

ZAGREB UNIVERSITY

European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation
A.Y. 2025/2026

When the Storm Passes: Linking Natural Disasters to Sexual Violence and Trafficking Against Women in Haiti

An analysis of the legal frameworks and policies that aim to protect/promote women's and girls' rights in Haiti, and how Haiti, being a disaster-prone country, mitigates their vulnerability to sexual violence/GBV and Trafficking.

Author: Scarlet Iona Mirabel Murphy
Supervisor: Antonija Petričušić

Word Count Declaration: 29,642

ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that natural disasters in Haiti function as risk multipliers that intensify pre-existing structural inequalities, increasing women's vulnerability to sexual violence and trafficking whilst exposing the limitations of domestic and international legal frameworks intended to protect them. Using a qualitative socio-legal case study of Haiti, strengthened by feminist and vulnerability theories, the research draws upon existing literature, UN reports, international conventions, and disaster frameworks to examine how weak institutions, gang violence, poverty, and recurring disasters combine to heighten women's vulnerability in post-disaster contexts.

The methodological framework is based on a secondary desk-based study, supported by secondary interviews providing perspectives on why sexual violence persists. The study also compares how the “law on paper” translates into practice, assessing whether international frameworks to which Haiti is a party and its domestic laws are being implemented and upheld.

The findings demonstrate that disasters do not independently create sexual violence and trafficking but instead amplify existing vulnerabilities through displacement, insecure housing, cultural norms, gender inequality, and limited access to education. The research concludes with tailored legal, policy, community-based, policing, and educational recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection of women in Haiti's disaster context.

KEYWORDS

Gender based Violence/ CEDAW/ Natural Disaster/ Haiti/ Trafficking/Sexual Violence/Risk Multiplier

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would firstly like to thank Antonija Petričušić for both her inspiring lectures and her professional and emotional guidance throughout the thesis, this semester would have been very different without your powerful presence. Thanks also to Zagreb University for hosting me in such an incredible city.

A big thank you to the EMA team, especially Martina Urbinati for her student support and Stefania Saccarola, for our interesting conversations in the library. Special thanks to EMA fellows Dr Orla Ní Cheallacháin, Dr Inge Zwarts (and her inspiring philosophy seminars) and Dr Judit Villena Rodó.

I thank my wonderful EMA friends Auri, Emer, Ronnie, Ferdia and Ashly for always supporting me throughout both my semesters in Venice and Zagreb, and being the best company to me through all the hard deadlines and exam dates.

A huge thank you to my Roommates in Zagreb, Pim and Martina. Thank you, Pim, for the amazing dinners, and thank you so much, Martina, for the many coffee trips to Booska to study/write and throughout making sure I was staying motivated and all in all being my partner in crime; thanks also to your grandparents for hosting our “study retreats”.

A final thank you to all my family members; Mirabel, Jessica, Andrew, Flo and Jasper for believing in me and encouraging me, as well as Matteo for the many supportive calls.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Term
BINUH	United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti
CED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CSTPEPO	Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GR	General Recommendation
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MESECVI	Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention of Belém do Pará
MINUJUSTH	United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VAW	Violence Against Women

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 - Natural Disasters and Climate Change.....	7
1.2 - Risk Multipliers: Linking Sexual Violence and Natural Disasters	8
1.3 - Haiti's disaster history and the 2010 Earthquake.....	10
1.4 - Research Rationale.....	11
1.5 - Research Aims	13
1.6 – METHODOLOGY	14
1.6.1 - Research Materials.....	14
1.6.2 - Methodological approach.....	15
1.6.3 - Limitations	17
CHAPTER 2: POLITICAL, LEGAL AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS.....	19
2.1 - Haitian History	20
2.2 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	22
2.2.1 - Key CEDAW Articles.....	23
2.2.2 - CEDAW General Recommendations.....	24
2.2.3 - CEDAW Concluding Observations 2009	26
2.2.4 - CEDAW Concluding Observations 2016	26
2.3 - The International covenant on Civil and political rights (ICCPR).....	29
2.4 - Trafficking Frameworks.....	29
2.5 - Convention of Belém do Pará	30
2.6 - Disaster Reduction Frameworks	33
2.7 - Haiti's Frameworks	36
2.7.1 - Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Violence within Haitian Law.....	37
2.7.2 Policing, Protection and Accountability.....	38
2.7.3 - Haiti's response and periodic reports.....	39
2.7.4 UN Reporting Mechanisms and the Deterioration of Human Rights in Haiti.....	40
2.8 - Structural Barriers	47
2.8.1 - Weak governance, corruption and unequal access to justice	48
2.8.2 - International and Western influence	50
2.8.3 - Disaster-Related Institutional Collapse.....	52
CHAPTER 3: SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN HAITI	55

3.1 - Factors increasing women's vulnerability pre/post disaster	55
3.2 - Gender Based Violence (GBV).....	58
3.3 – Trafficking.....	60
CHAPTER 4: NATURAL DISASTERS AS RISK MULTIPLIERS: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE LIMITATIONS OF LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN HAITI	63
4.1 - Main Findings: Natural Disasters as Risk Multipliers	63
4.2 - Limitations to the Legal and Normative Frameworks.....	69
CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS.....	76
5.1 - Improvement and Strengthening of Legal and Normative Frameworks and International Partnerships ...	76
5.2 - Reform of Security Institutions and Services.....	79
5.4 - Limitations of recommendations.....	84
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

“I can tell you that confronting the problems once marginalised as women’s issues, we can tackle the greatest dangers of the 21st century - Behind every major crisis there’s an unseen factor at play, a story you have never been told ...a greatest indicator of the world's stability, wealth and safety is the status of women” – Gloria Steinman 2024

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 - Natural Disasters and Climate Change

Natural disasters refer to climatic, volcanic, and hydrological events that cause widespread destruction to societies, impacting economic strength, infrastructure, and personal mortality, as well as creating a multitude of cascading effects.¹ However, their impacts are not experienced equally across countries. Nations with lower levels of economic development, weaker infrastructure, and limited disaster preparedness are often more vulnerable to these events.

This raises the question of whether a disaster can truly be considered “natural,” or whether its impact is more a product of its environment and structurally created conditions. If the same disaster were to occur in two different countries, it is unlikely to have the same effects; rather, it would expose the development gaps between them. The severity of a disaster is therefore closely linked to socio-economic conditions such as poverty, governance, and access to resources.

Research, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2022)² and the Hyogo Framework for Action,³ shows that disasters disproportionately affect lower-income countries, as they often lack the financial and institutional capacity to reduce risk and recover effectively. This highlights that disasters are not isolated events but are deeply connected to structural inequalities and development gaps, which shape both their impact and the ability of societies to respond.

Climate change is also increasing the frequency and intensity of certain hazards, including extreme heat, heavy rainfall, flooding, drought, and stronger storms. The IPCC reports with high confidence that human-induced climate change has intensified many extreme weather events and increased the

¹ UNDRR, ‘Definition: Disaster | UNDRR’ (30 August 2007) <<https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster>> accessed 4 May 2026.

² Hans-Otto Pörtner and others (eds), ‘Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability - Summary for Policymakers’ (Cambridge University Press 2022) 11-20.

³ UNDRR, ‘Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters - Full Text | PreventionWeb’ (15 November 2007) <<https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/hyogo-framework-action-2005-2015-building-resilience-nations-and-communities-disasters>> accessed 9 March 2026 11-20.

likelihood of compound disasters in vulnerable regions.⁴ These changes further heighten risks for populations already exposed to environmental and economic vulnerability.

International frameworks have been developed to address disaster risk reduction and improve resilience. The Hyogo Framework for Action (2005–2015), adopted by United Nations member states in 2005, aimed to reduce disaster losses by strengthening national and community preparedness, governance, and risk management strategies.⁵ Building on this, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030) was adopted by the United Nations in 2015.⁶ Sendai expands the Hyogo Framework by shifting from reactive disaster management toward a more proactive approach focused on prevention, resilience building, and reducing underlying risk factors. It also emphasises the principle of “Build Back Better”, encouraging states to rebuild infrastructure and social systems in ways that improve resilience following disasters.⁷ This approach is particularly relevant in contexts such as Haiti, where rebuilding after major disasters must address underlying vulnerabilities as well as immediate damage. This thesis therefore examines disasters not as isolated environmental events, but as processes and risk multipliers that expose and intensify existing structural inequalities, ultimately increasing women's vulnerability to sexual violence and trafficking, whilst exposing the limitations of domestic and international legal frameworks intended to protect them.

1.2 - Risk Multipliers: Linking Sexual Violence and Natural Disasters

Building upon the understanding that disasters are shaped by existing social and structural conditions, there is increasing recognition that natural disasters act as risk multipliers for GBV, trafficking, and sexual violence. Rather than creating these harms independently, disasters expose and intensify pre-existing vulnerabilities, particularly within fragile states such as Haiti. The violence itself is therefore not caused by the disaster, but emerges as a secondary consequence of the disruption and structural

⁴ Valérie Masson-Delmotte and others (eds), ‘Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis - Summary for Policymakers’ (Cambridge University Press 2021) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009157896.001>> 4-5.

⁵ UNDRR, ‘Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015’ (n 3).

⁶ UNDRR, ‘Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, 2015) <<https://sdgs.un.org/publications/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030-17988>> accessed 9 March 2026.

⁷ *ibid* 4.

inequalities that disasters exacerbate.⁸ Reports from Nepal, for example, show that women become especially vulnerable after disasters when food is insufficient and their spouses are away.⁹

Partner violence will also appear to increase when spouses feel stressed and powerless/unable to respond to a disaster and eventual cascading issues around them; these situations of scarcity and uncertainty put pressure on said spouse, where abusive behaviour intensifies. Most commonly, when men feel they can no longer act as “provider” in the family or community and are emasculated by events out of their control.¹⁰ This is not an excuse but rather an explanation of how disaster conditions amplify abuse.

In a post disaster scenario we are faced with thousands of people placed in insecure shelters and internal displacement camps, where usually there is a lot of disappearance of women and girls who are usually trafficked and sexually assaulted, Ms. Rashida Manjoo Special Rapporteur on violence against women reported how sexual violence against women was rising in these environments and how she assumes this is due to the fact of pre-existing vulnerabilities being exacerbated.¹¹ As will be explored in later chapters, international frameworks may struggle to adequately define trafficking and sexual violence, whilst domestic laws may be ineffective in preventing or responding to such abuses. Women enter disaster situations already facing limited protection, with disasters exposing gaps within legal frameworks and enforcement.

In Haiti, after the 2010 Earthquake, an investigation by *The Times* found several instances of Oxfam employees paying young women for sex and exchanging sex for aid in the aftermath of the earthquake.¹²¹³ Such examples show that natural disasters must be understood not only as environmental or humanitarian crises, but also as a crisis that deepens gender inequality and increases the risk of violence and exploitation against women. Haiti has been selected as a core case for this

⁸ Spotlight Initiative, ‘Colliding Crises: How the Climate Crisis Fuels Gender-Based Violence’ (Spotlight Initiative 2025) Issue Brief 2.

⁹ Itzá Castañeda Camey and others, ‘Gender-Based Violence and Environment Linkages: The Violence of Inequality’ (IUCN 2020) 11.

¹⁰ *ibid* 139.

¹¹ Ms. Rashida Manjoo, ‘Statement by Ms. Rashida Manjoo Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences’ (United Nations General Assembly 2010) Statement <<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/documents/ga65/vaw.pdf>> 6.

¹² Camey and others (n 9) 194.

¹³ Sean O’Neill Reporter Chief, ‘Oxfam in Haiti: “It Was like a Caligula Orgy with Prostitutes in Oxfam T-Shirts”’ (9 February 2018) <<https://www.thetimes.com/uk/article/oxfam-in-haiti-it-was-like-a-caligula-orgy-with-prostitutes-in-oxfam-t-shirts-p32wlk0rp>> accessed 26 March 2026.

study due to a combination of its economic instability, geographically multi-hazard location, and ongoing vulnerability to Haitian women.

1.3 - Haiti's disaster history and the 2010 Earthquake

Haiti is the second-largest Caribbean Island, bordered to the east by the Dominican Republic, with a total land area of 28,000km².¹⁴ The GDP of Haiti is approximated at 25 billion US dollars in 2024.¹⁵ Haiti's population is approximately 95% black, 5% being white and mixed. The main religions consist of 80% Roman catholic, 16% protestant, but half of the religion does practice voodoo.¹⁶

Haiti is in a highly multi-hazardous region exposed to floods, storms, earthquakes, landslides and droughts, with 96% of the population exposed to at least 2 different types of disasters.¹⁷ Most of the disasters Haiti has suffered between 1980 and 2024 are as follows: 51% floods, 32% storms, 3% earthquakes (approx. amounts),¹⁸ earthquakes are less frequent events but far more destructive. Haiti has historically struggled to respond effectively to natural disasters due to its underfunding, weak institutions, and bad governance, all of which will be discussed in chapter 2.

The 2010 Earthquake remains one of the most significant disastrous events in Haiti, due to its infrastructure collapse, long-term social and economic instability and the ineffective governments/agencies dedicated to disaster risk reduction, acting in an effective and timely manner; all such factors exposed Haiti's fragility to natural disasters.¹⁹ This was a magnitude 7 earthquake, which left the country in disarray; important statistics highlight that 3,500,000 people were affected, 220,000

¹⁴ UNDP - Climate Change Adaption, 'Haiti | UNDP Climate Change Adaptation' <<https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/latin-america-and-caribbean/haiti>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁵ World Bank Group, 'World Bank Open Data' (*World Bank Open Data*) <<https://data.worldbank.org>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁶ Embassy of the Republic of Haiti, 'Haiti at a Glance' (*Embassy of Haiti*, 2026) <<https://www.haiti.org/haiti-at-a-glance/>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁷ ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and The World Bank, 'Haiti's Path to Building Resilience to Multiple Disaster Risks in a Fragile Context | GFDRR' (2017) <<https://www.gfdrr.org/en/publication/haitis-path-building-resilience-multiple-disaster-risks-fragile-context>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁸ The World Bank Group, 'Haiti - Historical Natural Disasters | Climate Change Knowledge Portal' (*Climate Knowledge Portal*, 2026) <<https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/haiti/natural-disasters-historical>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁹ ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and The World Bank (n 17).

died, 300,000+ were injured, and approx. 293,000 houses were destroyed and damaged, leaving one and a half million people living in camps.²⁰ Haiti's exposure to disasters is made worse by poverty, environmental degradation, weak infrastructure and fragile government institutions.²¹ Not only was Haiti subject to physical damage from the earthquake, such as destruction of ministry buildings and other infrastructure, including the national palace, parliament, and national penitentiary but Haiti also lost one-third of its civil servants as well, creating a huge institutional collapse.²² Post-disaster it's clear the institutional collapse is not simply due to just the disaster itself, but general political and historical instability and corruption (see structural barriers section).

1.4 - Research Rationale

Haiti is the core case study for this thesis due to its colonial and political history as well as being a multi-hazardous country, and being represented as a vulnerable and socially, economically and politically unequal state. When analysing the treatment of women and women's rights, it's clear that there's very little research that directly links the issues of natural disasters and women's rights together. Haiti, therefore, becomes a very interesting country to make these links and investigations of violence, gender and natural disasters.

Existing literature demonstrates that climate change acts as a risk multiplier, with natural disasters increasing sexual violence, especially when this occurs in a fragile setting.²³ As previously established, if women are already in vulnerable positions, the link to GBV and the climate crisis gap closes even more. Especially when referencing women in rural settings who are burdened with unpaid labour roles, which reinforce structural inequality and heavily limit their ability to respond to a crisis effectively.²⁴

²⁰ Disaster Emergency Committee, '2010 Haiti Earthquake Facts and Figures | Disasters Emergency Committee' (2013) <<https://www.dec.org.uk/article/2010-haiti-earthquake-facts-and-figures>> accessed 11 May 2026.

²¹ ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and The World Bank (n 17).

²² World Bank Group, 'Rebuilding Haitian Infrastructure and Institutions' (*World Bank*, 2019) <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2019/05/03/rebuilding-haitian-infrastructure-and-institutions>> accessed 11 May 2026.

²³ Spotlight Initiative (n 8).

²⁴ Irene Dankelman and Kavita Naidu, 'Introduction: Gender, Development, and the Climate Crisis' [2020] *Gend Dev* <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2020.1843830>> accessed 22 April 2026 449.

This research seeks to explore the relationship between women's rights and natural disasters through an investigation of policies, government responses and NGO/UN reports. The challenges women suffer are further intensified by global trends, with around 40% of the world's population now living in 'repressed states', where civil action, including women's rights movements, is often restricted.²⁵ At the same time, there is a growing conservative backlash against women's rights, with patriarchal values becoming more persistent, limiting progress in gender equality.²⁶

Across the world, women's rights are increasingly under pressure, this research aims to contribute to a wider conversation on what needs to be done and what can be improved. It seeks to open discussions on how women's rights must adapt, particularly in the context of a worsening climate and the increasing impact of natural disasters.

This thesis provides a unique insight into how natural disasters should not be viewed independently as the sole cause of post-disaster destruction and suffering. Rather, they act as risk multipliers, exposing the structural weakness already present. Without strong support systems before a disaster, the outcome is to some extent already determined.

Without attention being drawn to the high statistics, reports, personal stories and high rates of trafficking and rape post-disaster,²⁷ these issues may not be seen as connected or understood as outcomes of the same conditions. This creates a gap in how we understand the full impact of disasters, particularly on women.

There are research gaps that don't investigate this situation in a similar way to my research, especially when considering the movement of modern feminism, where women are achieving greater financial independence, and the perceived threat this can create. This thesis aims to bring a new and more connected perspective by examining how structural issues and social attitudes contribute to ongoing vulnerability, identifying what and who can be held accountable, and offering recommendations supported by other researchers in the field of gender studies and natural disaster relief. This study will

²⁵ Ibid 450.

²⁶ Sascha Gabizon, 'UNGA75: "Heads of State, We Need You to Pushback against the Pushback"' (Women Engage for a Common Future 2020) <<https://www.wecf.org/unga75-heads-of-state-we-need-you-to-push-back-against-the-push-back/>> accessed 22 April 2026.

²⁷ MADRE and others, 'Gender--Based Violence Against Haitian Women & Girls in Internal Displacement Camps' (Republic of Haiti 2011) Republic of Haiti - Submission to the United Nations - Universal Periodic Review 12th Session of the Working Group on the UPR-Human Rights Council.

bring a better understanding of how structural inequalities foster vulnerability and act as the underlying factor that shapes the impact of disasters on women's rights.

1.5 - Research Aims

The final aim for this thesis is to successfully analyse the legal frameworks that Haiti is joined to and whether or not Haiti follows them accordingly. It seeks to identify key gaps and reasons for sexual violence (GBV/Trafficking) in Haiti, such as perspectives, disasters, culture or low education. After all the analysis, the thesis provides concrete recommendations that will be tailored to Haiti's environment based off scholarly research.

These research questions will help prove/link the contribution that natural disasters make to rising sexual violence within Haiti.

1. How do natural disasters function as risk multipliers for sexual violence and trafficking against women in Haiti?
2. To what extent do international and domestic legal frameworks effectively protect women from post-disaster violence and exploitation in Haiti?
3. What legal and policy reforms could strengthen women's protection in disaster contexts in Haiti?

To answer the following questions, chapter 2 (Legal and Normative Frameworks) analyses the different political, legal, and normative frameworks that operate to benefit women's rights and to which Haiti is a State Party. This includes examinations of CEDAW, the Sendai Framework, and Haitian history and governance, which help address the root causes of vulnerability in Haiti.

This is followed by chapter 3, which turns to the evidence of sexual violence/trafficking and GBV, proving not only their existence but also exploring the reasons why they persist. This chapter looks directly at factors such as poverty, weak governance, corruption, cultural norms, and access to justice.

With the foundations established in these previous chapters, the final chapters evaluate how natural disasters interact with and intensify pre-existing vulnerabilities. From there, the gaps within existing frameworks and governance structures in Haiti are evaluated and, with the assistance of scholarly

research, recommendations for improvement are proposed. These recommendations explore adaptations to existing legal frameworks and community-based initiatives that could be implemented to strengthen the protection of women in Haiti before drawing the final conclusions of this study.

1.6 – METHODOLOGY

This thesis adopts a qualitative socio-legal case study methodology, using Haiti to examine how natural disasters function as risk multipliers for sexual violence and trafficking. The analysis combines comparative implementation analysis by comparing the "law on paper" with the "law in reality" to assess how effectively legal obligations are implemented in Haiti. This approach is supported by feminist and vulnerability theories.

1.6.1 - Research Materials

The research is based on a qualitative analysis of secondary sources (textual analysis); sources include treaties, legislation, UN reports, NGO reports, academic literature, and existing interview data (to analyse perspectives).²⁸ These sources are comparatively analysed to assess Haiti's domestic implementation of its legal obligations within international frameworks.

The materials used throughout this thesis will be a combination of treaties and policy documents, such as CEDAW. Within this framework, General Recommendations and Concluding Observations will be analysed and investigated to assess how strictly they are followed, as well as the reporting mechanisms to which Haiti is subject. Disaster risk reduction frameworks, such as the Hyogo and Sendai Frameworks, will also be included as reference points for how Haiti could improve its response to disasters and reduce vulnerability in post-disaster contexts. Alongside other reports from the UN and UN expert reports.

²⁸ Naïka C Gabriel and others, “‘The Women, They Maltreat Them... Therefore, We Cannot Assure That the Future Society Will Be Good’: Male Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence: A Focus Group Study with Young Men in Haiti’ (2016) 37 Health Care Women Int 773 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/07399332.2015.1089875>>.

In addition, reports from organisations and NGOs such as Oxfam and Amnesty International will be used to provide external perspectives, alongside Haitian sources and academic work by professionals and researchers focusing on Haiti. These sources will help provide statistics, background context, and more localised insights into the situation.

Using these materials, in chapters this thesis will cross-analyse how Haiti is following CEDAW obligations and applying Sendai Framework recommendations. This will be done through a form of check listing and identifying Haiti's legal obligations and assessing whether they are being effectively implemented, alongside a general analysis of what the law requires.

1.6.2 - Methodological approach

As described previously, this thesis adopts an overarching methodological approach combining socio-legal theories, vulnerability theory, and disaster literature, which are applied throughout the research. These approaches have not only been used as analytical tools but have also guided the structure and direction of the thesis.

They highlight key aspects that are often overlooked, particularly the gap between law and lived reality, the role of structural inequality, and the way disasters intensify existing vulnerabilities. By engaging with these perspectives, the thesis is able to build a more complete understanding of the issues faced in Haiti. This has helped shape the meaning of each chapter and ensured that the overall analysis is contextualised to Haiti and not solely based on Western assumptions or frameworks.

Brian Z. Tamanaha's distinction between "law in the books" and "law in reality",²⁹ provides the main socio-legal framework for this thesis. His work supports the comparative implementation used throughout, whereby international legal obligations are compared against Haiti's domestic laws, reporting mechanisms, and lived reality to identify the gap between formal protection and practical enforcement. This is also useful when considering how Western legal frameworks and reporting mechanisms may not always translate effectively into Haiti's political, social, and post-disaster context.

²⁹ Brian Z Tamanaha, *A General Jurisprudence of Law and Society* (Oxford University Press 2001).

Whilst Tamanaha provides a useful distinction between law on paper and law in reality, he fails to provide a methodological framework for measuring effective implementation. He leaves the assessment of that gap to the researcher's interpretation, as is common within socio-legal research.³⁰ This thesis will then use observable indicators such as treaty reporting compliance, legislation, institutional practice, and reporting mechanisms to provide evidence of how legal obligations are implemented in practice, helping to assess compliance with legal norms and implementation.

Sally Engle Merry complements this approach through her theory of vernacularisation,³¹ which explains how international legal norms require adaptation to local social and cultural contexts. Her work assists in evaluating why international human rights standards may not translate effectively in practice for Haiti despite formal legal compliance. This approach aligns with Tamanaha's to examine why legal protections fail in lived realities.

A limitation to Merry's argument, however, lies within the concept of vernacularisation itself. If human rights are excessively localised, the overall consistency of human rights protections is weakened. Countries could interpret or adapt international standards in ways that reduce the level of protection provided.³² Highlighting the importance of balancing adaptations that reflect a country's cultural context whilst still achieving the same level of human rights protection.

Martha Fineman's vulnerability theory provides the analytical framework through which structural vulnerability is examined.³³ Fineman views vulnerability as a universal condition directing attention towards the social, economic and institutional conditions that produce unequal vulnerability before and after disasters. Rather than viewing women solely as victims, this thesis will examine the failure of the state and society to foster a better environment, taking an intersectional approach that considers one's lived environment rather than solely their gender. This avoids viewing all women as victims and links to the idea of risk multipliers, where natural disasters intensify existing inequalities and harm. However, by treating vulnerability as universal, it will become difficult to identify which groups are

³⁰ Reza Banakar and Max Travers, 'Introduction to Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research' <<https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1511112>> accessed 7 July 2026.

³¹ Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press 2006) <<http://archive.org/details/humanrightsgende0000merr>> accessed 29 April 2026.

³² Jack Donnelly, 'Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights' (1984) 6 Hum Rights Q 400 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/762182>>.

³³ Martha Albertson Fineman, *The Vulnerable Subject: Anchoring Equality in the Human Condition* (2008).

most vulnerable and require the greatest protection, potentially obscuring the needs of persons experiencing greater levels of harm and disadvantage.³⁴ This thesis addresses this by identifying the structural factors that place women in Haiti at a greater risk.

In addition, the thesis engages with disaster and climate literature, which views natural disasters as risk multipliers. Sources such as UN Women, the IPCC, and the Sendai Framework are comparatively analysed to assess Haiti's disaster resilience, implementation of resilience measures, and areas for improvement. The 2010 Earthquake is used as a case study to demonstrate how disasters intensify existing vulnerabilities. These approaches and analytical structure are reflected in the chapter structure. Analysing how legal and governance systems fail in practice, vulnerability pre/post disaster, and how disasters act as risk multipliers.

1.6.3 - Limitations

The scope of this thesis and detail level is restricted due to several factors. Firstly, it can be very difficult to navigate Haiti's commitments to women's rights and advancing women's rights when (as will be discussed) there is very limited reporting on both their positive and negative efforts on the advancement of women's rights. The underreporting not only means that we are unable to judge/give advancements for Haiti, but that any data we might have may not be fully reflecting realities in Haiti. Furthermore, there is limited access to recent and reliable data, making it difficult to assess current conditions and developments within Haiti.

Secondly, regarding access to sources and reports, there have been many reports that speak on GBV, trafficking, natural disasters and Haiti. However, there are fewer sources which make direct analysis between sexual violence and natural disasters. Meaning that some of the conclusions that have been made through this thesis are through cross-analysing documents rather than having direct statistics or quotes. Additionally, NGO evidence can be limited, and international reporting may at times reflect a Western perspective or bias, particularly when assessing implementation within Haiti.

³⁴ Alyson Cole, 'All of Us Are Vulnerable, But Some Are More Vulnerable than Others: The Political Ambiguity of Vulnerability Studies, an Ambivalent Critique' (2016) 17 Crit Horiz 260
<<https://doi.org/10.1080/14409917.2016.1153896>>.

Finally, with this thesis being solely reliant on secondary research, it's unable to develop a deeper understanding of the major issues and reasons for violence against women in Haiti, which it could have done using original interviews or testimonies. Due to the lack of fieldwork and primary research, the thesis is unable to draw upon first-hand evidence from those directly affected, limiting the depth of the analysis. My analysis therefore remains dependent upon secondary literature, international reports, conventions, and legal frameworks rather than first-hand evidence; as a more generalised issue, there is limited access to research, both being an issue of being able to freely access documents as well as some documents not being made public and being privatised.

CHAPTER 2: POLITICAL, LEGAL AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS

This chapter sets out the political, legal and normative frameworks that are intended to protect women's rights, particularly in the context of natural disasters. It analyses what these frameworks promise in theory, and investigates how they operate in practice, especially within Haiti.

The chapter will first outline key international legal instruments, focusing on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its relevant general recommendations and concluding observations, to understand what obligations states have in protecting women from violence, discrimination, and exploitation. It will then consider disaster and climate governance frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework, to assess how disasters are addressed within global policy and whether gender is adequately included within these responses.

Following this, the chapter will move to a Haiti-specific focus, examining national legal structures, institutions, and the extent to which these international obligations are implemented domestically. This includes analysing Haiti's legal system, its participation in international agreements, and its reporting under CEDAW, alongside identifying key gaps in enforcement and accountability. This will then bridge into an analysis of the structural barriers preventing access to justice, providing context as to why justice systems continue to fail women and why legal protections are often not effectively implemented in practice.

Throughout this chapter, the aim is not only to describe what legal protections exist, but to critically assess their strengths/limitations. In doing so, it provides the foundation for later chapters, which will explore how these legal frameworks fail to fully protect women in practice, particularly in disaster contexts.

2.1 - Haitian History

Haiti is a country shaped by a long history of oppression and colonisation. Understanding this history helps explain how a nation once central to the production of sugar and coffee declined through colonial violence and its lasting consequences, shaping Haiti's current position and how it is often wrongly perceived by parts of the global North.³⁵

The beginning of colonialism and the oppression of Haiti was in 1492, by Christopher Columbus, when Spain claimed the island of Hispaniola (modern-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic). Due to the rapid spread of disease and slavery, the Taino population (the indigenous population of Haiti) was effectively decimated. This led Spain to begin the importation of African slaves,³⁶ eventually, Spain neglected the western (modern Haitian) part of the island.³⁷

In the 18th century, Haiti was a colony of France known as Saint-Domingue, which was known to be “rich” through its African slave labour and plantation economy (coffee and sugar), with extreme differences between the free persons of colour, colonists, and the majority enslaved African population.³⁸ The revolution, which began around 1791, arose through the overlapping tensions of different social groups and hierarchies, which included free people of colour wanting more civil rights, white colonists fighting for power and control, and then enslaved people took this opportunity to have their own revolution. This revolution was about bringing changes to the race hierarchy, slavery and imperial rule.³⁹ Haiti's revolution was the first successful slave revolution, exposing the limits of colonialism and, in this case, French colonial rule.

Post-revolution Haiti was not completely “free” but instead suffered oppression in other ways. To begin with, the country's infrastructure was heavily damaged, and it was economically struggling. With both British and American involvement also in the revolution, Haiti was isolated from exporters, and such countries had growing fears that the country's independence would spread to their own colonies. Haiti was also having to pay France for its independence and found itself with large amounts of debt.

³⁵ Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haitian History: New Perspectives* (Routledge 2013) 13.

³⁶ Institute of Haitian Studies, ‘HAITI: A Brief History of a Complex Nation’ (*The University of Kansas*, 2026) <<https://haitianstudies.ku.edu/haiti-brief-history-complex-nation>> accessed 27 March 2026.

³⁷ Sepinwall and Trouillot (n 63) 13.

³⁸ *ibid* 13-20.

³⁹ *ibid* 13-20.

The United States of America also did not recognise Haiti's independence until 1862 due to these fears, and consequently occupied Haiti between 1915 and 1934.⁴⁰

Between the years of 1991 and 1995, after the overthrowing of a democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the military dictator Raoul Cedras took over;⁴¹ during his time, protestors and any person attempting to uphold authoritarian rule would be tortured, arrested or face extrajudicial execution.⁴² During this period, there were numerous reports of rape and abuse against women, particularly those whose husbands or fathers had gone into hiding. Women involved in protests and women's rights organisations were especially targeted; military personnel reportedly used rape as a tool of intimidation and repression to maintain control.⁴³ This ended when the USA intervened, leading an operation to uphold democracy, restoring Aristide to power.⁴⁴

Haiti has unfortunately always suffered due to the control and power of other groups. Looking throughout its history, two things become apparent: that colonial rule left Haiti in a very vulnerable position to begin with, and that women have always been used as a means of intimidation to seek control and spread fear. Such an analysis is vital as its foundational to understanding in the contexts of natural disasters and women rights abuses as through time disaster exposes these weakness Therefore, when examining women's rights in post-disaster Haiti, it is important to recognise that many of the risks faced by women following disasters are rooted in deeper historical, political, and social structures that existed long before the disaster itself occurred, and how Haiti has been shaped by this history.

This historical analysis is important to the thesis because it demonstrates that many of the vulnerabilities faced by women did not begin with natural disasters. Rather, disasters expose and intensify weaknesses that already exist within society.

⁴⁰ Brian Concannon, Kristina Fried and Alexandra V Filippova, 'Restitution for Haiti, Reparations for All: Haiti's Place in the Global Reparations Movement' (2023) 55 Univ Miami Inter-Am Law Rev 80 82-93.

⁴¹ COHA, 'The Haitian Timeline: A History of Military Dictatorship and Civil Rule (Revised and Expanded)' (COHA, 9 February 2010) <<https://coha.org/military-dictatorship-in-haiti/>> accessed 14 June 2026.

⁴² Human Rights Watch, 'Human Rights Watch World Report 1994 - Haiti' (Refworld, 1 January 1994) <<https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/hrw/1994/en/92949>> accessed 14 June 2026.

⁴³ Human Rights Watch National Coalition For Haitian Refugees, 'Rape in Haiti: A Weapon of Terror'.

⁴⁴ COHA (n 38).

2.2 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Prior to the adoption of CEDAW, it is important to recognise the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had been developing treaties since 1946, particularly in areas such as women's political rights and consent to marriage. However, these earlier efforts were more fragmented and limited in scope.⁴⁵ CEDAW brought these separate issues together into one comprehensive framework, addressing discrimination across all areas of life, including economic, social, and political rights.

CEDAW entered into force in September 1981, with almost 100 nations agreeing to be bound by it. Its widely considered the most comprehensive global instrument, establishing a global standard and agenda for action by states to ensure these rights are guaranteed and enjoyed.⁴⁶ CEDAW aims to combat discrimination against women in all areas, including sex-based discrimination, economic privileges, political participation, education, and social, cultural, and civil rights. The Convention is divided into 30 articles, with Articles 7–8 concerning public and political life.⁴⁷ Articles 10–24 focus on social and economic equality,⁴⁸ and Articles 15–16 address legal and family equality.⁴⁹

States that ratify the Convention are legally bound by its provisions and must incorporate the principle of equality between men and women into domestic law. Under Articles 2 and 3, states are required to adopt legislative and policy measures to eliminate discrimination and ensure the full development and advancement of women so that they can exercise their human rights on an equal basis with men. States must also report regularly to the Committee of CEDAW. Under Article 18, every four years, state parties are expected to submit a national report to the Committee, where their progress is reviewed.⁵⁰ Where states fail to meet their obligations, the Committee can raise concerns, issue recommendations/follow up reports, and hold states to account, bringing them to international

⁴⁵ UN Women, 'Short History of CEDAW Convention' (*United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*, 2009) <<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.htm>> accessed 4 May 2026.

⁴⁶ United Nations General Assembly, 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979' (United Nations General Assembly 1979) United Nations General Assembly resolution 34/180 34 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>> accessed 5 March 2026.

⁴⁷ *ibid* 3.

⁴⁸ *ibid* 4-9.

⁴⁹ *ibid* 6.

⁵⁰ *ibid* 8.

scrutiny.⁵¹ Although CEDAW creates binding international obligations, enforcement mechanisms remain limited and largely rely on reporting, international scrutiny, and political pressure.

2.2.1 - Key CEDAW Articles

The following CEDAW articles that are specific to this topic and have the most relevance are as follows. Article 2, “*States must eliminate discrimination against women through legislation, policy measures, and refrain from acts or practices engaging in discrimination against women*”.⁵² When applying this article to this thesis, it can ensure that States in disaster-prone areas must ensure that policies and disaster frameworks eliminate the possibility of GBV post-disaster, as well as ensuring that women are not excluded from disaster relief protection and recovery programs or researching how such vulnerabilities are exposed.

Article 3, “*States must ensure the full development and advancement of women in all fields (social, political, cultural and economic) to exercise and enjoy their rights*”.⁵³ Applying this effectively would mean that disaster governance and frameworks must consider how disasters affect a woman’s ability to access healthcare, housing, and their financial security/independence, as well as ensure that low-income countries have “space in the budget” to account towards women’s long-term independence socially and economically.

Article 6, “*States must suppress all forms of trafficking and exploitation of women*”.⁵⁴ Applying this means States must strengthen protection systems in disaster-affected states where trafficking risks increase, and prostitution seems like the only method of financial freedom women can use; disasters often increase risks of trafficking and exploitation due to displacement and insecurity of girls.

Article 14, “*States must take care and ensure rural women have access to and enjoyment of their rights*”.⁵⁵ Disaster risk reduction must consider the needs of women in rural and economically

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² *ibid* 2.

⁵³ *ibid* 2.

⁵⁴ *ibid* 3.

⁵⁵ *ibid* 5-6.

disadvantaged areas, where they are further away from access to healthcare and less catered for in the country they reside in.

2.2.2 - CEDAW General Recommendations

The CEDAW committee also issues general recommendations. General recommendations (GR) are statements which help further define the meaning or uses of provisions in CEDAW. This helps a state to fulfil all legal obligations and assists in writing a periodic report as of November 2024. There is 40 GR under the CEDAW Convention.⁵⁶ Two GRs 37/38 will be analysed within this study.

Firstly we will discuss, General Recommendation 37 (2018) on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate, this GR emphasises the urgency of addressing the impacts of climate change and disasters on women's human rights and strengthening gender equality to improve community resilience, its quoted within this GR that “*Although climate change affects everyone, those countries and populations that have contributed the least to climate change, including people living in poverty, young people and future generations, are the most vulnerable to its impacts*”.⁵⁷ Vulnerable people, such as women and girls, are more susceptible to the risks and losses of disasters due to their limited access to resources, housing, employment, and social protection, and are less able to adapt to these challenges, further exacerbating inequalities. The GR aims to improve coherence and accountability between international frameworks on climate change and disaster risk reduction. It also recognises that many disasters are linked to human-induced climate change, which can be reduced through cooperation between states and measures such as carbon taxation.⁵⁸ CEDAW calls on states, under Article 18, to report on how they ensure substantive gender equality in disaster and climate policies.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ IWRAW, ‘General Recommendations’ (*IWRAW ASIAN PACIFIC*) <<https://cedaw.iwraw-ap.org/cedaw/general-recommendations/>> accessed 4 May 2026.

⁵⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, ‘General Recommendation No.37 (2018) on Gender-Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in a Changing Climate’ (United Nations 2018) General Recommendation gr 37 2 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no37-2018-gender-related>> accessed 9 March 2026.

⁵⁸ *ibid* 5.

⁵⁹ *ibid* 4-5.

Secondly, General Recommendation 38 (2020) on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the context of Global Migration delves into the specifics of this thesis. It explores Article 6 of CEDAW, highlighting how global migration flows increase vulnerability to trafficking, especially when women and girls are pushed into irregular migration routes.⁶⁰

GR 38 specifically notes the importance of aligning climate change measures, which becomes very important when considering the adverse effects climate change will have on natural disasters. Research by Stott also proves not only a worsening of disasters, but also that blame is due to human-induced effects,⁶¹ as well as increased frequency in disasters.⁶² Nations lacking disaster preparedness systems/infrastructure will be at greater risk when disasters worsen in the future.

Overall, CEDAW GR 37 and 38 strengthen the convention by directly linking disaster risk, climate change, and crisis contexts, whilst promoting gender-responsive policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁶³ They highlight that women must not only be protected but also actively involved in disaster planning and decision-making processes. At the same time, they recognise that disasters and displacement significantly increase the risks of trafficking and exploitation, particularly for women in vulnerable and lower-income settings, emphasising the need to prevent revictimization, ensure access to justice, and punish perpetrators.⁶⁴ Together, these GRs reinforce that disasters are not isolated events but risk multipliers, and provide a framework against which Haiti's implementation and compliance can be assessed.

⁶⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'General Recommendation No.38 (2020) on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration' (United Nations 2020) General Recommendation GR 38 2-3 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no38-2020-trafficking-women>> accessed 5 March 2026.

⁶¹ Peter A Stott, DA Stone and MR Allen, 'Human Contribution to the European Heatwave of 2003' (2004) 432 Nature 610 <<https://doi.org/10.1038/nature03089>>.

⁶² Stéphane Hallegatte, 'Natural Disasters and Climate Change' 90-91 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-08933-1>> accessed 5 March 2026.

⁶³ *Sustainable development goals were 17 goals created by the UN in 2015 aiming to protect planetary health as well as humanity's social and economic livelihoods; each goal had targets to follow to achieve its aims.* Visit site: <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals> for more information regarding SDGs.

⁶⁴ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'General Recommendation No.38 (2020) on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration' (n 57).

2.2.3 - CEDAW Concluding Observations 2009

The CEDAW Committee also offers concluding observations; this includes tailored recommendations and opinions specific to certain countries about their application of CEDAW. These are usually issued after a state has published its state report at the end of each session.⁶⁵ Such can help offer guidance to a state and give recognition and positives to their application.

When looking through and analysing the positive aspects raised in the CEDAW concluding observations in 2009.⁶⁶ Many of the points highlighted are framed more in terms of the State's "efforts" to revise legislation and its "intentions" to ratify and follow through with new laws, observations, and recommendations. The only concrete achievements identified were the creation of gender focal points within ministries and cooperation with NGOs to help implement the Convention. It can therefore be deduced that, at that stage, there was limited evidence of real progress.

In the following concluding observations of 2016, we are able to see that frameworks for equality have been added and adapted to combat gender inequality. We will find that the same "issues" found in 2009 still exist in 2016. We can question whether such actions were empty promises and performative to keep the committee satisfied when no real change was made.

2.2.4 - CEDAW Concluding Observations 2016

Looking through the concluding observations made by the CEDAW Committee to Haiti on its CEDAW obligations, the Committee recognised some progress since the earlier review in 2009. By the 2016 concluding observations,⁶⁷ the Committee welcomed several positive developments, including the Electoral Decree of February 2015, which established a minimum quota of 30% for female candidates on voting lists for municipal and local elections, the Human Trafficking Act of 2014, the Gender

⁶⁵ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Follow-up to Concluding Observations' (*OHCHR*) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw/follow-concluding-observations>> accessed 5 May 2026.

⁶⁶ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - Forty Third Session - Haiti' (United Nations 2009) Concluding Observations.

⁶⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (United Nations 2016) Concluding Observations <<https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/8-9>>.

Equity Office in Parliament, the Office to Combat Violence against Women and Girls, and the Second National Plan to Combat Violence against Women (2012–2016).⁶⁸

However, the Committee also made clear that these reforms had not yet produced concrete results. A major difficulty identified was the impact of the 12 January 2010 Earthquake, which seriously affected Haiti's social and economic stability and created major obstacles to the implementation of the Convention. In paragraph 7, the Committee stressed the need for a four-year national action plan and called on the State party to include women in the development and implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies and programmes, highlighting how the earthquake hindered Haiti's ability to protect women by worsening poverty and housing situations, and how women's rights were not deemed a priority in the aftermath of the disaster.⁶⁹

In paragraph 9, the Committee expressed grave concern that GBV remained the most severe form of discrimination in the country. The Committee linked poverty as a contributing factor, alongside highlighting barriers to women's access to justice, including stigma, fear, lack of awareness of rights, economic factors, and a dysfunctional judiciary.⁷⁰ Paragraphs 9 and 13 further emphasise weak implementation of gender laws and frameworks, with long delays in women's rights legislation, as well as inadequate effort in the fields of human resources and finance. Although gender equality laws exist, women continue to face barriers of lacking legal awareness, a dysfunctional judiciary and economic independence.

As well as weak implementation of gender laws, an issue of lack of legislation criminalising violence against women is raised in paragraph 21.⁷¹ No legislation has been adopted specifically criminalising violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence, incest, marital rape and sexual harassment. Sexual violence is often not reported due to mistrust of police, low prosecution rates, and social stigma, and there is also a lack of shelters available for women.

Paragraph 39 raises awareness of the effects climate change will have on natural disasters, as well as the exclusion of women in decision-making.⁷² It highlights concerns regarding the effects of natural

⁶⁸ *ibid* 1-2.

⁶⁹ *ibid* 3.

⁷⁰ *ibid* 3.

⁷¹ *ibid* 7.

⁷² *ibid* 14.

disasters and climate change on rural women, alongside their poor inclusion in disaster prevention and climate change / DRR strategies.

A final principal concern is found in paragraph 43, discussing the internal displacement of women post-disaster.⁷³ Following the 2010 Earthquake, Haitian women expelled from the Dominican Republic were forced to live in inadequate sleeping conditions and makeshift shelters, making them highly vulnerable, with adequate actions and investigations not carried out to prevent such situations.

Overall, the concluding observations show that poverty, social stigma, weak access to justice, and disaster conditions have combined to make women in Haiti particularly vulnerable.

From the issues we have discovered from these concluding observations, Haiti was given the following guidance and recommendations to follow up to improve gender equality in the country:

- Submission of 10th periodic report in March 2020
- In 2 years, written information on the steps they have taken and things they have done to implement the following recommendations
- Help in the prevention and enjoyment of women's fundamental rights and freedom in all aspects of life they are encourage to ratify the following treaties Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) (signed in 2013), the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW) (signed in 2013), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED) (signed in 2007).
- A call to realisation of gender equality, using the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁷³ *ibid.*

2.3 - The International covenant on Civil and political rights (ICCPR)

This Covenant was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 1966, entering into force on 23 March 1976.⁷⁴ This Convention helps protect the fundamental freedoms of a person (liberty, security, and political participation). Haiti has been a party to this Covenant since 1991.⁷⁵

The First Optional Protocol (OP) of the ICCPR gives individuals the right to make complaints to the UN Human Rights Committee once domestic remedies are exhausted. Haiti has not accepted this OP,⁷⁶ limiting citizens' access to justice.

In February 1995, following the military regime, a special report from the Haitian Government to the ICCPR was made on the "deplorable situations inherited from the military government".⁷⁷ The report states politically motivated sexual abuse and population displacement, demonstrating an early acknowledgement of sexual violence as a threat to human rights, and a willingness to improve such.⁷⁸ However, as this thesis will continue to demonstrate, progress has remained limited.

2.4 - Trafficking Frameworks

The relevant international legal instruments protecting against human trafficking are as follows. The 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (CSTPEPO) was adopted on the 25th of July 1951,⁷⁹ building upon earlier international conventions for the suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children (1921) and the Traffic in Women of Full Age (1933). CSTPEPO is a UN treaty which is aimed at stopping the exploitation of prostitution and trafficking of persons but requires member states under Article 2 to

⁷⁴ General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), 'International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights' <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>> accessed 27 May 2026.

⁷⁵ United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies, 'View the Ratification Status by Country or by Treaty - Ratification Status For Haiti' (*OHCHR.ORG*)

<https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=74&Lang=en> accessed 2 June 2026.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Government of the Republic of Haiti, 'DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH A SPECIAL DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE - HAITI' 3.

⁷⁸ Government of the Republic of Haiti (n 29) 6 - Par 25b.

⁷⁹ Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others 1949.

criminalise the profiteers (pimps, brothels, etc.), of such activities taking the blame off the prostitute. As well as taking appropriate measures to warn the public of dangers and supervise areas where trafficking could take place, such as airports and railways (Article 17), and to repatriate victims without prejudice or prosecution (Articles 18 - 19). Haiti ratified CSTPEPO on the 26th of August 1953.⁸⁰

Following this is the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. Adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 2000, being the world's primary legal instrument to combat human trafficking.⁸¹ Signed by Haiti in December 2000 and ratified in April 2011.⁸² This is the first legally binding instrument to provide an internationally recognised definition of human trafficking; it offers the same procedures as the CSTPEPO, such as ensuring rights are respected and traffickers are prosecuted. However, the scope of their definitions is slightly different; rather than focusing on prostitution being the only caveat stemming from trafficking, there can also be sexual exploitation, slavery, organ removal and forced labour, which are included in the UN Protocol, as well as a separation between voluntary adult prostitution and trafficking. CSTPEPO applies a more “old-fashioned” view on trafficking in comparison to the 2000 Protocol, treating it as a wider structural issue through the lens of migration, organised crime and vulnerability.

2.5 - Convention of Belém do Pará

The Convention of Belém do Pará operates within the Inter-American Human Rights system. Both the Inter-American Commission & Court of Human Rights (IACHR),⁸³ operate as monitoring/accountability mechanisms under the American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San

⁸⁰ United Nations, ‘A Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others’ (*United Nations treaty Collection*, 4 July 2026) <https://treaties.un.org/pages/viewdetails.aspx?src=ind&mtdsg_no=vii-11-a&chapter=7&clang=_en> accessed 4 July 2026.

⁸¹ The Protocol for human trafficking 2000.

⁸² United Nations, ‘A Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime’ (*United Nations Treaty Collection*, 4 July 2026) <https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&clang=_en> accessed 4 July 2026.

⁸³ American Convention on Human Rights ‘Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica’ (B-32) 1969.

Jose) entering into force in 1978,⁸⁴ which Haiti ratified in 1977.⁸⁵ The IACHR can hold all party nations accountable for human rights violations, by issuing binding judgments.

The Belém do Pará Convention, traditionally known as the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, was adopted in 1994 and entered into force in 1995.⁸⁶ It was the world's first international treaty to recognise that violence against women constitutes a violation of human rights.⁸⁷ The Convention recognises violence against women in all contexts, which is identified in Article 1 as actions based on gender causing physical, sexual, or psychological harm, and most importantly, occurring in both private and public spheres. Haiti ratified this treaty in 1997.⁸⁸

Article 7,⁸⁹ outlines the obligations and duties of States, ranging from adopting legislation to protect women's rights, establishing fair legal procedures, and ensuring authorities act in accordance with the Convention. Article 8 then follows by listing the progressive measures that must be adopted, including programmes to ensure these rights are successfully implemented.⁹⁰ These include promoting educational training, establishing specialised counselling services for women affected by violence, and generally promoting awareness of women's rights.

Unlike CEDAW, the Convention of Belém do Pará does not rely primarily on periodic state reporting to a treaty body. Instead, implementation is monitored through the Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention of Belém do Pará (MESECVI),⁹¹ under which States Parties provide information on their implementation and challenges, followed by recommendations from the committee. Haiti took part in the First Multilateral Evaluation Round (2004–2008), responding to the questionnaire. However, it did

⁸⁴ Organization of American States, 'AMERICAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS "PACT OF SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA' <https://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_b-32_american_convention_on_human_rights.pdf>.

⁸⁵ United Nations, 'American Convention on Human Rights "Pact of San José, Costa Rica"' (*United Nations Treaty Collection*) <<https://treaties.un.org/pages/showdetails.aspx?objid=08000002800f10e1>> accessed 4 July 2026.

⁸⁶ Organization of American States, 'Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women'.

⁸⁷ 'Belém Do Pará Convention' (*The London School of Economics and Political Science*) <<https://www.lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/tackling-violence-against-women/belem-do-para-convention>> accessed 2 June 2026.

⁸⁸ Department of International Law OAS, 'INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN "CONVENTION OF BELEM DO PARA"' (*Multilateral Treaties*) <<https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/sigs/a-61.html>> accessed 2 June 2026.

⁸⁹ *ibid* 3.

⁹⁰ *ibid* 2-4.

⁹¹ OAS, 'A Life Free of Violence: The Right of All Women - The Belém Do Pará Convention and Its Follow-up Mechanism' <<https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/FolletoMESECVI2012-EN.pdf>>.

not respond during the Second Round (2009–2014) or the Third Round (2016–2020), and there is currently no available data for Haiti regarding the Fourth Round (2018–2022).⁹²

Particular challenges that were recorded were Haiti's lack of submission of follow-up reports, which made it difficult to evaluate Haiti's progress and implementation of the Convention.⁹³ Haiti was also specifically identified in the Second Follow-up Report as a country whose participation in monitoring needed to be improved.⁹⁴

Haiti also lacked specific legislation on VAW. The report notes that Haiti addressed VAW through its Penal Code rather than through a specific law on violence against women.⁹⁵ Another issue highlighted was the increase in sexual violence following the 2010 Earthquake, particularly within displacement camps, where women and girls became increasingly vulnerable. It's also important to note in this report that there's a mention of the exacerbating effects of violence to women in natural disaster contexts and how natural disaster response should take VAW into account.⁹⁶

The consequences identified from not acting in line with the reports and failing to effectively comply with the Convention are significant. Women and girls in disaster settings continue to face heightened risks of rape and sexual violence.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the Third Hemispheric Report raises concerns that VAW may become socially tolerated when perpetrators are not punished, while impunity remains widespread when cases are not properly investigated or prosecuted.⁹⁸

Recommendations contained within the Second Hemispheric Report include improving security within displacement camps through better lighting, increased police patrols, and a greater presence of female

⁹² OAS, 'National Reports on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention' (*OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for peace, security, and development*, 1 August 2009)

<<https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/NationalReportsFirstRound.asp>> accessed 2 June 2026.

⁹³ OAS, 'Third Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention - Prevention of Violence against Women in the Americas: Paths to Follow' (OAS 2017) 3 143 - Table 16.

⁹⁴ OAS, 'Second Follow-Up Report on the Recommendations of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI - Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém Do Pará Convention (MESECVI)' (OAS 2014) Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) 2 19 - Par 22<<https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/MESECVI-SegundoInformeSeguimiento-EN.pdf>>.

⁹⁵ *ibid* 30-33.

⁹⁶ OAS, 'Second Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention - Mechanism to Follow Up on the Implementation of the Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (MESECVI)' (OAS 2012) Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) 2 36

<<https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/MESECVI-SegundoInformeHemisferico-EN.pdf>>.

⁹⁷ OAS, 'Second Follow-Up Report on the Recommendations of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI - Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém Do Pará Convention (MESECVI)' (n 39) 18 / 52.

⁹⁸ OAS, 'Third Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention - Prevention of Violence against Women in the Americas: Paths to Follow' (n 38) 153.

police officers.⁹⁹ The report also recommends providing accessible medical and psychological services for victims of sexual violence, as well as creating specialised investigative police units and improving law-enforcement training in responding to cases of sexual violence.¹⁰⁰

2.6 - Disaster Reduction Frameworks

As mentioned in the introduction, there will be a reference to disaster risk reduction international frameworks, which for this study will help determine Haiti's compliance. Also remembering that this thesis is using natural disasters as a key component in how violence is made worse, it is important to highlight the key international disaster frameworks.

Firstly, there is the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change.¹⁰¹ Post the Paris Agreement, Haiti submitted climate action plans to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2015,¹⁰² followed by its official ratification of the agreement in 2017.¹⁰³

The Sendai Framework (2015-2030)¹⁰⁴ is a successor to the Hyogo Framework (2005-2015),¹⁰⁵ which is a non-binding United Nations international agreement that aims to reduce disaster risk and build disaster resilience through tailored recommendations and international policy. The Sendai Framework is an improvement on the Hyogo Framework, with more direct links to climate change adaptation, introducing the “build back better” approach. This refers to the ability to rebuild infrastructure in a good state so that when a disaster occurs, it can withstand impacts rather than already being in a vulnerable condition.

⁹⁹ OAS, ‘Second Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention - Mechanism to Follow Up on the Implementation of the Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (MESECVI)’ (n 41) 36.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC 2016.

¹⁰² United Nations Climate Change, ‘Haiti Submits Its Climate Action Plan Ahead of 2015 Paris Agreement | UNFCCC’ (September 2015) <<https://unfccc.int/news/haiti-submits-its-climate-action-plan-ahead-of-2015-paris-agreement>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁰³ IISD, ‘Paris Agreement Reaches 166 Ratifications’ (*SDG Knowledge Hub*, October 2017)

<<https://sdg.iisd.org/news/paris-agreement-reaches-166-ratifications/>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁰⁴ UNDRR, ‘Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ (n 6).

¹⁰⁵ UNDRR, ‘Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters - Full Text | PreventionWeb’ <<https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/hyogo-framework-action-2005-2015-building-resilience-nations-and-communities-disasters>> accessed 11 May 2026.

To effectively progress the Sendai Framework and move global disaster development forward, rather than the standstill the Hyogo Framework faced, the Sendai Framework introduced seven global targets,¹⁰⁶ all aiming for improved disaster infrastructure/frameworks and international cooperation by 2030, and an example of one of these targets being *(f) Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the Framework by 2030.*

If greater implementation was taken towards these targets, we could see a stronger and more resilient Haiti. Alongside these targets, the Sendai Framework also sets out 4 priorities for action:¹⁰⁷

Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk;

Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk;

Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience;

Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

All are relevant to Haiti, but priorities 2 and 4 are particularly applicable, as they emphasise improving disaster governance and implementing “build back better” strategies, which could reduce informal housing and strengthen protective mechanisms through an improvement in disaster governance. The Sendai Framework frequently highlights the importance of women’s involvement in disaster risk reduction and management, recognising how vulnerable they are post-disaster and the importance their voice can have in what needs to be implemented in post disaster recovery.¹⁰⁸ As well as in preparedness measures to ensure secure alternative means of income and livelihood.¹⁰⁹ Disaster risk reduction is also based on societal engagement and partnership, meaning that women should be prioritised within this sector and given positions where their opinion counts, as they are disproportionately affected.¹¹⁰ Throughout the framework, there is frequent reference to the disproportionate impact disasters have on women, making this a very key framework which combines women’s vulnerability and disaster management.

¹⁰⁶ UNDRR (n 65) 12.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid* 14.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid* 10 - Par 7.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid* 23 - Par 36Ai.

¹¹⁰ *ibid* 10 - Par 4.

A useful development to consider is the Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (2023).¹¹¹ The declaration acknowledges that despite progress in disaster risk reduction, many countries continue to experience increasing disaster losses due to climate change, environmental degradation, poverty, and inequality. Importantly for this thesis, it also highlights the promotion of gender-responsive disaster risk reduction.¹¹² The declaration further stresses the need to strengthen governance, improve early warning systems and implement the “build back better strategy”.¹¹³ These findings reinforce the argument made throughout this thesis that disasters act as risk multipliers, exposing and worsening existing social and economic inequalities rather than creating them independently.

In relation to state responsibility, frameworks such as the Sendai Framework are non-legally binding UN frameworks and therefore cannot be directly enforced.¹¹⁴ However, when partnered with the Paris Agreement, which is a legally binding treaty on climate change (Articles 2, 4, and 9), the principles of the Sendai Framework gain stronger legal and political value.¹¹⁵ Together, these frameworks recognise that states have the capacity to limit greenhouse gas emissions and must also consider the impacts climate change will have on economies and disaster risks. Therefore, where states fail to take adequate steps to reduce emissions or strengthen disaster preparedness, they may also fail to uphold their obligations under CEDAW.¹¹⁶

In a more positive light, Haiti did approve a National Risk and Disaster Management Plan (2019–2030), and reports in 2020 stated that the country had committed to strengthening disaster resilience while taking gender equality into account.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ United Nations General Assembly, ‘Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030’ <<https://www.undrr.org/publication/political-declaration-high-level-meeting-midterm-review-sendai-framework-disaster-risk>>.

¹¹² *ibid* 5.

¹¹³ *ibid* 8.

¹¹⁴ UNDRR, ‘Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ (n 6).

¹¹⁵ United Nations, ‘The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC’ (2015) <<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>> accessed 11 March 2026.

¹¹⁶ Amnesty International, ‘AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL’S OBSERVATIONS ON THE DRAFT GENERAL RECOMMENDATION No. 37 ON GENDER-RELATED DIMENSIONS OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN A CHANGING CLIMATE’ (Amnesty International 2017) 2.

¹¹⁷ UNDRR and UN Women, ‘Haiti Approves a New Risk and Disaster Management Plan | UNDRR’ (25 July 2020) <<https://www.undrr.org/news/haiti-approves-new-risk-and-disaster-management-plan>> accessed 11 May 2026.

2.7 - Haiti's Frameworks

When looking into Haiti's frameworks, this thesis will look at the laws and institutions themselves, how they are upheld and by what constitutions, as well as looking more specifically into how different aspects of sexual violence are defined. As well as looking at the reporting mechanisms of Haiti to the treaties and conventions they are a party.

The following section highlights the legal codes and frameworks that Haiti is under and party to, such legal frameworks/conventions and constitutions ensure that Haiti uphold human rights. Certain articles that have been selected specifically highlight the rights and legal bonds to its standards and protection of women, as well as defence for natural disasters.

Beginning with the Constitution of Haiti (1987), the highest national legal framework.¹¹⁸ Articles 17, 52, and 268 set out provisions for establishing equality between both sexes. With further analysis, this means equality in the economic, civil, and political fields, regardless of sex; these standards will be met. Article 19 states the state's obligations to guarantee such rights.

At the highest judicial level, there is the Cour de Cassation (Supreme Court),¹¹⁹¹²⁰ operating under Articles 173–177 of the Constitution. They ensure the correct application of law and act as the final appeal authority. It is essential that such a judicial system has strong enforcement here to ensure equal justice is met for women. Haiti's legal system also includes lower courts. Appeal, First Instance, and Local courts, which handle civil and criminal cases which include violence, trafficking, and human rights violations. A major issue in Haiti's judicial system is they remain slow and under-resourced.¹²¹

For gross Human Rights violations, the International Criminal Court (ICC)(1998), operating under the Rome Statute.¹²² Acting as an international legal framework, investigating and prosecuting genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes against aggression. Haiti signed but has not ratified the Rome Statute, meaning ICC jurisdiction is limited unless referred by the UN Security Council.

¹¹⁸ Constitution of the Republic of Haiti, 1987, Haiti, WIPO Lex 1987.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ Cour de cassation, 'About the Court' (*Cour de cassation*) <<http://www.courdecassation.fr/en/about-court>> accessed 26 March 2026.

¹²¹ Human Rights Watch, 'Haiti: Events of 2024' *World Report 2025* (2024) <<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/haiti>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹²² Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 1998 1.

Therefore, protection for women from enslavement and trafficking falls under the jurisdiction of Haitian domestic courts as well as the IACHR, limiting access to justice for the Haitian population.

2.7.1 - Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Violence within Haitian Law

Understanding how Haiti addresses GBV requires an examination of both its criminal law frameworks and wider institutional responses. Haiti does not currently have one comprehensive law defining GBV. Instead, protections are spread across provisions of the Penal Code, constitutional guarantees and international obligations incorporated into domestic law.¹²³

When examining the Penal Code, rape is recognised as one of the crimes of sexual aggression under Article 268. However, the legislation does not provide a clear definition of rape, nor does it explicitly discuss consent, creating uncertainty regarding the scope of protection available to victims. Furthermore, sexual harassment is not addressed within the original 1835 Penal Code, highlighting significant gaps within the legal framework.¹²⁴

The IACHR Annual Report 2009 noted continuing violence and discrimination against women in Haiti and referred to specialised state initiatives, including the creation of the *Concertation nationale contre les violences à l'égard des femmes*.¹²⁵ This initiative sought to prevent, punish and eliminate violence and discrimination against women across different sectors of society. Despite these efforts, the Commission continued to highlight that violence against women remained significantly underreported and that discrimination persisted throughout the country.

Further developments can be seen within reforms to Haiti's criminal law. Article 296 criminalises rape and recognises sexual violence within marriage. In addition, Article 278 provides harsher sanctions where violence is committed against a woman by a family member or intimate partner.¹²⁶ These provisions demonstrate a growing recognition of domestic violence and intimate partner violence within Haitian law.

¹²³ The World Bank, 'Gender-Based Violence Country Profile HAITI'.

¹²⁴ The World Bank, 'Gender-Based Violence Country Profile HAITI' 7.

¹²⁵ ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, 'ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS 2009' (2009) 431 <<https://cidh.oas.org/pdf%20files/ANNUAL2009.pdf>>.

¹²⁶ The World Bank, 'Gender-Based Violence Country Profile HAITI' (n 69) 8.

Overall, Haiti's legal framework demonstrates an attempt to recognise and address violence against women. However, many protections remain fragmented across different laws and legal instruments rather than being contained within one comprehensive legislative framework. This creates challenges for both enforcement and access to justice, particularly when viewed alongside the realities described in recent human rights reports.

2.7.2 Policing, Protection and Accountability

Alongside criminal law protections, the Haitian Constitution places clear obligations upon the state to protect its citizens. Article 25 prohibits the use of unnecessary force, physical brutality and psychological pressure, while Article 269(1) establishes the police force as responsible for maintaining public order and protecting the lives and property of citizens.¹²⁷ These provisions demonstrate that the Haitian state formally accepts responsibility for protecting individuals from violence and abuse.

The Haitian National Police (PNH) is the principal law enforcement body responsible for implementing these protections. Its role extends beyond crime prevention and includes maintaining public security, investigating offences and protecting vulnerable members of society.¹²⁸ The Law of 29 November 1994, “Establishing, Organising and Regulating the Haitian National Police”, states that the police are responsible for protecting individual freedoms, lives and property, maintaining public order, preventing crime and supporting the protection of human rights.¹²⁹ Oversight of police conduct is carried out by the *Inspection Générale de la Police Nationale d’Haïti* (IGPNH), which investigates allegations of police misconduct, corruption, abuse of authority and excessive use of force.¹³⁰

Existence of these constitutional protections and oversight structures must be contrasted with the realities described in recent UN reports. While Haiti formally recognises the duty to protect citizens, the reports discussed throughout this thesis repeatedly identify weak law enforcement, limited state control and continuing failures to protect women and girls from violence. If we fail to uphold our police force, we fail to uphold rights for women.

¹²⁷ Constitution of the Republic of Haiti, 1987, Haiti, WIPO Lex.

¹²⁸ Republic of Haiti, ‘LOI DU 29 NOVEMBRE 1994 PORTANT CRÉATION, ORGANISATION ET FONCTIONNEMENT DE LA POLICE NATIONALE’.

¹²⁹ *ibid* Article 7.

¹³⁰ *ibid* Article 38.

Haiti has shown to adopt and form many legal and international frameworks for the protection of both women's rights and disaster management/climate change, especially in the human rights spectrum. Evidence from CEDAW general recommendations and concluding observations demonstrates there is weak implementation and exclusion of women in most of these judicial institutions, which undermines the protection of women's rights. As well as other issues with Haiti's on the ground implementation of such frameworks.

2.7.3 - Haiti's response and periodic reports

Haiti ratified CEDAW in 1981, but reports have not been submitted regularly or periodically every four years.¹³¹ In 2014, Haiti submitted the periodic reports for both the 8th and 9th periods (2006–2014) combined, with little evidence pointing to earlier reports being submitted separately. This only confirms the number of missed cycles. As well as not submitting on time, Haiti has also been combining reports together. The lack of reporting can suggest the limited priority given to CEDAW, and by missing deadlines and combining reports, the issues are given less consistent attention. For over 25 years, Haiti did not comply with Article 18 of CEDAW. There is also little evidence pointing to a new periodic report being submitted after the one due in 2020.

It is, however, important to mention the 2010 Earthquake, which caused a huge delay in reporting, and the Committee took that serious setback into account.¹³² This shows how institutional collapse can affect everything, including women's rights, and in a country where this was not initially treated as a direct priority, it certainly would not be after a disaster, when more immediate pressures such as the economy, destruction, and death become significant.

When looking at and analysing whether Haiti followed up on the major recommendations given to them by the committee in the 2016 concluding observations, we find the following. There is no evidence of there being a 10th periodic report, yet there is also little evidence of any written information on what they have done to implement such steps. Haiti has still not yet ratified CAT, CMW was signed

¹³¹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention - Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of States Parties Due in 2014 - Haiti' (United Nations 2014) 7 <<https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/HTI/8-9>>.

¹³² *ibid* 7 - Par 5.

in 2013 but still has not yet been ratified, CRPD was ratified in 2009 but has not been signed, and CED has also still not been ratified.¹³³ Showing limited commitment to advance Human Rights.

2.7.4 UN Reporting Mechanisms and the Deterioration of Human Rights in Haiti

This section examines the UN reporting mechanisms used to monitor and respond to Haiti's human rights crisis, focusing especially on Human Rights Council resolutions,¹³⁴ reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti BINUH monitoring and the work of the Designated Expert on Haiti between 2024 and 2026. The purpose of this section is not simply to list reports, but to analyse how international reporting demonstrates the deterioration of human rights within Haiti over time.

Before examining the reports themselves, it is crucial to briefly understand the wider political context of Haiti. In recent years, Haiti has experienced severe political instability, gang expansion, institutional collapse and increasing insecurity following the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021.¹³⁵ Weak state institutions, limited law enforcement capacity and the growing territorial control of gangs have significantly affected the protection of human rights, particularly for women, children and IDP.¹³⁶

The United Nations Human Rights Council therefore increased monitoring and technical assistance measures regarding Haiti. Human Rights Council resolutions and OHCHR reports increasingly focused on gang violence, sexual violence, child recruitment, displacement and the collapse of state protection mechanisms. Earlier reports focused primarily on technical assistance and institutional capacity-

¹³³ United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies, 'Ratification Status for Haiti' (OHCHR, 2025) <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=74&Lang=EN> accessed 18 March 2026.

¹³⁴ Human Rights Council, 'Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building to Improve the Human Rights Situation in Haiti, in Connection with a Request from the Authorities of Haiti for Coordinated and Targeted International Action' (United Nations General Assembly 2023) UN Resolution 52/39; Human Rights Council, 'Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building to Improve the Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, in Connection with a Request from the Authorities of Haiti for Coordinated and Targeted International Action' (United Nations General Assembly 2024) UN Resolution 55/24 <<https://docs.un.org/en/%20A/HRC/RES/55/24>>.

¹³⁵ UN News, 'UN Condemns "Abhorrent" Assassination of Haiti President Jovenel Moïse | UN News' *UN News* (7 July 2021) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/07/1095422>> accessed 28 May 2026.

¹³⁶ OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (Human Rights Council 2024) Interim report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights A/HRC/57/41 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5741-situation-human-rights-haiti-interim-report-united-nations-high>>; OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (Human Rights Council 2025) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights <https://binuh.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/report_of_unhchr_on_the_human_rights_situation_in_haiti_24_february_-_04_april_2025.pdf>; OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (Human Rights Council 2026) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights A/HRC/61/74.

building, while later reports describe a much broader deterioration of human rights affecting movement, education, access to food and water, health care, elections and personal security (to be discussed later in this section).

Haiti has experienced a long sequence of United Nations missions, moving from peacekeeping and police stabilisation operations in the 1990s, to the large multidimensional United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) from 2004 to 2017.¹³⁷ Then to justice and rule-of-law support through United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH).¹³⁸ Finally, the current political and human rights monitoring role of the BINUH, established by Security Council Resolution 2476 on 25 June 2019.¹³⁹ BINUH is a United Nations special political mission that supports Haitian authorities in areas such as political stability, governance, accountability, rule of law and the protection of human rights. Unlike earlier peacekeeping missions, BINUH focuses less on military stabilisation and more on institutional support, political dialogue and human rights monitoring, acting as a bridge between political reform, governance assistance and international human rights reporting.¹⁴⁰

OHCHR operates in Haiti through the human rights component of BINUH. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is the main United Nations body responsible for promoting and protecting human rights internationally.¹⁴¹ During this reporting period, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was Volker Türk (2022 – 2026 present), whose role included monitoring violations, reporting developments to the Human Rights Council and calling for international action.¹⁴²

Another important figure within this reporting structure is William O'Neill, the High Commissioner's Designated Expert on Haiti (appointed in 2023).¹⁴³ A Designated Expert is an independent expert appointed following a request from the Human Rights Council to monitor, assess and advise on a

¹³⁷ *A UN peacekeeping mission to help create a secure and stable environment in Haiti and strengthen political processes as well as promote human rights, established under Security Council resolution 1542*. Visit this site for more information: <https://minustah.unmissions.org/en/>.

¹³⁸ *A UN peacekeeping mission aimed to strengthen rule of law institutions, including the justice and prisons, as well as promoting and protecting human rights, established under Security Council resolution 2350*. Visit this site for more information: <https://minujusth.unmissions.org/en/>.

¹³⁹ United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 2476' (United Nations 2019) Resolution 2476 <[https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2476\(2019\)>](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2476(2019)>).

¹⁴⁰ BINUH, 'Mandate' (BINUH, 14 May 2026) <<https://binuh.unmissions.org/en/mandate>> accessed 28 May 2026.

¹⁴¹ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'Haiti' (OHCHR) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/haiti>> accessed 28 May 2026.

¹⁴² Volker Türk, *In Haiti, Türk Reports 'Unprecedented' Violations* (2024) <<https://www.ohchr.org/es/statements-and-speeches/2024/04/haiti-turk-reports-unprecedented-violations>> accessed 28 May 2026.

¹⁴³ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'High Commissioner's Designated Expert on Haiti' (OHCHR) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hc-expert-haiti>> accessed 28 May 2026.

country-specific human rights situation.¹⁴⁴ This role does not exist for every country and is generally used where a situation requires specialised monitoring and technical assistance.

Volker Türk repeatedly raised concerns regarding the scale of human rights violations occurring within Haiti. In a statement delivered during the 55th session of the Human Rights Council in April 2024, Türk described the situation as involving “unprecedented” violations, particularly regarding gang violence, sexual violence and internal displacement.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, in 2025 William O’Neill stated that, in his thirty years of working on Haiti, he had “never seen this level of sustained violence and fear,” while noting that approximately 1.3 million Haitians had been displaced from their homes. O’Neill also urged states not to forcibly return Haitians to the country due to the severe humanitarian and security crisis.¹⁴⁶

The foundation for much of the later reporting can be found within Human Rights Council resolutions 52/39 and 55/24.¹⁴⁷ These resolutions are not treaties or conventions, but formal Human Rights Council decisions relating to technical assistance and capacity-building within Haiti.

Human Rights Council Resolutions 52/39 (April 2023),¹⁴⁸ and 55/24 (April 2024),¹⁴⁹ raised concerns regarding Haiti's lack of effective technical and institutional resources, rule of law failures, insecurity, gang violence and the increasing vulnerability of women and children. These resolutions are important because they created the formal mandate for continued reporting, monitoring and international involvement regarding Haiti's human rights situation. The later OHCHR reports for 2024, 2025, 2026 were therefore part of an ongoing reporting process established under these resolutions.

A comparative analysis will be made from the reports that derived from the resolutions mentioned above; they are written and provided to us under the authority of the United Nations High

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Human Rights Council, ‘UN Human Rights Chief Designates William O’Neill as Expert on Human Rights in Haiti’ (*OHCHR*, 12 April 2023) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/04/un-human-rights-chief-designates-william-oneill-expert-human-rights-haiti>> accessed 28 May 2026.

¹⁴⁵ Volker Türk (n 181).

¹⁴⁶ Bill O’Neill, ‘States Should Not Return Anyone to Haiti’ (*United Nations*, 4 July 2025) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/07/states-should-not-return-anyone-haiti-un-expert-bill-oneill>>.

¹⁴⁷ Human Rights Council, ‘Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building to Improve the Human Rights Situation in Haiti, in Connection with a Request from the Authorities of Haiti for Coordinated and Targeted International Action’ (n 172); Human Rights Council, ‘Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building to Improve the Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, in Connection with a Request from the Authorities of Haiti for Coordinated and Targeted International Action’ (n 172).

¹⁴⁸ Human Rights Council, ‘Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building to Improve the Human Rights Situation in Haiti, in Connection with a Request from the Authorities of Haiti for Coordinated and Targeted International Action’ (n 172).

¹⁴⁹ Human Rights Council, ‘Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building to Improve the Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, in Connection with a Request from the Authorities of Haiti for Coordinated and Targeted International Action’ (n 130).

Commissioner for Human Rights (Volker Turk), benefiting from evidence from the BINHU, NGOs and other assisting witnesses. Four key themes identified in each of the three reports will be analysed against each other to gauge a perspective on the progression of these situations.

All three reports identify gang violence as the central driver of Haiti's human rights crisis. The reports consistently connect gang control with killings, sexual violence, displacement, restrictions on movement, weak law enforcement and limited access to basic services.

The 2024 report covering the period from 29 February to 1 July 2024, focused heavily on the rapid escalation of gang violence and the immediate effects this had on civilians.¹⁵⁰ The report described mass violence, growing insecurity and attacks affecting women, men and children caught in crossfire situations. It also highlighted concerns regarding disproportionate police force and limited public security.

The 2025 report showed that violence had become increasingly embedded within daily life.¹⁵¹ The report documented how many victims were attacked not only in public areas but also inside homes and on public transport. It also highlighted major obstacles to effective law enforcement and the continued inability of state authorities to maintain public security.

By 2026, the reports suggested a broader collapse of public protection systems.¹⁵² The 2026 report discussed the emergence of self-defence groups carrying out "popular justice", including violence and killings against individuals associated with gangs.¹⁵³ Some of these acts were allegedly encouraged or tolerated by police. The report also discussed gang interference with elections, restrictions on public movement and the inability of citizens to safely access food, health care and water.

The progression of these reports therefore demonstrates that the situation in Haiti evolved from a serious security crisis into a much wider collapse of state authority through gang control and citizens taking charge. As the reports progress, we see that attacks towards civilians move into their private sphere, advancing from attacks in a public space to attacks within their homes; this is a very stark reflection on how quickly the state is losing control and its ability to protect.

¹⁵⁰ OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 175).

¹⁵¹ OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 175).

¹⁵² OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 175).

¹⁵³ *ibid* 3-4.

One of the strongest themes across all three reports is the increasing use of sexual violence by gangs, particularly against women and girls. The 2024 report described how gender-based violence survivors quintupled between the first two months of 2024 and March, increasing from 250 to 1,543 survivors. It noted that sexual violence accounted for approximately 75% of reported crimes during this period.¹⁵⁴¹⁵⁵ It also described how gangs used sexual violence strategically to terrorise communities, control territory and restrict movement.

Women and girls travelling to schools, checkpoints or public services were reportedly forced into sexual acts under threats of death. Additionally highlighting that basic services and psychological support for survivors remained insufficient. Particularly alarming was the report of 216 cases of sexual violence, including collective rape involving girls and boys under the age of five, within internally displaced persons sites in Port-au-Prince.¹⁵⁶

The 2025 report demonstrated that sexual violence had become even more widespread and systematic, it described that women and girls were reportedly forced into “relationships” with gang members.¹⁵⁷ Haitian women were also reportedly held at gunpoint during acts of rape. Importantly, the report stressed that sexual violence was likely significantly underreported due to stigma, fear of retaliation and lack of trust in authorities.¹⁵⁸

The 2026 report continued to describe severe sexual violence, particularly gang rape, representing 81% of recorded sexual violence.¹⁵⁹ The report also documented children being coerced into “sentimental relationships” with gang members and forced into sexual exploitation.¹⁶⁰

The progression across these reports demonstrates that sexual violence within Haiti increasingly became a method of intimidation, coercion, territorial control and social domination, particularly affecting women and girls, to help push their ideologies and weaken female autonomy. Women and children remain some of the most vulnerable groups throughout all three reports. The reports

¹⁵⁴ OHCHR, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti’ (n 132) 5 - Par 16.

¹⁵⁵ Giles Clarke, ‘Haiti: UN Concerned by the “Alarming Rise” in Sexual Violence | UN News’ *UN News* (United Nations, 17 May 2024) <<https://news.un.org/fr/story/2024/05/1145656>> accessed 28 May 2026.

¹⁵⁶ OHCHR, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti’ (n 132) 7 - Par 22.

¹⁵⁷ OHCHR, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti’ (n 132) 3 - Par 10.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid* 4 - Par 17.

¹⁵⁹ OHCHR, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti’ (n 132) 4 - Par 10.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*.

consistently identify children as victims of displacement, trafficking, forced recruitment and educational disruption.

Regarding displacement and insecurity of the population, the 2024 report highlighted how insecurity forced many civilians to flee Port-au-Prince due to limited public security. This created large numbers of IDPs, particularly women and children living within insecure displacement camps.¹⁶¹

The 2025 report continued to describe insecurity and displacement, while also noting that many abuses against women and children remained underreported.¹⁶² In addition to this, from assessments given by the IOM (International Organisation for Migration), 52% of displaced people were children, and displaced people were staying in highly insecure housing.¹⁶³ In some cases, there were internal displacement camps set up in schools, having an obviously large effect on children's access to education.¹⁶⁴

By 2026, the reports described a much broader crisis affecting children. The report highlighted growing child trafficking, forced gang recruitment and situations where children joined gangs for protection and survival. Gang violence was also described as severely disrupting education, with approximately one in seven children reportedly dropping out of school.¹⁶⁵ This demonstrates how gang control increasingly affected not only physical safety, but also long-term access to education, protection and development.

With regard to the disproportionate use of police force and rule of law, the 2024 report highlighted concerns regarding disproportionate police force and limited state protection,¹⁶⁶ it identifies corruption as the root cause of the state's weakness.¹⁶⁷ In addition, poor working conditions for court clerks and prosecutors have contributed to repeated strikes, leaving courts operating at very limited capacity; such challenges are aggravated by gang attacks on judicial institutions, including the burning and destruction of court buildings.¹⁶⁸

The 2025 report further stressed the inability of law enforcement to respond to gang violence and sexual violence effectively.¹⁶⁹ There is a general inability, through both underfunding and institutional

¹⁶¹ OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 132) 6-7.

¹⁶² OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 132) 4 - Par 17.

¹⁶³ IOM, 'Haiti Mobility Tracking'.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid* 5 - Par 21.

¹⁶⁵ OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 132) 5 - Par 15.

¹⁶⁶ OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 132) 4 - Par 14.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid* 9 - Par 33.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid* 9 - Par 32.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid* 3 - Par 10.

capacity of the workforce, to provide monitoring of firearm trafficking,¹⁷⁰ due to the lack of presence and security, sexual violence continues to be perpetuated.¹⁷¹ Whilst there has been some progress made by police forces in areas previously controlled by gangs, reports state that these operations have merely “slowed” gang advancement rather than making such areas safe for residents to return to.¹⁷² This demonstrates the continued weakness of state control and the rule of law.

The 2026 report showed increasing concerns regarding unlawful use of force by police for the possible encouragement of self-defence groups acting for the Bwa kal movement¹⁷³ and killing perpetrators or killing supposed intimate partners of gang members.¹⁷⁴ Between 1 March 2025 and 8 January 2026, the General Inspectorate reportedly opened investigations into 222 incidents involving possible unlawful use of force by police, resulting in the deaths of 110 people and injuries to 16 others.¹⁷⁵

This demonstrates that the deterioration of the human rights situation in Haiti is due not only to the fear gangs can instil, but also to the control they have over territory and firearms. With state institutions lacking funding, capacity, and public trust, alongside reports of unlawful uses of force, Haitians have increasingly turned to self-defence groups and their own protection mechanisms, which can be argued to be highly unorthodox.

Making comparisons to all three reports, we can see a clear deterioration in Haiti’s human rights situation, especially for the vulnerable groups of women and children who are especially targeted and affected, whether that be by the unavailability of education institutions or deliberate attacks on women or gain control or recruitment of children.

The 2024 reporting focuses on the escalation of gang violence, sexual violence and displacement. Gang control is shown to be used very strategically against women in order to control territories, with gender-based violence survivors quintupling during the reporting period. This was coupled with growing displacement camps and courts struggling to function, raising concerns regarding state capabilities, the rule of law, and governmental authority.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid 6 – Par 25.

¹⁷¹ Ibid 3 – Par 10.

¹⁷² Ibid 6 – Par 27.

¹⁷³ *Self-defence and vigilante groups against gang members; this movement was formed in April 2023; their actions have developed from mob violence to lynching of suspected gang members.* Read for more information:

<https://acleddata.com/report/last-line-defense-how-vigilante-groups-are-transforming-haitis-security-landscape>

¹⁷⁴ OHCHR, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti’ (n 132) 3 - Par 7.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid* 7 - Par 23.

By 2025, violence is seen to be embedded more within everyday life, with assaults occurring both in public spaces and within the home, as well as women being coerced into relationships and unable to escape due to fear of reporting. Through lack of funding and limited capacity, police were struggling to control gangs, firearm trafficking, and provide protection to displaced populations, particularly children. Children were especially affected, with educational institutions increasingly disrupted or taken over by armed groups.

By 2026, the crisis had expanded further to include school dropout, increased levels of rape, and girls being forced into relationships. On top of this, we see the expansion of self-defence groups through the Bwa Kal movement, with citizens increasingly taking security into their own hands, possibly in response to gang interference with food distribution, elections, and the harms inflicted upon women and children. From this, can it not be concluded that the State has lost such a degree of control that the targeting and killing of suspected gang members has become a role increasingly taken on by Haitian citizens themselves?

Collectively, these reports demonstrate the deterioration of human rights and highlight the structural barriers that continue to weaken governance, implementation, and protection within Haiti, leading into the following section.

2.8 - Structural Barriers

With all the laws, frameworks and reporting laid out previously, it gives a clear picture of what Haiti is party to and in agreement with. Being a ratified party to the CEDAW Convention, alongside multiple international human rights and disaster governance frameworks, it could therefore be assumed that women in Haiti would have stronger protections and greater access to justice. However, as highlighted within the methodological framework of this thesis, legal protections do not automatically translate into lived protection. Haiti demonstrates a clear gap between international legal obligations and their practical implementation, particularly within post-disaster contexts.

Whilst legal frameworks formally exist, weak governance, corruption, institutional instability, and poor enforcement continue to undermine these protections in practice. Frameworks created through Western legal and political understandings may also struggle to operate effectively within states experiencing deep political, economic, and post-disaster instability. Therefore, before examining GBV and

trafficking evidence directly, it is important to first analyse the structural barriers preventing women from accessing justice, protection, and institutional support within Haiti.

2.8.1 - Weak governance, corruption and unequal access to justice

From what was gathered in the previous sections, it is evident that colonial rule placed Haiti in a very vulnerable position, and then post-French colonial rule Haiti was made even more vulnerable through high corruption in economic institutions, unstable legal institutions, and debt.¹⁷⁶ Corruption within Haiti can therefore be described as a historically embedded issue placed onto it. Whilst legal frameworks formally exist, corruption, political instability, weak governance, and institutional instability continue to undermine these protections in practice and can instead leave such frameworks rather performative within institutions. Corruption in Haiti operates at very high levels across economic institutions and government (ranking at 16/100 on the corruption perception index),¹⁷⁷ making it very difficult to prosecute and is allowed by the people in positions of power.¹⁷⁸ With such corruption existing at high governmental and institutional levels, reforms become very difficult to properly implement.

Not only does corruption create economic instability,¹⁷⁹ but it also weakens social justice efforts and societal trust.¹⁸⁰ People and citizens begin to rely on their own efforts to find justice or make money, and don't turn to the state for assistance.¹⁸¹ Accessing justice in Haiti can come at a cost only the richer can afford.¹⁸² Social reform is prevented, and public services and health become less of a priority as gains are diverted for personal benefit; instability then trickles down into both the judiciary and police

¹⁷⁶ Jean-Hugues Joseph, 'Organized Crime and Corruption in Haiti: Lessons from Latin America, Africa, and Asia' (Social Science Research Network, 15 July 2024) 1-4 <<https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4897259>> accessed 21 April 2026.

¹⁷⁷ Transparency International, 'Haiti - Corruption Perceptions Index' (2025) <<https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/haiti>> accessed 18 May 2026.

¹⁷⁸ Jomanas Eustache, 'Reflections on Ethical Integrity: Challenges to the Rule of Law Facing the Haitian Legal Profession' (2016) 39 *Hastings INT'L COMPAR REV* 141-142 <Available at: https://repository.uclawsf.edu/hastings_international_comparative_law_review/vol39/iss1/7>.

¹⁷⁹ Asian Development Bank, *COMBATING TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SOUTH ASIA* (2003) <<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/30364/combating-trafficking-south-asia-paper.pdf>>; Disaster Emergency Committee, '2010 Haiti Earthquake Facts and Figures | Disasters Emergency Committee' (2013) 61 <<https://www.dec.org.uk/article/2010-haiti-earthquake-facts-and-figures>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁸⁰ Joseph (n 96) 4.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

¹⁸² Eustache (n 140).

systems, weakening them as trustworthy and accessible legal institutions. Huge delays and high caseloads further aggravate the already present corruption within Haiti's justice system.¹⁸³

Gangs in Haiti are operating with more control and more power than the government, and even more firepower than the police.¹⁸⁴ Stressing the importance of regaining control and strengthening security. However, it is reported that such gangs are funded by government officials to influence elections.¹⁸⁵ The Haitian judiciary itself is compromised by corruption, which prevents the rule of law from being upheld and not only reduces citizen trust,¹⁸⁶ but also prevents foreign investment.¹⁸⁷ Women often struggle to access justice despite the existence of legal protections. This can particularly be seen within the CEDAW 2016 concluding observations, where concerns were raised surrounding Haiti's dysfunctional judiciary, weak implementation of gender laws, and barriers preventing women from reporting violence, including stigma, fear, economic dependence, lack of legal awareness, and mistrust of institutions.¹⁸⁸ With all this taken into account, the way the world focuses on Haiti and its corruption often fails to investigate or understand the domino effect on women and how it affects them in these situations.

Weak implementation is also evident within Haiti's reporting mechanisms under CEDAW. Despite clear obligations requiring regular reporting under Article 18, Haiti's significantly delayed reporting suggests limited prioritisation of women's rights obligations.¹⁸⁹ Practical implementation remains extremely limited due to underfunding, lack of institutional coordination, and weak governance structures. The CEDAW Committee itself noted that reforms and gender equality policies had not yet produced concrete results due to inadequate effort within enforcement systems.¹⁹⁰ Weak monitoring mechanisms and lack of meaningful follow-up further reduce the effectiveness of CEDAW in practice, raising the question of whether Haiti aims more to appear compliant rather than create meaningful reform.

¹⁸³ *ibid* 142.

¹⁸⁴ United Nations, 'Haiti: Gangs Have "More Firepower than the Police"' | UN News' (4 April 2024) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148231>> accessed 21 April 2026.

¹⁸⁵ The World Bank, 'Haiti Pathways to Responding to Recurrent Crises and Chronic Fragility' (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development - The World Bank 2022) Systematic Country Diagnostic Update.

¹⁸⁶ Eustache (n 98) 143.

¹⁸⁷ Joseph (n 138).

¹⁸⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (n 23) 4-5.

¹⁸⁹ United Nations General Assembly (n 2) Article 18.

¹⁹⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (n 64).

Leadership figures such as Jean-Claude Duvalier (Ruling: 1971–1986),¹⁹¹ and Jean-Bertrand Aristide (Ruling: 1991 / 1994–1996 / 2001–2004).¹⁹² Showed very little interest in creating progress in the field of women's rights, reflected by weak institutional development and delayed compliance with CEDAW reporting obligations.¹⁹³ Despite recent and positive developments to women's rights, including the Gender Equality Office and the Second National Plan to Combat Violence against Women.¹⁹⁴ Corruption, weak governance, and insecurity continue to be highlighted in recent United Nations reports and have significantly limited implementation.¹⁹⁵ Leaving the current government unable to fully prioritise or enforce women's rights in practice.

2.8.2 - International and Western influence

Frameworks created through Western legal and political understandings may struggle when imposed onto states with completely different social, economic, and post-disaster realities. By looking at concepts of law on paper, faced with law in reality theories, it can be seen that the possible legal transplantation of Western standards to other cultures in practice is ineffective.¹⁹⁶ As well as this, there is often an assumption that strong institutions already exist, which in many cases simply do not exist within post-disaster or politically unstable states such as Haiti.

International agencies and NGOs often do not want to interact directly with the Haitian government, and most aid and social reform enacted within Haiti comes from outside actors, seemingly due to fears surrounding the mismanagement of money.¹⁹⁷ As much as NGOs and international organisations may have good intentions, it does not help Haitian governance build trust among its own citizens or implement social reform that would be more beneficial through local understanding of the culture. Donors do not want to risk financial mismanagement, causing foreign actors to work around the state

¹⁹¹ Britannica, 'Jean-Claude Duvalier | Biography & Facts | Britannica' <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Claude-Duvalier>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁹² Britannica, 'Jean-Bertrand Aristide | Former President of Haiti & Liberation Theology Advocate | Britannica' <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Bertrand-Aristide>> accessed 11 May 2026.

¹⁹³ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (n 64).

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ United Nations (n 146).

¹⁹⁶ Tamanaha (n 29).

¹⁹⁷ Robert Klitgaard, 'Addressing Corruption in Haiti' [2010] Work Pap Ser Dev Policy Number 2 11.

rather than through it. Whilst this may be done to avoid corruption, it can also weaken state authority further and reduce public trust in national institutions.

This became particularly clear after the 2010 Earthquake, where it was reported that Haitian governance had lost significant control over recovery efforts and border control. Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive received criticism at the time for not being sufficiently transparent and visible to Haitian citizens during the recovery process.¹⁹⁸ However, Bellerive responded to these criticisms by arguing that much foreign aid was going over the head of the Haitian government and directly through NGOs and international organisations. This made it difficult for the government to manage recovery efforts, especially as many of these organisations were accountable to foreign governments rather than to Haitian institutions. Bellerive also believed that foreign assistance was not purely moral, but also pragmatic, as Haiti could be viewed as a potential future economic market.¹⁹⁹

Although it is difficult to judge the intentions of foreign governments and NGOs providing aid, it can be argued that many chose not to work through Haitian state institutions due to fears of corruption, lack of transparency, and concern over where aid money would be spent. However, undermining government structures in this way can also weaken state authority and public trust, making it appear to citizens that the government has little control. In the context of trafficking and sexual violence, this is important because weakened state authority and limited border control create conditions in which traffickers can more easily exploit women and girls.

Therefore, responsibility cannot be placed entirely on Haitian governance structures alone. If Haiti is not given the support to strengthen its own institutions, within its own capacities, it becomes increasingly difficult for the state to appear credible and legitimate to its citizens. By pursuing a Western “white saviour” approach,²⁰⁰ international actors may unintentionally weaken the capacity of Haitian institutions, not only by limiting their ability to protect citizens in a way they deem best, but also by preventing them from demonstrating this ability.

¹⁹⁸ Tom Evans, ‘Traffickers Targeting Haiti’s Children, Human Organs, PM Says’ (28 January 2010) <<http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/01/27/haiti.earthquake.orphans/index.html>> accessed 18 May 2026.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *A Term used towards white people that are under the assumption that they know what is best for black, indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC). They fail to consider if their actions are needed and if such action will cause positive or negative repercussions. The “assistance/” the provided can also be derived from an assumption that BIPOC people lack intelligence or resources to help themselves.* Read more: <https://www.healthline.com/health/white-saviorism>.

2.8.3 - Disaster-Related Institutional Collapse

Such barriers become even more severe within post-disaster environments where institutions are overwhelmed, and finances, resources, and manpower become extremely limited, alongside large numbers of people becoming homeless and displaced.²⁰¹

Following the 2010 Earthquake, the destruction of government ministries, courts, infrastructure, and public services placed even greater strain on already weak institutions, limiting Haiti's ability to effectively implement protections and disaster responses.²⁰² Corruption and political insecurity should therefore not be seen as something isolated, but as another risk multiplier that prevents progress in women's rights, particularly in crisis contexts such as natural disasters, where vulnerabilities are further intensified. Such issues are not unique to Haiti and were also highlighted within the Sendai Framework Midterm Review. The challenges identified within the Review are particularly relevant to Haiti, where weak governance, poverty, institutional instability, and repeated natural disasters continue to undermine disaster preparedness and the protection of women and girls.²⁰³

Disasters are already intensifying existing vulnerabilities, exposing how poorer populations and people living in more rural areas are disproportionately affected by disasters.²⁰⁴ Alongside this, physical issues such as unenforced building codes, insufficient disaster management planning, and rising crime rates post-disaster create further instability, with overwhelmed institutions,²⁰⁵ leaving little attention placed on the protection of women within camps and temporary shelters.²⁰⁶ In a hopeful turn of events, post the 2010 disaster, many people called for change and the start of a new beginning, stating that the crisis was an opportunity to “build a new country” correlating very well to Sendai's “build back better”.²⁰⁷

However, Haiti's reconstruction challenges have also been described as rooted within a system of “sanctioned plunder” embedded within Haitian politics, highlighting how corruption and governance

²⁰¹ Disaster Emergency Committee (n 20).

²⁰² World Bank Group (n 22).

²⁰³ United Nations General Assembly (n 103).

²⁰⁴ The World Bank, ‘Haiti Pathways to Responding to Recurrent Crises and Chronic Fragility’ (n 105) 18-19.

²⁰⁵ Klitgaard (n 117) 10.

²⁰⁶ UN Women, ‘Media Factsheet Haiti: Impact of Ongoing Violence on Women and Girls - Haiti’ (1 May 2025)

<<https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/media-factsheet-haiti-impact-ongoing-violence-women-and-girls>> accessed 19 May 2026.

²⁰⁷ Klitgaard (n 117) 6.

failures are viewed as deeply structural rather than temporary post-disaster issues.²⁰⁸ Whilst frameworks such as Sendai promote the idea of “Build Back Better” to stop cycles of destruction and vulnerability.²⁰⁹ Haiti instead appears to find itself within a “slow burn effect”,²¹⁰ where each disaster continues to worsen already existing vulnerabilities and institutional weaknesses. All such institutional barriers and weaknesses create the perfect recipe and conditions waiting for a disaster to happen, where all systems can break down, and the most vulnerable groups suffer the harms first.

This segment has shown that international legal and disaster governance frameworks do recognise the need to protect women from violence, trafficking, and disaster-related vulnerability. However, these protections remain largely dependent on state implementation, which becomes difficult when considering Haiti’s structural barriers, corruption and slow law implementation mechanisms. This creates the basis for the next chapter, which examines the sexual violence itself, looking at and defining GBV and trafficking, investigating how the structural barriers mentioned here play a key factor into such violence being prevalent.

Overall, this chapter has analysed the conventions, laws, and treaties to which Haiti is a party, alongside their reporting mechanisms and compliance. Through documents such as CEDAW's concluding observations and even disaster frameworks, it has identified that, whilst protections exist, corruption, limited funding, weak institutions, and poor law enforcement continue to prevent effective implementation in practice.

This demonstrates that, despite legal obligations protecting women, structural barriers continue to limit disaster resilience and women's protection within Haiti. Rather than creating these vulnerabilities, natural disasters expose and intensify existing inequalities, leaving women increasingly vulnerable to sexual violence, trafficking, and exploitation as displacement increases and support systems weaken.

This chapter has therefore provided the foundations needed to understand the link between disasters and women’s rights in Haiti. It has helped explain why existing protections often struggle in practice and why women remain particularly vulnerable within post-disaster environments. The following

²⁰⁸ *ibid* 7.

²⁰⁹ UNDRR, ‘Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ (n 6).

²¹⁰ *Refers to the gradual and long-term consequences of disasters, whereby existing vulnerabilities are intensified over time. Rather than ending when the disaster itself is over, social harms such as poverty, displacement, and violence may continue to develop.* Chris Weeks, ‘The “Slow-burn Effect” of Human Trafficking Following Disaster’ (2025) 49 *Disasters* e12685 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12685>>.

chapter will build on these findings by examining GBV and trafficking more directly, further strengthening the connection between natural disasters and women's vulnerability in Haiti.

CHAPTER 3: SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN HAITI

This chapter examines the pre-existing inequalities and vulnerabilities faced by women in Haiti that increase exposure to gender-based violence and trafficking both before and after disasters. Rather than treating these as separate issues, this chapter first explores the interconnected structural factors that contribute to women's vulnerability, including poverty, displacement, gender inequality, institutional weakness, and post-disaster instability. It then moves on to examine GBV and trafficking independently, analysing their prevalence and contributing factors.

3.1 - Factors increasing women's vulnerability pre/post disaster

The following factors highlight some of the key structural and societal conditions that increase women's vulnerability both before and after disasters, helping explain why women become disproportionately exposed to GBV, exploitation, and trafficking within crisis contexts.

Cultural norms play a significant role in creating vulnerability for women in Haiti. Norms within society can see violence as a normalised behaviour, which can be particularly detrimental to children growing up and viewing it as such. Respondents in a study by Gabriel suggest that violence is often a learned behaviour, and one respondent in particular commented that there should be no reason to abuse or lay hands on a woman, yet because people become so used to seeing it, the behaviour continues to be reproduced across generations.²¹¹ Such a normalisation can make it difficult to challenge violence collectively. When looking into Haitian society, there is a big divide between the rich and the poor, which could limit attempts at unified efforts between women's organisations.²¹²

When violence is acted out and presented in public spaces, the common reaction is that there is little willingness or ability for others to intervene; this is due to the fact that there is a general lack of awareness of what available support systems are out there, or the belief that nothing can be done about this, and possibly nothing should be done.²¹³ As a result of this, the violence becomes normalised within communities.

²¹¹ Gabriel and others (n 28).

²¹² *ibid* 263.

²¹³ *ibid* 8.

Masculinity and, more so, the fear of losing power are key drivers of violence in Haiti. Due to the political instability and high rates of unemployment, men are unable to be providers and act as such.²¹⁴²¹⁵ This will grow their fears of being or becoming emasculated, and rape can almost be seen as a tool for such men to regain their power and masculinity. Studies continue to prove that the fear of emasculation and loss of personal finances creates such isolated and harmful living environments.²¹⁶ There is a stressed importance for women to learn and become educated to have the financial means to escape these environments and break such patterns.

This idea of violence being used to regain power can be extended further. Rape and abuse can also be used as a weapon of war against women; as suggested by Professor Altman, rape can act as a way of “preserving tradition”; by this, he meant that rape can be a tool to preserve gender hierarchies and reinforce male dominance when such hierarchies can be perceived to be under threat.²¹⁷²¹⁸ Such was evident in the military dictatorship of Raoul Cedras.²¹⁹

Economic vulnerability and extreme poverty will further increase a woman’s vulnerability. In many cases, the death or absence of a male family member removes the physical and financial support, leaving a woman more exposed to abuse.²²⁰ Displacement also plays a critical role; women who live in temporary shelters, insecure housing, or are housed in tents in post-disaster situations often have less access to food, water and sanitation facilities.²²¹ Having to access such essentials requires them to use unsafe routes or use showers in the evenings and at dangerous hours when they are most vulnerable. Such risks are not a matter of choice but necessity, as no alternative options are available, trapping them in vicious cycles.

Vulnerability for women in Haiti can also be seen to be rooted in gender inequality, with 71% of trafficked victims being women and girls.²²² For the most part, women have less access to education,

²¹⁴ Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press 2001) <<http://archive.org/details/globalsex0000altm>> accessed 29 April 2026.

²¹⁵ Blaine Bookey, ‘Enforcing the Right to Be Free from Sexual Violence and the Role of Lawyers in Post-Earthquake Haiti’ (2011) 14 City Univ N Y Law Rev 255 <<https://doi.org/10.31641/clr140201>>. (260-261)

²¹⁶ Diddy Antai, ‘Traumatic Physical Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence against Women: What Is the Role of Community-Level Factors?’ (2011) 11 BMC Womens Health 56 <<https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6874-11-56>>.

²¹⁷ Altman (n 4) 4.

²¹⁸ Bookey (n 219).

²¹⁹ Human Rights Watch National Coalition For Haitian Refugees (n 40).

²²⁰ Bookey (n 5) 262.

²²¹ *ibid* 262.

²²² The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, ‘The Gender Dimensions of Human Trafficking’ (2017).

property rights, and fair wages, with women frequently being segregated from opportunities that could give them independence, purposely leaving them with minimal decisions and forcing many to face options such as prostitution.²²³ The same can be seen with young girls, where during financial crises girls are often pulled out of education first, giving priority for boys to be educated.²²⁴ Again, leaving them with minimal future opportunities. In some countries, possibly due to traditional beliefs, educated women are viewed as less desirable for marriage or as a threat, discouraging investment in girls' education.²²⁵

Gender inequality can also have a major effect on GBV, looking at the evidence given above, if there is less educational opportunities and then airer wages, it is made much harder for women to leave abusive environments or seek support when they are financially dependent on partners.²²⁶

Following on from this point, lack of education itself becomes another major cause of trafficking, as educational status can greatly limit one's opportunities and ability to protect themselves. Many anti-trafficking advocates, therefore, promote greater access to education for girls.²²⁷ Unfortunately, in many countries lacking financial means, patriarchal views often result in little investment being placed into girls' education.²²⁸ Not only can education provide access to better employment opportunities, reducing the likelihood of falling into exploitative work, but it can also educate women and girls on the warning signs of trafficking, helping them recognise when they are in vulnerable positions and how to better protect themselves.

Other contributing factors include broken families, drug addiction, and wider social instability.²²⁹ Alongside post-colonial legacies, which are particularly applicable to Haiti.²³⁰ Colonial rule and its aftermath left Haiti with deep-rooted inequalities, weak institutions, and poverty, all of which continue to contribute to women's vulnerability and limit their access to protection. Following disasters, conflict, and mass displacement of people further intensify these vulnerabilities.²³¹ Leaving many without

²²³ Louise Shelley (n 203).(54)

²²⁴ *ibid* 54.

²²⁵ Asian Development Bank, *COMBATING TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SOUTH ASIA* (2003) 55 <<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/30364/combating-trafficking-south-asia-paper.pdf>>.

²²⁶ Louise Shelley (n 203).

²²⁷ *ibid* 132.

²²⁸ *ibid* 158.

²²⁹ *ibid* 275.

²³⁰ *ibid* 266-267.

²³¹ *ibid* 267-268.

protection, income, shelter, or support systems, making them increasingly susceptible to exploitation and trafficking.

3.2 - Gender Based Violence (GBV)

GBV is any form of harmful act, whether that be mental or physical, due to the gender of that person; The definition states it can be violence against either gender; unfortunately, it is most common that women and girls are more impacted than men and boys.²³² In the aftermath of natural disasters, field reports exposed how, in countries such as the Philippines, post the Mount Pinatubo eruption, central and northern America after Hurricane Mitch and several countries post the 2004 Tsunami, all reported to have suffered increased violence against women.²³³

Without taking into account post-disaster conditions, Haitian women have frequently been victims of GBV, with rape in particular, whether that be by soldiers under the illegitimate regime of General Raoul Cedras,²³⁴ husbands and partners reclaiming a sense of masculinity and power over their partners,²³⁵ or as this study continues to prove to women who are displaced in post-disaster conditions.²³⁶

Traditional gender roles will further reinforce these dynamics of abuse, with women traditionally being expected to take care of children and manage household responsibilities, and men just providing financially, being the primary income earners and main authority figure within the house.²³⁷ Such gender roles may prevent women from pursuing education or engaging in activities outside of household tasks, which in turn limits their opportunities and access to education. Despite the prevalence of abuse in Haiti, only 17-19% of women justify violence in certain situations, being a low

²³² Sanni Bundgaard and Dabney P.Evans, 'Gender-Based Violence' *Inter-Agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings: 2010 Revision for Field Review* (Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises 2010) <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK305160/>> accessed 29 April 2026.

²³³ IASC, 'IASC Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, 2005 | IASC' (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2005) Guidelines 4 <<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-sub-working-group-gender-and-humanitarian-action/iasc-guidelines-gender-based-violence-interventions-humanitarian-settings-2005>> accessed 29 April 2026.

²³⁴ Bookey (n 5) 260.

²³⁵ Altman (n 218).

²³⁶ IASC (n 237).

²³⁷ Nikki Levy Miller, 'Haitian Ethnomedical Systems and Biomedical Practitioners: Directions for Clinicians' (2000) 11 J Transcult Nurs 204 207 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/104365960001100307>>.

acceptance rate, compared to the fact that around 80.4% of violence in Haiti is carried out by intimate partners.²³⁸ Suggesting societal norms sustain these behaviours, and abusive male behaviour will continue to be normalised.

Research also shows that young boys growing up witnessing violence or inequality and imbalance within the household will foster an ideology of how women should be treated or that abusive behaviour is normal.²³⁹ This will eventually create a cycle where violence is reproduced across generations and taught in the household. Other theories explaining the perpetuation of GBV suggest that a cycle begins at a young age, driven by factors such as low education levels, boys not attending school and falling into gangs, experiences of childhood abuse, both physical and mental trauma, alcohol use, and being deemed an “outcast” or not being well integrated into society.²⁴⁰

In the study by Naïka C Gabriel, which involved interviewing men in Haiti about their perceptions of violence against women and their opinion of what causes it, men were asked the question, “*what factors they think could influence violence?*”²⁴¹ Many respondents answered that, due to the changing roles of women in society, as women gain independence and authority, men perceive this achievement as a threat to their position as men, leading to increased violence. Women's financial freedom and independence are not seen as an improvement but as something that is taken away from a man, making it a threat.

Education and income levels further reinforce dependence on men. Following the 2010 Earthquake, statistics showed us that education rates, with over 90% of women having less than a high school education and 11.1% having never attended school.²⁴² It is therefore theorised that with a higher level of education, women could understand/read the situation better to then leave. Many women also lived on extremely low incomes both before and after the disaster, creating reliance on male partners and reducing their ability to leave abusive situations.

It identified that GBV in Haiti is primarily carried out by intimate partners and rooted in structural and societal conditions. GBV exists before a disaster, being shaped by gender roles, economic inequality and cultural norms. A post-disaster environment will therefore intensify these vulnerabilities through

²³⁸ Doris W Campbell and others, ‘Violence and Abuse of Internally Displaced Women Survivors of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake’ (2016) 61 Int J Public Health 981 988 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-016-0895-8>>.

²³⁹ Gabriel and others (n 1) 3.

²⁴⁰ *ibid* 3.

²⁴¹ *ibid* 7.

²⁴² Campbell and others (n 28) 984-985.

displacement, poverty and psychological stress. Overall, GBV in Haiti is not driven by acceptance by women, but by the imposed social norms, economic pressure and institutional weakness that allow such cycles of violence to persist.

3.3 – Trafficking

Human trafficking victims can be of any gender and age; through deception, they may be exploited by traffickers for large profits.²⁴³ Trafficking is known to increase post-disaster, with natural disasters cited as a “main driver” beginning this cycle of destruction.²⁴⁴ The displacement of people post-disaster, left in impoverished conditions, homeless people with either nowhere to live or living in temporary shelters, and the general institutional collapse create a highly vulnerable environment and a much higher supply of victims.²⁴⁵ If we continue this track, doing little for the prevention/attempts to reduce global warming, we will subsequently see a rise in the frequency of natural disasters, followed by an increase in trafficking.²⁴⁶ Trafficking, therefore, cannot be understood as an isolated criminal activity, as much as we now understand that natural disasters cannot be understood as the key creator in a country’s demise. Instead, it is linked to poverty, gender inequality, labour exploitation, migration, social vulnerability and weak institutions (socioeconomic issues).²⁴⁷

The main root causes of trafficking are poverty and inequality, with lack of employment, poverty, and economic imbalance driving vulnerability. Trafficking can also be linked to globalisation, the rise of free markets, heightened economic competition, and the increased interconnectedness of even remote parts of the world.^{248,249} In the discussion of economic growth, there is also a high demand for trafficked individuals due to them being cheap labour sources and affordable “commodities”, alongside the fact they are considered a compliant workforce that is unlikely to revolt, which may explain why trafficked labour is not urgently removed from supply chains.²⁵⁰ The continued use of prostitution

²⁴³ United Nations - Office on Drugs and Crime, ‘Human-Trafficking’ (*United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2024) <www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html> accessed 14 May 2026.

²⁴⁴ Weeks (n 171).

²⁴⁵ Louise Shelley (n 13) 94.

²⁴⁶ *ibid* 38.

²⁴⁷ Asian Development Bank (n 141).

²⁴⁸ Louise Shelley, John Picarelli and Chris Corpora, ‘Beyond Sovereignty: Issues for a Global Agenda’.

²⁴⁹ Asian Development Bank (n 15) 51.

²⁵⁰ Louise Shelley (n 13) 39-40.

stemming from sex trafficking, or even the purchasing of cheap clothing originating from sweatshops run through trafficked labour, highlights how consumers are often unaware of the exploitation behind their low-cost and accessible “commodities” they are benefiting from.

As trafficking becomes increasingly profitable for businesses, from the consumer perspective, very little is noticed other than the fact that access to sex and prostitution has become more widely and readily available, as well as cheaper, similarly to products originating from exploitative labour (sweatshops and fast fashion).²⁵¹ This cycle of increased availability and affordability continues to increase both demand and profitability. According to one financial analyst, sex slavery has made sex services more available than a decade ago, therefore increasing demand.²⁵² If there were greater inclusion of women within social and economic sectors, such crimes may not go as unnoticed; the female perspective is undervalued in this case.²⁵³

Poor law enforcement and corruption also create easier routes for traffickers to operate through, particularly when traffickers can bribe border officials, police officers, and other personnel.²⁵⁴ Weak institutions and a lack of enforcement, therefore, allow trafficking systems to continue largely unchecked, keeping trafficking routes available.

It's reported that after the 2010 Earthquake, trafficking was one of the biggest problems, with many reports of child trafficking and organ trafficking.²⁵⁵ On one occasion, Haitian police caught 10 US citizens trying to take 33 children out of the country to potentially be part of an “illegal adoption scheme”.²⁵⁶ Demonstrating weakening of state control and chaos post-disaster.

²⁵¹ *A business model characterised by the mass production of goods to meet consumer demand, often resulting in significant environmental damage and labour exploitation. It commonly relies on disadvantaged populations who are paid low wages and required to work in poor and often unsafe conditions.* Read more:

https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/articles/entry/fast-fashion-may-be-cheap-but-it-comes-at-a-cost/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=tfdsad&utm_source=1&utm_campaignid=16254326089&gclid=Cj0KCQjwornRBhCrARIsAON5exH2_eiGDtM19N8atmj5zqz5DIUY5tMC888vRzDmD_BmeGvAGF3cW3kaAgV4EALw_wcB##

²⁵² Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery* (Columbia University Press 2009) 37.

²⁵³ Asian Development Bank (n 15) 61.

²⁵⁴ *ibid* 61-77.

²⁵⁵ Evans (n 160).

²⁵⁶ Joseph G. Delva, ‘Americans Arrested Taking Children out of Haiti | Reuters’ (30 January 2010)

<<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/americans-arrested-taking-children-out-of-haiti-idUSTRE60T23I/>> accessed 10 June 2026.

Despite the existence of international trafficking frameworks, including the 1994 Trafficking Convention and the UN trafficking protocol, trafficking evidently continues to be an issue for Haitians. Pointing to the fact that Haitians struggle with their implementation and enforcement.

Within this section, we have identified why trafficking and GBV are so prominent within post-disaster environments and the factors that amplify them. In doing so, we have also identified why natural disasters act as risk multipliers rather than the sole cause of such harms, intensifying existing issues such as corruption, poor governance structures, poverty, and unsuitable housing.

It becomes very apparent from all of these factors that, even prior to a disaster occurring, women are already placed in vulnerable positions. When a disaster then arrives, and women are already viewed in this unequal way, they become even more vulnerable within displacement camps and unstable environments. Combined with limited education and awareness of how to respond in such situations, women can become easy targets for trafficking and exploitation, whilst also remaining vulnerable to violence perpetrated by partners, further reinforcing existing cycles of abuse.

Looking into certain factors, such as masculinity, it becomes clear that this can be a prominent tactic used to exert control over women, with violence being used as a means of intimidation, coercion, and even as a weapon during periods of conflict and instability.

When analysing legal codes, it also becomes clear that simply placing legal protections on paper is not enough without proper implementation and enforcement, and in this case, women's perspectives are not being adequately reflected, as they continue to experience these harms despite the existence of laws intended to protect them, with limited evidence of meaningful change in practice. The following section will therefore connect these wider vulnerabilities to sexual violence more directly, examining how natural disasters further intensify such risks and operate as risk multipliers.

CHAPTER 4: NATURAL DISASTERS AS RISK MULTIPLIERS: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE LIMITATIONS OF LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN HAITI

Throughout the previous chapters, we have sought to answer the three research questions posed at the beginning of this thesis. This section will discuss and draw conclusions from the evidence and findings presented throughout the study, helping us answer research questions one (*How do natural disasters function as risk multipliers for sexual violence and trafficking against women in Haiti*) and two (*To what extent do international and domestic legal frameworks effectively protect women from post-disaster violence and exploitation in Haiti*). This chapter therefore discusses the main findings and limitations of legal and normative frameworks, and together the evidence will help us answer the final research question concerning recommendations.

4.1 - Main Findings: Natural Disasters as Risk Multipliers

This section synthesises evidence and research to illustrate how natural disasters serve as risk multipliers. It argues that these disasters do not inherently cause GBV, sexual violence, or trafficking; instead, they reveal and exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities. In Haiti, the most pressing obstacles to women's protection include poverty, ineffective law enforcement, limited education, gender inequality, entrenched cultural and social norms, inadequate access to justice, and weak institutional support.

Through the analysis of the different CEDAW instruments and documents, there is clear evidence that poverty is a key driver preventing gender equality and increasing vulnerability. This can be seen in General Recommendation 37, where it is recognised that people living in poverty are more affected by climate change and natural disasters, with particular concern for women in poverty.²⁵⁷ General Recommendation 38 also connects poverty to trafficking, showing how economic insecurity can push women and girls into situations where they are more easily exploited.²⁵⁸ Therefore, poverty is not

²⁵⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'General Recommendation No.37 (2018) on Gender-Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in a Changing Climate' (n 54).

²⁵⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'General Recommendation No.38 (2020) on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration' (n 57).

simply a background issue, but one of the central conditions that makes women less able to prepare for, survive, and recover from a disaster.

There are also clear links indicating a domino effect between lack of education, economic dependence, and vulnerability. Without education, women are less able to access stable employment, meaning less financial freedom; therefore, insecure housing (amongst other factors: limited access to health services, etc.).²⁵⁹ This then means that many women become dependent on male partners or male family members for financial and physical support. This dependence becomes dangerous both before and after a disaster. Before a disaster, it may prevent women from escaping abusive situations. After a disaster, if women are separated from husbands, partners, or male family members, they may lose the support system they once relied on.²⁶⁰ This does not mean that male protection should be treated as the solution, but rather that women's lack of independent access to resources places them in a more vulnerable position.

Alongside poverty and economic dependence, cultural and social norms contribute to the normalisation of violence against women and reduce the willingness of communities to intervene.²⁶¹ Masculinity and the expectation that men act as providers and authority figures are also important factors. In disaster contexts, where livelihoods, property, and income are often lost, men may experience feelings of emasculation and a loss of status.²⁶² In some cases, violence then becomes a way of reasserting control, particularly against intimate partners. These social and cultural dynamics do not begin with the disaster. They exist beforehand, but the disruption caused by disaster makes them more intense.

From these pre-existing conditions, there are also clear links to trafficking. Poverty, low education, and economic dependence create scenarios where girls and women are left with limited options, making them more vulnerable to the coercion of traffickers who offer financial promises or supposed opportunities. In some cases, women may be too desperate to recognise that these promises are a facade, whilst in the case of young girls, they may not yet be educated on the dangers or warning signs of trafficking. In this sense, trafficking does not suddenly appear after a disaster but instead develops and manifests from the fact that women and girls are already less educated, less economically

²⁵⁹ Louise Shelley, *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective* (Cambridge University Press 2010) 54 <<https://dl.icdst.org/pdfs/files4/bd2523edf8d7f5e86255690f65a06589.pdf>> accessed 15 May 2026.

²⁶⁰ Bookey (n 219).

²⁶¹ Naïka C Gabriel and others, “‘The Women, They Maltreat Them... Therefore, We Cannot Assure That the Future Society Will Be Good’: Male Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence: A Focus Group Study with Young Men in Haiti’ (2016) 37 *Health Care Women Int* 773 8 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/07399332.2015.1089875>>.

²⁶² Altman (n 218).

independent, and less aware of the risks they may face. Women may also already be exposed to unsafe work and exploitation prior to the disaster. Therefore, when desperation increases after a disaster, they become even easier for traffickers to exploit.

Another important pre-disaster weakness is access to justice. From the previous chapters, it can be seen that women in Haiti face serious barriers when trying to access justice, and that the justice system itself remains dysfunctional. The CEDAW concluding observation 2016 show concerns around women's access to justice, stigma, fear, lack of legal awareness, economic barriers, and the weakness of the judiciary.²⁶³ With evidence of corruption in both the police and the judiciary, public trust declines further.²⁶⁴ This means that women may already be discouraged from reporting sexual violence, exploitation, or abuse before a disaster even takes place.

This is made worse by the fact that legal protections remain limited both on paper and in practice. There is no clear domestic legal definition of GBV, and rape within the Penal Code remains vague, particularly around consent and wider protections.²⁶⁵ Therefore, even before a disaster occurs, women are facing a protection system that is already weak. The argument here is that prior to a disaster, and even more clearly after a disaster, legal protection remains limited because the law is not always properly defined to begin with and fails to enforce anything that is defined.

In this instance, applying Fineman's approach to vulnerability, Haitian women should not be viewed as inherently vulnerable simply because they are women.²⁶⁶ Their vulnerability comes from unequal access to basic means that will advance their rights, where opportunities for resilience and protection are not equally available to all. Their vulnerability is shaped by limited education, poverty, cultural norms, weak institutional support, lack of access to justice, and inadequate disaster preparedness. Sexual violence, trafficking, and prejudice are therefore not created by disasters themselves. Instead, they are pre-existing social, economic, and patriarchal issues that disasters intensify. Haitian women are already structurally vulnerable before disasters occur, with disaster events exposing and amplifying existing inequalities rather than creating them independently.

²⁶³ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (n 64).

²⁶⁴ Jomanas Eustache, 'Reflections on Ethical Integrity: Challenges to the Rule of Law Facing the Haitian Legal Profession' (2016) 39 *Hastings INT'L COMPAR REV* 143 <Available at: https://repository.uclawsf.edu/hastings_international_comparative_law_review/vol39/iss1/7>.

²⁶⁵ The World Bank, 'Gender-Based Violence Country Profile HAITI' 7.

²⁶⁶ Martha Albertson Fineman, *The Vulnerable Subject: Anchoring Equality in the Human Condition* (2008) .

This then explains why natural disasters become risk multipliers. When a disaster occurs, the vulnerabilities already discussed are made worse. Women may become homeless, displaced, or forced into insecure housing, leaving them exposed to unsafe and unprotected environments. Temporary shelters and displacement camps often lack adequate lighting, privacy, sanitation, security, and regular police patrols. Women may have to travel unsafe routes to access food, water, bathrooms, or medical assistance. These risks are not matters of choice, but of necessity, because the disaster removes safer alternatives.

Much of this vulnerability can be traced back to the physical destruction caused by disasters. Homes are destroyed, businesses collapse, sources of income are lost, and families are separated. These conditions create stress, insecurity, and desperation. In Haiti's case, this also raises questions regarding the effectiveness of government responses, particularly where disasters are followed by social unrest, riots, increased gang activity, or reduced state control.²⁶⁷²⁶⁸ The disaster therefore does not only destroy physical infrastructure but also places pressure on already fragile social and institutional systems.

With damaged infrastructure, social disorder, and populations living under significant stress, institutions also begin to deteriorate further. Courts become less effective, police presence is reduced, reporting mechanisms weaken, and government attention is often placed on managing the immediate consequences of the disaster. During these periods, women's rights frequently become a secondary concern rather than a priority.²⁶⁹ This does not mean that women's rights disappear from legal frameworks, but rather that the ability to enforce those rights becomes even weaker in reality.

The 2010 Earthquake in Haiti demonstrates this clearly. The disaster caused mass displacement, destruction of livelihoods, and the collapse of important infrastructure. It also weakened already fragile institutions and reduced the state's ability to monitor violence, respond to reports, protect displaced women, and prevent trafficking. In this environment, perpetrators of GBV and trafficking can take greater advantage of vulnerable populations. The disaster therefore creates the conditions in which existing harms become more severe and more difficult to control.

²⁶⁷ International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Haiti: Stabilisation and Reconstruction after the Quake' (2010) Latin America/Caribbean Report 32 <<https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/icg/2010/72648>> accessed 19 June 2026.

²⁶⁸ United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 1927 (2010)' <<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Haiti%20SRES%201927.pdf>>.

²⁶⁹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (n 64).

Post-disaster environments also create additional challenges in relation to health and trauma. Many doctors, practitioners, and responders may lack the experience or training needed to deal with trauma-related victims, whilst mental health services are unavailable.²⁷⁰ These services could have helped to prevent women feeling “desperate” and assist in distinguishing between the safe and harmful opportunities. Mental health support could also reduce the feelings of emasculation in men and stop such emotions at their root before developing into violence.

The loss of key women’s rights advocates after the 2010 Earthquake also weakened the support systems available to women and possibly reduced the drive for reform.²⁷¹ Therefore, the disaster not only affected victims directly, but also removed wider support networks that could have helped women and pushed for stronger protection mechanisms.

Statistical evidence further supports the idea that disasters intensify rather than create violence. Post-disaster data showing increases in PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, depression, and suicidal thoughts demonstrate the severe psychological impact of disaster conditions.²⁷² Such trauma can affect how individuals react and respond to stress. However, high levels of violence were recorded both before (71.2%) and after (75%).²⁷³ The 2010 Earthquake showed, firstly heightened levels before an environmental stressor and an increased post-disaster. This demonstrates that GBV is not created by disasters but is instead a structural issue that is intensified under crisis conditions.

This is also where the “slow-burn effect” becomes useful in explaining trafficking.²⁷⁴ The disaster itself does not always create trafficking immediately in a simple cause-and-effect way. Instead, post-disaster poverty increases, frustration grows, desperation deepens, and individuals may begin to accept any opportunity offered to them without being able to properly acknowledge warning signs. This helps explain how trafficking can emerge gradually after disaster, as people are pushed into unsafe choices through poverty, being displaced, and lacking protection.

²⁷⁰ Sadie Elisseou, Sravanthi Puranam and Meghna Nandi, ‘A Novel, Trauma-Informed Physical Examination Curriculum for First-Year Medical Students’ 15 MedEdPORTAL J Teach Learn Resour 10799 <https://doi.org/10.15766/mep_2374-8265.10799>.

²⁷¹ Lina Abirafeh, ‘Haitian Feminists Celebrate Lost Leaders’ (*Ms. Magazine*, 14 March 2010) <<https://msmagazine.com/2010/03/14/haitian-feminists-celebrate-lost-leaders/>> accessed 30 April 2026.

²⁷² Doris W Campbell and others, ‘Violence and Abuse of Internally Displaced Women Survivors of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake’ (2016) 61 Int J Public Health 981 988 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-016-0895-8>>.

²⁷³ *ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Weeks (n 171).

This links with the “ratchet effect”,²⁷⁵ where each disaster makes a population more vulnerable than before.²⁷⁶ If a country does not fully recover from one disaster before the next one occurs, vulnerability accumulates. Poverty becomes deeper, institutions become weaker, housing becomes more insecure, and public trust declines further. This gives greater credibility to the Sendai Framework’s “Build Back Better” approach, because recovery should not simply rebuild the same weak conditions that existed before.²⁷⁷ It should reduce the vulnerabilities that allowed the disaster to create such severe harm in the first place.

This also reinforces the law in reality approach.²⁷⁸ The issue is not only whether legal and normative frameworks exist, but whether they can operate in practice during a crisis. Haiti demonstrates that legal protections may exist on paper, but weak institutions, corruption, underfunding, poor implementation, and disaster-related collapse prevent those protections from being properly experienced by women in reality. Therefore, the gap between law on paper and law in practice becomes most visible during and after disasters. It can also be argued that this gap is worsened by the Western nature of many international frameworks. These frameworks often assume that a state has the capacity to take them on and apply them in practice. In Haiti, however, corruption and weak enforcement already make this difficult, and disaster conditions make it even harder when the physical systems needed to protect citizens have also collapsed, and priorities shift to rebuilding.

Ultimately, the findings of this thesis show that natural disasters act as risk multipliers because they expose and intensify pre-existing social, economic, cultural, and institutional weaknesses. In Haiti, women’s vulnerability to gender-based violence, sexual violence, and trafficking cannot be understood only through the disaster itself. It must be understood through the conditions that existed before the disaster and the way those conditions were amplified afterwards. Poverty, lack of education, gender inequality, weak access to justice, corruption, poor housing, and institutional weakness all existed

²⁷⁵ A concept used in economics (most commonly) but can be applied to disaster studies. It refers to a situation where change will occur during a crisis, and once the change has happened, we do not return to our previous state afterwards; it’s hard for the change/damage to be reversed. Disasters may have temporarily made a change to normal conditions, but the aftermath remains permanent and damaging. Michael J Boyle and Yarilet Perez, ‘Understanding the Ratchet Effect in Economics: Examples and Implications’ (1 December 2025) <<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/ratchet-effect.asp>>.

²⁷⁶ Robert Chambers, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* (Routledge 2013) 122.

²⁷⁷ UNDRR, ‘Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ (n 6).

²⁷⁸ Tamanaha (n 29).

before the disaster. The disaster then increased their effects by creating homelessness, displacement, desperation, trauma, and further institutional collapse.

Therefore, natural disasters should not be treated as the root cause of violence against women in Haiti. They should instead be understood as events that reveal the weaknesses already present in society and make them harder to ignore. Natural disasters can therefore be used as a way of looking into reality, showing what was already failing before the destruction took place and what must be done better moving forward. Although natural disasters are, to some extent, outside of human control and will continue to occur, the level of harm they create is not completely unavoidable. By accepting that disasters will continue, protection should move beyond emergency response after the disaster has already happened and instead focus on strengthening the systems that exist before it occurs. This means addressing the structural inequalities and institutional failures that leave women vulnerable in the first place, so that when a disaster does strike, the most vulnerable are not left without protection.

4.2 - Limitations to the Legal and Normative Frameworks

The previous sections demonstrated how vulnerability develops in practice. In this section, attention will now turn to why existing legal protections frequently fail to prevent these outcomes on the ground. In previous chapters, this thesis identified the legal frameworks that Haiti is party to, alongside its own domestic and normative frameworks. It also assessed Haiti's reporting mechanisms and the way sexual violence is defined within its legal system. The key issue is therefore not simply an absence of law, but rather the difficulty of putting these commitments into practice. This section builds on the previous analysis by examining why these legal protections remain limited in practice within Haiti.

Let us begin by analysing CEDAW, various GR have been produced since CEDAW's initial drafting, helping to address more niche issues that were not originally included, assisting states in navigating modern challenges, particularly climate change and its consequences, wars, and other factors that impact the autonomy and safety of women.

Its obligations are strong, coupled with its reporting mechanisms. The fact that reporting mechanisms and concluding observations are tied to the Convention further strengthens its effectiveness. However, although CEDAW is legally binding, sanctions are neither severe nor effectively enforced. Countries such as Haiti can therefore often avoid sanctions for poor reporting and weak implementation.

Furthermore, general recommendations themselves are not legally binding, meaning that many newer concerns and emerging issues may not receive the level of implementation needed.

Another issue found within CEDAW is its allowance for reservations, whereby states can bind themselves to the Convention whilst choosing not to comply with specific provisions. CEDAW is, in fact, the human rights convention with the highest number of reservations.²⁷⁹ By allowing states to make reservations, the overall strength of gender equality provisions is weakened.

Additional constraints include limited funding and resources available to the Committee. The Committee has also faced significant challenges processing the large volume of state reports and monitoring compliance effectively.²⁸⁰ Furthermore, CEDAW's original position towards violence against women was relatively limited compared with its later developments through general recommendations (which are not legally binding).²⁸¹

These limitations are relevant to Haiti, where CEDAW protections may exist on paper, but weak reporting practices, poor follow-up mechanisms, and little evidence that CEDAW recommendations have been implemented show the difficulty for Haiti in turning CEDAW's obligations into reality. More should be done in a country such as Haiti to ensure the enforcement of CEDAW, particularly where women's rights are not fully protected.

Initial issues identified within the Convention of Belém do Pará relate to its relatively weak monitoring mechanisms, which rely heavily on periodic state reporting. Haiti itself has repeatedly failed to respond to evaluation rounds under the Convention, with little being done to enforce participation or improve compliance. This again demonstrates the limitations of relying on reporting systems without stronger enforcement mechanisms.

Another framework worth mentioning is the Sendai Framework, which is not legally binding. There are no penalties for non-compliance, meaning participation remains largely voluntary. Furthermore, many of the priorities of Sendai are difficult to implement within the Haitian context. Furthermore, many of the priorities of the Sendai Framework are difficult to implement within the Haitian context. Priority 2

²⁷⁹ Paulina Montez, 'Women's Rights Are Human Rights: CEDAW's Limits and Opportunities' (*BJIL*, 4 April 2021) <<https://www.berkeleyjournalofinternationallaw.com/post/women-s-rights-are-human-rights-cedaw-s-limits-and-opportunities>> accessed 9 June 2026.

²⁸⁰ Lauren Bock Mullins, 'CEDAW: The Challenges of Enshrining Women's Equality in International Law' (2018) 20 *Public Integr* 257, 8 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10999922.2017.1381542>>.

²⁸¹ *ibid* 9.

“Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance” is particularly challenging, as Haiti already struggles with weak governance capacity. In addition, Haiti's reconstruction efforts continue to be hindered by poverty, limited resources and insufficient funding, making the principle of “Build Back Better” difficult to implement in practice.

As well, Haiti's focus on disaster response rather than prevention (prevention being a central philosophy of the Sendai Framework), alongside the underfunding and fragmented early warning systems, limits its ability to translate the Sendai Framework into practical outcomes.²⁸²

The 1949 Trafficking Convention also demonstrates limitations in its effectiveness and scope. The Convention fails to address key forms of trafficking, such as organ removal and forced domestic servitude, being major manifestations of human trafficking. As well as lacking formal monitoring mechanisms.²⁸³ This lack of state enforcement and narrow focus make it relatively ineffective. This makes it difficult for victims to come forward and report such crimes, and even if they do, cases must often fit a narrow definition due to the Convention's primary focus on trafficking linked to prostitution.

This Convention's articles can also be seen as limitations. Article 16, which is vague.²⁸⁴ Article 17, which assumes states have strong border control and governance systems.²⁸⁵ Article 18, which requires states to collect information on trafficking.²⁸⁶ Yet trafficking remains heavily underreported due to fear, corruption, and social stigma.²⁸⁷ Overall implementation remains increasingly difficult in post-disaster environments, with widespread corruption.

The UN Trafficking Protocol has also been criticised, particularly for not adequately distinguishing between women and children, and for failing to include stronger mandatory provisions on assistance to trafficked persons.²⁸⁸²⁸⁹ Gallagher further argues that one of the major weaknesses of the Protocol is its

²⁸² International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Haiti Red Cross Society, ‘How Law and Regulation Supports Disaster Risk Reduction’ (2015) Study Report 93-94
<https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/media/disaster_law/2020-09/HAITI%20DRR%20Report.pdf>.

²⁸³ Asian Development Bank, *COMBATING TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SOUTH ASIA* (2003) 78
<<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/30364/combating-trafficking-south-asia-paper.pdf>>.

²⁸⁴ Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others Article 16.

²⁸⁵ *ibid* Article 17.

²⁸⁶ *ibid* Article 18.

²⁸⁷ Eustache (n 140).

²⁸⁸ Asian Development Bank (n 27) 78.

²⁸⁹ Kim Hak-su, ‘COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ASIA: A Resource Guide to International and Regional Legal Instruments, Political Commitments and Recommended Practice’ 31
<<https://doi.org/https://repository.unescap.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/647b7f0f-4a7b-4dd3-9aa5-35165c524e9e/content>>.

limited human rights protections, particularly the failure to guarantee effective remedies for victims and the lack of strong obligations requiring states to identify trafficked persons.²⁹⁰ Weak implementation also remains a major concern, with working groups under the Protocol often failing to properly examine state reports or issue recommendations.²⁹¹

This protocol is also not systematically implemented due to limited state capacity. Article 6 focuses on the assistance and protection of victims.²⁹² However, many of these protections are phrased weakly through terms such as “shall consider”, meaning obligations are not fully mandatory, giving too much liberty of interpretation for States. This allows States to claim compliance whilst still offering limited practical protection to victims. Article 9 focuses on prevention of trafficking, but effectiveness depends on state capacity and funding.²⁹³ Making implementation in a disasters-stricken and low-income country such as Haiti difficult.

When finally analysing gaps within Haiti’s legal frameworks, accountability systems, and reporting mechanisms, the following limitations can be identified. To begin with the more obvious issues highlighted throughout this thesis, such as underreporting and corruption claims, it becomes apparent that these overarching problems have a ripple effect on matters that may initially seem small but actually point to much larger institutional failures. To begin, Haiti does not have a formal law which defines GBV, and rape lacks a clear definition within the penal code.²⁹⁴ There is also no clear mention of sexual harassment.²⁹⁵ Alongside this, corruption means that many institutions may prioritise cases through bribery, whilst also facing high caseloads, creating delays to cases and even results in some being ignored.²⁹⁶

Another key issue is Haiti’s inability to control gangs and the power that gangs hold over elections and cities, making certain areas of Haiti inaccessible and unsafe for women to move around in.²⁹⁷ In recent UN reports, “Situation of Human Rights in Haiti”, concern was stressed around the power gangs hold

²⁹⁰ Anne T. Gallagher, ‘Two Cheers for the Trafficking Protocol’ (Anti-Trafficking Review 2015) Review.

²⁹¹ *ibid.*

²⁹² The Protocol for human trafficking 2000 Article 6.

²⁹³ *ibid* Article 9.

²⁹⁴ The World Bank (n 9) 7; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, ‘Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti’ (n 7) 7 - Par 21.

²⁹⁵ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, ‘Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti’ (n 64).

²⁹⁶ The World Bank, ‘Haiti Pathways to Responding to Recurrent Crises and Chronic Fragility’ (n 147); Eustache (n 140).

²⁹⁷ DW Documentry, *The Gangs of Haiti - The Criminal Coalition* (2026)
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k52tNJAeID4>>.

and how this affects the safety of women and children.²⁹⁸²⁹⁹ This shows how weak enforcement is not only a legal issue, but also a security issue, as women cannot rely on the state for protection where gangs are able to control territory and movement.

Issues within enforcement are also seen in Haiti's failure to properly involve women in legal systems.³⁰⁰ Without women's opinions and participation, it becomes difficult to know what change is necessary and how it should be implemented. This is made worse by the lack of services available to women, including safe spaces, health services, and proper shelters. Temporary shelters and tents often lack safety and are not protected effectively, leaving women exposed even in spaces that should be designed for protection.³⁰¹ Recent reporting also indicates that safe shelter for victims of sexual violence remains limited. Combined with major humanitarian funding cuts from the United States and other donors, Haiti has fewer resources to provide reproductive healthcare, protection services, and safe accommodation. Consequently, many women are forced to return to the environments where the abuse took place.³⁰² Cultural issues also remain relevant, where violence is persistently perpetuated so it's viewed as a learned behaviour, normalising it in families and communities as it's seen so often, which only increases the likelihood for it to be repeated and tolerated.³⁰³

The 2026 UN report also raised concern around the excessive use of force by police, which allowed self-defence groups and gangs to rise further and retaliate.³⁰⁴ Between 1 March 2025 and 8 January 2026, 110 people were reportedly killed unlawfully by police. This further weakens trust in the system, as people are left fearing both criminal groups and those who are supposed to protect them. Gang recruitment also becomes an issue in this context. When Haitians lose trust in the government and its ability to protect them, some may fall under the protection of gangs, whether by choice or through

²⁹⁸ United Nations (n 146).

²⁹⁹ OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 175); OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 175); OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 175).

³⁰⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - Forty Third Session - Haiti' (n 63); Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (n 64).

³⁰¹ Bookey (n 219).

³⁰² Nathalye Cotrino, 'Sexual Violence Survivors in Haiti Left Without Care | Human Rights Watch' (28 January 2026) <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/01/28/sexual-violence-survivors-in-haiti-left-without-care>> accessed 19 June 2026.

³⁰³ Gabriel and others (n 28).

³⁰⁴ OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (n 175).

pressure. Children may also be pulled into gang structures at a very young age,³⁰⁵ particularly in poverty-stricken environments, where gangs can provide income and security.³⁰⁶

Without trust in the legal system, the police, or the state more generally, the situation falls further into chaos. Haiti's limitations therefore do not only concern weak laws, but also the inability to enforce those laws in reality. This leaves women without effective protection and without trust in governance, so they do not seek them for protection, which may also raise an issue that Haiti may be under the belief that the war on Human rights is not as concerning as they believe, with low reporting of abuse. Legal frameworks may face significant challenges when implemented within environments characterised by corruption, insecurity, and low levels of public trust.

By examining all of the limitations identified above, one of the major issues when applying these frameworks to Haiti is the lack of funding, resources, and institutional capacity. There is also an argument that many of these frameworks remain highly Westernised and may not always reflect local realities. This echoes Merry's critique that universal human rights norms often require translation into local, social, cultural and institutional contexts if they are to be effective in practice.³⁰⁷

In addition, there is a clear lack of enforcement from international institutions, such as the UN and limited collaboration between Haiti and monitoring bodies, demonstrated through weak reporting and poor compliance. Whilst stronger sanctions could theoretically improve accountability, it is my belief that in Haiti's case they may create a catch-22 situation whereby already limited resources are further depleted, ultimately harming the state's ability to improve both disaster and human rights conditions. It is reinstated, therefore, from all evidence above that Haiti's war on women protection post-disaster is not to blame the disaster itself. Rather, it functions as a risk multiplier which exposes vulnerability.

To reiterate our first research question, *how do natural disasters function as risk multipliers for sexual violence and trafficking against women in Haiti*, it is with great confidence that we can say this has in fact been proven multiple times throughout this thesis. Firstly, when looking at the gaps within legal systems and how women's rights are not being fully reflected or protected prior to a disaster, then looking at the statistical evidence and factors which make them vulnerable, and now within this chapter

³⁰⁵ *ibid* 5 - Par 15.

³⁰⁶ DW Documentry (n 304).

³⁰⁷ Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2006) <<http://archive.org/details/humanrightsgende0000merr>> accessed 29 April 2026.

analysing together the risk multiplier theory and how natural disasters have a domino effect on an already vulnerable population.

We now understand that because of factors such as lack of education, cultural norms, and poverty, women are made physically insecure following a disaster. This physical insecurity, such as inadequate housing and displacement, is combined with a mental insecurity and sense of “desperation”, where women may feel forced to seek any economic opportunities available to them. By combining both the pre-disaster and post-disaster factors discussed throughout this thesis, we can come to a clear conclusion that natural disasters function as risk multipliers, that intensify pre-existing vulnerabilities increasing women’s exposure to sexual violence and trafficking in the Haitian context.

Then, for our second research question, *to what extent do international and domestic legal frameworks effectively protect women from post-disaster violence and exploitation in Haiti*, this was firstly established in the second chapter on legal and normative frameworks, where we laid the foundations of what Haiti is party to that aims to protect women’s rights, whilst also looking at Haiti’s domestic structures. Throughout the thesis, we have poked holes in why these frameworks are lacking. Now, when arriving to this chapter, there's a deeper and more detailed analysis of how legal and normative frameworks are, in fact, not effectively protecting women from post-disaster violence and exploitation, and that more needs to be done.

This will lead us now to our final research question: *what legal and policy reforms could strengthen women’s protection in disaster contexts in Haiti*, building upon the weaknesses, gaps, and implementation failures identified throughout the previous chapters, as well as the positive obligations and best practices contained within existing legal and normative frameworks, the following section develops a series of targeted recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection of women before, during, and after disasters.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations look at the application of law on the ground and compare it to reality, by cross-analysing what the laws are in Haiti and how they are being practised. We also look at legal transplantation within Haiti and how clearly this is not working effectively. From looking at all previous materials and their limitations on paper and in practice, I can make three tailored recommendations to Haiti that aim to address various issues faced by Haitians, whilst also looking at different facets of life such as economic, physical, cultural, and social improvements that can be made concerning reducing sexual violence and improving disaster resilience. Together, they seek to ensure women's safety and the advancement of rights, especially in a post-disaster context.

As well as making recommendations, there will also be a section that discusses the possible limitations to such recommendations. This section will answer the final research question, *what legal and policy reforms could strengthen women's protection in disaster contexts in Haiti*, therefore addressing the final research question and bringing this thesis towards its conclusion.

5.1 - Improvement and Strengthening of Legal and Normative Frameworks and International Partnerships

These recommendations arise from the limitations present in Haiti's current legal and normative frameworks as well as frameworks they are party to (or not). They focus on proposing additions or improvements to existing frameworks, while also directly highlighting which frameworks could be better adapted. By clarifying the shortcomings and outlining targeted solutions, this approach aims to strengthen legal protections and promote more effective governance.

One of the key improvements that could be made for Haiti is the strengthening of legal frameworks and implementing the actions of treaties, conventions and laws into Haiti's systems. In general, it can be seen in the lack of reporting from Haiti to CEDAW; improved reporting and prioritisation to CEDAW needs to be made, as well as an introduction of VAW law mentioned in the 2016 concluding

observation.³⁰⁸ By making a better effort in reporting to CEDAW and strengthening its compliance with recommendations, Haiti could better identify gaps in the protection of women. A VAW law would also provide stronger protections for women and demonstrate Haiti's commitment to preventing violence against women, applying to both normal and post-disaster contexts. As well as this, both CEDAW and the Belém do Pará Convention, emphasise gender-sensitive justice systems and stronger responses to violence against women, supporting calls for a greater presence of women within legal and law enforcement institutions. This can help give women greater confidence to report crimes committed against them, whilst also ensuring that women's experiences and perspectives are better reflected within the justice system.

Most importantly as well, Haiti's own domestic courts should include a vague definition of rape, and available definitions of rape should include protective measures that can be taken.³⁰⁹ On the same topic of definitions, there could be an improvement or more clarity made within the trafficking convention between prostitution and trafficking, increasing the likelihood of women reporting trafficking crimes without fear of social stigma or possibility of being arrested due to being confused as a prostitute.

On the same topic of definitions, more clarity should be raised in the trafficking frameworks regarding the distinction between prostitution and trafficking. This would increase the likelihood of women reporting crimes committed against them without fear of social stigma, misidentification, or possible arrest due to being wrongly perceived as prostitutes rather than victims of trafficking.

As well Haiti should ratify the Rome Statute, Haiti has not ratified the Rome Statute; if they do ratify it, Haiti can become a member of the ICC. This will not only again show their commitment to advancing women's rights but also to the prosecution of crimes against humanity, including acts of sexual violence and rape. This would further reinforce accountability and strengthen efforts to combat the lack of accountability for such crimes. Haiti should also accept the ICCPR optional protocol, which allows citizens to access international assistance and brings awareness to human rights violations in Haiti, and again add pressure to Haiti to improve their domestic human rights protections.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (United Nations 2016) Concluding Observations 7 - Par 22 (a) <<https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/8-9>>.

³⁰⁹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (n 64) 7.

³¹⁰ United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies (n 72).

Most importantly, the Sendai Framework has a lot of priorities you can follow for the improvement of disaster resilience; if Haiti just applied priorities 2 (*Strengthening disaster risk governance*) and 3 (*Investing in disaster reduction for resilience*) it would be far better equipped to withstand future disasters. By failing to invest in disaster resilience, Haiti is also failing to invest in the development and protection of women.

Haiti can initiate the principle of "Build Back Better".³¹¹ Houses and businesses should be strengthened prior to a disaster occurring so that their destruction is less severe afterwards. Such measures may appear costly or difficult to implement, but substantial amounts of money are already spent on rebuilding following disasters. Therefore, investing in resilience beforehand could prove highly beneficial, ensuring that buildings are more secure, reducing displacement, and ultimately improves the safety of women, who are less likely to find themselves in insecure housing or come face to face in situations where stress/economic hardship and unemployment create abusive relationships.

In some of the cases and recommendations mentioned above, financial support would prove highly beneficial, especially in the case of improving disaster-resilient infrastructure, as well as generally improving displacement camps and their security. Haiti cannot realistically address disaster resilience and the protection of women's rights alone. The scale of political instability, poverty, gang violence, and repeated natural disasters requires international cooperation. If the Haitian governance system can prove itself to be trustworthy, international organisations may begin to send aid directly to the government and allow it greater control over how funds are spent, rather than working over its head. However, this involvement should not confuse partnership with dependency. There must be a shared responsibility.

This will not only benefit Haiti in a physical way by improving its infrastructure, but also by creating strong international partnerships. Showing international communities, and even its own citizens, that they can trust the system would help build confidence in governance and could reduce some of the resentment many Haitians have towards government institutions. Ultimately, Haiti should not become dependent on the assistance rather a provision of necessary support so Haiti can improve their resilience, government structures, protection to women, and disaster infrastructure/frameworks. Another approach could involve international organisations directly assisting with the construction of

³¹¹ UNDRR, 'Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (n 6).

disaster-resilient infrastructure. This would allow such organisations greater oversight regarding where funding is being allocated, whilst also helping to build trust between Haiti and international partners and ensuring that resources are used effectively. Another method could be for international organisations to come to Haiti and directly build disaster-resilient infrastructure. This would allow them to better determine where funding is being spent and provide greater certainty that resources are being used effectively, whilst also helping to build trust and strengthen international partnerships.

While each recommendation may seem small, together they can make a significant difference. They seek to achieve the wider goal of improving trust in governance and strengthening the protection and safety of women's rights. By improving laws and frameworks, whilst also making physical improvements within Haiti itself, women would be less susceptible to sexual violence following disasters, particularly within displacement camps, and would have greater ability and confidence to report crimes as Haiti takes on more responsibility through ratification and compliance with international frameworks, which will also prove their dedication to the reduction of sexual violence post-natural disaster. Ultimately, these improvements work towards reducing the vulnerabilities that place women at risk in post-disaster environments, making it less likely that women will experience sexual violence, exploitation, and other forms of abuse following disasters.

5.2 - Reform of Security Institutions and Services

These recommendations aim to improve “security” in Haiti, such as improvements to the police force, and to physical measures to heighten security in displacement camps. Including retraining people in security positions as well as educating them on women’s vulnerability in a post-disaster context.

The 2025 and 2026 *Situation of Human Rights in Haiti* reports highlight weaknesses in the response to sexual violence.³¹² It is evident that reforms to police training and institutional capacity could help strengthen responses to sexual abuse, whilst raising awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence and its prominence within post-disaster contexts. This would leave law enforcement better equipped to respond to such situations and support victims more effectively. As well as this, there should be training for police to recognise patterns of abuse, knowing the factors of why it might arise and why

³¹² OHCHR, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti’ (n 175); OHCHR, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti’ (n 175).

women may be vulnerable, so they are able to stop it before it worsens or even prevent it from happening before a disaster strikes to again lessen the amount of violence post-disaster.

Better involvement of women could be seen to be not only highly uplifting but also bring new perspectives whilst helping women feel more trusted and safer by having someone they can turn to. There can therefore be a call for more female police officers to be trained, which may help change perceptions and narratives surrounding abuse, whilst reducing the social stigma women often face when reporting violence by ensuring there are women available to report.

In a practical sense, as well, it's essential that police forces, NGOs or medical facilities are ready to give emergency reproductive care; this can be handling unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and any pregnancy-related complications.³¹³ There should be greater provision of rape kits,³¹⁴³¹⁵ allowing women to quickly provide evidence that may assist in identifying and prosecuting perpetrators, whilst also ensuring timely access to appropriate medical care. Alongside this, there should be improved legal aid services available to women in these contexts, helping them understand the next steps for prosecution and providing greater access to justice. Most importantly, as a preventative measure, we must invest in secure shelters for displaced and vulnerable women after a disaster and have many female police officers patrolling, with the possibility to apply pressure (or deter) police officers or border controllers where lots of bribery for allowance of trafficking is happening. As well as general protection for women, there could be a decrease in corruption/bribery with more women working in security institutions, thereby prioritising women's health. Shelters should also be made physically secure, with a provision of whistles or rape alarms to bring attention to them if danger occurs.

The recommendations ultimately hope to prevent the heightened amount of post-disaster trafficking and sexual abuse to decrease the vulnerability of women. By including more women in the police force, there could be a rise in confidence for women to report abuse and possibly a decrease in trafficking after a disaster, as well as encouraging women to come forward with suspicions of trafficking or

³¹³ CARE, 'Sexual and Reproductive Health in Emergencies | CARE International' (CARE, 2026) <<https://www.care-international.org/what-we-do/crisis-response/sexual-and-reproductive-health-emergencies>> accessed 19 June 2026.

³¹⁴ NSVRC, 'Helping the Helpers: Support Rape Crisis Centers After Disasters' (National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)) <https://www.nsvrc.org/blog_post/helping-helpers-support-rape-crisis-centers-disasters/> accessed 19 June 2026.

³¹⁵ A rape kit, also known as a sexual assault evidence kit (SAEK), is equipment which is used to collect DNA post assault (rape). Such DNA can be used as forensic evidence when reporting a person to law enforcement. Read more: [https://rainn.org/2240/getting-a-sexual-assault-forensic-exam-safe/#:~:text=What%20Is%20a%20Rape%20Kit,assault%20forensic%20exam%20\(SAFE\).](https://rainn.org/2240/getting-a-sexual-assault-forensic-exam-safe/#:~:text=What%20Is%20a%20Rape%20Kit,assault%20forensic%20exam%20(SAFE).)

exploitation to officials. With there being less bribery or corrupt officials, with a new female workforce entering, a big difference could be seen. Practical elements of rape alarms and even rape kits or emergency medical aid can help Haitian women not feel that they are victims or must rely on anyone and take care of their own autonomy. Retraining of the male police force also ensures better detection of patterns of abuse.

5.3 - Bottom-up community-based approaches

These recommendations look at Reports and interviews about how the Haitian community treat sexual abuse against women; we will take a bottom-up approach on how we can inform the community to uplift women. This approach is also informed by what factors (poverty, low education, etc.) are creating vulnerability before disasters. Throughout Haiti's history, international aid has often been criticised for misunderstanding local realities and providing assistance that creates dependency rather than long-term resilience. A commonly cited example is the large-scale importation of rice and food aid.³¹⁶ Whilst intended to alleviate poverty, often undermined local farmers and agricultural markets. This demonstrates the importance of understanding the demographic and community being assisted before implementing solutions. This recommendation also challenges ideas commonly associated with "white saviourism", where external actors provide money, food, or aid without fully understanding the long-term social and economic consequences for local communities. Effective assistance should empower communities to become self-sustaining rather than dependent upon continued external intervention. The thesis demonstrates that by helping the community in this approach, we can reduce confusion as we "understand" what's actually needed by the community.

Research led by Gabriel sheds light on male perspectives surrounding abuse.³¹⁷ The findings reveal that some men feel threatened by the rise of independent "modern women," who are less reliant on men than previous generations. This evolving dynamic can provoke feelings of inadequacy (emasculatation) in men, sometimes resulting in abusive behaviors. Abuse is also perpetuated through generational cycles. Boys who witness violence from their fathers often internalise these behaviours, carrying them into adulthood and continuing the cycle within their own families and communities. It can be suggested

³¹⁶ Connecticut Public, *Haiti: Day by Day* (2022) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDoxqjI_Cps&t=2695s>.

³¹⁷ Gabriel and others (n 28).

that we should better educate younger boys on the damage abuse has and that it is not “normal” as they may assume. Examining these common themes of abuse highlights how they manifest within post-disaster contexts.

Within children’s education systems, we should try to include women as much as possible to push women as strong figures and have young children view them as such; the power of educating both young boys and girls could help them both recognise patterns of abuse/report as such and understand that each gender is equal. It also breaks abusive patterns maturing into their adulthood and future relationships. Education in general will prevent them from falling into gangs as they will be educated on employment opportunities and even the dangers of gangs; young girls can also be uplifted by this and not leave them in financially “desperate” positions post-disaster.

Even educating them to be financially independent can help avoid situations where they are economically reliant on someone else and trapped with partners inflicting GBV. Research highlights how exposure to traumatic events, including natural disasters, can have lasting psychological impacts.³¹⁸ Where trauma remains unaddressed, it may contribute to aggression and violent behaviours.³¹⁹³²⁰ This suggests that greater access to psychological support and trauma services, particularly post-disaster, could help address some of the underlying factors contributing to abusive behaviours.

By making simple adaptations such as providing education for young children and having lots of female educators, we break the cycles of young children falling into abusive relationships or gangs and break cultural stereotypes of women being just house caretakers. Aswell prevent children being forced into restavek.³²¹³²² In connection with this thesis, in post-disaster contexts, this could increase the safety of women by reducing the risk of trafficking and GBV, in times of heightened vulnerability, where women are more easily able to be taken advantage of. As well, we can educate children on how

³¹⁸ Elisseou, Puranam and Nandi (n 274).

³¹⁹ Cynthia Gillikin and others, ‘Trauma Exposure and PTSD Symptoms Associate with Violence in Inner City Civilians’ (2016) 83 J Psychiatr Res 1 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2016.07.027>>.

³²⁰ Noor Jarun Ferrell and others, ‘The Development and Evaluation of a Trauma Curriculum for Psychiatry Residents’ (2014) 38 Acad Psychiatry 611, 611–612 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-014-0095-x>>.

³²¹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, ‘Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti’ (n 64) 11.

³²² *Commonly young children (can also be women), who spend their days caring for the house and the family. Such chores include cooking, cleaning and lots of heavy lifting. 1 in 4 children in Haiti are Restaveks; such a role prevents someone from having personal autonomy over their life and education.* Read more: <https://www.haiti-now.org/?srsId=AfmBOopyU3CmCARIx93buRHlJRSL5fvkqAJLl5fLC4UrDbSIIGMuhKf>.

to react within a disaster, such as how to react when one happens, what alarms to look out for and where to seek shelter; such information can also be passed to older generations in the household.

The UN Trafficking Protocol Article 9 would be in support of such mechanisms, as in such article they clearly note that governments must establish policies and programs to prevent and protect persons against trafficking.³²³ Such educational programmes aim and would hopefully achieve this. It as well recognises that poverty and unequal opportunities create an environment where trafficking can be birthed. Improvements to education and education programmes that promote women's rights and education on abuse could eliminate ideologies that cause GBV/trafficking and sexual abuse.

There can also be community awareness programs that can reach all ages; such programmes can campaign to break the stigma behind reporting GBV and recognise VAW as a real issue of abuse. NGOs can initiate community support networks that promote gender equality and create a space for people to discuss any instances of abuse they have suffered, so that when NGOs leave the country, women and girls will have trusted individuals to turn to. Leaders of this can be women to promote and prove them to be community leaders. But also having men within such a sector of change will help educate males and normalise women to report abuse without fear or stigma. We must keep the involvement of men throughout, alongside the uplifting of women. The aim is not to segregate men and then face backlash from doing so, but to ensure that both genders are involved in creating a more unified society.

Women should not be viewed solely as victims. Throughout Haiti, women already play important roles within families, communities, and local economies. Therefore, policy responses should recognise women as agents of resilience rather than passive recipients of assistance. By placing women at the centre of decision-making processes, communities become more resilient whilst simultaneously addressing underlying gender inequalities.

The CEDAW Committee also recognise that women should not be just recipients of assistance following a disaster, but have active participation in disaster risk reduction, post disaster management and climate change decision making processes.³²⁴ The Committee recognises that women are often excluded from these processes, and requests that they be included. This participation ensures women's

³²³ The Protocol for human trafficking 2000 Article 9.

³²⁴ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (n 1) 14 - Par 39-40.

perspectives and experiences are reflected in policy, creating more inclusive disaster response frameworks.

By having women involved in disaster planning incentives, and supporting women-led organisations. We increase the representation of women in national and local governance, expand climate-resilient programs led by women; and promote economic empowerment through education, training and employment opportunities.

This final recommendation touches on the perspectives/lived experience and cultural norms in Haiti; this recommendation is then very specific to the Haitian issues of abuse. This recommendation puts women in positions where they can become agents of change and be seen as role models, as well as gaining their perspectives. By also stressing the importance of education, it breaks patterns of abuse, reduces unemployment and even educates people how to react in a disaster. This thesis demonstrates that with a reduction in people living in impoverished situations, there will be all-around better security for women in a post-disaster context.

5.4 - Limitations of recommendations

These recommendations can sound optimistic in writing; we can question whether this would be applicable on the ground and predetermine its limitations. When looking at previous frameworks Haiti is party to, we detected that such frameworks in reality were not working effectively on the ground. So, keeping the same way of thinking and being realistic, this thesis shall predict and list the possible limitations the recommendations might have.

Firstly, Financial constraints will play a huge factor in the ability to fund such awareness, education programs and disaster-resilient frameworks/infrastructure. As much as it is an aim to gain financial support through international aid, we first must make the connection and gain the trust, which could take a while with Haiti's history of corruption.

The mixture of gang control, historical corruption/political inability, combined with the weak judiciary and justice systems. Means that frameworks cannot simply be adopted in Haiti. It makes it very difficult to trust that any aid or frameworks will be upheld effectively or even followed when the country is surrounded by instability.

State capacity and even lengthy time processes in the creation of laws could mean that introducing a VAW law in practice may take a considerable time, and the impacts would only become evident over a lengthy period. Reforms and re-education programs in the police force also could take a while to take effect; not only this, but this is under the assumption that there will be effective interaction with re-education programs and even willingness of women to enter the police force. Lack of monitoring institutions and mechanisms will also reduce the effectiveness of the recommended programmes. These limitations should not, however, reduce the impact that recommendations could make but help us predetermine the obstacles that could be faced.

The combination of these recommendations and limitations of such creates, in total, a very well-rounded approach and effective strategy to combat the prevalence of sexual violence in a post-disaster Haiti. As well as including strategies to combat in a pre-disaster Haiti. This Chapter has answered the final research question: *what legal and policy reforms could strengthen women's protection in disaster contexts in Haiti?* Now, with the combination of this chapter and the previous one, we have successfully answered all the aims and research questions set out at the start of this study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In conclusion to this thesis, Natural disasters have repeatedly been exemplified as risk multipliers throughout this thesis. We have determined that disasters have not independently created GBV, trafficking, or sexual violence. Instead, they expose and intensify existing vulnerabilities, being poverty, gender inequality, weak institutions, corruption, lack of education, poor housing, displacement, and limited access to justice. They function as something that exposes all the pre-existing social, economic, and institutional vulnerabilities.

By applying the theories and methods of Brian Z. Tamanaha, this thesis was able to highlight the disconnect between law in reality and the implementation of law in practice, particularly where legal frameworks are transplanted into contexts where they may not fully fit. Sally Engle Merry's work further complemented this approach by demonstrating how formal legal frameworks often struggle to translate into lived reality, especially within developing and poverty-stricken states where weak institutions, limited resources, and cultural factors may prevent reforms from operating as intended. Martha Albertson Fineman's vulnerability theory also proved highly useful in understanding why women in Haiti are vulnerable, rather than simply assuming vulnerability because they are women. Instead, this thesis investigated more deeply what being a woman in Haiti means regarding access to education, justice, economic opportunities, protection mechanisms, and ultimately access to human rights.

Research Question 1, *how do natural disasters function as risk multipliers for sexual violence and trafficking against women in Haiti?* By first examining the legal frameworks prior to disasters and identifying their gaps, we were able to establish weaknesses in the protection of women's rights before a disaster even occurs. We then investigated the evidence surrounding vulnerability and identified education, poverty, weak institutions, corruption, cultural norms, and gender inequality as key contributing factors. Building upon this, we demonstrated how displacement, insecure shelters, limited security, lack of access to justice, trauma, and economic desperation all work to amplify women's vulnerability after a disaster. This thesis therefore established that natural disasters do not independently create violence against women but instead expose and intensify vulnerabilities that already existed beforehand.

The main observation stemming from Research Question 2, *to what extent do international and domestic legal frameworks effectively protect women from post-disaster violence and exploitation in Haiti?* It's not that they fail to do so, but that the answer is considerably more nuanced. Frameworks such as CEDAW, the trafficking frameworks, the Convention of Belém do Pará, the Sendai Framework, and various UN reporting mechanisms all demonstrate strong commitments towards the advancement and protection of women's rights. These frameworks contain important obligations, recommendations, monitoring systems, and protections. However, due to a lack of funding, corruption, limited state capacity, poor reporting, weak enforcement mechanisms, political instability, and gang control, it becomes extremely difficult for such protections to be translated into the Haitian context. Therefore, the issue is not necessarily the absence of legal protection, but rather the inability to effectively implement and enforce such protections in reality.

The main observations in Research Question 3, *what legal and policy reforms could strengthen women's protection in disaster contexts in Haiti?* The recommendations developed throughout this thesis arose from a continued analysis of situations, frameworks, reporting mechanisms, and identified weaknesses. By examining shortcomings within the frameworks themselves, factors of vulnerability, and positive obligations already contained within international instruments, it was possible to develop evidence-based recommendations under common themes of enhancing community awareness and education. Through strengthening disaster resilience, increasing female participation within legal and security institutions, improving accountability, and building stronger international partnerships with Haiti. These recommendations therefore do not arise independently, but directly from the weaknesses identified throughout this research.

Whilst significant literature exists on GBV and trafficking independently, my research found fewer studies exploring how disaster environments intensify these harms within the Haitian context. This thesis therefore approaches Haiti through a lens of disaster vulnerability, linking disaster studies with human rights, women's rights protections, disaster risk reduction, trafficking frameworks, and legal implementation theory. This research remains unique in bringing together these different themes of research, providing a more rounded understanding of women's vulnerability in post-disaster Haiti. Lots of research identifies the harms and vulnerabilities present but often stops at that point. This thesis continued beyond identifying such harms by examining why protections fail in practice and by developing recommendations aimed at addressing those failures.

It's understood, however, that this research could be improved and developed further. This thesis is based primarily upon secondary data, existing reports, legal frameworks, scholarly literature, UN documents, and NGO reporting. There are also difficulties in accessing certain forms of data due to privacy concerns, ongoing instability within Haiti, and the underreporting of sexual violence and trafficking, meaning that the full picture may not always be visible. There is therefore difficulty in measuring the true scale of post-disaster violence, particularly where many statistics originate from international organisations, NGOs, and reporting bodies rather than direct victim testimony.

Future research could build on this study by conducting primary research through interviews with Haitian women, aid organisations, NGOs, legal professionals, police officers, and disaster responders, providing a deeper understanding of lived experiences and allowing for more detailed conclusions. Future research could also evaluate whether increased female representation within legal institutions and police forces would genuinely improve reporting rates, confidence in institutions, and access to justice, rather than this remaining an assumption. Such approaches would strengthen the evidence base and provide an even more detailed understanding of the relationship between disasters, vulnerability, and women's rights in Haiti.

When the storm passes, the risks faced by women do not disappear with it. Disasters expose the inequalities and institutional weaknesses already present. This thesis hopes to bring greater awareness to the fact that protecting women in Haiti requires more than responding to the disaster itself. It involves addressing the conditions that allow women to be violated and exploited. We must bring attention to such issues and address them, as they persist long before the storm arrives.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books:

Altman D, Global Sex (Chicago : University of Chicago Press 2001)

<<http://archive.org/details/globalsex0000altm>> accessed 29 April 2026

Chambers R, Rural Development: Putting the Last First (Routledge 2013)

Kara S, Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery (Columbia University Press 2009)

Louise Shelley, Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective (Cambridge University Press 2010)

<<https://dl.icdst.org/pdfs/files4/bd2523edf8d7f5e86255690f65a06589.pdf>> accessed 15 May 2026

Masson-Delmotte V and others (eds), 'Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis - Summary for Policymakers' (Cambridge University Press 2021) <<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009157896.001>>

Merry SE, Human Rights and Gender Violence : Translating International Law into Local Justice (Chicago : University of Chicago Press 2006) <<http://archive.org/details/humanrightsgende0000merr>> accessed 29 April 2026

Pörtner H-O and others (eds), 'Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability - Summary for Policymakers' (Cambridge University Press 2022)

Sepinwall AG and Trouillot M-R, Haitian History: New Perspectives (Routledge 2013)

Tamanaha BZ, A General Jurisprudence of Law and Society (Oxford University Press 2001)

<https://books.google.hr/books/about/A_General_Jurisprudence_of_Law_and_Socie.html?id=g6Dn5jVTaY0C&redir_esc=y>

Journal Articles:

Adibi Larijani H, Moslehi S and Dowlati M, 'Identifying the Preparedness Components for Sexual Violence in Natural Disasters: A Systematic Review' (2022) 36 Med J Islam Repub Iran 158 <<https://doi.org/10.47176/mjiri.36.158>>

Albertson Fineman M, *The Vulnerable Subject: Anchoring Equality in the Human Condition* (2008)
Alordiah CO, 'Full Article: Socio-Cultural Norms Encouraging Violence against Women (VAW) from a Popular Ethnic Group in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria and the Roles of Schools in Preventing VAW' (Taylor & Francis 2022)
<<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2022.2102299>> accessed 10 October 2025

Antai D, 'Traumatic Physical Health Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence against Women: What Is the Role of Community-Level Factors?' (2011) 11 BMC Womens Health 56
<<https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6874-11-56>>

Bookey B, 'Enforcing the Right to Be Free from Sexual Violence and the Role of Lawyers in Post-Earthquake Haiti' (2011) 14 City University of New York Law Review 255
<<https://doi.org/10.31641/clr140201>>

Bundgaard S and P.Evans D, 'Gender-Based Violence' Inter-Agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings: 2010 Revision for Field Review (Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises 2010) <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK305160/>> accessed 29 April 2026

Camey IC and others, 'Gender-Based Violence and Environment Linkages: The Violence of Inequality' (IUCN 2020) <<https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf>>

Campbell DW and others, 'Violence and Abuse of Internally Displaced Women Survivors of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake' (2016) 61 Int J Public Health 981 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-016-0895-8>>

Clarke G, 'Haiti: UN Concerned by the "Alarming Rise" in Sexual Violence | UN News' UN News (United Nations, 17 May 2024) <<https://news.un.org/fr/story/2024/05/1145656>> accessed 28 May 2026

Cole A, 'All of Us Are Vulnerable, But Some Are More Vulnerable than Others: The Political Ambiguity of Vulnerability Studies, an Ambivalent Critique' (2016) 17 Critical Horizons 260 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14409917.2016.1153896>>

Concannon B, Fried K and Filippova AV, 'Restitution for Haiti, Reparations for All: Haiti's Place in the Global Reparations Movement' (2023) 55 The University of Miami Inter-American Law Review 80 <<https://repository.law.miami.edu/umialr/vol55/iss1/6/>>

Desai BH and Mandal M, 'Role of Climate Change in Exacerbating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Women: A New Challenge for International Law' (2021) 51 EPL 137 <<https://doi.org/10.3233/EPL-210055>>

Donnelly J, 'Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights' (1984) 6 Human Rights Quarterly 400 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/762182>>

Elisseou S, Puranam S and Nandi M, 'A Novel, Trauma-Informed Physical Examination Curriculum for First-Year Medical Students' 15 MedEdPORTAL 10799 <https://doi.org/10.15766/mep_2374-8265.10799>

Eustache J, 'Reflections on Ethical Integrity: Challenges to the Rule of Law Facing the Haitian Legal Profession' (2016) 39 HASTINGS INT'L & COMPAR L REV <Available at: https://repository.uclawsf.edu/hastings_international_comparative_law_review/vol39/iss1/7>

Fisher S, 'Violence against Women and Natural Disasters: Findings from Post-Tsunami Sri Lanka' (2010) 16 Violence Against Women 902 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801210377649>>

Gillikin C and others, 'Trauma Exposure and PTSD Symptoms Associate with Violence in Inner City Civilians' (2016) 83 J Psychiatr Res 1 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2016.07.027>>

Hoogesteyn K and others, 'The Intersection of Human Trafficking and Natural Disasters: A Scoping Review' (2024) 25 Trauma, Violence, & Abuse 2877 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241227985>>

IASC, 'IASC Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, 2005 | IASC' (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2005) Guidelines <<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-sub-working-group-gender-and-humanitarian-action/iasc-guidelines-gender-based-violence-interventions-humanitarian-settings-2005>> accessed 29 April 2026

Montez P, 'Women's Rights Are Human Rights: CEDAW's Limits and Opportunities' (BJIL, 4 April 2021) <<https://www.berkeleyjournalofinternationallaw.com/post/women-s-rights-are-human-rights-cedaw-s-limits-and-opportunities>> accessed 9 June 2026

Mullins LB, 'CEDAW: The Challenges of Enshrining Women's Equality in International Law' (2018) 20 Public Integrity 257 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10999922.2017.1381542>>

NSVRC, 'Helping the Helpers: Support Rape Crisis Centers After Disasters' (National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)) <https://www.nsvrc.org/blog_post/helping-helpers-support-rape-crisis-centers-disasters/> accessed 19 June 2026

Rahman P, Sharma A and Mehnaz S, 'International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)' [2024] SSRN Journal <<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5054029>> accessed 13 February 2026

Raypole C, 'White Saviorism: Examples, Impact, & Overcoming It' (Healthline, 14 July 2021) <<https://www.healthline.com/health/white-saviorism>> accessed 7 July 2026

Stott PA, Stone DA and Allen MR, 'Human Contribution to the European Heatwave of 2003' (2004) 432 Nature 610 <<https://doi.org/10.1038/nature03089>>

Thurston AM, Stöckl H and Ranganathan M, 'Natural Hazards, Disasters and Violence against Women and Girls: A Global Mixed-Methods Systematic Review' (2021) 6 BMJ Glob Health e004377 <<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-004377>>

Tombs P, 'Severe Climate Change May Increase Violence against Women | UCL News - UCL – University College London' (2 October 2024) <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2024/oct/severe-climate-change-may-increase-violence-against-women>> accessed 10 October 2025

Virginie Le Masson, 'Disasters, Climate Change, and Violence Against Women and Girls' <https://www.google.com/search?q=Disasters%2C+Climate+Change%2C+and+Violence+Against+Women+and+Girls+%E2%80%93+Virginie+le+Masson&oq=Disasters%2C+Climate+Change%2C+and+Violence+Against+Women+and+Girls+%E2%80%93+Virginie+le+Masson&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBBzM1NWowajeoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> accessed 10 October 2025

——, 'Gender-Based Violence Country Profile HAITI' <<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099071923113542070/pdf/P176979056881f0070b0d1077e7d1d132c5.pdf>>

——, ‘Media Factsheet Haiti: Impact of Ongoing Violence on Women and Girls - Haiti’ (1 May 2025)
<<https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/media-factsheet-haiti-impact-ongoing-violence-women-and-girls>>
accessed 19 May 2026

Treaties, Conventions, Constitutions and Legislation:

American Convention on Human Rights ‘Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica’ (B-32) 1969
<https://www.oas.org/dil/access_to_information_American_Convention_on_Human_Rights.pdf>

Constitution of the Republic of Haiti, 1987, Haiti, WIPO Lex 1987
<<https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/legislation/details/7837>>

Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others 1949 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-suppression-traffic-persons-and-exploitation>>

Department of International Law OAS, ‘INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN “CONVENTION OF BELEM DO PARA”’ (Multilateral Treaties)
<<https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/sigs/a-61.html>> accessed 2 June 2026

IISD, ‘Paris Agreement Reaches 166 Ratifications’ (SDG Knowledge Hub, October 2017)
<<https://sdg.iisd.org/news/paris-agreement-reaches-166-ratifications/>> accessed 11 May 2026

LSE, ‘Belém Do Pará Convention’ (The London School of Economics and Political Science)
<<https://www.lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/tackling-violence-against-women/belem-do-para-convention>> accessed 2 June 2026

OAS, ‘National Reports on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention’ (OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for peace, security, and development, 1 August 2009)
<<https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/NationalReportsFirstRound.asp>> accessed 2 June 2026

Organization of American States, ‘AMERICAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS "PACT OF SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA’ <https://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_b-32_american_convention_on_human_rights.pdf>

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 1998 1 <<https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2024-05/Rome-Statute-eng.pdf>>

T.Gallagher A, 'Two Cheers for the Trafficking Protocol' (Anti-Trafficking Review 2015) Review <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/370371195_Two_Cheers_for_the_Trafficking_Protocol>

The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC 2016 <<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>>

The Protocol for human trafficking 2000 <https://www.unodc.org/res/human-trafficking/2021the-protocol-tip_html/TIP.pdf>

UN Women, 'Short History of CEDAW Convention' (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2009) <<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.htm>> accessed 4 May 2026

UNDRR, 'Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters - Full Text | PreventionWeb' <<https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/hyogo-framework-action-2005-2015-building-resilience-nations-and-communities-disasters>> accessed 11 May 2026

United Nations, 'The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC' (2015) <<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>> accessed 11 March 2026

United Nations Climate Change, 'Haiti Submits Its Climate Action Plan Ahead of 2015 Paris Agreement | UNFCCC' (September 2015) <<https://unfccc.int/news/haiti-submits-its-climate-action-plan-ahead-of-2015-paris-agreement>> accessed 11 May 2026

United Nations General Assembly, 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979' (United Nations General Assembly 1979) United Nations General Assembly resolution 34/180 34 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>> accessed 5 March 2026

——, 'A Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others' (United Nations treaty Collection, 4 July 2026) <https://treaties.un.org/pages/viewdetails.aspx?src=ind&mtdsg_no=vii-11-a&chapter=7&clang=_en> accessed 4 July 2026

——, ‘A Life Free of Violence: The Right of All Women - The Belém Do Pará Convention and Its Follow-up Mechanism’ <<https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/FolletoMESECVI2012-EN.pdf>>

——, ‘A Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime’ (United Nations Treaty Collection, 4 July 2026)

<https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&clang=_en> accessed 4 July 2026

——, ‘A REVIEW OF GENDER AND THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK’ (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), 2023)

<<https://www.undrr.org/media/87522/download?startDownload=20260708>>

——, ‘American Convention on Human Rights “Pact of San José, Costa Rica”’ (United Nations Treaty Collection) <<https://treaties.un.org/pages/showdetails.aspx?objid=08000002800f10e1>> accessed 4 July 2026

——, ‘Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention - Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of States Parties Due in 2014 - Haiti’ (United Nations 2014)

<<https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/HTI/8-9>>

——, ‘Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women’ <<https://www.oas.org/Juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html>>

——, ‘Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030’ <<https://www.undrr.org/publication/political-declaration-high-level-meeting-midterm-review-sendai-framework-disaster-risk>>

——, ‘Second Follow-Up Report on the Recommendations of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI - Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém Do Pará Convention (MESECVI)’ (OAS 2014) Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) 2

<<https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/MESECVI-SegundoInformeSeguimiento-EN.pdf>>

——, ‘Second Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention - Mechanism to Follow Up on the Implementation of the Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (MESECVI)’ (OAS 2012) Follow-Up Mechanism to the

Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) 2 <<https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/MESECVI-SegundoInformeHemisferico-EN.pdf>>

——, ‘Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) 2015)
<<https://sdgs.un.org/publications/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030-17988>>
accessed 9 March 2026

——, ‘Third Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará Convention - Prevention of Violence against Women in the Americas: Paths to Follow’ (OAS 2017) 3
<<https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/TercerInformeHemisferico-en.pdf>>

United Nations Reports and Documents:

BINUH, ‘Mandate’ (BINUH, 14 May 2026) <<https://binuh.unmissions.org/en/mandate>> accessed 28 May 2026

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, ‘Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - Forty Third Session - Haiti’ (United Nations 2009) Concluding Observations <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/720407?v=pdf>>

Durnescu MR and L, ‘Resolution Process of the Human Rights Council: A Bird’s Eye View’ (UN Today, 1 March 2023) <<https://untoday.org/resolution-process-of-the-human-rights-council-a-birds-eye-view/>> accessed 28 May 2026

Human Rights Council, ‘Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building to Improve the Human Rights Situation in Haiti, in Connection with a Request from the Authorities of Haiti for Coordinated and Targeted International Action’ (United Nations General Assembly 2023) UN Resolution 52/39
<<https://docs.un.org/en/%20A/HRC/RES/55/24>>

MADRE and others, ‘Gender-Based Violence Against Haitian Women & Girls in Internal Displacement Camps’ (Republic of Haiti 2011) Republic of Haiti - Submission to the United Nations - Universal Periodic Review 12th Session of the Working Group on the UPR-Human Rights Council
<<https://ijdh.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/UPR-Submission-on-Review-of-Haiti.pdf>>

Ms. Rashida Manjoo, 'Statement by Ms. Rashida Manjoo Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences' (United Nations General Assembly 2010) Statement

<<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/documents/ga65/vaw.pdf>>

OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti' (Human Rights Council 2024) Interim report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights A/HRC/57/41

<<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5741-situation-human-rights-haiti-interim-report-united-nations-high>>

O'Neill B, 'States Should Not Return Anyone to Haiti' (United Nations, 4 July 2025)

<<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/07/states-should-not-return-anyone-haiti-un-expert-bill-oneill>>

UNDP - Climate Change Adaption, 'Haiti | UNDP Climate Change Adaptation'

<<https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/latin-america-and-caribbean/haiti>> accessed 11 May 2026

UNDRR and UN Women, 'Haiti Approves a New Risk and Disaster Management Plan | UNDRR' (25 July 2020) <<https://www.undrr.org/news/haiti-approves-new-risk-and-disaster-management-plan>> accessed 11 May 2026

United Nations - Office on Drugs and Crime, 'Human-Trafficking' (United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024) <<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html>> accessed 14 May 2026

United Nations Human Rights Council, 'UN Human Rights Chief Designates William O'Neill as Expert on Human Rights in Haiti' (OHCHR, 12 April 2023) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/04/un-human-rights-chief-designates-william-oneill-expert-human-rights-haiti>> accessed 28 May 2026

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'Haiti' (OHCHR)

<<https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/haiti>> accessed 28 May 2026

United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies, 'Ratification Status for Haiti' (OHCHR, 2025)

<https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=74&Lang=EN> accessed 18 March 2026

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'High Commissioner's Designated Expert on Haiti' (OHCHR) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hc-expert-haiti>> accessed 28 May 2026

United Nations Security Council, ‘Resolution 1927 (2010)’

<<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Haiti%20SRES%201927.pdf>>

Volker Türk, In Haiti, Türk Reports ‘Unprecedented’ Violations (2024)

<<https://www.ohchr.org/es/statements-and-speeches/2024/04/haiti-turk-reports-unprecedented-violations>> accessed 28 May 2026

——, ‘Definition: Disaster | UNDRR’ (30 August 2007) <<https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster>> accessed 4 May 2026

——, ‘Follow-up to Concluding Observations’ (OHCHR) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw/follow-concluding-observations>> accessed 5 May 2026

——, ‘General Recommendation No.37 (2018) on Gender-Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in a Changing Climate’ (United Nations 2018) General Recommendation gr 37 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no37-2018-gender-related>> accessed 9 March 2026

——, ‘General Recommendation No.38 (2020) on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration’ (United Nations 2020) General Recommendation GR 38 <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no38-2020-trafficking-women>> accessed 5 March 2026

——, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti’ (Human Rights Council 2025) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights <https://binuh.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/report_of_unhchr_on_the_human_rights_situation_in_haiti_24_february_-_04_april_2025.pdf>

——, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti’ (Human Rights Council 2026) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights A/HRC/61/74 <<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session61/advance-version/a-hrc-61-74-auv.pdf>>

——, ‘Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building to Improve the Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, in Connection with a Request from the Authorities of Haiti for Coordinated and Targeted International

Action' (United Nations General Assembly 2024) UN Resolution 55/24

<<https://docs.un.org/en/%20A/HRC/RES/55/24>>

——, 'View the Ratification Status by Country or by Treaty - Ratification Status For Haiti' (OHCHR.ORG)

<https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=74&Lang=en>
accessed 2 June 2026

NGO and International Organisation Reports:

ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and The World Bank, 'Haiti's Path to Building Resilience to Multiple Disaster Risks in a Fragile Context | GFDRR' (2017) <<https://www.gfdr.org/en/publication/haitis-path-building-resilience-multiple-disaster-risks-fragile-context>> accessed 11 May 2026

Amnesty International, 'AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE DRAFT GENERAL RECOMMENDATION No. 37 ON GENDER-RELATED DIMENSIONS OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN A CHANGING CLIMATE' (Amnesty International 2017)
<<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/5582/2017/en/>>

CARE, 'Sexual and Reproductive Health in Emergencies | CARE International' (CARE, 2026)
<<https://www.care-international.org/what-we-do/crisis-response/sexual-and-reproductive-health-emergencies>> accessed 19 June 2026

Cotrino N, 'Sexual Violence Survivors in Haiti Left Without Care | Human Rights Watch' (28 January 2026) <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/01/28/sexual-violence-survivors-in-haiti-left-without-care>>
accessed 19 June 2026

Gabriel NC and others, "'The Women, They Maltreat Them... Therefore, We Cannot Assure That the Future Society Will Be Good": Male Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence: A Focus Group Study with Young Men in Haiti' (2016) 37 Health Care for Women International 773
<<https://doi.org/10.1080/07399332.2015.1089875>>

Human Rights Watch National Coalition For Haitian Refugees, 'Rape in Haiti: A Weapon of Terror'

Human Rights Watch, 'Human Rights Watch World Report 1994 - Haiti' (Refworld, 1 January 1994)

<<https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/hrw/1994/en/92949>> accessed 14 June 2026

International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Haiti: Stabilisation and Reconstruction after the Quake' (2010) Latin America/Caribbean Report 32 <<https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/icg/2010/72648>>

accessed 19 June 2026

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Haiti Red Cross Society, 'How Law and Regulation Supports Disaster Risk Reduction' (2015) Study Report

<[https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/media/disaster_law/2020-](https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/media/disaster_law/2020-09/HAITI%20DRR%20Report.pdf)

[09/HAITI%20DRR%20Report.pdf](https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/media/disaster_law/2020-09/HAITI%20DRR%20Report.pdf)>

IOM, 'Haiti Mobility Tracking'

<https://dtm.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11461/files/reports/Round%209%20Key%20results%20-%20December%202024_0.pdf?iframe=true>

IPCC, 'Summary for Policymakers' (IPCC Sixth Assessment Report - Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, 2022) <<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/summary-for-policymakers/>>

accessed 19 February 2026

Miller NL, 'Haitian Ethnomedical Systems and Biomedical Practitioners: Directions for Clinicians' (2000) 11 J Transcult Nurs 204 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/104365960001100307>>

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES, 'ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS 2009' (2009)

<<https://cidh.oas.org/pdf%20files/ANNUAL2009.pdf>>

Reporter SO Chief, 'Oxfam in Haiti: "It Was like a Caligula Orgy with Prostitutes in Oxfam T-Shirts"'

(9 February 2018) <<https://www.thetimes.com/uk/article/oxfam-in-haiti-it-was-like-a-caligula-orgy-with-prostitutes-in-oxfam-t-shirts-p32wlk0rp>> accessed 26 March 2026

Shelley L, Picarelli J and Corpora C, 'Beyond Sovereignty: Issues for a Global

Agenda' <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/255635835_Beyond_Sovereignty_Issues_for_a_Global_Agenda>

Spotlight Initiative, 'Colliding Crises: How the Climate Crisis Fuels Gender-Based Violence' (Spotlight Initiative 2025) Issue Brief<<https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/publications/colliding-crises-how-climate-crisis-fuels-gender-based-violence>>

The World Bank Group, 'Haiti - Historical Natural Disasters | Climate Change Knowledge Portal' (Climate Knowledge Portal, 2026)
<<https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/haiti/natural-disasters-historical>> accessed 11 May 2026

The World Bank, 'National Disaster Risk Management Plan 2019 - 2030 - Climate Change Laws of the World' (Urban, Resilience And Land Global Practice Latin America And Caribbean Region 2020) Disaster Risk Management Plan ICR00005335 <https://climate-laws.org/document/national-disaster-risk-management-plan-2019-2030_126e> accessed 11 March 2026

Transparency International, 'Haiti - Corruption Perceptions Index' (2025)
<<https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/haiti>> accessed 18 May 2026

World Bank Group, 'Rebuilding Haitian Infrastructure and Institutions' (World Bank, 2019)
<<https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2019/05/03/rebuilding-haitian-infrastructure-and-institutions>> accessed 11 May 2026

——, 'Haiti Pathways to Responding to Recurrent Crises and Chronic Fragility' (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development - The World Bank 2022) Systematic Country Diagnostic Update <<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/709131656602892706/pdf/Haiti-Systematic-Country-Diagnostic-Update-Pathways-to-Responding-to-Recurrent-Crises-and-Chronic-Fragility.pdf>>

——, 'World Bank Open Data' (World Bank Open Data) <<https://data.worldbank.org>> accessed 11 May 2026

Newspaper Reports:

AFP/Port-au-Prince BAB, 'Without UN Peacekeepers, Haiti's Police Force Face Security Challenge' Gulf Times (16 April 2017) <<https://www.gulf-times.com/story/544560/without-un-peacekeepers-haitis-police-force-face-security-challenge>> accessed 2 June 2026

Evans T, 'Traffickers Targeting Haiti's Children, Human Organs, PM Says' (28 January 2010) <<http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/01/27/haiti.earthquake.orphans/index.html>> accessed 18 May 2026

G. Delva J, 'Americans Arrested Taking Children out of Haiti | Reuters' (30 January 2010) <<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/americans-arrested-taking-children-out-of-haiti-idUSTRE60T23I/>> accessed 10 June 2026

Nina Lakhani, 'Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Violence Soared after Lahaina Wildfire, Report Finds Hawaii Fires' (May 2025) <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/29/sexual-violence-lahaina-hawaii-wildfires>> accessed 10 October 2025

Websites:

Abirafeh L, 'Haitian Feminists Celebrate Lost Leaders' (Ms. Magazine, 14 March 2010) <<https://msmagazine.com/2010/03/14/haitian-feminists-celebrate-lost-leaders/>> accessed 30 April 2026

Asian Development Bank, COMBATING TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SOUTH ASIA (2003) <<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/30364/combating-trafficking-south-asia-paper.pdf>>

Britannica, 'Jean-Bertrand Aristide | Former President of Haiti & Liberation Theology Advocate | Britannica' <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Bertrand-Aristide>> accessed 11 May 2026

COHA, 'The Haitian Timeline: A History of Military Dictatorship and Civil Rule (Revised and Expanded)' (COHA, 9 February 2010) <<https://coha.org/military-dictatorship-in-haiti/>> accessed 14 June 2026

Cour de cassation, 'About the Court' (Cour de cassation) <<http://www.courdecassation.fr/en/about-court>> accessed 26 March 2026

Dankelman I and Naidu K, 'Introduction: Gender, Development, and the Climate Crisis' [2020] Gender & Development <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2020.1843830>> accessed 22 April 2026

Disaster Emergency Committee, '2010 Haiti Earthquake Facts and Figures | Disasters Emergency Committee' (2013) <<https://www.dec.org.uk/article/2010-haiti-earthquake-facts-and-figures>> accessed 11 May 2026

Embassy of the Republic of Haiti, 'Haiti at a Glance' (Embassy of Haiti, 2026) <<https://www.haiti.org/haiti-at-a-glance/>> accessed 11 May 2026

Emm A, 'Afghanistan Legal Profile Report' (Proelium Law LLP, 29 January 2025) <<https://proeliumlaw.com/haiti-legal-profile/>> accessed 26 March 2026

Ferrell NJ and others, 'The Development and Evaluation of a Trauma Curriculum for Psychiatry Residents' (2014) 38 Acad Psychiatry 611 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-014-0095-x>>

Government of the Republic of Haiti, 'DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH A SPECIAL DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE - HAITI' <<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/haiti/>>

Hak-su K, 'COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ASIA: A Resource Guide to International and Regional Legal Instruments, Political Commitments and Recommended Practice' <<https://repository.unescap.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/647b7f0f-4a7b-4dd3-9aa5-35165c524e9e/content>>

Hallegatte S, 'Natural Disasters and Climate Change' <<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-08933-1>> accessed 5 March 2026

Higgins P, *Eradicating Ecoside* (2nd edition 2015, Shephard-Walwyn LTD 2015)

Institute of Haitian Studies, 'HAITI: A Brief History of a Complex Nation' (The University of Kansas, 2026) <<https://haitianstudies.ku.edu/haiti-brief-history-complex-nation>> accessed 27 March 2026

IWRAW, 'General Recommendations' (IWRAW ASIAN PACIFIC) <<https://cedaw.iwraw-ap.org/cedaw/general-recommendations/>> accessed 4 May 2026

J Boyle M and Perez Y, 'Understanding the Ratchet Effect in Economics: Examples and Implications' (1 December 2025) <<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/ratchet-effect.asp>>

Jagannath M, 'Barriers to Women's Access to Justice in Haiti' (2011) 15 CUNY L Rev 27 <<https://academicworks.cuny.edu/clr/vol15/iss1/4/>>

Maslen SC, 'Law on Police Use of Force in Haiti' (The Law on Police Use of Force, 1 June 2025)
<<https://www.policinglaw.info/country/haiti>> accessed 30 May 2026

Republic of Haiti, 'LOI DU 29 NOVEMBRE 1994 PORTANT CRÉATION, ORGANISATION ET FONCTIONNEMENT DE LA POLICE NATIONALE' <http://oas.org/es/sla/dlc/mesicic/docs/mesicic5_hti_annex8.pdf>

Sascha Gabizon, 'UNGA75: "Heads of State, We Need You to Pushback against the Pushback"' (Women Engage for a Common Future 2020) <<https://www.wecf.org/unga75-heads-of-state-we-need-you-to-push-back-against-the-push-back/>> accessed 22 April 2026

Stige SH and Sveaass N, 'Living in Exile When Disaster Strikes at Home' (2010) 20 Torture 76
<<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20952824/>>

The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Person, 'THE GENDER DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING' (2017)
<<https://icat.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1461/files/publications/icat-ib-04-v.1.pdf>>

The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, 'The Gender Dimensions Of Human Trafficking' (2017) <<https://icat.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1461/files/publications/icat-ib-04-v.1.pdf>>

Tully J, 'Reconciliation Here on Earth' in James Tully, Michael Asch and John Borrows (eds), *Resurgence and Reconciliation: Indigenous-Settler Relations and Earth Teachings* (University of Toronto Press 2018) <<https://philarchive.org/rec/TULRHO>> accessed 22 November 2025

UN News, 'UN Condemns "Abhorrent" Assassination of Haiti President Jovenel Moïse | UN News' UN News (7 July 2021) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/07/1095422>> accessed 28 May 2026

United Nations, 'Haiti: Gangs Have "More Firepower than the Police" | UN News' (4 April 2024) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148231>> accessed 21 April 2026

United States Department of State, 'Trafficking in Persons Report - Haiti' (UNHCR 2014)
<<https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/usdos/2014/en/99911>>

Weeks C, 'The "Slow-burn Effect" of Human Trafficking Following Disaster' (2025) 49 Disasters e12685 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12685>>

World Weather Attribution, 'Climate Change Fuelled Extreme Weather in 2023; Expect More Records in 2024' (22 December 2023) <<https://www.worldweatherattribution.org/climate-change-fuelled-extreme-weather-in-2023-expect-more-records-in-2024/>> accessed 15 May 2026

——, 'Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Reports of Haiti' (United Nations 2016) Concluding Observations <<https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/8-9>>

——, 'Haiti Legal System Overview' (Proelium Law LLP, 29 January 2025) <<https://proeliumlaw.com/haiti-legal-profile/>> accessed 26 March 2026

——, 'Haiti: Events of 2024' World Report 2025 (2024) <<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/haiti>> accessed 11 May 2026

——, 'Jean-Claude Duvalier | Biography & Facts | Britannica' <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Claude-Duvalier>> accessed 11 May 2026

——, 'Resolution 2476' (United Nations 2019) Resolution 2476 <[https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2476\(2019\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2476(2019))>

'UNTC' <<https://treaties.un.org/pages/showdetails.aspx?objid=08000002800f10e1>> accessed 4 July 2026

Other Sources:

Banakar R and Travers M, 'Introduction to Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research' <<https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1511112>> accessed 7 July 2026

Connecticut Public, Haiti: Day by Day (2022) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDoxqjI_Cps&t=2695s>

DW Documentry, The Gangs of Haiti - The Criminal Coalition (2026) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k52tNJAeID4>>

Joseph J-H, 'Organized Crime and Corruption in Haiti: Lessons from Latin America, Africa, and Asia' (Social Science Research Network, 15 July 2024) <<https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4897259>> accessed 21 April 2026

Klitgaard R, 'Addressing Corruption in Haiti' [2010] Working Paper Series on Development Policy Number 2 <<https://scholar.cgu.edu/robert-klitgaard/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2017/02/Addressing-Systemic-Corruption-in-Haiti-version-2.pdf>>