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Haiti, Policy and Governance

Haiti: Utilizing Peacekeeping Missions to Improve the Current Living Condition

Many Americans are aware of the drastic impact natural disasters can have on parts of the country, such as Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana and Hurricane Harvey in Texas. Many Americans volunteered to bring necessary supplies, such as food, water and shelter, to those affected by the damage of the natural disaster. This also included efforts to rebuild the areas destroyed by the natural disasters, such as houses and other businesses. However, there are some countries that have been affected by natural disasters as well, however they have yet to still be positively impacted by recovery efforts and still remain in a stranded state. Haiti is a country located in the Caribbean, bordering the Dominican Republic. The country, which was once known as a tourism destination and for its distinct culinary perspective, has now become a country plagued with many problems that have only worsened over time. Haiti suffers from many issues, including illiteracy, lack of stable housing, as well as lack of proper laws and policies to repair the damage caused by natural disasters, and a lack of proper education which has left millions of Haitians in a state of despair. Haiti is a country, desperately in need of restoration and solutions, and that starts with proper policies put into place that the government must strictly follow in order for any positive change to occur.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2020) Haiti is a Caribbean country of 10,710 sq miles that's located in a tropical climate that is known to get humid at times and is susceptible to tropical storms. As of 2019, Haiti has a population of 10,929,000 people that consists of 55.3% urban and 44.7% rural, with 32.86% of that land being cultivated in 2016. Throughout Haiti, however, most Haitians still utilize a cell phone or landline telephone. Rural living in Haiti consists of most families living in two room houses made out of mud, while urban living consists of families living in ram-shack houses; families in Haiti, on average, consist of around 4 people. Which means that those living situations, in both rural and urban areas, are considered very cramped and not fully furnished. The heads of Haiti include Prime Minister Joseph Joute and President Jovenel Moise. The government of Haiti consists of a republic that houses a parliament with two legislative houses; one being the Senate and the other being the Chamber of Deputies. Haiti's major crops include sugar cane, tobacco, rice, yams, plantains and bananas. Besides selling these major crops, Haitians also have access to meat and seafood in Haiti; common meats and seafood include: chicken, pork, conch, lobster, crab, carp and tilapia. These foods can be accessed through Haitian street vendors and Haitian street markets; with meat and seafood costing significantly more than starches. This can be compared to the price of fish versus the price of caviar in the U.S. This can make it very hard for certain families to afford proper nutrition.

Life in Haiti, for the most part, is characterized by impoverishment as well as malnutrition. Many Haitians lack proper water and sanitation, which results in many families being left without proper water resources. Since Dining for Women (2020) states that a typical family diet consists of mostly starches, since meat and fish is considered an expensive product to purchase, due to a small number of farmers, many families aren't receiving proper nourishment and are left undernourished. In addition to a lack of proper nutrition, Haiti also suffers from a lack of jobs. Jobs in Haiti consist of vendors, fishermen, construction workers, teachers and shopkeepers, however men, typically, are the only ones allowed to

hold these jobs. This is due to men and women not being treated equally in Haitian culture. Men are the citizens that receive jobs and the main source of income. Women, for the most part, act as housewives and care for the home and children. With the job industry being significantly scarce, the lack of jobs has resulted in large amounts of unemployment. Children in Haiti lack a proper education; this is due to many schools in Haiti not being affordable, since they required fees to be paid. These schools are known as private schools and are mostly located in urban areas. Public schools, which require no fees, are lacking necessary resources which leaves many Haitian children deprived of a proper education which has resulted in a high rate of illiteracy. Despite Haiti having hundreds of primary care facilities, most of the facilities are unequipped and lack necessary equipment. Despite the fact that healthcare is affordable in Haiti, those who have healthcare are deprived of proper medical attention. This is extremely concerning, since there is an ongoing battle against Cholera in Haiti. This means that something needs to change.

The lack of Policy and Governance continues to be a present issue that is resulting in Haiti continuing to decline and not improve. The lack of proper policy and governance has resulted in a severe lack of proper housing that can withstand natural disasters, this has led to many Haitians that live in rural areas being forced to move into displacement camps. With a lack of proper policy in place with the neighboring country of the Dominican Republic, many Haitians that fled to the Dominican Republic have been deported back to Haiti, despite there not being enough housing. According to the Human Rights Watch (2020) more than 10,000 Haitians were sent back to Haiti from the Dominican Republic each month of the first six months of 2019. This has only led to housing worsening more and more. The lack of proper policy regarding education has resulted in a lack of proper resources, leaving Haiti with a poor education system. This has led to most children being kept out of primary and secondary school; leaving around ½ of Haitians over 15 being illiterate. The lack of proper policy regarding labor in Haiti also has resulted in there being no minimum age requirement when it comes to holding a job, leaving children working instead of learning. Without proper education, however, urban areas suffer from unemployment due to many well paying jobs requiring literacy. In order for Haiti to stop declining as a country and start improving, proper policies must be put into place by the Haitian government and they must be strictly outlined and strictly followed. This calls for a plan of action to be made regarding the creation and implementation of new policies for the sake of improving Haiti.

In order to improve the country of Haiti, I recommend to revise and reinstate a peacekeeping mission to Haiti that has a core focus on revising housing and education in Haiti. The main policies that would need to be put into place would include, reform and rehabilitation efforts that would need to remain in place and continue to be upheld. I believe that if the peacekeeping mission has a strict outline and the Haitian Government upholds it, then it will result in the housing crisis and lack of proper education issues being resolved. In order for this peacekeeping mission to work the Plan of Action will require an agreement to be in place with the U.S Government as well as the Haitian Government. The Plan of Action would also need to be approved by the U.S Government to move forward. Once approved by the U.S Government, the peacekeeping mission, like all peacekeeping missions, would be organized by the United Nations, The funding will come from the annual State Department of Foreign Operations. The Plan of Action will require an agreement to be in place with the U.S Government as well as the Haitian Government. While this plan is ambitious, it has been done before by the United Nations in the past.

Up until October of 2019, the United Nations had maintained that the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti stayed in place. According to United Nations Peacekeeping (2018) The

mission kept a core focus on reducing the spread of Cholera by giving Haitians proper treatment against the illness, and by increasing the support for a vaccination against Cholera. The peacekeeping mission was successful in reducing the amount of cases during its run; by going from more than 41,000 suspected cases of Cholera and 440 deaths in 2016 to just over 300 suspected cases and three deaths from January through April 2019. The mission also followed strict guidelines that were also upheld, for the most part, by the Haitian Government. This also led to the peacekeeping mission being successful. The peacekeeping mission also investigated allegations of police brutality made by anti-government protesters to ease tensions between the Haitian Government and the anti-government protestors and avoid any more conflict between the two sides. In addition to this, an effort was made by the World Bank by implementing the Infrastructure and Institutions Emergency Recovery. This project saw the rehabilitation of Haitian roads, resources being provided to urban and rural communities, and even saw 9 Public Financial Management entities being placed back into operation. This effort, however, disbanded in June of 2018.

To come to the present there is currently a peacekeeping mission being conducted in South Sudan, known as the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, that contains core values similar to the ones that would be in the planned peacekeeping mission. The core values in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan is to provide South Sudanese citizens with clean water, proper food, defend their rights and reduce the amount of South Sudanese citizens currently living in displacement camps. As of 2020, the peacekeeping mission has reported success in moving ten of thousands of South Sudanese citizens from displacement camps through methods of relocation. According to IPI Global Observatory (2019) The peacekeeping mission has also been successful in isolating the polarized communities in South Sudan from one another at a time when even broader violence was likely. Which has resulted in the prevention of a genocide. This aspect of the South Sudan peacekeeping mission can be applied to the rise in gangs in Haiti, which according to Nation Master (2020) is larger than the United States.

Since the previous peacekeeping mission in Haiti saw the decrease in cholera cases, I believe that if the same amount of effort and attention is given to issues such as housing and education, then their high rates would significantly decrease and a large amount of Haiti's needs could be met. If the proposed peacekeeping mission placed the same focused efforts towards education and housing, we will see a significant decrease in the amount of Haitians that are illiterate or living in displacement camps, like with the decrease in Cholera cases. Instead these homeless families will have the opportunity to live in real houses and not in houses made out of mud. It would be wise for the peacekeeping mission to remain in place for at least 15 years or until the damage Hurricane Matthew left on Haiti is, for the most part repaired. The mission core goals should include: improvements in education, such as bringing in resources from the United States to improve the quality of education, opening schools with no fees that offer proper education, building stable houses that will be able to withstand natural disasters in rural areas and placing more farms in rural populations.

If these core goals are strictly enforced, then Haitians could migrate from overcrowded urban areas to more rural areas of Haiti. If this were to occur, then many Haitians would have the resources to start and develop a farm, and have more living space then they would previously have in urban areas. The development of more farms would result in more Haitians having jobs, access to food, would hopefully see the price of meat and fish being lowered to a more reasonable price, and would expand the average

farm size in Haiti; 0.5 hectares which is equal to half the size of a football field. In addition to building more houses, if more public schools were built in rural areas, there would be a decrease in the rate of illiteracy in Haiti, and more children would be able to attend school. The public schools would also see more resources being provided in the form of books, as well as writing utensils. More Haitians being able to read would also result in more Haitians being able to receive jobs in more urban areas. Peacekeepers, like the ones serving in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, will also be able to keep the crime rate down which will also keep the amount of crimes low and keep citizens safe. Especially since the Human Rights Report (2020) reports as many as “11,000 detainees” being kept in prison with the majority still awaiting trial.

While this plan of action is ambitious, it can be accomplished as well as be successful. The United Nations’ role in enforcing strict policies regarding Cholera was what allowed that specific issue to improve and the amount of cases to decrease. Therefore the plan of action is needed, however with its focus on housing and education. The improvement of education and housing in Haiti will allow Haitians to have more availability of jobs, and can expand the farming industry at the same time. All of these implementations can set Haiti on a path of recovery and allow the country to improve. However this plan of action can only work if the policies are upheld, not only by the U.S Government, but also by the Haitian Government as well.

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