and disease transmission among deportees and returnees. By 7 November, the shelter at Anse-à-Pitres lacked water access, while the shelter at Belladeres had limited water access. Shelters require renovations, and maintenance staff has limited availability to keep the centres clean (KII 11/11/2024 a; KII 19/11/2024; KII 15/11/2024).

Food security

Most of the October returnees and deportees arrived with no resources, and many were denied food during the deportation process in the Dominican Republic (Protection Cluster 09/10/2024; AI 28/08/2024). The emergency accommodation centres in Belladeres and Ouanaminthe provide hot meals, but the supply is limited (KII 11/11/2024 b). Markets at the border towns lack the capacity to meet the needs of those with cash to purchase food. There is also a risk of patronage from deportees and returnees increasing prices and affecting food security in host communities (KII 11/11/2024 a).

CRISIS IMPACTS: AFTER LEAVING THE BORDER

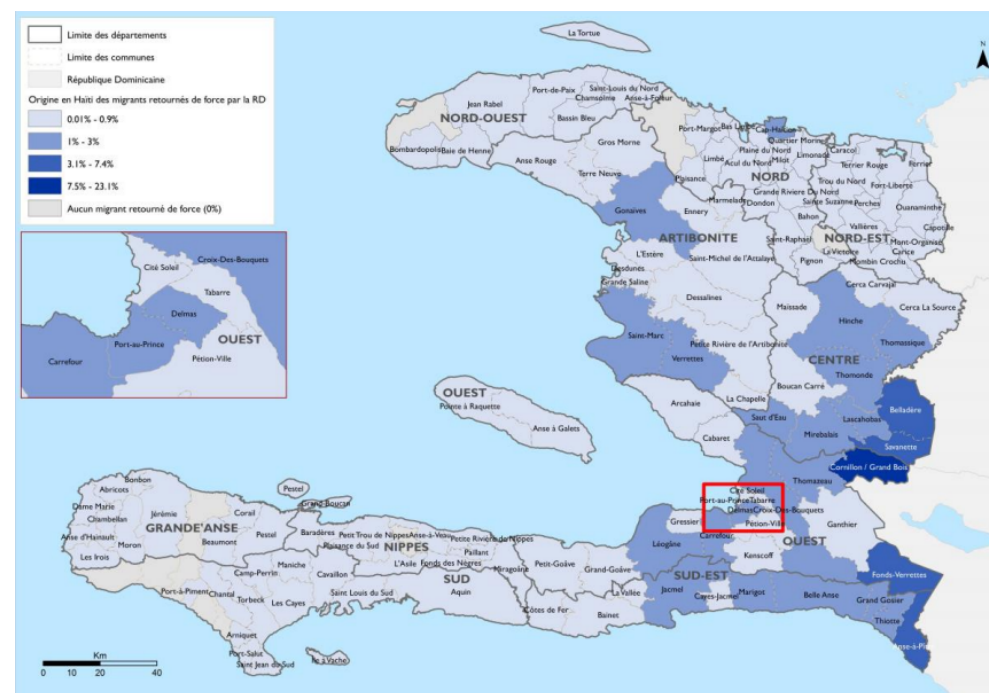
Common destinations

There is no comprehensive information on the destinations of deportees and returnees after leaving the border. While IOM collects information on deportees' and returnees' intended destinations at the border, it is unclear whether many reach their stated destinations. Reports from the border since October indicate that many recent arrivals are heading to their communities of origin in Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest departments (KII 11/11/2024 a). An IOM survey of 2023 deportees found that 83% were from the four departments bordering the Dominican Republic: Ouest, particularly Cornillons Grand Bois and Fonds-Verrettes communes (42%); Centre, particularly Belladeres and Savanette communes (21%); Sud-Est, particularly Anse-à-Pitres commune (18%); and Nord-Est (2%). 95% intended to return to their communities of origin within Haiti, with 5% intending to stay elsewhere in the country (IOM 13/05/2024).

Some returnees and deportees attempt to re-enter the Dominican Republic, either immediately upon arrival at the border crossings or after several months in their communities of origin. 44% of the surveyed returnees and deportees intended to leave again, with 65% heading to the Dominican Republic (IOM 13/05/2024). Others leave Haiti by other means – for example, by travelling to the US through Nicaragua (BBC 09/10/2024; KII 08/11/2024).

There is no systematic monitoring of deportees' and returnees' needs in their destinations. This section includes information on wider humanitarian needs in Haiti, highlighting the departments where it appears that deportees and returnees intend to settle, at least temporarily. It also discusses the needs that may arise during the process of attempting to re-enter the Dominican Republic or other countries.

Map 2. Destination of deportees surveyed in 2023, by commune



Source: IOM (13/05/2024)

Shelter

Shelter needs are high in all departments receiving deportees and returnees. In January 2024, Centre department, where Belladeres crossing is located, and Ouest department, where many deportees are returning to their community of origin, had the highest numbers of people in need of shelter assistance in Haiti, at 566,000 and 845,000, respectively (OCHA 19/01/2024). The 2024 MSNA found that around 40% of respondents in Centre department lived in makeshift shelters and 35% in incomplete buildings. In Sud-Est department, over 40% lived in makeshift shelters, while in Artibonite department, 36% lived in incomplete buildings (REACH 09/10/2024 a). An influx of deportees and returnees will likely aggravate shelter needs, with inadequate shelter conditions exposing returnees, deportees, and host communities to inclement weather and associated health risks (WB accessed 12/11/2024).

Many returnees and deportees – 23%, according to the 2023 IOM survey – were IDPs in Haiti prior to entering the Dominican Republic (IOM 13/05/2024; KII 19/11/2024). Given the escalating gang violence in Haiti in 2024, these returnees and deportees are unlikely to be able to return to their communities of origin, leading to particularly high shelter needs.

Protection

Returnees and deportees are vulnerable to gang violence while travelling to and upon arrival in their communities of origin or other destinations, particularly in Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest departments, where gang activity is concentrated. Gang control over key roads throughout these departments leads to high levels of extortion, kidnapping, and violence against travellers (GI-TOC 05/11/2024). Many deportees and returnees who lack the resources to pay for transport hitchhike, leaving them particularly exposed to violence while travelling (KII 15/11/2024). Migrants attempting to return to the Dominican Republic through smugglers are also at heightened risk of extortion, trafficking, and associated protection risks (KII 08/11/2024).

There are anecdotal reports that gangs are increasingly targeting deported men and boys returning to Artibonite and Ouest departments with no resources or livelihood options, leaving them with little choice but to join the gangs for access to resources (KII 11/11/2024 a). UASC are at particularly high risk of experiencing violence and, if they travel onwards to other parts of Haiti, of recruitment into armed gangs, among which minors made up an estimated 30–50% by May 2024 (UNICEF 31/05/2024).

Food security and livelihoods

Most returnees and deportees will arrive in their communities of origin and other destinations with no resources or employment, leaving them with high livelihood needs (KII 15/11/2024; KII 19/11/2024). The 2023 IOM survey found that 82% of deportees originally left Haiti because of a lack of employment opportunities, indicating that communities of origin will have minimal capacity to meet these livelihood needs (IOM 13/05/2024; KII 19/11/2024).

The influx of returnees and deportees with limited resources will likely aggravate food insecurity among returnees, deportees, and host communities. In September, IPC projected that 5.4 million Haitians (nearly half of the population of 11.2 million) will experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse food insecurity levels through February 2025, increasing to 5.54 million by June 2025. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels will be particularly high in the departments of Belladeres, Ouest, and parts of Sud-Est, while in Ouanaminthe, at least 25% of households will meet 25–50% of their caloric needs from humanitarian assistance (IPC 30/09/2024 a and 30/09/2024 b).

Increased food insecurity will also contribute to rising malnutrition, particularly among deported children. An estimated 277,000 children ages 6–59 months faced acute malnutrition in November 2024, with the worst rates in Artibonite department, Sud-Est department, and the ZMPP, all of which are witnessing the current wave of deportations (IPC 08/03/2024).

The increase in deportations will affect remittances from the Dominican Republic to Haiti, important resources for many households with diminished livelihoods as a result of gang violence and natural hazards (The Dialogue 09/04/2024; Haiti Libre 21/09/2023). At the same time, these households losing remittances may have to provide for returnees and deportees who have lost their income in the Dominican Republic and have no resources or livelihoods upon arrival.

Health and WASH

Healthcare access across Haiti is limited, leaving few services available to returnees and deportees with high health needs stemming from chronic health or deportation-related medical conditions. Health services are particularly constrained in Centre department, where 34% of the 2024 MSNA respondents could not access healthcare when they required it (REACH 09/10/2024 a). Cost posed the highest barrier to health service access nationwide in 2024, making it especially challenging for deportees and returnees with no resources (REACH 19/10/2024). A lack of documentation upon arrival in Haiti also complicates access to public health services.

WASH access across Haiti is also minimal, with the lowest levels of access to improved water sources (50%) in Centre department, where Belladeres crossing is located. Artibonite department has the third lowest, at 31% (REACH 09/10/2024 a). Low rates of WASH access in Centre department are partly attributable to the high frequency of natural hazards in the area (REACH 09/10/2024 b).

Low access to WASH and health services may increase disease transmission in communities where deportees and returnees settle. Haiti has been experiencing a cholera outbreak since October 2022, with a spike in cases at the end of 2023 and a lower but fairly consistent number of cases throughout 2024. According to the most recent available data, by 31 August 2024, the highest number of confirmed cases throughout the year were in Ouest (nearly 3,000), Centre (around 600), and Artibonite (around 300) departments, all of which were affected by the increased deportations (PAHO accessed 12/11/2024; WHO 13/12/2022).

FACTORS COMPOUNDING HUMANITARIAN NEEDS WITHIN HAITI

Gang violence crisis

Haiti has experienced a surge in gang violence since March 2024, primarily concentrated in the ZMPP, over 80% of which was under gang control by November. From July, gang violence began to increase around the edges of Port-au-Prince (PAP), particularly in Ganthier and Gressier communes, indicating gangs' aims to expand geographic influence and control (GI-TOC 05/11/2024). By November, an estimated 2.7 million people (nearly 25% of Haiti's population) lived under gang control, primarily in Artibonite, Centre, and Ouest departments, all of which are affected by the influx of returnees and deportees (OSRSG Children and Armed Conflict 11/11/2024; OCHA 08/11/2024).

Violence continues to flare in PAP, most recently on 11 November, when attacks displaced around 20,000 people. Around 17,000 of these were already living in displacement sites. This brings the total number of IDPs in Haiti to over 700,000, over half of whom are children (OCHA 18/11/2024; IOM 15/11/2024). An influx of returnees and deportees will further increase the strain on communities hosting these IDPs.

In June 2024, a multinational security support mission was deployed to Haiti to assist the Haitian National Police in combatting gang violence. By the beginning of November, however, the mission had not succeeded in decreasing violence or re-establishing state control over the capital (GI-TOC 05/11/2024).

Political instability

In an October 2024 UNSC session and an emergency session of the Organization of American States, Haitian authorities criticised the Dominican Republic's increased deportations for violating international human rights law (EFE 03/10/2024; Haiti Libre 24/10/2024; Dominican Today 08/10/2024). Persistent political instability, along with gang violence, natural hazards, and other humanitarian crises, hampers Haiti's capacity to respond to these deportations. The escalation of gang violence in March led to the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who had never received parliament approval and had ruled by decree since July 2021 (HRW accessed 12/11/2024; BBC 13/03/2024). In April 2024, a nine-member transitional council was appointed to regain state security control and prepare for democratic elections. After months of infighting and corruption-related scandals, the transitional council fired Haiti's interim Prime Minister, Gary Conille, on 12 November 2024 (AJ 10/11/2024). While the council appointed a replacement, businessman Alix Didier Fils-Aime, the leadership transition and instability may distract from the need for a diplomatic response to the deportation crisis.

Climate and natural hazards

Haiti's INFORM Climate Change Risk Score is 5.5/10 (high), with a score of 7.3/10 for lack of coping capacity, reflecting low state capacity to respond to natural hazards (EC accessed 11/11/2024). Haiti is particularly vulnerable to tropical storms and cyclones, which cause flooding and landslides, especially in low-lying coastal regions (OCHA 19/01/2024). Haiti's hurricane season runs from June–November and may still bring severe storms within the year, aggravating needs among host communities, deportees, and returnees, including those travelling and living in temporary shelters (Reuters 08/06/2024). Most recently, from 10–12 November, heavy rainfall caused flooding in Sud department, leaving around 3,600 families with urgent humanitarian needs (OCHA 15/11/2024).

RESPONSE AND ACCESS CONSTRAINTS AT THE BORDERS AND WITHIN HAITI

On 8 October, the Prime Minister of Haiti announced an interministerial committee to prepare a diplomatic and humanitarian response to the increase in deportations (DW 11/10/2024). The committee mobilised ten institutions, including local authorities and national ministries, to take charge of supporting newly deported and returned Haitians. The National Office of Migration has one or more representatives at all the official border crossings, and the Institute of Social Well-Being and Research, which provides support to child deportees and returnees, is present at all border crossings except Malpassee (IciHaiti 18/10/2024; KII 19/11/2024; UNICEF 13/11/2024).

There is highly limited humanitarian support on the Haitian side of the border, with few UN agencies, INGOs, and national NGOs present. There is no humanitarian presence at Malpassee and minimal presence at Anse-à-Pitres. The humanitarian presence on the Dominican side of the border is also limited, allowing for some protection monitoring but no systematic flow monitoring (KII 19/11/2024).

The available humanitarian responders are managing emergency accommodations, reunifying UASC with their families or placing them with foster families, and providing limited transport, food, NFIs, and health assistance. By mid-November, local authorities, the National Office of Migration, and UN agencies were also supporting the renovation of emergency accommodation centres and the building of a new centre at Ouanaminthe (KII 11/11/2024 a; KII 13/11/2024; KII 19/11/2024; KII 11/11/2024 b; KII 15/11/2024; Shelter Cluster 30/10/2024).

Despite these activities, significant funding constraints mean that only an estimated 10–15% of the returnees and deportees who arrived in October 2024 received humanitarian assistance (KII 11/11/2024 a). By October, the Protection of Migrants Working Group had received only 2% of its requested funding under the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan. In

2023, underfunding meant that the working group was able to assist only 7% (around 15,000) of all 215,000 Haitian arrivals from the Dominican Republic (Protection Cluster 09/10/2024).

Insecurity because of escalating gang violence continues to compromise the humanitarian response across Haiti, disrupting supply chains and impeding the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance (WFP 05/11/2024; REACH 29/10/2024). Gangs control all main routes connecting PAP with the rest of the country and extort the people travelling or transporting goods along these routes (GI-TOC 05/11/2024).

Access to Haiti by air and sea remains constrained, with several airlines suspending flights on 11 November after gunfire hit a US plane trying to land in PAP. Intermittent insecurity-related port closures in PAP throughout 2024 have also limited the entry of humanitarian cargo and supplies (BBC 12/11/2024; The Maritime Executive 27/09/2024; REACH 29/10/2024). The airport was closed until 18 November, with the US Federal Aviation Administration banning flights over Haiti until 12 December (ECHO 15/11/2024). WFP resumed humanitarian flights on 20 November (WFP 19/11/2024).