

July 2025

World Vision

A GENERATION LIVING IN FEAR

Dreams and
opportunities
kidnapped by
gang violence
in Haiti



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CONSULTATION TO DISPLACED
POPULATIONS IN HAITI
WORLD VISION LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN
WORLD VISION HAITI
JULY 2025



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NATIONAL DIRECTOR

FOREWORD

Haiti is enduring one of the most heartbreaking crises in its recent history. Our nation, once defined by resilience and community strength, is now grappling with the devastating impact of gang violence, widespread displacement, and the near-total collapse of essential public services. Children and families are bearing the brunt of this crisis. They face not only physical danger but also hunger, trauma, and the loss of hope.

This report captures the voices and experiences of more than 840 individuals—children, parents, church leaders, professionals, and community members—across six departments most affected by the violence: West, Central Plateau, Nippes, Grand’Anse, South-East, and South. It reflects a country where survival has replaced normalcy, and fear has replaced freedom.

The findings are both alarming and deeply moving. Children are going hungry, being forced from their homes, and are living with psychological scars that will take years to heal. Adults are struggling to provide, protect, and persevere as gang control tightens around everyday life. And across every community, local leaders testify to the breakdown of health systems, education, and protection services.

This is not just a security crisis—it is a protection emergency. The violations of children’s rights are clear and urgent. Haiti is now among the top five global hunger hotspots, and among the five countries with the highest number of child victims of sexual violence. At the time of this writing,

more than 11% of our population is internally displaced, with shelters overwhelmed and hope stretched thin.

But even in this darkness, there is light. The resilience of our communities, the courage of our children, and the dedication of local faith leaders continue to inspire us. World Vision Haiti stands with these communities—and we invite others to join us in calling for immediate action.

We urge the Government of Haiti to prioritize the protection of civilians and restore the rule of law. We appeal to international donors and agencies to scale up humanitarian support and invest in long-term recovery. And we call on the Haitian civil society and the Church to continue their essential role as protectors, advocates, and beacons of hope.

This report is more than data. It is a wake-up call—and a commitment. As Country Program Director of World Vision Haiti, I affirm our pledge to stand alongside the most vulnerable, especially the children, and to work tirelessly until every child in Haiti is safe, fed, protected, and free to thrive.

Let us not delay. The time to act—for Haiti’s children—is now.

Dr. Lesly Margel Michaud
Country Program Director
World Vision International Haiti

THE CRISIS IN NUMBERS

5.7M

food insecure people

1.3M

internally displaced people

8.4K

people in IPC Phase 5 food insecure (risk of starvation)

121.3K

people forcibly returned from January to June 2025

3.8K

Gender-Based Violence cases between January and May 2025

2.3K

grave violations against children recorded

+490%

increase in violation against children between 2023 and 2024

+50%

of Haiti's population food-insecure

+24%

increase in IDPs since December 2024

Sources: FAO, WFP, IOM, GBV Sub-cluster

INTRODUCTION

Escalating gang violence in Haiti keeps hostage its population. This dire situation has intensified over the past five years. Widespread insecurity, hunger and trauma are the most tangible effects among the population. Armed groups, recently designated as terrorist organizations by the United States' government, have profoundly disrupted daily life across multiple regions, inflicting fear and severely limiting access to essential services and food.

This report presents the findings of a consultation to 840 people, including 271 children and 569 adults comprising 200 key informants, sorted by church and community leaders, professionals from different sectors and small business owners residing in six departments significantly affected by this crisis. West, Central Plateau, Nippes, Grand'Anse and South-east are the main geographical areas where the data was collected. Regarding the gender and age parameters of the results, the girls represent 156 of the respondents against 115 boys. About the group age, 116 girls are between 12 to 17 years while 86 boys belong to this age group. Forty (40) girls are between 6 to 11 years old against 29 of the boys in this age bracket.

The report describes how the progressive normalization of danger caused by gang violence is systematically robbing children of safety, food and access to education.

The data reflects the personal experiences and perspectives of individuals directly or indirectly impacted by gang violence. Their testimonies reveal the devastating toll on physical safety, mental health,

education, economic conditions, and family life.

Respondents consider that women and girls (55%) are the most vulnerable to the crisis triggered by gang violence. However, boys and men are (45%) are also severely affected. Adults identified that children face sexual exploitation, verbal and physical abuse, kidnapping, and the threat of forced recruitment within this context. As a result, almost half of the consulted children experience stress. This emotional burden deeply impacts Haitian society, leading to a loss of hope and a widespread sense of helplessness.

The experiences that Haitian children are facing is a direct violation of their internationally recognized rights: Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes every child's inherent right to life, survival, and development.

Within a context of decreasing funds for humanitarian responses and development, World Vision reaffirms its commitment to the most vulnerable children in Haiti. Our organization continues to serve children and their families providing education in emergencies, access to food, water and sanitation, and advocating for the protection of children and their rights, amidst this crisis. We focus on child protection and community empowerment, working hand in hand with children, grassroots leadership, government at the national and local levels, civil society, and local faith-based organizations.

1. CHILDREN: A GENERATION LIVING IN FEAR

In Haiti, childhood has become synonymous with survival. Once spaces of learning and laughter, schools are now targets, sometimes occupied by armed groups or shuttered due to insecurity. Children no longer fetch water or attend church without fear of stray bullets or abduction. In urban slums and rural enclaves alike, their voices echo a haunting truth: “We are not safe.”

With gangs tightening their grip on major transit routes, access to food and basic services has

become dangerously restricted, pushing children into hunger and hopelessness. Some are forced to flee their homes, others to watch their families disintegrate. The trauma is visible—not only in tears, but in trembling hearts, sleepless nights, and lost dreams.

This section is not just a collection of statistics. It is a mirror reflecting the broken promises of a nation to its youngest citizens. The crisis in Haiti today is not only about bullets and barricades—it is about stolen childhoods and the erosion of hope.





The armed men have stripped all the displaced people of their dignity. They are left without food, living in the streets, and have lost everything they once owned.

Dimitri Lavictor, a 35-year-old school teacher, lives in the Nippes department.

1.1 Food Insecurity and Forced Displacement

Expanding gang violence has limited access to food, both by disrupting the supply chain, impeding physical access to markets, and hindering safe access to crops and domestic production. The surveyed children described a dire reality marked by deprivation of food:

- 72% reported that they and their families suffered hunger due to the effects of gang violence.
- 37% of children expressed an urgent need for food.

As of June 2025, nearly 1.3 million people in Haiti were forcedly displaced fleeing extreme insecurity, according to the International Organization for Migrations (IOM). The children consulted by World Vision in Haiti reaffirmed this grim reality:

- 21% said they were forced to flee their homes to escape violence.
- 14% witnessed a family member leaving the country, often, as a desperate attempt to find safety elsewhere.
- 21% of the children were obliged to flee their community of origin.

Ongoing forced internal displacement has interrupted the education for thousands of children in Haiti. According to World Vision's survey, 85% of children said they are still able to attend school, while 15% are not.

For those forced to flee, housing conditions and food insecurity have worsened. Despite the growing humanitarian emergency unfolding in Haiti, the situation remains in the shadows.

1.2 Psychological Trauma and Stress

With persistent attacks by gangs on neighborhoods, children are unable to play in the streets, walk to school and thousands remain enclosed within the walls of their homes out of fear. Others are silently grieving their separation from parents or family members. The mental health toll of gang violence on children in Haiti is alarming, affecting their emotions and perception of the future. Although, not quantified, many children expressed themselves having recurring nightmares. Out of the surveyed children:

- 44% testified they experience heart palpitations due to stress.
- 25% reported feeling persistent sadness.
- 27% said they live in a state of constant fear.





When I was raped, I was ashamed, I wanted to kill myself. But when I remembered the children who are fatherless, I accepted my suffering.

Magdala, 30 years-old, mother of 3 children

- 14% of the children are experiencing separation from a family member who was forced to migrate to another country because of the insecurity.
- Nearly 2% disclosed feeling so hopeless they no longer wish to continue living.

These indicators underscore the profound psychological scars left on a generation growing up in fear, amid persistent violence.

1.3 Daily Life in Danger

Daily routines for children have become potentially life-threatening. Stray bullets, spontaneous attacks and control of the streets by criminal groups have completely disrupted daily life, holding hostages the dreams of thousands of children.

- 29% of consulted children consider attending school a high-risk activity.
- Children consider that activities like going to the market (5%), fetching water (14%), visiting relatives (10%), and even attending church (9%) are increasingly unsafe.
- 6.71 % of boys and girls feel that even staying home is also risky.

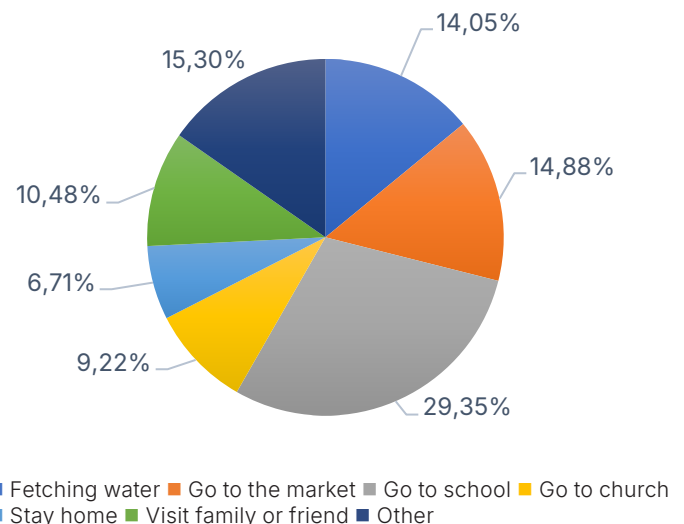
In the West department, several children have been hit by stray bullets while in their classrooms or on their way home. Despite the menacing environment that surrounds them, children showed resilience and shared their coping mechanisms to overcome fear and sadness:

- 16 % of consulted children consider going to church as a way out.
- 22 % resort to reading the Bible.
- 16% expressed they need to play.

- 25% play with friends.
- 29% talk to other members of their family.
- 3% choose to stay alone or cry (7%).
- For those who have access to connectivity and a mobile phone, spending (5%) time on social networks is their choice to face fear. .

The normalization of danger in ordinary routines shows how gang violence is systematically robbing children of safety and access to education. The experiences that the Haitian children are facing a direct violation of their internationally recognized rights. Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes every child's inherent right to life, survival, and development. While article 27 ensures their right to an adequate standard of living, including access to food, shelter, and nutrition, and according to the current information and all the information available on the terror in Haiti, it's clear that these rights are being denied..

Children's exposure to dangers while carrying out certain activities



2. ADULTS: ECONOMIC SURVIVAL UNDER SIEGE

Surveyed adults were divided into two categories: one more specific, called key informant, a compound of community and church leaders, local authorities and professionals from different sectors and students. The data collected through this category focused on the availability of services in the communities. The other category is a more general group of adults.

A total of 569 adults/ key informants were surveyed. Regarding gender, there were distributed amongst 316 women and 253 men. As per age, respondents were grouped in 5 groups: Forty (40) people were between 18-24 years old, 198 between 25-35 years old, 188 between 36-50 years old, 115 were in the 51 to 60 age group, and 28 were seniors, sixty-five years and older.

In terms of daily activities, 31% of consulted adults are engaged in small business activities, 20% have paid jobs, while 5% are studying.

2.1 Worsening Food and Financial Crisis

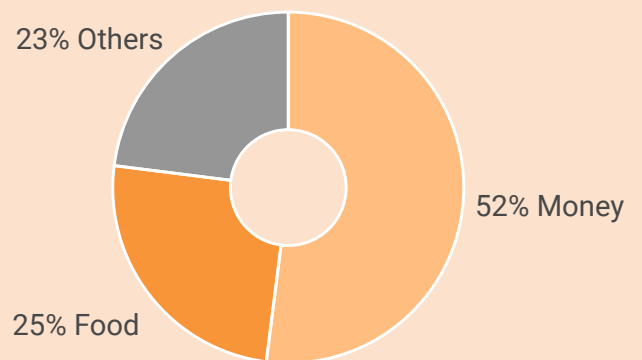
Since its early stages, gang violence has targeted airports, ports, and livelihoods, especially in the capital city, Port-au-Prince. The disruption of supply chains and prolonged scarcity of goods led to skyrocketing inflation. As of May 2025, food inflation marked 29.90% in comparison with the prior year, according to Trading Economics.com. Violence is poisoning the capacity of a country to produce, contributing to further impoverishing Haiti's population. The surveyed adults voiced severe economic hardships:

- 52% said money was their most urgent need.
- 25% cited food as their primary concern.
- 94% said they have inadequate access to food.

- 97% reported that gang violence has made it extremely difficult to procure necessities.
- 83% believe food insecurity has worsened in recent years.

The disruption of supply chains, public markets, and food transport due to gang control has pushed already vulnerable households into extreme humanitarian status.

Urgent Needs of Community Members



2.2 Who is Most at Risk?

According to respondents, the most vulnerable groups in the current insecurity climate are:

- Women (28%)
- Girls (27%)
- Boys (22%)
- Men (23%)

Everyday tasks like fetching water, shopping at local markets, or commuting to work have become dangerous, often resulting in physical or emotional

harm. The groups disproportionately affected by insecurity and lack of services include children, pregnant women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and girls and women in general. These populations are at heightened risk of exploitation, abuse, hunger, and medical neglect, increasing inequality and deepening suffering.

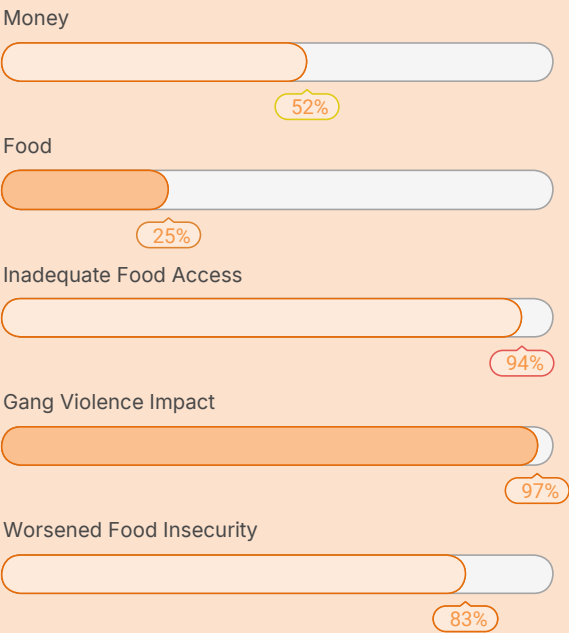
2.3 Emotional and Physical Threats

- 15% of adults reported being directly threatened with recruitment into armed groups.
- 39% have had a family member fall victim to gang-related violence.
- 22% of adults consider going to work or managing a small business risky because of gang violence
- 17 % consider extremely dangerous going to public markets or looking for food dangerous due to gang activity.

The dominant emotional states are deep sorrow and anxiety, shared widely across communities.

This emotional burden deeply impacts Haitian society, leading to a loss of hope and a widespread sense of helplessness.

Urgent Needs and Challenges Faced by Community



3. INSIGHTS FROM KEY INFORMANTS: A WIDESPREAD SYSTEMIC BREAKDOWN

3.1 Impacts on Children's Lives

Community and religious leaders and professionals consulted by World Vision identified the major impacts of gang violence on children:

- Hunger and school dropout are the top two consequences. Respectively, 41% and 28%.
- Children face sexual exploitation, verbal and physical abuse, kidnapping, and the threat of forced recruitment.
- Many have been injured by stray bullets or witnessed acts of violence in their neighborhoods.

These assertions suggest a systemic erosion of safety and child well-being in several communities throughout Haiti.

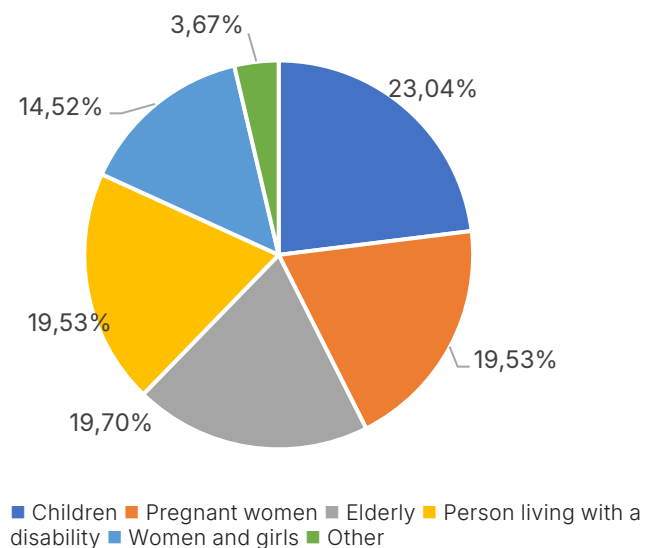
3.2 Collapse of Basic Services

The informants also highlighted the progressive failure of essential services:

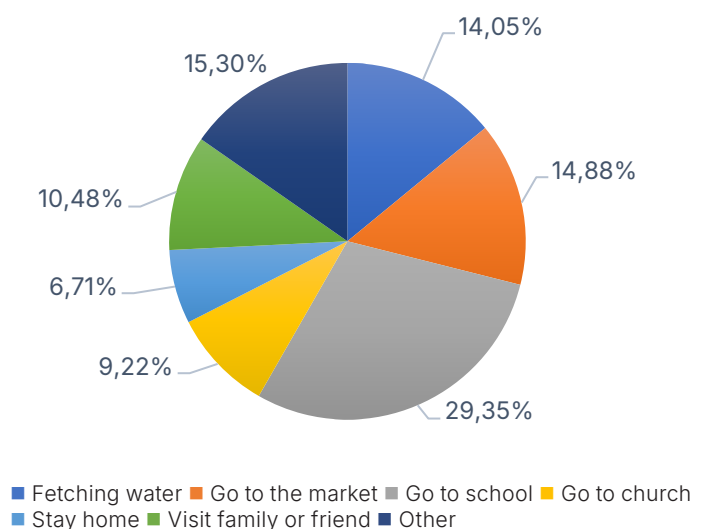
- 97% reported a sharp rise in the prices of food and basic goods.
- 55% noted that healthcare access has drastically declined.
- Many cited the inability to attend school due to violence, rising tuition fees, or school closures.

This deterioration limits prospects and leaves communities without the support structures needed to recover from trauma.

Most affected by gang violence



Children's exposure to dangers while carrying out certain activities



CONCLUSION

The security crisis driven by gang violence in Haiti has resulted in a profound protection crisis. It becomes more obvious that gang violence has gone beyond insecurity and has triggered the collapse of systems that are vital to ensuring children's wellbeing: education, supply chain to ensure food access, healthcare, and even community and family stability.

Children in Haiti are growing up in fear, displaced, separated from loved ones, and deprived of their basic rights. This increasingly dangerous environment is a threat to their development, wellbeing and opportunities. A generation marked by prolonged suffering is at risk at all levels: physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually.

Adults, as caregivers face hunger, trauma, and an inability to protect or provide for their families. This is not only a humanitarian emergency. The deepening funding gap to address this crisis signals a global failure to protect and provide for the most vulnerable people, especially children.

As an active member of civil society, World Vision calls for urgent and sustained action and collaboration from donors, the private sector, governments, cooperation agencies and multilateral organisations to address this crisis.

1. To the Government of Haiti:

- To effectively implement measures to restore the rule of law, while being committed to prioritizing the protection of civilians, specifically the children, the women, and the girls.
- Ensure that schools, health facilities, and public infrastructure are secure and accessible for children their families.
- Facilitate humanitarian access to reach the most affected communities, particularly in the area of Port-au-Prince and the Central Plateau.

2. We call International Donors and UN Agencies to:

- Scale up immediate humanitarian assistance, especially food, water, shelter, and medical care for displaced and at-risk families.
- Provide funding to support community-based services to ensure the protection of children,

including education, access to food, water, psychosocial assistance, child-friendly spaces and health services.

- Support and fund long-term economic recovery programs to restore livelihoods and reduce the drivers of violence and exploitation.

3. To Local Civil Society and Community Leaders:

- Strengthen community-based protection networks, including those of Faith-based organisations, to monitor child rights violations and provide psychosocial support for children.
- Mobilize local resources and knowledge to re-connect families, keep children in school, and rebuild trust within communities.
- Advocate nationally and internationally for sustained attention and investment in the protection of children and families.



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