

Haiti Insecurity and Cholera Outbreak

Situation Report #5

27 January 2023



KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Increased violence shook Port-au-Prince this week as the airport was closed due to armed crowds trying to reach Prime Minister Ariel Henry. Gang violence and demonstrators blocked roads throughout the capital and in other major cities.
- The Project HOPE team has begun a multi-sectoral cholera response program in Sud, Nippes, and Grand'Anse with local partners. In-depth Health and WASH assessments of eight cholera treatment sites are underway and expected to be completed in the coming weeks.
- Since this outbreak began in September, the Haitian Ministry of Health (MSPP) has reported more than 1,700 confirmed cases and over 24,000 suspected cases of cholera. It is still believed that these numbers are severely underreported, as insecurity continues to limit quality testing and tracking.ⁱ



A Cholera Treatment Center in Beaumont, part of Project HOPE's facility assessments, has few materials and support for cholera treatment. Photo by Project HOPE team, 2023.

Situation Overview

Port-au-Prince is reeling this week as Haiti's security situation rapidly deteriorated this past week and violence continues to plague the capital. Haiti's largest newspaper, Le Nouvelliste, is reporting six policemen killed by armed men from Savien and Mowodwè gangs. Reports stated the six were displayed on the street with their guns on their chests.ⁱⁱ Another seven had been killed in recent days in Carrfour-Feuille and Métivier neighborhoods.ⁱⁱⁱ There were multiple collateral civilian injuries related to these two events, and the number of civilian deaths are unknown. Weapons belonging to the dead and injured officers had not been recovered and are assumed to now be in gang possession.

Armed individuals, dressed in police uniforms, attacked and ransacked Prime Minister Ariel Henry's residence in the Delmas neighborhood. The Prime Minister, who was then attending a meeting in Argentina, was then trapped at Port-au-Prince's Toussaint Louverture International Airport as armed groups and demonstrators broke through barriers into the airport. Reports state that the Prime Minister was able to leave the airport and is in an undisclosed location.^{iv} Incoming flights from international airports were temporarily diverted.^v

Le Nouvelliste is also reporting multiple roadblocks with burning tires and demonstrations throughout Port-au-Prince, with schools, banks, businesses, and public transportation lines closed. Tensions were also reported in Saint-Marc, Gonaives, and Léogane.^{vi}

The U.S. Embassy has issued a security alert recommending extreme caution in Port-au-Prince.^{vii} Haiti's Director General has ordered all police forces on High Alert and Operation Mode as of Thursday.

Amid the violence and insecurity, cholera cases have increased by nearly 60% the last month.^{viii} In mid-January, the Haitian Ministry of Public Health (MSPP) reported more than 1,700 confirmed cases and over 24,000 suspected cases of cholera throughout the country. MSPP also reported nearly 500 deaths and over 20,000 hospitalized as a result of confirmed or suspected cholera cases. The majority of cases continue to be concentrated in Ouest Department. Sud Department, however, has seen an 63% increase in cholera cases this month.

1.2 million oral cholera vaccines arrived in December to Haiti, and a one-month vaccination campaign was conducted in Ouest and Centre Departments. Ninety-four cholera treatment centers are currently operational in the country, with over two-thirds of them receiving suspected or confirmed cases this past month.

The Central Bank Governor of Haiti formally declared an economic depression. Inflation has reached nearly 45% since last year.^{ix}

Project HOPE's Response

Project HOPE has begun implementation of a multi-sectoral program to support eight health facilities and respective catchment areas in Nippes, Sud, and Grand'Anse Departments. The program focuses on the prevention and treatment of cholera through the provision of medical surge staff; medicines; medical supplies; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions; and an integrated community health worker response. Project HOPE is complementing Health and WASH sector activities with Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services at the health facility and community levels, including a robust component on preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

Project HOPE is currently working with partners both in Les Cayes and Jeremie to support cholera treatment centers. The emergency assessment team was joined by Security, Finance, Programs, Logistics, and Technical staff two weeks ago for the start-up of the program. Project HOPE has secured several weeks of fuel and has begun international procurement of cholera kits. The



Les Anglais Health Center was part of Project HOPE's previous programming in Haiti and is part of our current program implementation scope. Photo by Project HOPE team, 2023.

provision of cholera-related medicines and medical supplies, water and sanitation materials, and personal protective equipment (PPE) will be critical to addressing the pressing needs of this complex humanitarian situation. Detailed assessments of eight cholera treatment facilities, including CTCs and primary health centers receiving cholera cases, are currently underway and are tailored to specific Health, WASH and MHPSS activities. Initial observations include Cholera Treatment Centers without proper wastewater management and infrastructure to maintain infection prevention control standards.

Recent events in Port-au-Prince are concerning and may require an ongoing evaluation of potential alternative international travel routes for Project HOPE's team members entering and leaving the country. Project HOPE continues to have access to areas of operation in Sud, Grand'Anse and Nippes, and security remains stable in these departments. Project HOPE will continue to evaluate and monitor the security situation in the capital and any potential escalation of insecurity in Project HOPE's program areas. We remain fully operational at this time.

Project HOPE has worked to support the people of Haiti since the 1980s, including programs in maternal and child health and emergency responses to the 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew. After the 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck on August 14, 2021, Project HOPE, with support from both USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and other partners, mobilized emergency relief and helped the country's health system recover for the long term.

ⁱ PAHO Cholera outbreak 2022: Haiti | Data as of: 2022-12-02

ⁱⁱ <https://apnews.com/article/law-enforcement-caribbean-port-au-prince-haiti-crime-1ee816630cb9d1baf4346d9bcc39d47>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.lenouvelliste.com/article/240312/une-nouvelle-defaite-dans-les-rangs-de-la-pnh-provoque-des-scenes-de-colere-dans-le-pays>

^{iv} <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/01/26/haiti-police-protest-killings/>

^v <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/haiti-protests-flare-after-police-officers-killed-gang-violence-2023-01-26/>

^{vi} <https://www.lenouvelliste.com/a-la-minute>

^{vii} <https://ht.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-port-au-prince-haiti-79/>

^{viii} <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2023/01/1131487>

^{ix} <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/haiti-humanitarian-and-cholera-situation-report-7-17-january-2023>

Contact Information

Chris Skopec
Executive Vice President
Global Health
cskopec@projecthope.org

Adib Fletcher
Senior Director
LAC and Humanitarian Response
afletcher@projecthope.org

