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Humanitarian Relief after Haiti's Earthquake

International humanitarian relief efforts do not travel down a single pathway. They take place under many different circumstances. Two of the most prominent are postconflict situations, when a country is struggling to cope with the carnage and destruction left by war, and disaster relief efforts, when the challenge facing a society is how to rebuild in the aftermath of a natural or man-made disaster. Our focus here is on this second pathway—international humanitarian relief efforts in response to disasters.

On one level the humanitarian relief efforts taking place on this pathway are fundamentally nonpolitical. Rooted in practical field experience, these efforts are often referred to as the “rules of three.” Two different sets of these rules exist. The first rule of three involves the fate of the people who need help and details what conditions they can be expected to withstand: three minutes without air; three days without water; three weeks without food; three months without hope.¹ Failing to provide the necessary relief for these needs within these timeframes is seen by experts as leading to failure of the humanitarian effort. The second rule of three details the three structural stages of the broader humanitarian effort: response, relief, and recovery. In the response phase, the focus is on conducting search and rescue missions to save lives. In the relief phase, attention shifts to providing life-sustaining provisions such as food, ice, clothing, and temporary shelter. The emphasis in the recovery phase is on community rebuilding and infrastructure development.

A closer look at these relief efforts points to a different reality. We find a pathway that, though marked by public statements of cooperation and expressions of great concern for the well-being of people in distress, also contains elements of conflict. Moreover, in some circumstances conflict may dominate cooperation on these pathways. Relief efforts may be geared primarily to improving a country's image. Under these circumstances the real goal is to advance a country's foreign policy objectives within a region rather than to help people.² The conflictual dimension to relief efforts also reveals itself in the fact that countries sometimes reject humanitarian aid even though a clear case for its need exists.³

The ever-present tension between conflict and cooperation not only surfaces in relations between those travelling the humanitarian relief pathway

but also in the objectives being pursued. The major point of tension exists between providing security for the state (bringing an end to violence and looting, making streets safe, protecting government buildings, etc.) and providing security to those affected by the disaster. This second form of security is often referred to as human security.

In this chapter we will examine the pathway of international humanitarian relief as it worked its way through Haiti following the January 2010 earthquake. Our Concept Focus will be on human security. Our Spotlight section is on the protection cluster established by the United Nations (UN) as a central part of its emergency response to the crisis caused by the earthquake.⁴ In particular we are concerned with the attention (or lack thereof) given to human rights for women and children.

Haiti as a Humanitarian Symbol

Haiti has become a symbol of both the international community's compassion in responding to a natural disaster and of the dilemmas and magnitude of the challenges that face responders. The international community, states, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations responded with an outpouring of billions of dollars in financial and material humanitarian aid for the victims of the January 2010 Haitian earthquake. Yet, three years later, a former Haitian government official asked, "Where is the reconstruction?" and observed, "If you ask what went right and what went wrong, the answer is, almost everything went wrong."⁵ Estimates are that over 357,000 Haitians still live in 496 tent camps. The symbolism of Haitian humanitarian relief continues, however. In November 2012 former president and first lady Jimmy and Roslyn Carter participated in a Habitat for Humanity mission to Haiti to build 100 one-room houses. Then eighty-eight years old, it was Jimmy Carter's second trip to post-earthquake Haiti.

Before the 7.0 magnitude earthquake occurred, Haiti was widely recognized to be the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Its economic and political situations were among the most troubled in the hemisphere, if not the world.⁶ In 2009 the United Nations Human Development Index ranked Haiti 149 out of 171 countries. This index, which includes statistics on life expectancy, literacy, education, and other measures of the standard of living, is used to compare countries in terms of their quality of life. That same year Haiti ranked 175 out of 182 countries in the Corruptions Perception Index, a quantitative measure of how corrupt a government is seen by experts and in public opinion polls. In the immediate years leading up to the earthquake, 78 percent of Haitians were living on less than \$2 per day. More than one child in five was chronically malnourished. An estimated 80 percent of the population was unemployed or working in the informal sector, which is defined as being outside of government control and

Box 12.1**Case Summary**

After a 7.0 magnitude earthquake rocked Haiti, one of the poorest nations in the Western Hemisphere, in 2010, Haiti's government was unable to muster the resources needed to respond to the devastation. The international community scrambled to supply humanitarian relief, but, years later, Haiti is no better off than it was before the quake.

Global Context

Disaster relief efforts such as those in Haiti take place in a global context that relies heavily on voluntary contributions from states and nongovernmental organizations to provide short-term assistance. Outside of United Nations specialized agencies, no formal response mechanism exists to coordinate these efforts.

Key Actors

- Haiti
- United States, including the U.S. military and the U.S. Agency for International Development
- United Nations
- Various nongovernmental relief organizations

Motives

- Haiti needed outside assistance to provide for the health and welfare of its citizens and to help its economy and infrastructure recover.
- The United States sought to provide aid for a people and country in need, and it was also conscious of how past refugee flows created a mass exodus from Haiti to the United States.
- International organizations also sought to provide assistance for the humanitarian need in the wake of the crisis.

Concepts

- Foreign aid
- Humanitarianism
- Human security
- International organizations
- Intervention

consisting of black market and underground economic activity. Fifty-two percent of the country's population lived in overcrowded cities, the largest of which is Port-au-Prince. Cité Soleil, a slum district located within the city, has been described by the United Nations as the most dangerous place on earth. Those who live in the countryside were (and still are) engaged in subsistence farming. An importance source of income, amounting to 20

percent of Haiti's gross domestic product, came from remittances sent home by Haitians living and working abroad.

Two years after the earthquake and the massive outpouring of global aid, Haiti is hardly better off. In 2012 it was ranked 7 out of 177 countries on the Failed State Index, a quantitative measure of the ability of governments to exercise effective control over their territory. This ranking, although two spots better than in 2011, still earned it the designation of being in critical condition. Columbia was the nearest-ranking Latin American state, coming in at 44. In 2011 the Human Development Index placed Haiti in the low development category, ranking it 158 out of 187 countries. Nicaragua was its nearest-ranking Latin American state at 129. An estimated 72 percent of Haitians were living in poverty (on less than \$2 per day) in 2011, and 80 percent were below the poverty line as established by the Haitian government.

Similarly, the human rights situation in Haiti continues to mirror its pre-earthquake profile. High levels of violent crime existed prior to the earthquake, and the UN found an increase in murders, rapes, and kidnappings after the earthquake. Violent protests and civil unrest had also increased as the political and legal systems struggled to reestablish their legitimacy and

Box 12.2

Concept Focus

Human Security

Security is one of the most dominant themes in the study and practice of international politics. Traditionally, the focus has been on state security, but this is no longer the case. An increasingly large number of voices are calling for placing people and not states at the center of international politics. Human security is a relatively recent concept in the study of international politics, rising in visibility when the Cold War ended and the security threats facing states took on a less threatening character. As former U.S. director of central intelligence James Woolsey noted, at the time we were no longer threatened by a menacing dragon but by less dangerous poisonous snakes. The death of the dragon provided an opportunity to pursue a very different foreign policy agenda.⁷

The 1994 United Nations Human Development Report (UNHDR) put forward human security as the centerpiece of such an alternative strategy, one that centered on "the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives."⁸ The report went on to identify two broad dimensions of human security. The first centered on safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease, and repression. The second set grew out of "sudden and hurtful disruptions in patterns of daily life."⁹ The first set of threats is ongoing and requires the long-term attention of states, nongovernmental organizations, and international organizations.

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The second set of threats is short-term and episodic. Responding to these threats requires immediate action.

Within these two broad categories, the 1994 UNHDR highlighted seven "vital core" dimensions to human security: (1) economic security (assured basic income); (2) food security (physical and economic access to food); (3) health security (protection from infectious and parasitic diseases); (4) environmental security (protection from pollution, environmental degradation, and the depletion of natural resources); (5) personal security (protection from war, torture, criminal acts, state violence); (6) community security (the survival of cultures and traditions); and (7) political security (respect for basic civil and political rights).

While the 1994 UNHDR is the foundation on which most government and scholarly reports on human security are based, it is not the only definition of human security. A far more restrictive definition from the Human Security Project focuses exclusively on freedom from fear, arguing that human security should be conceptualized as freedom from violence and the fear of violence. Still another element has been put forward by Kofi Annan. Speaking as UN secretary-general, Annan identified three human security pillars: freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom to live in dignity.

These differing definitions are reflected in disagreement over the appropriate focus of human security efforts, creating a continuing dilemma for policymakers that is not easily resolved. For instance, should equal attention be given to freedom from fear and freedom from want, or should one be prioritized over the other? Does protection from large-scale violations of human rights guarantee that threats from poverty, disease, and malnutrition will be addressed? When does a fear or want cross the threshold to become a human security problem? Simply put, how much poverty or state violence must there be?

Among the most challenging contexts within which human security strategies have to be constructed are those involving internally displaced persons (IDP). These are people who "have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border."¹⁰ According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 26.4 million people fell into this category in 2011. Of them, 14.9 million were internally displaced due to natural disasters, most often because of floods and storms.

Because they do not cross borders, IDPs often remain invisible. The effects of IDPs on a country also differ from those of refugees. Refugees threaten to bring a conflict with them when they flee if they use their new homeland as a point for staging or supporting violent action in their origin country. They may also place heavy financial burdens on their new homeland regarding the provision of basic necessities, or they may disrupt the ethnic, religious, or political balance of power in a country through their arrival. The international consequences of IDPs, however, often are minimal. This does not mean, however, that their impact on their own country is insignificant. Their movement may destroy the environment, overcrowd urban areas, spawn criminal activity, and become a recruiting source for terrorist and antigovernment military groups.

authority. Michael Joseph Martelly was elected president in March 2011 in a contested election, and it was not until October 2011 that Parliament approved a prime minister. Conflict between Martelly and Parliament then led to several seats on the Haitian Supreme Court remaining vacant as the two could not agree on whom should sit on the court.

Problem Setting and Origins: A Shaky Political-Economic Foundation

Haiti's troubled economic conditions have deep historical roots. Sharing the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, Haiti was originally used as a base by pirates to attack French and British merchant ships. After French rule was officially established in 1697, an economy based on coffee and sugar plantations that relied on African slave labor gradually took root. A successful slave revolt broke out in 1791 and is cited by many historians as a key factor in Napoleon's decision to sell the Louisiana Territory to the United States in 1803, since without Haiti Louisiana's economic value to France was sharply reduced. In 1804 Haiti became an independent state after forces sent by Napoleon to put down the rebellion were defeated. The United States did not recognize Haitian independence until 1862, in large part due to issues of race and color. A 1826 congressional debate over establishing formal diplomatic relations with Haiti saw concerns voiced about "moral contagion" and the danger posed to the South by rewarding "the fruits of a successful Negro insurrection."¹¹

Haiti's economic development suffered greatly in its early period of independence. The failure of the United States and others to recognize Haiti's sovereignty led to a period of isolation that worked against foreign investment and trade. Compounding this situation was the breakup of its large plantations into smaller subsistence farming units and the need to pay France "compensation" for the loss of Haiti as a colony.

Political instability in Haiti went hand in hand with its economic troubles. From 1853 to 1915, Haiti experienced twenty-two changes in government. Since independence it has had fifty-six presidents, of which only ten completed a full term in office. Stability of a sort arrived in the early Cold War era with the arrival of the Duvalier dynasty. Tolerated and often actively supported by the United States for their anticommunist orientation, François "Papa Doc" Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier together ruled Haiti from 1957 to 1986. Only briefly during the John F. Kennedy administration did the widespread corruption, extreme poverty, and violent nature of Duvalier rule lead to counteraction as Haiti saw its foreign aid terminated and it was excluded from the U.S. Alliance for Progress, a foreign aid program established by President Kennedy that focused on improving economic relations with Latin America.

One significant by-product of the political-economic situation in Haiti was a steady stream of Haitians fleeing to the United States. At first

Timeline

Haiti's Humanitarian Emergency

1957–1986		Haiti, ruled by the Duvalier dynasty, comes to be known for its widespread corruption, poverty, and violence.
1991		A coup ousting Jean-Bertrand Aristide from the presidency sends thousands fleeing to the United States; most are caught by the U.S. Coast Guard and returned.
1994		The United States assists Aristide in returning to power.
2000		Aristide is reelected to the presidency.
2004		Aristide is overthrown once again; Haiti's new president requests a UN peacekeeping force, MINUSTAH.
2009		Haiti ranks as one of the world's least developed and most corrupt nations.
2010	January 12	A 7.0 magnitude earthquake rocks Haiti, damaging over 200,000 buildings, killing tens of thousands of people, and leaving 1 million people homeless.
	January 13	The United States deploys search and rescue teams to Haiti and the USAID Disaster Response team arrives.
	January 15	United Nations appeals for emergency financial assistance
	January 18	The UN and U.S. forces agree to give humanitarian concerns priority over security.
	January 23	The UN announces that emergency relief is at an end.
2011		Only 5 percent of rubble has been removed from Haiti, and only 15 percent of the required housing has been built.
2012		Only 43 percent of pledged money has been received by Haiti, most of which has not gone through the Haitian government but through non-governmental organizations.

this exodus was led by members of the upper class. Members of the urban middle class and semi-skilled workers soon followed. By the 1970s many poor and uneducated Haitians also sought refuge in the United States. In

November 1980 alone, some 1,000 Haitian “boat people” sought to enter the United States. Arriving in such large numbers on small, unsafe boats, the Haitian refugees soon overwhelmed the ability of local authorities to provide for their food, housing, and medical care, prompting calls that the U.S. Navy take action to stop their arrival in the United States. This refugee flow was temporarily ended by the Ronald Reagan administration, which threatened to cut off foreign aid to Haiti and ordered the U.S. Coast Guard to intercept the boats and return the passengers to Haiti. As a result, in November 1981 only forty-seven Haitians reached U.S. soil.

The refugee flow resumed stronger than ever a decade later in September 1991. In December 1990 Jean Bertrand Aristide, an ardent advocate of the poor and long-time opponent of the Duvalier regime, was elected president.¹² Even before his inauguration Aristide was the target of a failed coup by pro-Duvalier supporters. His presidency ended less than a year later, in September 1991, when the army led a second, successful coup against him. In the coup's aftermath, many Haitians again took to the sea. Fearing that once more the influx of Haitian refugees would far exceed the capacity of local and state governments to deal with their arrival, the U.S. Coast Guard intercepted 40,000 refugees and returned them to Haiti.

Returning Aristide to power became a priority of the Bill Clinton administration, but one that encountered many frustrations. International economic sanctions were placed on Haiti, but with little impact due to their lax enforcement. A global conference held on Governors Island in New York set a timetable for Aristide's return, but it produced little in the way of follow through. Clinton sent U.S. naval vessels and troops to Haiti, only to have them leave quickly after encountering an unruly crowd. Finally, in September 1994, supported by a United Nations Security Council resolution and with an invasion force in the air, a delegation led by former U.S. president Jimmy Carter convinced Haitian general Raoul Cédras to resign. Aristide returned from exile on October 15 to complete his presidential term, which ended in 1996.

The Haitian constitution does not permit presidents to serve consecutive terms, so Aristide did not run for the presidency in 1996, but he was again elected president in 2000 before being overthrown by another coup in 2004. Following Aristide's removal in February, Haiti's new president, Boniface Alexandre, requested that the UN send in a peacekeeping force to help restore order in Haiti and bring an end to weeks of political and economic unrest. The UN quickly agreed, citing the situation in Haiti as a “threat to international peace and security in the region.”¹³ A force of 1,000 U.S. Marines arrived the next day. On April 30 the UN took the added step of creating the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) force with a military capacity of up to 6,700 troops. MINUSTAH was composed almost entirely of Latin American forces and replaced the U.S.-led UN peacekeeping force on the ground in Haiti.

An immediate focal point of MINUSTAH activity was Cité Soleil, the gang-filled slum area within Port-au-Prince that was an Aristide political

stronghold. Numerous skirmishes with armed gangs, some of which resulted in civilian casualties, accompanied MINUSTAH's efforts to take control of this area. One such incident in June 2005 resulted in as many as eighty deaths. Success proved to be an elusive goal, with critics arguing that, more often than not, MINUSTAH forces merely stood on the sidelines, permitting the police to commit atrocities against pro-Aristide forces. In October 2006, for the first time in three years, Haitian police, supported by MINUSTAH soldiers, were able to enter Cité Soleil for one hour. Not surprisingly, while some in Haiti came to see MINUSTAH as a force for law and order, others viewed it as an occupying army.

MINUSTAH continued to operate in Haiti in the years prior to the earthquake, providing security against gangs and helping to put down riots such as those caused by a food crisis in 2008. More generally, it was charged with promoting reconciliation and a political dialogue among Haiti's warring pro- and anti-Aristide political factions.

Problem Definition and Response: Earthquake Devastation and Relief

On Tuesday, January 12, 2010, at 4:53 p.m., a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti, and global perceptions of the country changed dramatically. Earthquakes measuring less than 3.0 are considered so small as to be imperceptible. Those with a 7.0 or greater magnitude are held to be capable of producing severe damage over large areas. Thirty-two aftershocks, ranging in magnitude from 4.3 to 5.9, were recorded in the first two hours after the earthquake hit.¹⁴ Over the next two weeks, more than fifty-two aftershocks were recorded. The 2010 earthquake was not unanticipated, nor was it the first to hit Haiti due to its location near the edge of the Caribbean tectonic plate. That plate had been stuck in place since 1770 when a major earthquake razed large sections of Port-au-Prince. The city had been virtually destroyed two decades earlier, when in 1751 another large earthquake occurred. The last major earthquake to strike Haiti occurred in 1860.

Seismologists judged the destruction caused by the 2010 Haitian earthquake to be more than twice as lethal as that of any previous magnitude 7.0 earthquake. This was due to decades of unsupervised building and housing construction that left structures particularly vulnerable to the seismic shocks emanating from the sudden release of massive amounts of energy from the earth's crust. Some of the buildings or structures that suffered major damage or total destruction were the Presidential Palace, the National Assembly, the Port-au-Prince Cathedral, the headquarters of MINUSTAH, the offices of the World Bank, the control tower at Haiti's international airport, the Port-au-Prince harbor, and the main jail (allowing 4,000 inmates to escape). Half of Haiti's schools and three of its universities suffered significant damage, as did several major hospitals, including ones operated by the humanitarian relief group Doctors without Borders. Haiti's communication system

also suffered major damage. Its public telephone system ceased operating, fiber optic connectivity was disrupted, and many roads became blocked with debris.

Specific damage estimates vary considerably.¹⁵ The Haitian government reported that 250,000 residences and 30,000 commercial buildings were destroyed or severely damaged. It also stated that 1 million people had been made homeless and 300,000 were injured. Most controversial are the death estimates. The Haitian government initially estimated that 230,000 Haitians died as a result of the earthquake. On the first anniversary of the quake, it raised this number to 316,000. Far different numbers of dead were put forward in February 2010 by a Radio Netherlands investigative report and in an unpublished May 2011 report by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Radio Netherlands placed the death toll at closer to 92,000, and USAID concluded the death toll was between 45,000 and 85,000. This discrepancy is not surprising due to both the understandable difficulty of making definitive calculations under crisis circumstances and the politics of international crisis relief efforts. It is through stressing the unprecedented and catastrophic nature of a humanitarian tragedy that countries, relief agencies, and international organizations seek to maximize the public's monetary response.¹⁶ Whatever the true number on the loss of life in Haiti, it was catastrophic. A spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs described the Haitian disaster as "historic" and stated that "we have never been confronted with such a disaster in the U.N. memory."¹⁷

Crisis relief efforts can be characterized in many different ways. For the purposes of this case study, we first break these efforts down by identifying the major responders. Next we identify the major problems the responders encountered. Then later we turn our spotlight on the global push to place human rights at the center of the relief and recovery effort. Three first responders played particularly important roles in responding to the Haitian earthquake: the UN, the United States, and nongovernmental organizations.

The UN has a long history of coming to the aid of countries struck by a natural disaster, so it was no surprise that it quickly established a Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, a unit that gives the UN the capacity to respond quickly at the onset of an emergency. By the end of 2010, UNDAC teams had conducted 207 emergency operations in over ninety countries. UNDAC teams operate out of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which was the lead agency working with the Haitian government, established donors, the military, and those on the ground in Haiti. OCHA worked to coordinate the efforts of search and rescue teams and coordinate assistance efforts. In order to coordinate and prioritize humanitarian emergency response activities, the UN sets up "clusters" and assigns lead responsibility to specific UN agencies. In Haiti, twelve clusters were established (see Table 12.1).

Table 12.1 United Nations Clusters in Haiti

CLUSTER	LEAD UN AGENCY
Agriculture	Food and Agriculture Organization
Camp coordination and camp management	International Organization for Migration
Early recovery	UN Development Programme
Education	UN Children's Fund
Emergency shelter and nonfood items	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Cross Crescent Societies
Emergency telecommunications	World Food Programme
Food	World Food Programme
Health	World Health Organization and Pan American Health Organization
Logistics	World Food Programme
Nutrition	UN Children's Fund
Protection	Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights, UN Children's Fund, UN Population Fund, MINUSTAH
Water, sanitation, and hygiene	UN Children's Fund

Each of these clusters faced serious challenges. For instance, the emergency shelter cluster faced major problems centered on the displacement of people from their homes. An estimated 500 makeshift camps housing more than 700,000 people were spontaneously created in the aftermath of the earthquake. The World Food Programme, the lead agency in the food cluster, established sixteen food distribution points in the hopes of getting two weeks' worth of rations to 2 million people in Port-au-Prince. Drinking water was being provided for more than 900,000 people each day, and more than 66,000 people were employed in a "cash-for-work" program intended to spur early recovery by removing rubble and clearing drainage canals.

MINUSTAH's presence also grew. Its mandate had been extended for one year in October 2009, and the earthquake led to a further mandate extension and an increase in its authorized force size from 2,211 police officers and 6,940 military troops to 3,711 officers and 8,940 soldiers. Evidence of its growing rule could be seen in its involvement in human rights

issues. Along with the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees, MINUSTAH was charged with monitoring human rights violations and assisting the Haitian police and judiciary in preventing and responding to human rights violations.

In addition to organizing activity on the ground, the UN also set out to raise funds for Haitian earthquake relief and reconstruction efforts. On January 15 the UN Humanitarian Country Team in Haiti issued a flash appeal for \$575 million in emergency financial assistance. By early February \$619 million (107 percent of the goal) had been committed. In mid-February, the UN raised its appeal figure to a record high of \$1.44 billion.

The United States also had a two-pronged approach to the onset of the Haitian crisis.¹⁸ Within twenty-four hours the United States had deployed search and rescue teams and a USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team had arrived in Haiti. Operational efforts to provide assistance to those on the ground were placed under the coordinating authority of USAID, which was particularly active in the water, sanitation, and hygiene; food; logistics; health; and protection clusters. The U.S. military supplied additional operational resources. The scale of the effort was staggering. By March some 40,000 U.S. military personnel were stationed in Haiti or on surrounding waters. Fifteen U.S. vessels and forty aircraft were involved in transporting relief and rescue personnel, victims of the earthquake, and supplies. A little more than one month after the earthquake, 2.6 million bottles of water, 2.3 million food rations, 15 million pounds of bulk food, 844,000 pounds of bulk fuel, and more than 125,000 pounds of medical supplies had been delivered. The United States also worked with the government of Haiti to reopen Haiti's harbors and reestablish airport service to allow relief supplies to arrive. By early March an average of seventy-five relief flights were landing per day at the Port-au-Prince airport, down from a high of 160. Commercial flights resumed on February 18.

The United States also provided financial resources to the Haitian emergency response and reconstruction effort. On January 13 the U.S. ambassador to Haiti issued a disaster declaration, making an initial \$50,000 in immediate funds available for disaster relief. The following day President Barack Obama announced that the United States was making \$100 million available for humanitarian assistance. By early March a total of \$712.9 million had been provided to Haiti for earthquake relief efforts. In addition, the overall regular foreign aid assistance package for Haiti in fiscal year 2010 was \$363 million, with specific funding set aside for global health and child survival programs, food aid, narcotics control, and law enforcement and military training and education programs.

President Obama also sought to mobilize private funds for Haiti. He reached out to former presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush to spearhead a fund-raising effort. In doing so he replicated a format employed by George W. Bush in 2004 when he asked Clinton and George H. W. Bush to lead fund-raising efforts for victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami that struck Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand particularly hard.

Estimates of how many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) descended on Haiti are hard to come by. Newspaper accounts refer to “hundreds, maybe thousands,”¹⁹ ranging from well-established NGOs such as Save the Children, the International Red Cross, and Doctors without Borders to virtually anonymous and nameless Baptist missionaries from Idaho (who proceeded to try to illegally smuggle out some thirty Haitian “orphans” for adoption in the United States). Many came flush with money. The American Red Cross, for one, raised \$7 million in one day from pledges made via text messages alone. All total, Americans donated more than \$1.4 billion. Most donors in a crisis prefer to give to NGOs rather than to the government of the country needing assistance out of concerns about how their money will be spent. So massive was the presence of NGOs in Haiti that many Haitians referred to their country as “the Republic of NGOs.”

NGOs performed a wide variety of services. Doctors without Borders reported treating over 3,000 people in the first week after the earthquake. By late January it was treating fewer patients with injuries directly related to the earthquake and more with indirectly related physical problems such as diarrhea and mental trauma. In the first days following the earthquake, Catholic Relief Services announced a \$200 million, five-year relief and reconstruction program for Haiti. One of its immediate projects in the wake of the earthquake was delivering shelter kits and critical shelter materials to some 6,500 families staying in makeshift camps. Two of the activities undertaken by the International Red Cross were the establishment of a physical rehabilitation center in Port-au-Prince that was capable of treating 1,000 patients per year and inspection visits to prisons and police stations to ensure the humane treatment of those in custody.

Box 12.3

Spotlight

Human Rights and the UN Protection Cluster in Haiti

A 1991 UN resolution tentatively redefined the problem of helping internally displaced people (IDPs) from a humanitarian issue of providing food, shelter, and medical aid into a human rights issue. This recognition helped quickly mobilize international action in response to Haiti’s 2010 earthquake, which devastated the already poor and struggling nation. The Thirteenth Special Session of the Human Rights Council on January 27–28, 2010, passed a resolution expressing concern that “the effects of the earthquake have further exacerbated existing challenges to the full enjoyment of all human rights in Haiti.” The resolution also expressed concern over the

medium- and long-term consequences of the disaster, including its social, economic and development aspects . . . [and] call[ed] upon the international community to continue to ensure adequate and coordinated support for

the Government and the people of Haiti in their efforts to overcome the challenges arising from the earthquake, keeping in mind the importance of integrating a human rights approach.²⁰

The UN's protection cluster served as the primary means through which to address Haiti's human rights situation in the aftermath of the earthquake, which was particularly challenging due to the urban setting of the relief efforts. Urban camps are not easily separated from the larger population in a way that controls population flow, the distribution of aid, or the provision of security. They are often spontaneous in their development and blend in with the existing population structure, making the cleanup of debris and reconstruction more difficult. Many who come to the camps are not necessarily displaced in the sense of having lost housing but are urban dwellers seeking access to aid and support that they feel will otherwise not be available to them. Resettlement to existing housing sites in Haiti (urban or rural) was further complicated by the challenge of establishing land ownership rights in a country where informal agreements rather than formal legal titles are common and multiple ownership claims are frequent.

Within this context of makeshift housing, lost infrastructure, scarce resources, and competing claims, human rights violations against women and children in Haiti were of particular concern.²¹ Women and children are routinely the most vulnerable persons in the wake of a disaster or crisis. Human Rights Watch estimated that more than 300,000 Haitian women and children were living in camps for displaced persons after the earthquake. The Haitian government estimated that more than 100,000 children were without family protection, and UNICEF reported a rise in child trafficking and illegal adoptions. USAID reported assisting 596 women and 513 child victims of violence in Haiti in 2010.

Living conditions and the absence of medical care were major issues, particularly with regard to childbirth. The absence of security and lack of privacy in the camps were repeatedly cited as contributing factors in direct violence against women and children. So too was the behavior of police and MINUSTAH forces that were assigned to protect the camps but either failed to stop individual and gang violence against women and children or engaged in it themselves. The number of women engaging in prostitution to earn money or gain access to food and shelter also rose after the earthquake. Lack of money for transportation and health services not provided for free (such as sonograms) led to a rise in infant mortality rates.

Complicating the human rights challenge faced by relief workers even more was the traditional Haitian practice of *restavek*, in which impoverished families drop off children at the homes of better-off Haitians. These children—some 300,000, according to estimates—receive little or no education and often become servants. They also often are targets of abduction or sexual abuse and thus become infected with the HIV-AIDS virus. It was not uncommon for such children to be dropped off in the resettlement camps.

Despite these accomplishments, Haitian humanitarian relief also encountered a series of problems that led to recriminations and accusations among those involved in the mission as to who was responsible for inefficiencies in

the delivery of aid and relief. Coordination of effort in a crisis situation is an inherently difficult task. As we noted at the outset of our case study, time is of the essence. Emotions of both those giving and receiving aid are on edge. Accurate information is scarce and rumors are abundant. Added to this is the ever-present potential for misperceiving motives and holding conflicting agendas. Here we highlight three common problems that arose in Haiti.

First, the UN cluster approach, which was intended to serve as a coordinating mechanism for relief efforts in various areas, soon became overwhelmed by the arrival and participation of scores of NGOs.²² One study after the crisis concluded “the coordination system began to go round in circles.”²³ Not only were there too many NGOs desiring to participate in cluster coordinating meetings, but many of them did not know Haiti well and were led by non-French speakers. This resulted in the meetings being held in English, which virtually guaranteed the exclusion of the majority of Haitians from discussions about the relief and recovery operations in their own country. Many Haitians, therefore, came to feel that Haiti had become an occupied country ruled by outsiders. Additionally, the clusters encountered great difficulty in collecting data that would allow resources to shift from problem to problem and area to area as the rescue and recovery effort progressed. Rather than adopting a common methodology to measure progress or the lack thereof, many NGOs developed their own and/or failed to coordinate their efforts with other NGOs. The result was that while a large amount of time and effort was spent in trying to assess the situation, not enough usable data was collected.

A second problem involved the establishment of priorities, especially in the early stages of the international response. The initial priority was to establish security on the ground. Without it, humanitarian relief and rescue efforts were unlikely to succeed. Security was not an abstract problem, as looting, rioting, and other forms of violence quickly surfaced. In the first week of the crisis, the UN Security Council voted to send an additional 3,500 soldiers and police officers to Haiti. But rather than being held in check by the emphasis on security, the violence grew as Haitians came to feel that the relief effort was not making enough progress. Relief agencies also complained about the priority being given to security concerns over relief efforts. Doctors without Borders, for example, complained that an aircraft carrying a field hospital was repeatedly denied permission to land. Other NGOs noted that relief trucks were left unused at the airport for lack of supplies to deliver. In each case the problem identified was the priority being given by U.S. military officials to transporting troops and security supplies. The UN and U.S. forces agreed on January 18 to give priority to humanitarian flights over security flights. Embedded in this problem was another concern, however: the large and central role of the U.S. military in the humanitarian effort. While the logic of using U.S. military capabilities for the relief effort was recognized, past U.S. military actions in Haiti left many there suspicious of U.S. motives.

A third problem with the humanitarian mission centered on the goals and capabilities of the NGOs that descended upon Haiti.²⁴ A study done by the nonprofit Disaster Accountability Project collected information from 196 NGOs. They found that of \$1.4 billion raised through donations, only \$730 million was spent on the ground in Haiti. A survey of these 196 NGOs' Web sites found that only eight provided solid information on their activities. Most relied on anecdotes and appeals to emotion. The Disaster Accountability Project report singled out for criticism what some describe as medical tourism. Too often medical volunteers arrived in Haiti with minimal equipment, no pharmaceutical supplies, and no means of verifying their clinical capabilities or those of their organizations. Rather than serving as an added source of strength in the relief efforts, they became liabilities, interfering with the effective delivery of medical care by established emergency response teams that arrived with self-contained infrastructures. Additionally, local Haitians with medical experience and skills were routinely pushed aside and ignored by these newly arrived volunteers. Critics charged that photo opportunities all too often replaced the efficient treatment of patients. Random and uncoordinated donations of medication further complicated the rescue mission by overwhelming emergency supply and distribution systems with medicines that were not always appropriate to the situations faced on the ground.

Problem Evolution and Development: Transitioning out of Crisis

No definitive point exists at which the international Haitian humanitarian relief effort passed from the crisis stage into the post-crisis stage.²⁵ A transition point of sorts came very early, on January 23, when, after the UN stated that the emergency phase of the relief effort was nearing an end, the Haitian government formally ended its search for survivors. By the first anniversary of the earthquake, numerous "lessons learned" studies had been carried out about the crisis response, suggesting that for international organizations and relief agencies, Haiti had entered a post-crisis stage.

The picture that emerged from Haiti at this one-year anniversary point revealed much work that remained to be accomplished. Oxfam, an international alliance of organizations that works to eliminate poverty and injustice around the world, concluded that in many respects the relief effort had reached a standstill. Only 5 percent of the rubble had been cleared, and because of this only 15 percent of the required basic and temporary housing had been built. UNICEF concluded that more than 1 million people remained displaced. Two years after the earthquake, a UN study found that of the approximately \$44.5 billion pledged by UN members for reconstruction projects, only 43 percent had been delivered, which explained in part the slow pace of progress. Moreover, this money favored some projects and recipients over others. Less than half of the money allocated for agricultural

projects and for health projects had been disbursed. Only 6 percent of the money had been channeled through Haitian institutions and less than 1 percent through the Haitian government, meaning that most was held and distributed by NGOs. This created a situation in which some argued that the relief effort was now de-legitimizing the Haitian government in the eyes of its own people. U.S. aid also came in for criticism. Less than 1 percent of USAID funds went directly to Haitian organizations. The largest recipient of USAID funds to be used in Haiti was a for-profit firm, Chemonics.²⁶

The situation after the earthquake also recalled episodes from Haiti's economic and political past.²⁷ On the economic front, the showcase for Haiti's "build back better" strategy, a slogan former President Bill Clinton first penned for Haiti's recovery after a series of deadly hurricanes in 2009, was the Caracol industrial park, which went forward with little planning and was built largely with U.S. earthquake relief funds. Intended to employ 20,000 people, the park's main industrial anchor was a factory owned by a South Korean garment manufacturer who had earned a reputation in Guatemala for unfair and hostile labor practices. An earlier generation of export-oriented clothing factories in the Duvalier era resulted in a massive influx of workers who came to populate Cité Soleil, helping to transform it into the gang-filled slum it became. The land along Caracol Bay for the industrial park was obtained by the Haitian government by evicting 366 farmers. Before the earthquake, plans had designated this land to be part of Haiti's first protected maritime area.

On the political front, a sense of déjà vu came with the return of two exiled leaders on the eve of the 2011 presidential election in March. First, on January 16, 2011, after twenty-five years away, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier returned from exile in France, asserting he was returning to help in Haiti's reconstruction. Many suspected Baby Doc's true motive was to gain access to funds he had accumulated as president. Then, on March 18, 2011, Jean-Bertrand Aristide returned from exile in South Africa. Aristide had announced his wish to return to Haiti hours after the 2010 earthquake, but the United States asked South Africa to delay his return until after the presidential election. Aristide had declared the 2010 presidential election was not free and fair since his party had been barred from participating, and the United States feared his presence might destabilize the situation in Haiti and disrupt the election.

Added to this political and economic mix in the midst of Haiti's reconstruction efforts was an outbreak of cholera.²⁸ Cholera, a severe intestinal infection that if untreated is fatal in 25 percent of cases, is transmitted by water or food that has been contaminated by feces. If treated aggressively, the death rate drops to about 1 percent. Prior to October 2010 when the first cholera outbreak in Haiti was announced, there had not been a major incidence of the sickness in the country for fifty years. The outbreak was linked to river water contaminated by a sewage spill at a Nepali peace-keeping camp. In December 2011 the Pan American Health Organization placed the number of dead from cholera at almost 7,000, with over 250,000

cases being reported. This represented a serious health crisis for a country and people already vulnerable to the violence that had sprung up after the earthquake and left without homes or access to public services such as running water and reliable access to food. The passage of two additional years did nothing to improve the situation.²⁹ In late 2013, unable to get the UN to admit responsibility for the cholera outbreak, advocates for the Haitian victims of the epidemic announced they would bring legal action against the UN, although it was unclear at the time whether U.S. courts would accept the law suit.

The International Monetary Fund had projected 8 percent growth rates for Haiti in 2011 and 2012. The actual rates were far less—only about 2.5 percent in 2012. Homelessness remained an acute problem due in some measure to the type of housing being built. Rather than reconstruct damaged but usable slum housing or build simple homes (at the cost of \$6,000 per house), donor organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank funded the construction of new homes near major economic development projects such as Caracol at a much higher cost (in some cases over \$30,000 per house). Many of the houses built remained empty due to problems ranging from an absence of doors and windows to an inability to hook them up to water supplies. Human safety remained under siege. Fourteen percent of refugee camp households reported that one or more family members had been molested. Nine percent reported that a family member had been raped. Much aid money has gone unspent for a variety of reasons, such as contracts falling through and projects being cancelled. For example, Spain provided \$100 million to Haiti's water authority for infrastructure development, but only \$15 million of it was spent by the end of 2012. The United States has over \$1 billion money in unspent Haitian relief money. The Red Cross is holding another \$500 million.

Unspent aid money is not unique to the Haiti earthquake relief efforts. Bureaucratic delays and changing government priorities are a political reality for national governments and international organizations. Relief organizations also face these problems. Additionally, they are often unwilling to admit they might have more money than they need. Turning away donations is simply not done.

Conclusion: Lessons of Haitian Relief

According to one relief official, "Haiti is the humanitarian disaster of the future . . . and we're not ready for it."³⁰ If this assessment is correct, Haiti offers many lessons for those engaged in humanitarian relief efforts. One set of cautionary lessons relates directly to efforts to provide human security to IDPs who are victims of natural disasters. Three such lessons stand out. First, while the great outpouring of funds for the Haitian relief effort was somewhat of an anomaly, as historically many donors have seen helping IDPs fleeing war and civil unrest as more central to their mission than helping those caught in the throes of an earthquake or tsunami, money alone

does not matter. In December 2012 there were still 357,000 IDPs remaining in Haitian camps. Those who leave are often enticed into doing so by a payment of cash (in some cases \$400 per family) to return home.

The second cautionary lesson is a lack of clarity on what protection means. Relief experts Elizabeth Ferris and Sara Ferro-Ribeiro assert that this was the case in Haiti.³¹ They state that international actors spent too much time trying to define what protection meant and came up with a definition that was not helpful in setting human rights priorities. The end result was that those working on protection issues for women, children, prisoners, orphans, and so forth came up with different definitions that denied effective protection to the majority of Haitians. Third, for all that Haiti initially represented a symbol of the world's compassion, symbols have their limits as tools of humanitarian intervention. They cannot overcome donor fatigue, nor can they make organizations spend money or spend it effectively. Moreover, they may be overtaken by new symbols. In November 2012 Hurricane Sandy struck the northeast coast of the United States, inflicting major damage on the metropolitan New York area and bringing forward a wave of aid from concerned citizens and organizations across the United States. Earlier in its journey up the Atlantic Ocean, Hurricane Sandy struck Haiti. Along with a series of earlier fall storms, it created an additional 58,000 IDPs there. When combined with a drought in 2012, 20 percent of Haiti's population now suffered from severe food insecurity. Little was heard of this plight in the United States.

Haiti also offers lessons for the study of conflict and cooperation in world politics. When faced with a humanitarian crisis of the magnitude of the Haitian earthquake, the assumption is that the pathway being travelled by states, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations will be one characterized by widespread cooperation and that conflict will be minimal if not totally absent. As we have seen, this is not the case. Conflict was present, although not in the form of hostile military action or deliberately aggressive policies. Instead it took the forms of conflicting priorities, a desire to control the situation or act unilaterally, and a tendency to treat Haitians as passive receivers of help rather than as partners in rebuilding their country.

Case Analysis

1. Under what conditions or for what reasons, if any, should a country reject international humanitarian disaster relief aid?
2. To what extent is the pathway of cooperation and conflict on international humanitarian disaster relief aid nonpolitical? If it is not, should it be nonpolitical? How might this be done?
3. Select another recent case of international humanitarian disaster relief and compare it to Haiti. What similarities exist? What differences do you see?

4. How much responsibility do nonprofit organizations bear for the problems that arose in Haiti?
5. What are the responsibilities and obligations of the host government when an international disaster relief humanitarian aid effort is being undertaken within a country?
6. Who should be in charge of international disaster relief humanitarian aid efforts on the ground?
7. Who should determine when the pathway being travelled by those providing international disaster relief humanitarian aid to a country should come to an end—the host government or those donating aid?
8. How would you measure the amount of human security existing in a country?

Suggested Readings

- Haiti: One Year Follow Up Report on the Transparency of Relief Organizations Responding to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake* (Washington, DC: Disaster Accountability Project, December 2010–January 2011). Using information from surveys sent out to nongovernmental organizations involved in Haitian relief efforts, this report presents an accounting of how numerous nongovernmental organizations performed.
- Jobe, Kathleen. "Disaster Relief in Post-Earthquake Haiti: Unintended Consequences of Humanitarian Volunteerism." *Travel, Medicine and Infectious Disease* 9, no. 1 (2011): 1–5. This article summarizes U.S. humanitarian relief efforts in Haiti, giving special attention to the pharmaceutical and medical supply chain and the impact of volunteers on the health care system.
- Margesson, Rhoda, and Maureen Taft-Morales. *Haiti Earthquake: Crisis and Response*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010. This work presents early analysis of MINUSTAH after the quake, Haiti relief operations, international relief funding, and congressional concerns.
- Rencoret, Nicole, Abby Stoddard, Katherine Haver, Glyn Taylor, and Paul Harvey. *Haiti Earthquake Response: Contextual Analysis*. New York: United Nations Evaluation Group, July 2010. This work presents an overview of the political, social, and economic context within which the Haitian earthquake occurred and discusses the lessons learned from Haiti for disaster relief.
- Vohr, James. "Haiti Disaster Relief: Logistics Is the Operation." *Military Review* 91 (July–August 2011): 76–82. Vohr provides an overview of lessons learned from the logistical challenges faced by the military in providing aid to Haiti.
- Weisenfeld, Paul. "Successes and Challenges of the Haiti Earthquake Response: The Experience of USAID." *Emory International Law Review* 25, no. 3 (2011) 1,097–1,120. The author, who served as a

USAID administrator and was coordinator of the USAID Haiti Task Force team in Washington, discusses the need for greater efficiencies in disaster relief efforts.

Weiss, Thomas, and David Korn. *Internal Displacement: Conceptualization and Its Consequences*. Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2006. Weiss and Korn offer an analytic and conceptual discussion of the problems associated with internal displacement.

Web Resources

American Red Cross, www.redcross.org. This U.S.-based humanitarian agency provides assistance in disaster relief efforts both in the United States and abroad.

Center for Economic and Policy Research, www.cepr.net. Explore debates and reports on economic and social issues such as economic growth, inequality, and poverty, and review issues particularly concerning Latin America and the Caribbean.

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, www.unocha.org. Learn more about the UN agency responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors for a cohesive relief response.

UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minustah. Facts, figures, and more information on MINUSTAH in Haiti are available from their official site.

World Vision, www.worldvision.org. Explore the activities of a Christian humanitarian organization engaged in disaster relief and other efforts worldwide.