

LAPOP's  
*AmericasBarometer*  
takes the

# Pulse of Democracy in Haiti

## REPORT EDITORS

Cristobal Dupouy  
Mariana Rodríguez  
Valerie Schweizer-Robinson

20  
23



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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AmericasBarometer  
Barómetro de las Américas

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- Produce high-quality public opinion data
- Develop and implement cutting-edge methods
- Build capacity in survey research and analysis
- Generate and disseminate policy-relevant research

The lab is run by experts in survey methodology who innovate approaches to public opinion research. The team is dedicated to collaboration and pedagogy. The lab's work facilitates evidence-based dialogue and policy decisions about a broad range of issues related to democratic governance.

A Letter  
from  
USAID

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Since 2004, the AmericasBarometer measures attitudes, evaluations, experiences, and behavior in the Americas using national probability samples of voting-age adults. Survey topics include the economy, rule of law, state capacity, trust in institutions, individual values, corruption, security, and more.

USAID relies on the AmericasBarometer to inform strategy development, guide program design, and evaluate the contexts in which we work. The AmericasBarometer alerts policymakers and international assistance agencies to key challenges. Importantly, the project provides citizens with information about democratic values and experiences in their country, over time, and in comparison to other countries.

**Chantal Agarwal**  
Agreement Officer's Representative  
Democracy Human Rights and Governance Team  
Office of Regional Sustainable Development  
Bureau for Latin America & the Caribbean  
United States Agency for International Development



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UNDERSTANDING THE FIGURES IN THIS REPORT

AmericasBarometer data are based on national samples of respondents drawn from each country; naturally, all samples produce results that contain a margin of error. It is important for the reader to understand that each data point (for example, a country's proportion of citizens who support democracy) has a confidence interval, expressed in terms of a range surrounding that point. Many graphs in this study show a 95% confidence interval that takes into account this sampling variability. When two estimated points have confidence intervals that overlap to a large degree, the difference between the two values is typically not statistically significant; conversely, where two confidence intervals do not overlap, the reader can be confident that those differences are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Estimates for the 2023 AmericasBarometer are based on weighted data where applicable. Due to sampling discrepancies, calibration weights are generated for national surveys in Ecuador, Trinidad & Tobago, The Bahamas, and Brazil by strata based on population distributions for urban/rural population, gender, and age. Weights for Haiti and Nicaragua (telephone surveys) are calculated by estimating baseline probabilities adjusted for eligibility and non-response, then calibrated to the distributions of gender, education, age, and region in the most recent previous face-to-face AmericasBarometer country surveys. Cross-time and cross-country weights are standardized so that each country/year has the same effective sample size. Data for this report are based on the pre-release dataset; analysts may find small differences in point estimates when using publicly released datasets due to ongoing data cleaning and quality control.



**COVER ART**  
'Plagas de jardín' [Garden plagues]  
50 x 52 cm, oil on paper, 2020, by Sylvia Fernández  
Sylvia Fernández (Lima, 1978) graduated with a gold medal in Fine Arts from Corriente Alterna, in Lima, Peru, in 2002. Her painting explores the abstract boundaries of the mind and body and its relationship with nature, time and memory. <https://www.sylvia-fernandez.com>

**Sylvia is represented by Galería del Paseo**  
Founded in 1998 in Montevideo, Uruguay—and present as well in Lima, Peru, since 2003—Galería del Paseo promotes young Latin-American artists in the field of contemporary arts. <https://www.galeriadelpaseo.com>

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# Introduction

Mariana Rodríguez<sup>1</sup> and Valerie Schweizer-Robinson<sup>2</sup>

This report delves into the pressing issues facing Haiti, drawing from the comprehensive data collected in the 2023 AmericasBarometer survey. From the alarming rates of crime and insecurity to the underlying causes driving emigration, Haiti grapples with a multitude of challenges including violence, governmental instability, and the erosion of democracy.

The first chapter analyzes Haitians' firsthand experiences with crime, insecurity, and corruption. The data reveal a stark reality: one in four Haitians has fallen victim to crime, marking the highest rate recorded by the AmericasBarometer series. Against a backdrop of increased gang violence and control, Haiti has witnessed growing crime rates in the last decade. Understandably, over half of Haitians express feeling insecure in their neighborhoods, with a majority ranking insecurity as the nation's most pressing issue, surpassing levels seen in any other country in the Latin America and

Caribbean (LAC) region. While a quarter of respondents acknowledge the presence of gangs in their communities, few indicate that these groups provide any beneficial services.

Despite these concerning trends, over half of Haitians express trust in the police, marking a notable increase from the lowest levels observed in 2017. In fact, most would justify a coup by the police to address high crime levels. However, there is widespread skepticism regarding corruption among public officials, reflecting a pervasive discontent toward

Prime Minister Ariel Henry and others perceived as allowing gangs to exert control over the country. When asked about the possibility of cooperating with the U.S. military to improve national security, most Haitians express support for the prospect.

The second chapter explores public opinion on democracy and electoral processes. The 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse exacerbated existing governmental challenges, including corruption and a failure to address citizens' basic needs and security concerns. While a slight majority voice support for democracy, few are satisfied with how it currently functions in Haiti. Trust in elections remains low at one in four, and few believe their basic rights are protected, some of the lowest rates in the region in 2023. Continuous election delays and officials outstaying their terms could be contributing to this lack of trust. Calls for constitutional reform and presidential elections have been met with delays, leaving the populace disillusioned. Additionally, a significant portion of Haitians express indifference or outright opposition to participating in a constitutional referendum, reflecting widespread discontent with the current political system.

The final chapter delves into emigration trends and underlying factors in Haiti. Given the dire circumstances in the nation, it is unsurprising that a substantial majority, the largest in the LAC region, intend to emigrate in 2023. Haitians cite insecurity and lack of economic

<sup>1</sup> Mariana Rodríguez is the Director of Research and Engagement with LAPOP Lab.

<sup>2</sup> Valerie Schweizer-Robinson is a Statistician with LAPOP Lab.

opportunities as primary drivers of their intentions to emigrate. However, despite their desire to leave, many view emigration as unlikely, and legal restrictions further deter their intentions. Wealthier individuals and recipients of remittances display higher rates of intent to emigrate, underscoring the influence of financial resources on migration aspirations. Even today, a historical link to migration to the United States persists, with most prospective emigrants expressing their intention to migrate to the United States.

The findings from this report underscore Haiti's deteriorating state. Escalating insecurity, increasing gang violence, and perceived corruption have led to widespread disillusionment with democracy. The record-high levels of emigration intentions reflect the profound challenges facing the country, with little optimism among the populace for meaningful change.

Given the ongoing security and political challenges in Haiti, it is important to note that the data presented in this report were collected between May 4<sup>th</sup> and June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, with the report finalized by the end of that year. Subsequent events, such as a mass jailbreak and the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, may have further shaped the country's landscape. Despite the invaluable insights offered by this report, it is essential to interpret these findings within the evolving context of Haiti's situation.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**2023**  
AMERICASBAROMETER

**41,524**  
interviews

**180**  
core questions included in  
most countries

**415**  
country-specific questions

**1,100**  
interviewers

**26**  
COUNTRIES



Argentina  
Belize  
Bolivia  
Brazil  
Canada  
Chile  
Colombia  
Costa Rica  
Dominican Republic  
Ecuador  
El Salvador  
Grenada  
Guatemala  
Haiti  
Honduras  
Jamaica  
Mexico  
Nicaragua  
Panama  
Paraguay  
Peru  
Suriname  
The Bahamas  
Trinidad & Tobago  
United States  
Uruguay

### INTERVIEWER TRAINING

**24**

local firm  
trainings

**420**

training  
hours

**10**

waves of  
surveys across  
20 years

005

### CAPACITY BUILDING IN SURVEY RESEARCH IN 2023

**33**

events

**600+**

hours

**1,390**

attendees

### THE AMERICASBAROMETER SERIES

**34**

countries

**385,000+**

interviews

004

# Crime, Insecurity, and Corruption

Gregory J. Love<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, Haiti has experienced a deepening crisis marked by mass protests, public corruption, and a surge in violence. The situation escalated with the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021, creating a power vacuum, and paving the way for increased gang activity, fuel shortages, and inflation. The security situation further deteriorated in 2022, resulting in hundreds of deaths and the resurgence of cholera. The first quarter of 2023 witnessed a 28% increase in reported cases of killings, injuries, and kidnappings, along with a rise in vigilante actions. The weakened state institutions have left citizens grappling with profound challenges related to crime, security, and corruption.

The 2023 AmericasBarometer survey of Haiti is the first since President Moïse's assassination and the country's escalating security crisis. As many functions of the state, which were always weak, continue to fail, what is the impact on citizens' experience and views of crime, security, and corruption?

## MAIN FINDINGS

- A quarter of Haitians report having been a victim of crime in the past 12 months. This represents an increase from 2021 (when it was 22%) and is near the average level of crime victimization for the entire LAC region.
- Most Haitians (70%) say insecurity is the most important issue facing the country in 2023. This percentage is higher than any other country in 2023.
- In 2023, a quarter of Haitians report that gangs are active in their community. This is unchanged from 2021, and reported gang activity is highest in the Port-au-Prince and western regions of the country.
- More than half of Haitians (54%) express trust in the national police, a 12-percentage-point increase from 2017.
- The public widely believes that corruption among public officials is common or very common (73%). This high level has remained consistent since 2012, while reported bribe victimization by police has declined since 2012 (2% in 2023 from 11% in 2012).

In the last decade, reported crime victimization has increased by nearly 10 percentage points in Haiti.

Concerns over physical security and public corruption are perennial in Haiti, but the situation has substantially worsened in the last several years. In early 2021, Haiti was consistently disrupted by mass protests sparked by high fuel prices. Soon, these protests also focused on public corruption and increasing insecurity<sup>2</sup> prompting a violent response from the police. Political turmoil in the country reached a new high point with the July 7<sup>th</sup> assassination of President Moïse at the presidential residence. The full extent and motives of the organizers of the assassination remain publicly unknown, but recent arrests by U.S. authorities highlight the international importance of the plot.<sup>3</sup>

Following the assassination, Haiti—already suffering from high prices, increasing insecurity, and mass protests—faced a severe power vacuum. Just before his death, President Moïse had selected a new prime minister, Ariel Henry, but had not officially appointed him to the post. The lack of an official appointment of Henry left it unclear who oversaw the government for a time—Henry or Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph. The weak position of the state allowed for swelling violence and disorder, highlighted by increased organized gang activity. In 2022, fights between gangs and the police erupted in the capital and surrounding region, leaving hundreds dead. A key event of the conflict between organized gangs and the state was the blockade of Haiti's largest fuel terminal in protest of high fuel costs. The blockage led to the closure of most gas stations in the country, widespread fuel shortages, and worsening inflation. Even after the end of the blockage, fuel shortages continued along with increased gang activity with little effective response by the national government.

In the first quarter of 2023, the security situation worsened. According to the UN mission in Haiti, 1,634 reported cases of killings, injuries, and kidnappings occurred—a 28% increase in comparison to the previous quarter. They also note that in response to greater gang activity and state failure, “vigilance brigades” and lynchings have increased.<sup>6</sup>

The unstable environment created by the security situation has contributed to the spread of cholera in the country. Haiti suffered a massive outbreak of the disease following the 2010 earthquake but finally declared itself cholera-free in February 2022 after three years of zero cases. Unfortunately, this success was short-lived as a new cholera outbreak began in September 2022 and continued thereafter.<sup>7</sup>

## CRIME VICTIMIZATION IS A LARGE AND INCREASING PROBLEM

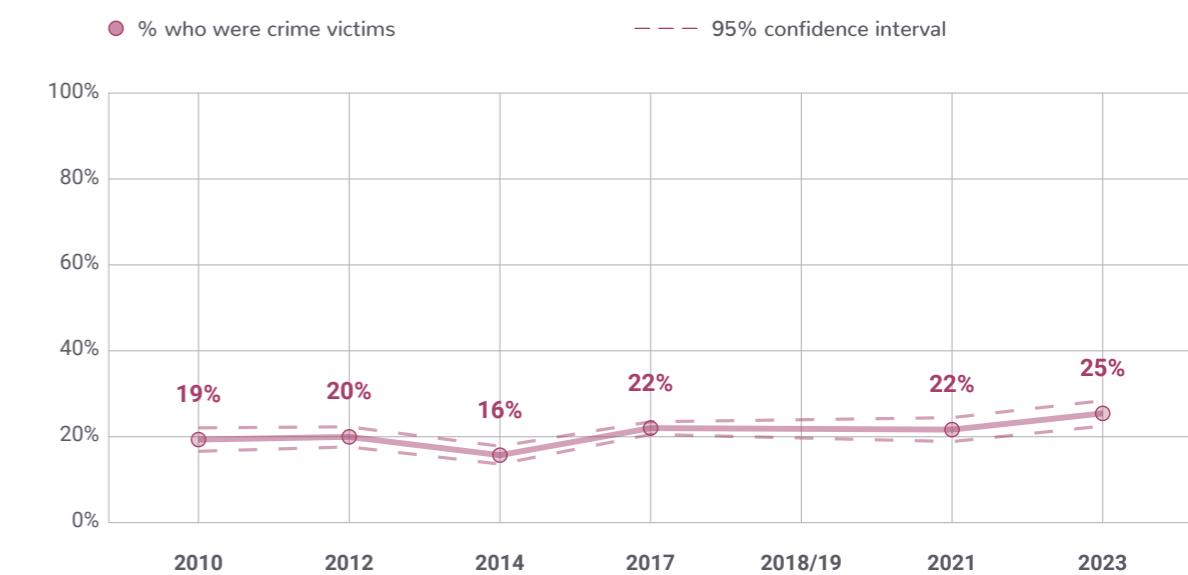
The rate of self-reported crime victimization in Haiti has increased since 2021. In the most recent survey of the AmericasBarometer, crime victimization is measured by the following question:

*Now, changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or any other type of crime in the past 12 months?*

In 2023, one in four adult Haitians say they were a crime victim in the past 12 months. As **Figure 1.1** shows, this is the highest level of crime victimization recorded by the AmericasBarometer in Haiti and is nearly a 10-percentage point increase from nine years prior.

**Figure 1.1**

Crime victimization in Haiti increased in 2023, reaching the highest level recorded by the AmericasBarometer

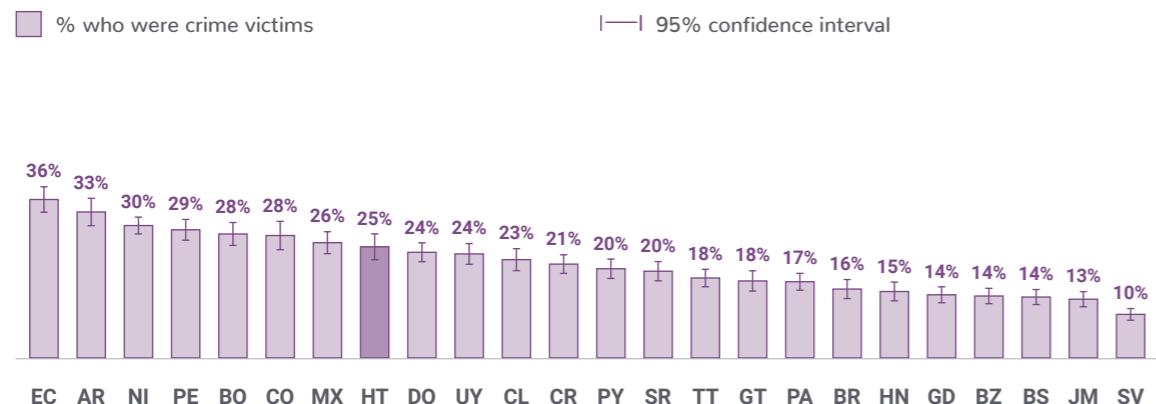


Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2010-2023

Overall, Haiti is among the countries with the highest victimization rate, but when compared to other countries in the LAC region, Haiti's crime victimization rate (25%) is high but well below countries such as Ecuador (36%) or Argentina (33%) (**Figure 1.2**). Compared to the regional mean level of reported crime victimization (22%), Haiti's rate is 3 percentage points higher.

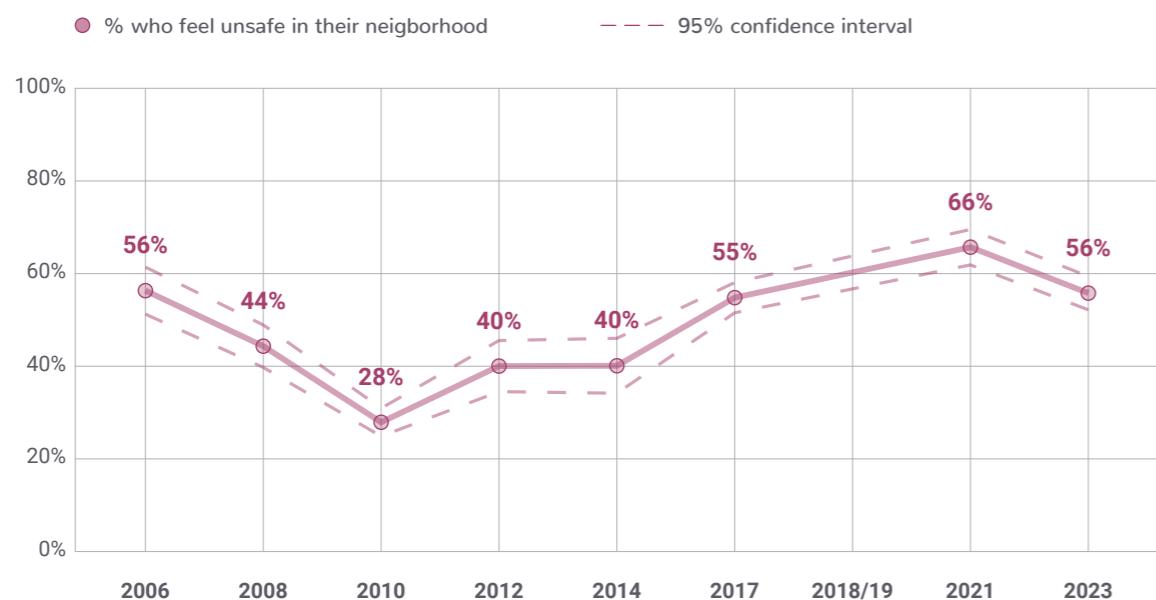
Furthermore, more than half of Haitians (56%) say they feel “somewhat unsafe” or “very unsafe” in their neighborhoods in 2023 (**Figure 1.3**). While this level is high, the current level of neighborhood insecurity is an improvement from 2021 (66%). However, feelings of insecurity remain much higher than their lowest point in the AmericasBarometer series—28% in 2010. Interestingly, the 2010 survey was conducted in the aftermath of the massive earthquake that struck the country

**Figure 1.2** Crime victimization rates in Haiti are similar to other countries in the LAC region in 2023, at about one in four



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

**Figure 1.3** Fewer Haitians report feeling unsafe in their neighborhoods in 2023 compared to 2021



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2006-2023

**56%**

of Haitians  
feel unsafe  
in their  
neighborhood  
in 2023.

on January 12<sup>th</sup> of that year. Despite the destruction and loss, Haitians in 2010 viewed their neighborhoods as safer than in previous years. In the years following the disaster, perceptions of insecurity regularly increased, reaching a high point in 2021.

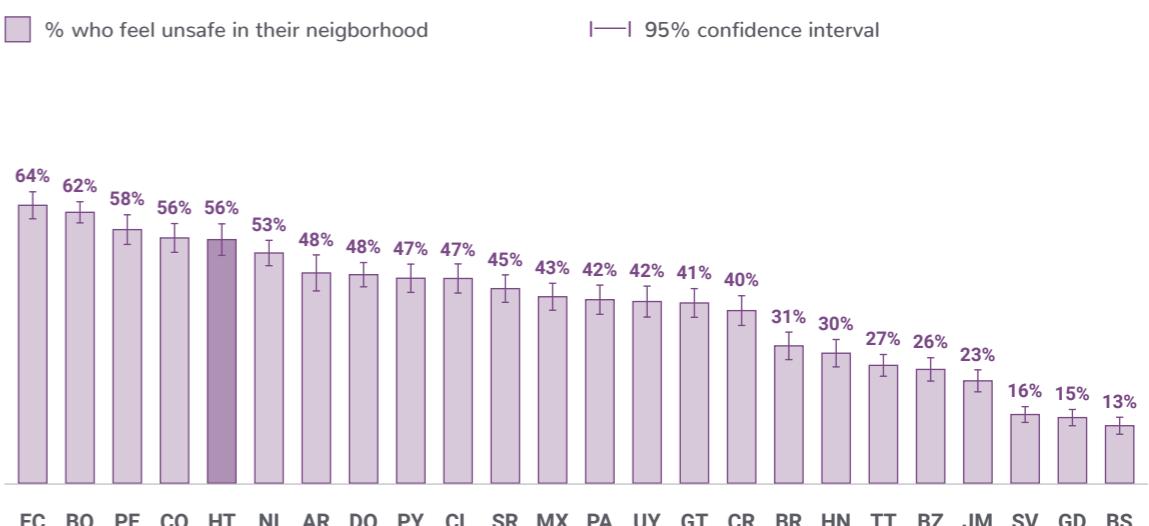
As with crime victimization, Haitians in 2023 express greater perceived neighborhood insecurity than the regional average (56% vs. 40%). Yet, Haiti does not have the highest levels of reported neighborhood insecurity, with citizens of four other countries expressing greater insecurity in their neighborhoods (Figure 1.4).

In addition to expressing significant concern for neighborhood insecurity, Haitians in 2023 overwhelmingly (70%) rate insecurity as the country's most important issue

(Figure 1.5). To put this in perspective, a common concern expressed in other countries in the region—economic challenges—was listed as the most important issue by just 13% of Haitians.

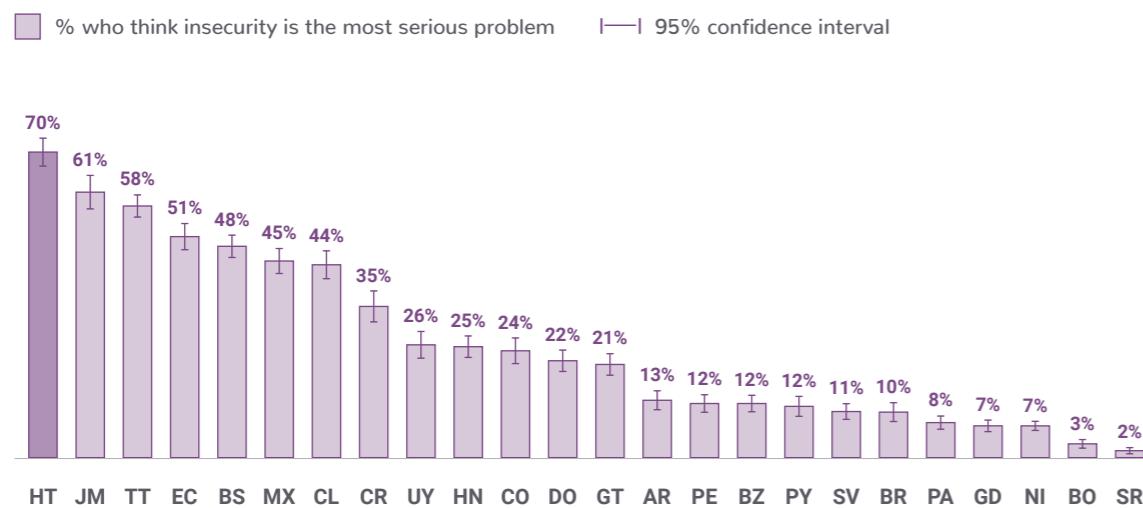
While Haitians may not report the highest levels of crime victimization or neighborhood insecurity in the LAC region, they do see insecurity as the most important issue at a rate higher than any other country in 2023. Figure 1.5 highlights how Haitians are overly concerned with insecurity, even compared to other countries with similar levels of reported or perceived crime and insecurity. Overall, Haitians list insecurity as the most important issue at a rate 32 percentage points higher than the regional average.

**Figure 1.4** Haitians express greater neighborhood insecurity than people in most other countries in the LAC region in 2023



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

**Figure 1.5** In 2023, Haitians report insecurity as the most important issue at the highest rate in the LAC region



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

### GANGS OPERATE IN MANY NEIGHBORHOODS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CAPITAL

**70%** of Haitians think insecurity is the most important problem.

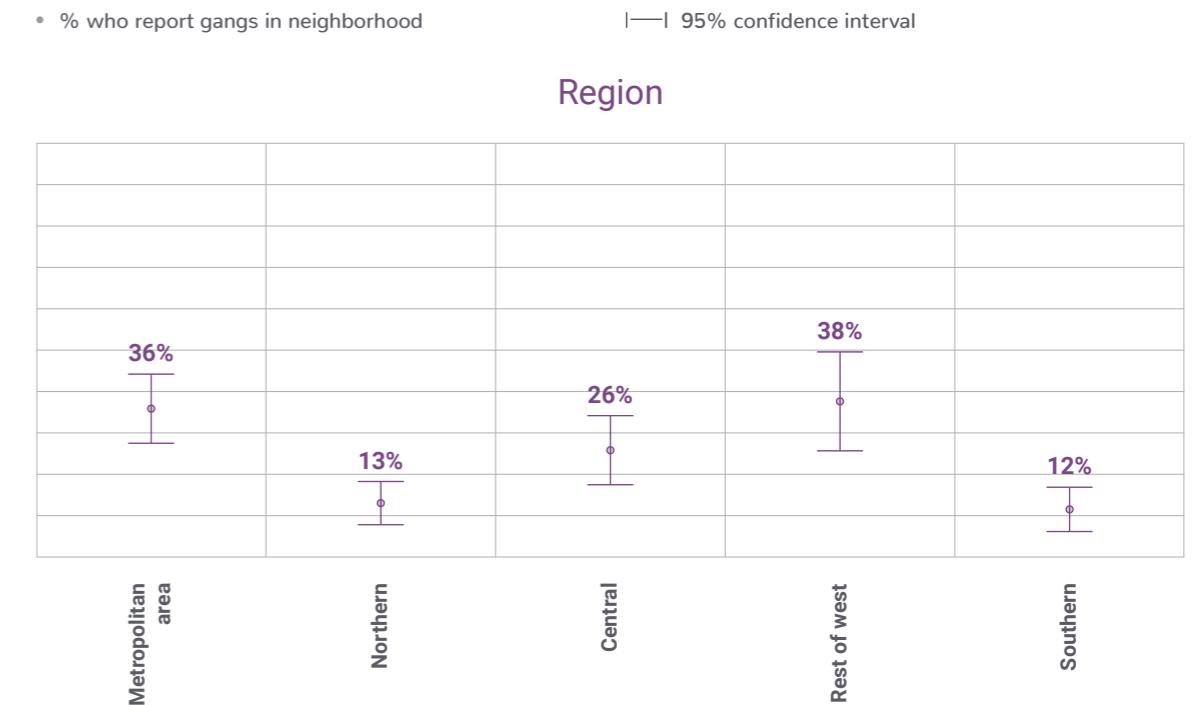
A potential factor shaping the extensive insecurity in Haiti is the widespread existence of criminal gangs. In 2023, 24% of Haitians report that gangs are active in their neighborhood, a rate unchanged from 2021. However, as **Figure 1.6** shows, while gangs are common in all regions of Haiti, they are more common in the metropolitan regions of the capital and western Haiti. In Port-au-Prince, more than one in three Haitians report gangs operating in their neighborhood.

While gangs are common in Haitian neighborhoods, and public services are rarely provided, only 8% of Haitians who report having gangs in the neighborhood say that gangs provide security or any other services. Overall, gangs in Haiti are not taking over any of the public roles left vacant by the weak state.

### HAITIANS TRUST IN THE NATIONAL POLICE, BUT CORRUPTION REMAINS A MAJOR CONCERN

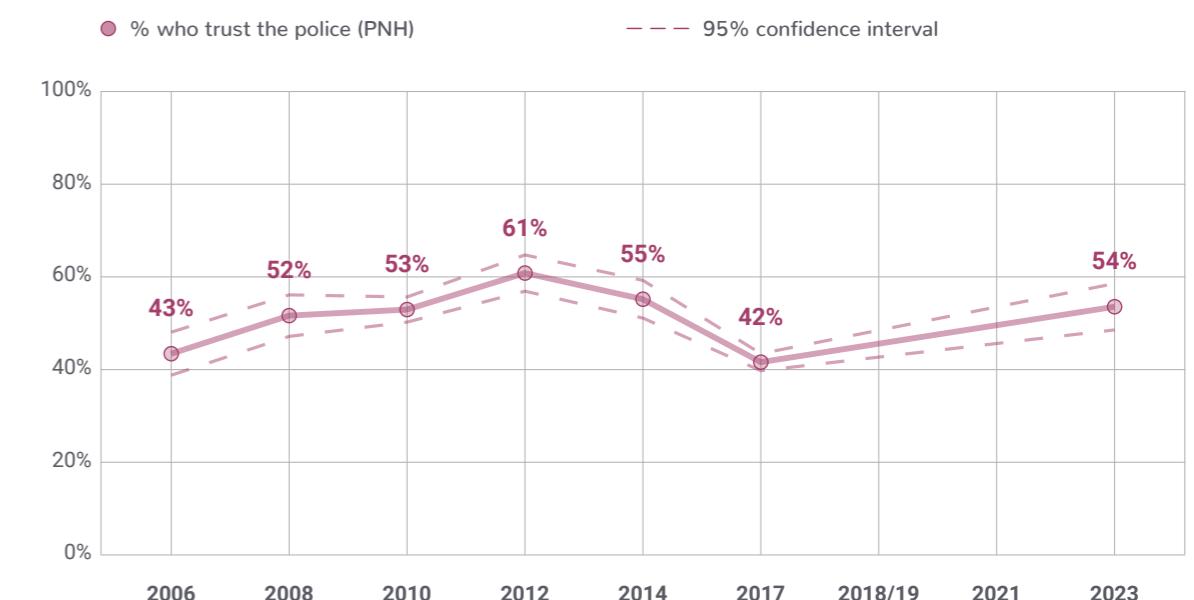
As **Figure 1.7** shows, trust in Haiti's national police (54%) has rebounded since its low point in 2017 (42%). Surprisingly, this high level of trust occurs in an environment of high crime, weakening state institutions, continuing political crises, and exceptionally high levels of concern about insecurity. This remarkable disconnect is also highlighted in **Figure 1.8**, which shows that Haiti has the third highest level of trust in police, equal to much wealthier countries such as Chile and Uruguay. In contrast, citizens of Haiti's island neighbor, the Dominican Republic, express much lower trust in the police (25%).

**Figure 1.6** Gangs are common in Haitian neighborhoods, especially in metropolitan areas and the west of the country

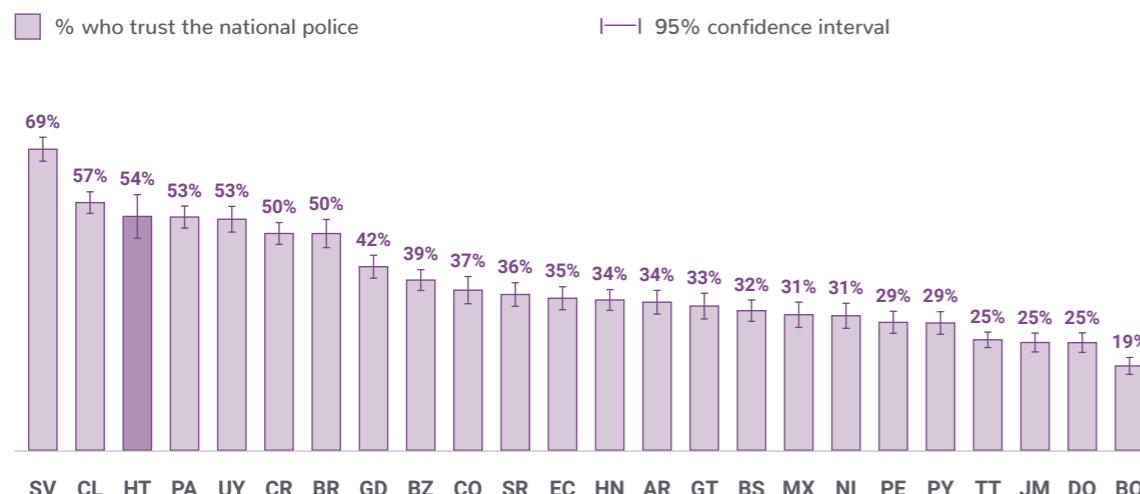


Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

**Figure 1.7** Over half of Haitians trust the national police in 2023, an increase from 2017



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2006-2023

**Figure 1.8** Haitians express greater trust in the police than citizens in most countries in the LAC region

Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

## PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION ARE WIDESPREAD

A potential explanation of Haitians' high level of trust in their police force compared to their regional neighbors may, in part, be due to the relatively low reported rate of bribe solicitation by officers of the police force. As **Figure 1.9** shows, only 2% of Haitians say they were asked to pay a bribe by a police officer in the previous 12 months. Again, this rate is exceptionally low and is comparable to Chile and Uruguay—two countries regularly rated as having some of the lowest levels of public corruption in the region.

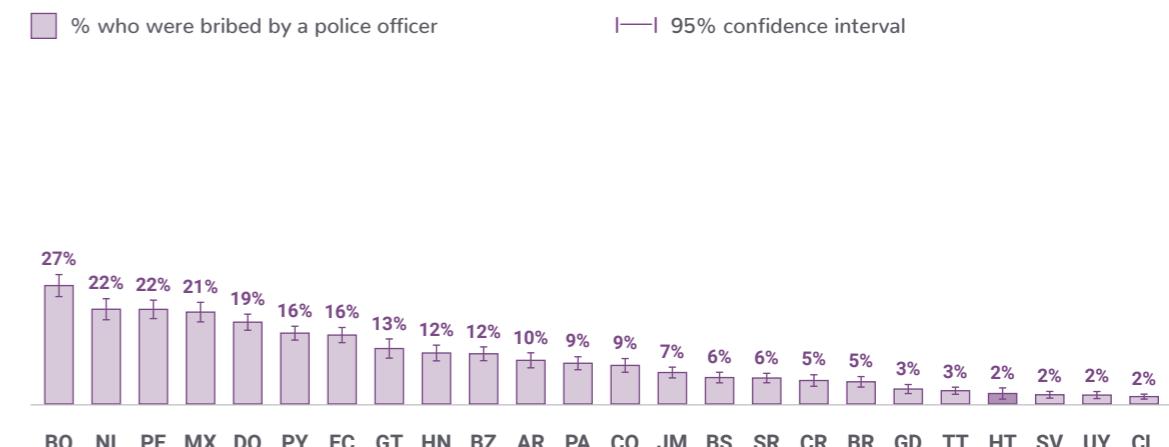
Despite high trust in the national police and low reported rates of bribe victimization by police officers, Haitians generally view public officials as corrupt. As displayed in **Figure 1.10**, 73% of Haitians say corruption among public officials is generalized, either "common" or "very common." This view of corruption

among public officials has remained constant since 2010, remaining high in every wave of the AmericasBarometer.

Haitians also view their government as doing little to fight corruption. In 2023, most Haitians (58%) say the government does nothing at all to fight corruption. In 2014, the last time the question was asked, only 12% said the government was doing nothing about corruption.

## CRIME, CORRUPTION, AND HAITI'S FUTURE

In the two years following the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, Haiti has seen worsening political and social instability. Haitians continue to struggle to have secure neighborhoods and an effective government. Experience with crime is common and increasing. In line with the widespread media reports of increasing insecurity in the country, a

**Figure 1.9** Compared to the rest of the LAC region in 2023, Haiti has low levels of bribe victimization by police

Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

**58%**  
say the  
government  
does nothing  
to fight  
corruption.

quarter of Haitians report being victims of crime in the past 12 months. There is a trend of increasing crime victimization that has continued to climb since 2014, reaching a new highpoint in the 2023 AmericasBarometer in Haiti.

Along with high crime victimization rates, Haitians perceive their neighborhoods as insecure. While the perceptions of insecurity declined slightly from 2021, it remains much higher than a decade ago. Compared to other countries in the LAC region, Haitians both experience crime victimization more often and are more likely to view their neighborhoods as insecure. However, Haiti has neither the highest rate of victimization nor insecurity in the region.

One area where Haiti does have the highest rate in the LAC region, and by a large measure, is concern about insecurity. Nearly one in three Haitians rate security as the country's most pressing issue—greater than any other country.

Somewhat surprisingly, and with some hope for the future, Haitians remain supportive of the national police. Despite widespread insecurity, half of Haitians trust the police, which is one of the highest rates in the LAC region. This may be partly due to the low rate of bribe solicitation by the police. Only 2% of Haitians say they were asked to pay a bribe to a police officer, one of the lowest rates in the region in 2023.

However, this support for one institution of the state does not translate to other areas of the government. While Haitians may often have a positive view of the national police, they view public officials overall as highly corrupt. With large corruption scandals involving public officials at all levels taking place for over a decade, it is not surprising that 73% of Haitians continue to believe that public corruption is common.

Regarding crime, gangs, and insecurity, Haiti appears to have a difficult future. State institutions are weak, organized gang activity is widespread, and political challenges have been rampant since the crises of 2021. Little in the views and experiences of Haitians gives much hope for this to change soon.

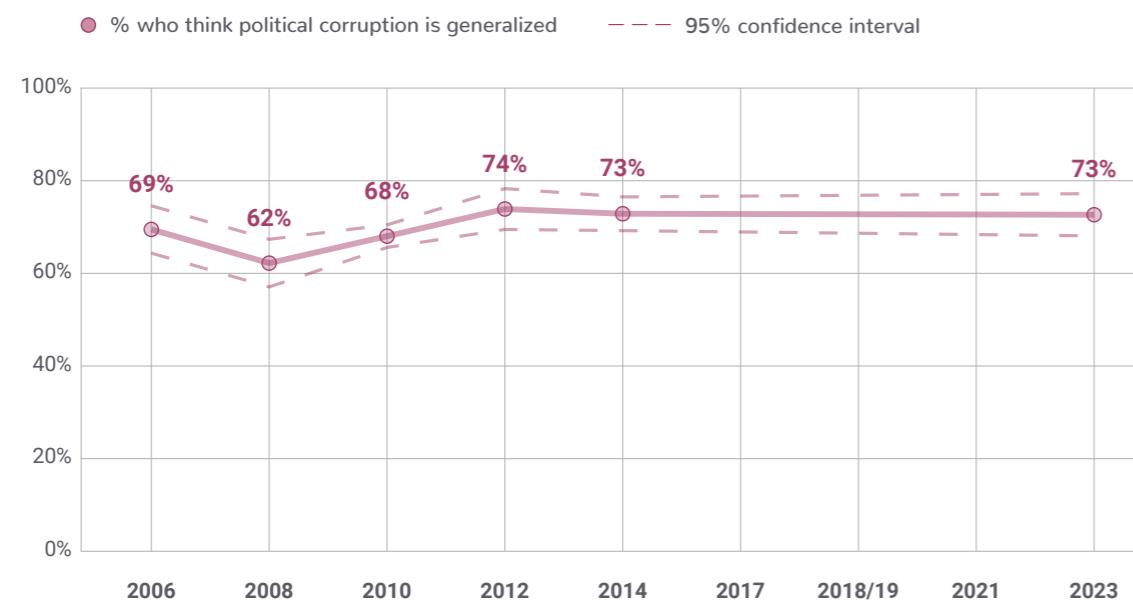
Two potential bright spots are the public's deep interest in improving security and that the police retain some trust and legitimacy despite the challenges of the national government. Additionally, the UN Security Council's authorization of the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission is regarded as one of the most promising solutions for eliminating gangs and reinstating security in Haiti.<sup>8</sup> To succeed, the MSS mission must establish clear procedures to prevent human rights violations, with a focus on accountability

for any transgressions. Haitian civil society groups must be actively involved in the development and oversight of these procedures, alongside humanitarian organizations, to ensure aid access for vulnerable populations.

A comprehensive plan to strengthen the Haitian national police and reform the justice system is crucial for a sustainable transition when the MSS mission concludes. The renewal of UN sanctions and international support for Haitian democracy and rule of law are essential components for the mission's success, requiring cooperation from all stakeholders and potentially increased resources from member states and international organizations to effectively implement the mission's mandate and bring hope for Haiti's future.<sup>9</sup>

Crime victimization, feelings of insecurity, and perceptions of corruption are all elevated in Haiti in 2023. To address citizen concerns about insecurity, a plan should be put in place that takes advantage of Haitians' trust in the national police and the justice system.

**Figure 1.10** Perceptions of public corruption remain widespread in Haiti



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2006-2023

## Notes

1 Gregory J. Love is a professor of Political Science at The University of Mississippi. His research focuses on Latin American politics, democratic transitions, political parties in new democracies, comparative political participation, and political economy.

2 Clesca 2021.

3 U.S. Dept. of Justice 2023.

4 Charles 2022.

5 Sanon and Coto 2022.

6 BINUH, ONCHR 2023.

7 Vega Ocasio et al. 2023.

8 UN News 2023.

9 Jean 2023.

## Cooperation with the U.S. Military to Improve Security

Alexander Tripp<sup>1</sup>

A majority of Haitians support U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military to improve national security.

In October 2022, Prime Minister Henry sought international military support to enhance security in Haiti. As the security situation in Haiti has continued to devolve and citizens fear for their safety, the international community has been deliberating whether to send a specialized military force aimed at restoring order in the country. Such a decision has not only been met with reluctance from international leaders but also from Haitian citizens themselves given the prolonged history of unsuccessful foreign interventions in the nation.<sup>2</sup> The United States has indicated that it will not lead this force, as its 2004 experience leading a military force to stabilize Haiti was unsuccessful.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, in the 2023 AmericasBarometer, a majority of Haitians support U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military to improve national security.

In 2023, LAPOP's AmericasBarometer began measuring approval for U.S. support for the Haitian military with the following question:

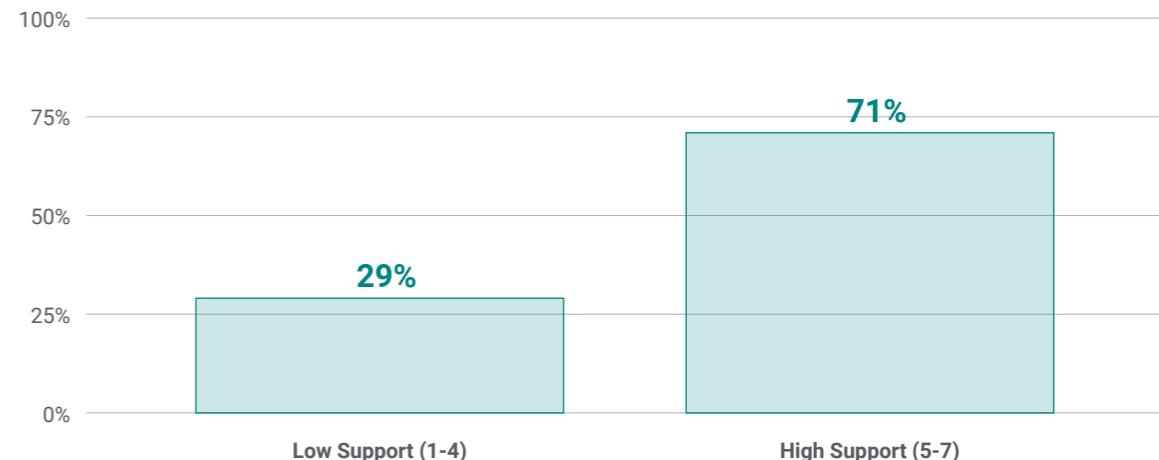
*Using any number on the scale from 1, “not at all” to 7, “a lot,” to what extent do you believe that the Armed Forces of the United States of America ought to work together with the Armed Forces of Haiti to improve national security?*

Here I code responses into a dichotomous variable, which allows me to estimate the percentage of people in the country who support U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military.<sup>4</sup>

COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. MILITARY...

Seven in ten Haitians strongly support U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military to improve national security

To what extent do you believe that the Armed Forces of the United States of America ought to work together with the Armed Forces of Haiti to improve national security?



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

Women in Haiti are more likely to support U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military than men

• % who strongly support U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military

— 95% confidence interval



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

Just over seven in ten Haitians (71%) indicate that they support U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military to improve national security. Just under three in ten (29%) do not support this course of action to improve Haiti's security situation.

What characteristics predict support for U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military? On average, support for U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military is highest among women.<sup>5</sup> Wealth, age, place of residence, and education are not significant predictors of support for U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military.

A majority of Haitians (71%) support the U.S. military's cooperation with the Haitian military in improving national security, and women support this course of action at a higher rate than men. Despite past failures, Haitians support the involvement of the U.S. military—cooperating with the Haitian military—to improve the national security situation. These data hold significance as we anticipate the launch of the MSS

mission, led by Kenya and strongly backed by the United States, both through the Pentagon and the State Department. Despite its multinational composition, the Haitian public largely views the MSS as closely linked with the U.S. military.

As we approach the deployment of the MSS mission, understanding public perceptions becomes increasingly crucial. To succeed and gain credibility among the Haitian population, the MSS mission must establish clear procedures to prevent human rights violations, with active involvement from Haitian civil society groups and humanitarian organizations to ensure accountability and aid access. Additionally, a comprehensive plan to strengthen the Haitian national police and reform the judicial system is crucial for a sustainable transition. Cooperation from all stakeholders, along with potential increased resources, is essential for the success of the mission and the hope it brings for Haiti's future.<sup>6</sup>

**Despite past failures, Haitians support the involvement of the U.S. military—cooperating with the Haitian military—to improve the national security situation. These data hold significance as we anticipate the launch of the MSS mission, led by Kenya and strongly backed by the United States.**

## Notes

- 1 Alexander Tripp is a PhD candidate in Political Science at Vanderbilt University and a research affiliate at LAPOP Lab.
- 2 Murdith, Blaise, and Chéry 2022.
- 3 Foley 2022.
- 4 Specifically, responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable by focusing on responses 5 through 7 while placing the remaining responses (1 through 4) into a baseline category.
- 5 I performed a logistic regression where the dependent variable is coded as 1 if a respondent supports U.S. cooperation with the Haitian military to improve national security and 0 if not. I include sociodemographic predictors in the model—gender, age cohorts, wealth, place of residence, and education (none/primary vs. secondary vs. superior).
- 6 Jean 2023.

# Democracy

Gregory J. Love

Recent shifts in democratic support among Haitians, though showing a modest increase, unfold against the backdrop of deep-rooted skepticism in the electoral process, marking one of the region's lowest levels of confidence. Polarization echoes in attitudes toward legal demonstrations, reflective of the aftermath of widespread protests over essential concerns. Notably low satisfaction with democracy and meager approval for Prime Minister Henry underscore the prevailing discontent.

This chapter traces Haiti's democratic trajectory from 2006 to its current classification as a "closed autocracy," prompted by issues like state weakness, corruption, and the aftermath of President Moïse's assassination. Unfulfilled promises of a constitutional referendum and overdue elections expose the structural impediments challenging both political and electoral progress, intensifying the urgency for democratic renewal in Haiti.

## MAIN FINDINGS

- A slight majority of Haitians (52%) support democracy. This is an increase from 2021 (46%) and is near the mean level of support for democracy in the LAC region.
- In 2023, Haitians have one of the lowest levels of trust in elections in the LAC region. One in four express trust in Haiti's elections.
- Haitians are polarized in their support of legal demonstrations. After years of large public demonstrations over food, fuel, and security, Haitians have become split on their support of protests.
- Satisfaction with democracy in Haiti remains very low. Haitians have the lowest level of satisfaction with democracy in the LAC region. Additionally, the prime minister is very unpopular (3% job satisfaction).
- Support for a coup during times of high crime increases in 2023. Haitians support a coup by the national police more than any other country in the LAC region.

**52%**support  
democracy  
as a form of  
government.**12%**are satisfied  
with how  
democracy  
functions in  
Haiti.

According to the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem), Haiti reached its high point of liberal democracy after the 2006 presidential election, which followed the notable 2004 coup and the institution of a UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSTAH). Since that initial period following the reinstatement of elections, Haiti's democracy declined in the face of economic, political, and social crises. However, following the 2021 assassination of President Moïse and the failure of the government to hold new elections, Haiti is now what Freedom House calls "not free" or what V-Dem calls a "closed autocracy," a category that includes countries such as Cuba and Venezuela.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike other countries in the LAC region that have experienced recent democratic backsliding, the causes of Haiti's failed democratic institutions appear more straightforward. The weakness of the state to prevent the assassination of a president is one obvious reason. A second is the government's longstanding failure to address the root causes that drive the consistent mass protests in Haiti. Both the public and experts agree that corruption is a key factor inhibiting the ability and willingness to address key needs like fuel, food, and security.<sup>2</sup> While many of these factors have existed in Haiti since the first transition to elections following the overthrow of the Duvalier regime, the current democratic crises are partly due to the killing of Moïse and the prime minister's failure to hold new elections. The irony lies in the fact that the fragmented opposition also appears reluctant to pursue elections, favoring instead a new unelected transition to government.

Following the 2021 crises, Prime Minister Henry has repeatedly promised both a referendum on a new constitution, originally proposed by Moïse, and fresh elections for all offices. In the two years since the

assassination, neither has happened. As of 2023, every elected official is serving past their mandated term of office.<sup>3</sup> From the prime minister (and acting president) to town mayors, every officeholder is serving without an electoral mandate. Elections for the parliament originally scheduled for 2019 have yet to occur, and there are no sitting legislators.<sup>4</sup>

In December 2022, Prime Minister Henry signed an agreement to hold elections in 2023. Following the agreement, Henry appointed a transition council to organize new elections. Some opposition factions disagree with Henry's involvement in the transition and oversight of elections and want him out of office before a new election. However, those within the opposition who insist on Henry's complete removal from office have, in turn, become marginalized. Interestingly, the opposition's focus is not on advocating for elections but rather on seeking to assume or establish government positions without the need for an electoral process to take place. Thus far, no date has been set for new elections.

#### WHILE HAITIANS EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY, THEY ARE UNSATISFIED WITH HOW IT CURRENTLY FUNCTIONS

In 2023, a majority (52%) of Haitians express support for the idea of democratic governance (Figure 2.1). This is a rise from a low point of support in 2021 (46%). This 6-percentage point increase in support for democracy comes despite the recent assassination of the president and the ongoing political crisis.

Overall, support for democracy in Haiti is similar to the average for the LAC region in 2023 (58%). While public support for

democracy in Haiti may be close to many other LAC countries, the level remains well below the highest point of democratic support in the AmericasBarometer series for Haiti in 2012 (75%).

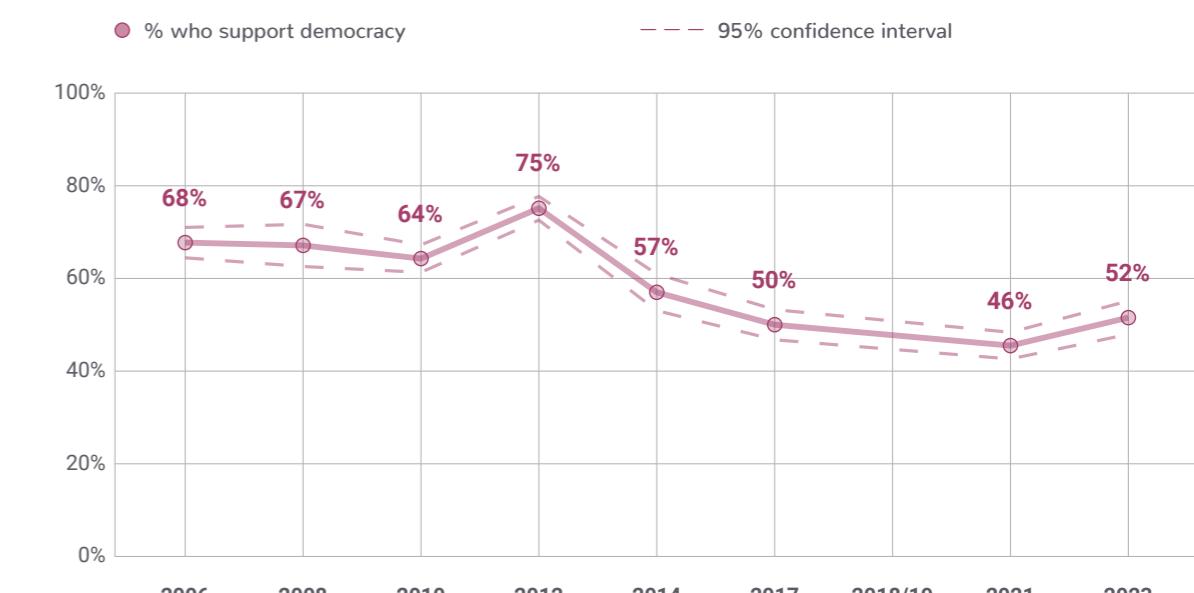
While a majority of Haitians may express support for democracy in the abstract, they have little trust in the key institution of democracy: elections. In 2023, only one in four Haitians expresses trust in the country's electoral system (Figure 2.2). Within the LAC region, Haiti has one of the lowest levels of trust in elections. The regular delay in holding elections may partially explain this low level of trust in elections. For decades, Haiti has often delayed elections for local and national office, including the presidency, for various reasons. The effect on trust in elections

may have intensified in recent years as all major elected officeholders are past their constitutional length of term.<sup>5</sup>

Many stakeholders within the international community assert that for elections to effectively usher in democratic renewal, they must be preceded by the adoption of a new constitution, alongside the implementation of new electoral and political party laws. Failure to address these fundamental issues risks exacerbating Haiti's democratic deficit and further eroding support for democracy among its citizens.

Overall, Haitians may support the idea of democracy, but they have little hope that the country's institutions can provide it.

**Figure 2.1** A slight majority of Haitians support democracy in 2023, an increase from 2021



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2006-2023

Along with having little trust in elections, Haitians also have low satisfaction with democracy. As **Figure 2.3** shows, 12% of Haitians are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with democracy in Haiti, a level unchanged from 2021. The low level of democratic satisfaction follows a dramatic decline from 41% in 2014, before the protests around the disputed, and canceled, 2015 election and the killing of Moïse in 2021.

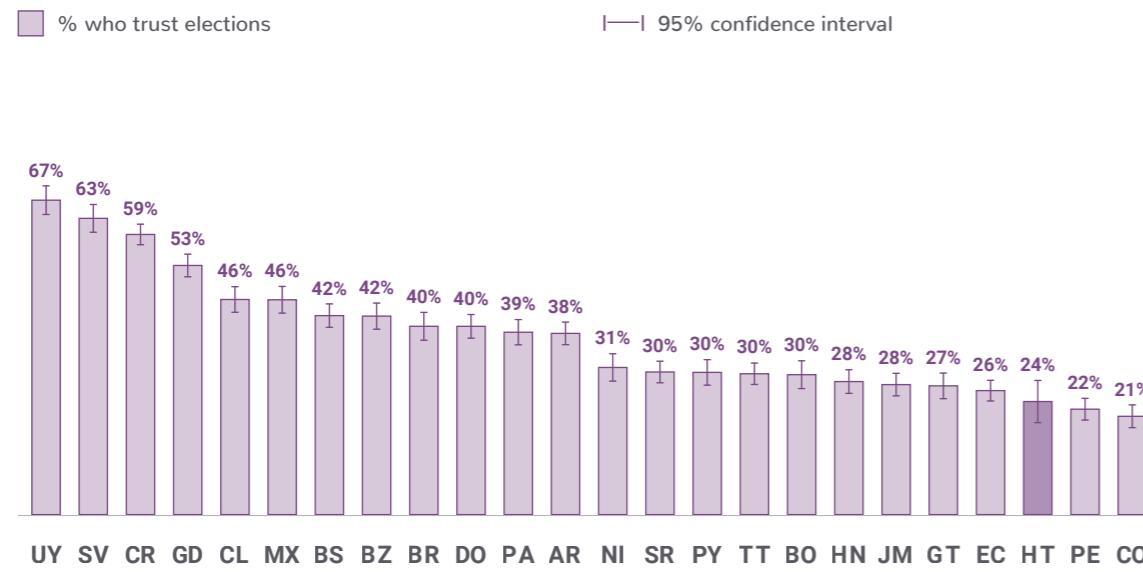
### VIEWS TOWARD MASS PROTESTS ARE POLARIZED, BUT THERE ARE WIDESPREAD NEGATIVE EVALUATIONS OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Large-scale protests have been a common occurrence in Haiti over the past several decades, but in the period following the assassination of the president, rises in gang violence, food and fuel insecurity,

and mass protests have become increasingly frequent.<sup>6</sup> Mass protests also have the potential to disrupt the lives of Haitians. Overall, this tension between protests as a means for expressing frustration with the government and the social costs of protests for many Haitians is seen in the polarized attitudes Haitians have toward participating in protests.

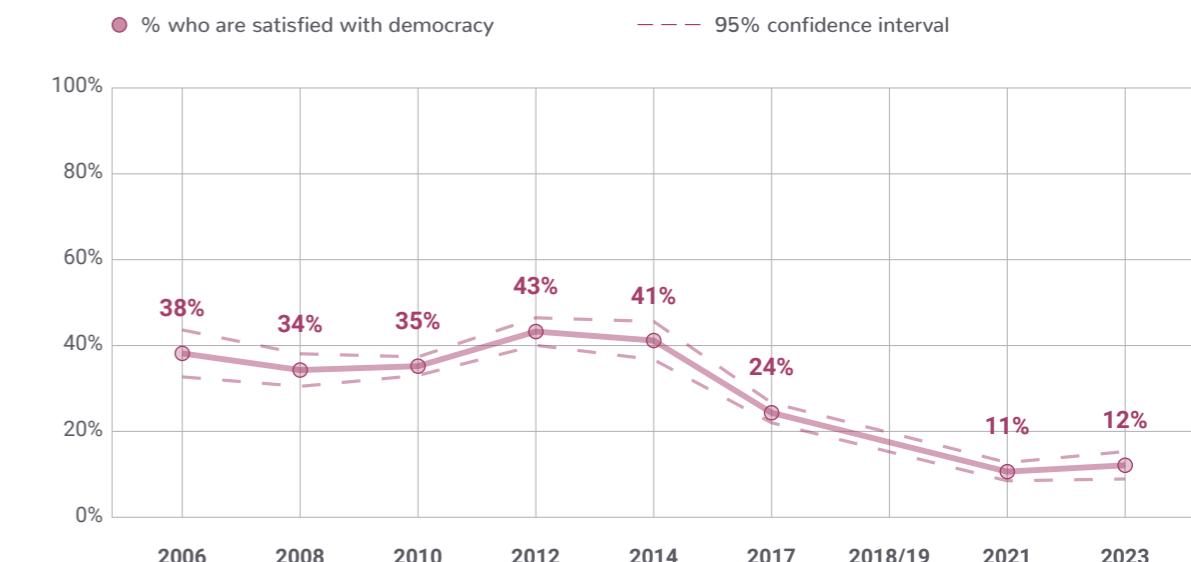
Mass protests have since been on the decline, indicative of a growing sense of fatigue among the population. This sentiment was evident in the lackluster protests following Henry’s failed departure on February 7, 2024. Moreover, protests are increasingly perceived as an illegitimate means of expressing dissatisfaction with the government, often viewed as a business venture where participants are paid to take to the streets. The imposition of sanctions targeting wealthy individuals has prompted some

**Figure 2.2** Haitians have one of the lowest levels of trust in elections in the LAC region



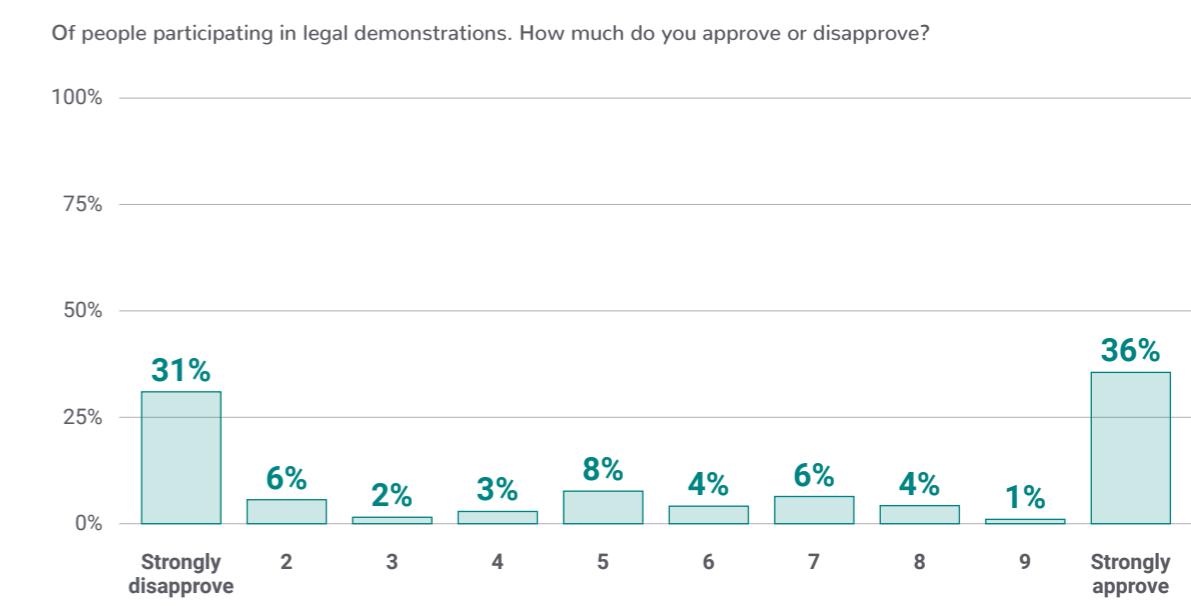
Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

**Figure 2.3** In 2023, satisfaction with democracy among Haitians remains very low, at close to one in ten



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2006-2023

**Figure 2.4** Haitians have polarizing views in their tolerance of public protests in 2023



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

to reconsider financing protests, as they prioritize safeguarding their in-country assets. Indeed, from mid-2023 to the present, there has been a significant decrease in the financial investment in paid-for protests in Haiti.

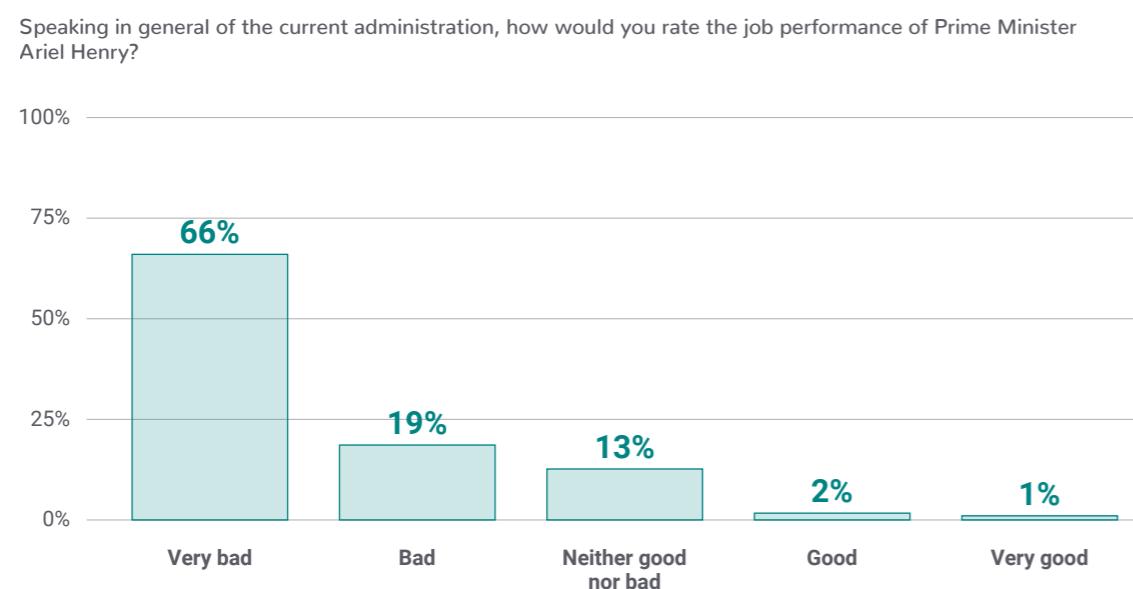
In 2023, most Haitians appear to have strongly held views about the nation's regular mass protests. **Figure 2.4** shows that a plurality of Haitians either "strongly approve" of participating in demonstrations (36%) or "strongly disapprove" (31%). This polarization is a change from a decade ago when the 2014 AmericasBarometer found only 8% of Haitians "strongly disapproved" of protests and 20% "strongly approved."

During political unrest over his term in office and shortly before his assassination, President Moïse appointed, but never

ratified, Henry as prime minister of Haiti. Following the assassination, a central question was who would lead Haiti: Henry or Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph? After two weeks and pressure from the international community, Henry was allowed to assume the offices of both prime minister and president of Haiti.<sup>7</sup> Although Henry had not been elected or formally appointed to either office, many assumed his tenure would be short due to new elections. At the time of the 2023 AmericasBarometer Haiti survey, Henry had been acting president and prime minister for 22 months.

We see in **Figure 2.5** that the vast majority of Haitians view Henry's tenure as a period of failure. Only 3% of the public say he has done a "good" or "very good" job, while 66% say he has done a "very bad" job as prime minister.

**Figure 2.5** Haitians are very dissatisfied with Prime Minister Henry in 2023



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

This is a dramatic decline from the high point of satisfaction with the work of the executive in 2014 during the tenure of Michel Martelly. Henry's low level of job approval is matched only by the low approval of René Préval following the government's failure to respond to the 2010 earthquake (**Figure 2.6**).

The public's dim view of Henry's tenure in office is also highlighted by Haiti's leader having the lowest job approval rating in the LAC region in 2023—29-percentage points below the regional average for presidents and prime ministers. That said, the fragmented opposition in Haiti does not enjoy much more popularity than Henry. While Henry's unpopularity is evident, none of the individual figures or coalitions of adversaries would seem to present convincing alternatives.

## HAITIANS EXPRESS CONFLICTING VIEWS ON HOW TO CREATE CHANGE IN THE COUNTRY

When asked about the best way to improve their community and country, Haitians remain committed to the idea of formal institutions. The most stated way to improve the country is to act locally via community boards and associations (32%). Despite having little trust in elections and a dim view of the national political leadership, many Haitians say the best way to improve the country is by voting (23%) or running for office (27%) (**Figure 2.7**).

Highlighting increasing negative sentiment toward protests, only 2% of Haitians say that participating in protests is an effective way to improve the country.

**Figure 2.6** Some previous Haitian leaders had public support, but few approve of the prime minister in 2023

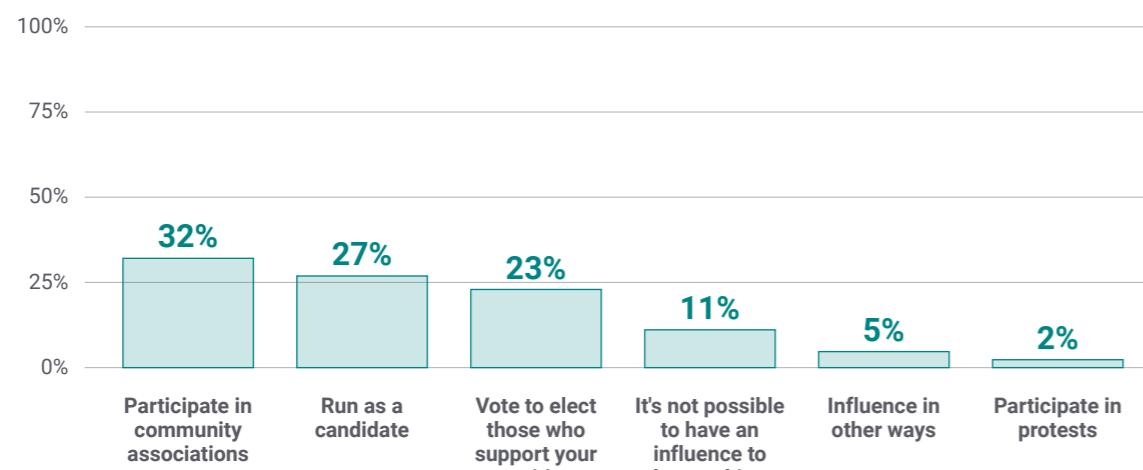


Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2006-2023

Figure 2.7

Haitians look to elections and community groups as ways to improve the country in 2023

In what way do you believe you can have the most influence to change things in the country?

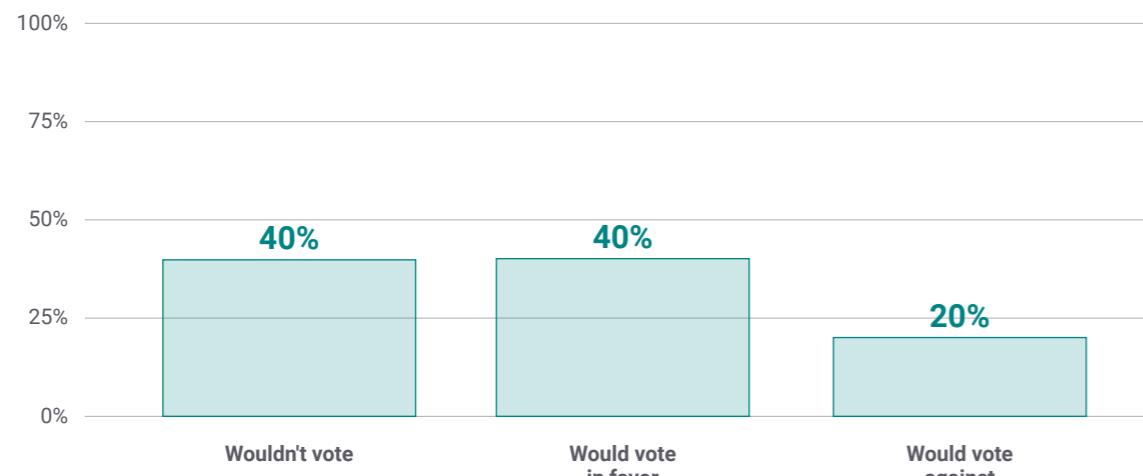


Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

Figure 2.8

Haitians are as likely to vote for a new constitution as they are to abstain from voting for the amendment at all

If the planned referendum to amend the Constitution were held this week, what would you do?



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

**32%**

believe the best way to influence change is to participate in community associations.

Despite the many deeply entrenched challenges Haitians face daily, and have for many decades, only 11% said it was impossible to improve the country.

Since the political crisis over President Moïse's term length in 2021, Haiti has planned for a national referendum regarding substantial constitutional changes, including the abolition of the senate and changing the executive to a fully presidential system, a contentious move toward a strong executive.<sup>8</sup> In the increased political and social crisis following the assassination, the proposed referendum has been delayed multiple times.

**40%**

would not vote in a referendum for a new constitution.

While there is no specific date for a referendum, Henry had previously aimed to hold one in late 2023. If Figure 2.8 is any indication, such a referendum has the potential to pass, but only with many Haitians abstaining from casting a vote. This highlights potential apathy for the political and democratic system and contrasts with the results in Figure 2.7. The need for constitutional reform is one of the few areas where consensus is found, with key areas of focus including the appointment of judges and the removal of parliamentary immunity. Currently, parliamentary immunity serves as a shield for corruption within the legislative body, attracting nefarious actors who seek election solely to exploit this protection. Additionally, the executive's exclusive authority to appoint judges undermines judicial independence, as appointees may feel pressured to align with government interests to secure renewal of their mandate.

While Haitians may strongly support democracy, they are also nearly as likely to support a coup by the national police to help control crime. Figure 2.9 shows that two in three Haitians would support such a coup, a dramatic rise from 2017 when only

29% expressed such a sentiment. This high level of support for an undemocratic action by the police is unusual for the LAC region in 2023. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that nowhere else in the region is the security situation as dire as in Haiti, necessitating a multinational intervention.

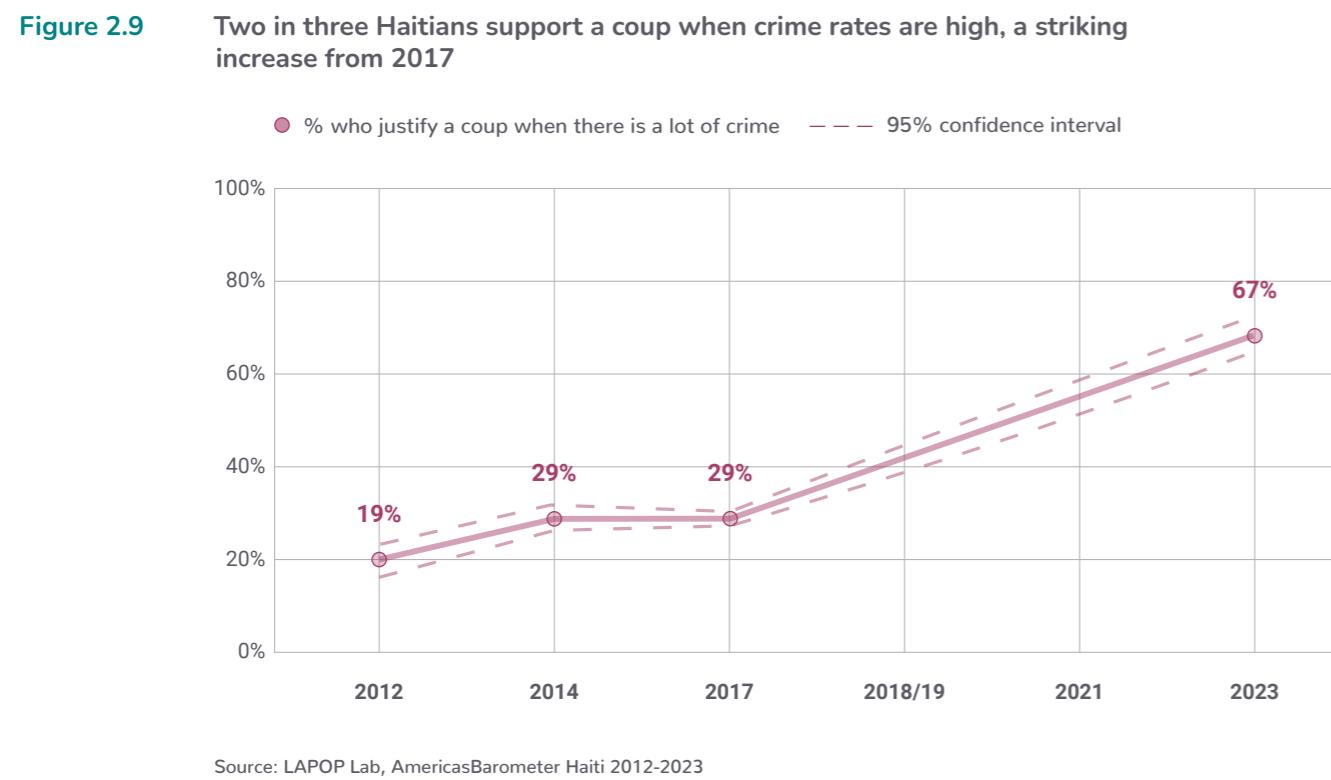
As Figure 2.10 highlights, Haiti has substantially higher levels of support for a coup than any other country in the region. Haitians support a hypothetical coup at a rate of 24-percentage points higher than the regional average.

## HAITI'S DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

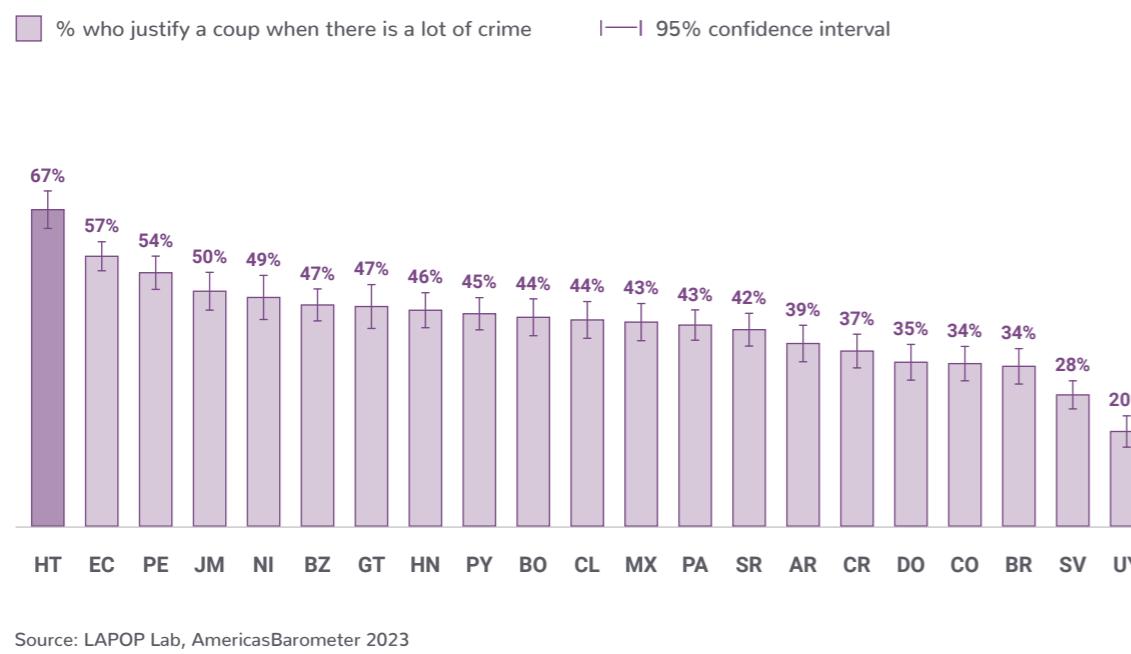
Haitians' views about democracy in general, and Haiti's institutions in particular, are complicated. In the most abstract, Haitians appear to support democracy despite the severe challenges the country faces. In 2023, there is an uptick in support for democracy from a low point in 2021. However, Haitians also express strong support for the idea of a coup by the national police—at a level higher than any other country in the LAC region.

Haitians also show support for engaging in the democratic process to improve the country. A plurality says voting or running for public office is the best way to help improve the country. Only 11% express pessimism that nothing can be done. In contrast, few Haitians trust the electoral system (24%). Again, this contradicts the ideals Haitians would like and the reality of the country's institutions and conditions.

In the past several years, mass protests have consistently affected Haiti's political and social life. Since 2020, regular large-scale and disruptive protests have regularly occurred, including the blockage of the country's major fuel depot by armed gangs.



**Figure 2.10** Haitians support a coup at the highest rate in the LAC region in 2023



**67%**

would justify  
a coup—the  
highest rate  
in the LAC  
region.

Haitians have become polarized around these protests, with substantial percentages strongly supporting and opposing participation.

When looking at the current political leadership, Haitians are nearly unanimous in their opposition to Prime Minister Henry. Only 3% approve of his job performance, substantially lower than any other leader in the LAC region. Likewise, many Haitians express willingness to abstain from a government-backed referendum reforming the constitution. Though it could be expected that many would welcome a constitution aimed at combating corruption.

With so many challenges facing Haiti and the lack of any credible institution outside of the police, Haiti's move back toward electoral democracy will continue to be difficult, even if large segments of the Haitian population hold onto the ideals and hope of democracy.

The absence of a parliament presents a unique opportunity for Haiti. Contrary to conventional wisdom, this vacuum could

be seen as advantageous as it facilitates constitutional reform (via referendum) and the establishment of new party and electoral laws, tasks that would have faced significant resistance within a functioning parliament where members are reluctant to relinquish their immunity.

Haiti further faces significant risks to its democratic future. Firstly, there is the danger of ongoing undemocratic transitions, where political power shifts occur without democratic processes. This could lead to opposition leaders assuming authority without the mandate of elections, potentially undermining the legitimacy of the government.

Secondly, hastily organized elections without prior reforms pose a significant threat to Haiti's democratic progress. Without addressing underlying issues, such as corruption and institutional weaknesses, such elections could risk further eroding trust in the democratic process and hindering the country's path toward a stable and representative democratic system.

## Notes

- 1 V-Dem 2023; Freedom House 2023.
- 2 Transparency International 2023.
- 3 Sullivan 2023.
- 4 As of September 18, 2023.
- 5 Sullivan 2023.
- 6 Reuters 2023.
- 7 Faiola 2021.
- 8 Charles 2022.

## Basic Rights Protection

Alexander Tripp

Only one in five Haitians believe their basic rights are protected, the lowest rate in the region in 2023.

Haiti faces an increasingly desperate domestic situation as gang violence, natural disasters, and corruption have crippled the government. Kenya has received international support to lead a security force and restore order in Haiti, though there are concerns about exacerbating the already widespread humanitarian crises.<sup>1</sup> In this Spotlight, I explore if Haitians perceive that their basic rights are being protected by the Haitian political system.

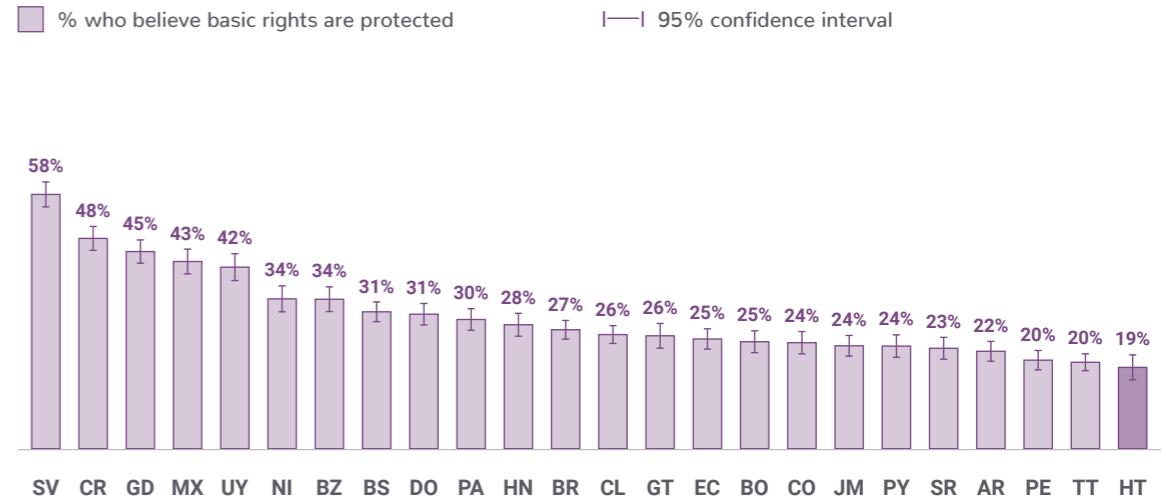
Since 2006, the AmericasBarometer has measured perceptions that basic rights are protected using the following question:

*Using any number on the scale from 1, “not at all” to 7, “a lot,” to what extent do you think that citizens’ basic rights are well protected by the political system of Haiti?*

Here, I code responses into a binary variable to estimate the proportion of Haitians who are confident that their basic rights are protected.<sup>2</sup> In 2023, only 19% of Haitians report feeling that their basic rights are protected, while an overwhelming majority (81%) express dissatisfaction with Haiti’s political system’s ability to ensure these rights.

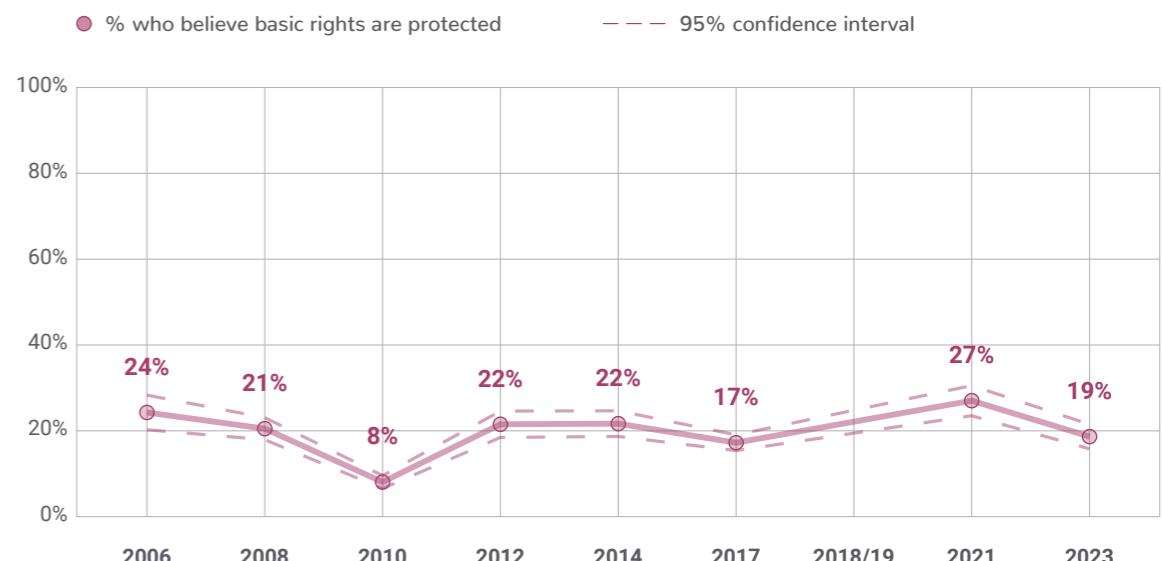
Haitians’ perceptions that their basic rights are being protected decreased to 19% in 2023, dropping eight percentage points from 27% in 2021. As Haiti faces instability and ubiquitous violence, respondents are not confident that their basic rights are protected. However, the results for this question in 2023 are higher than the lowest point in the series, which occurred in 2010, the same year as a major earthquake.

One in five Haitians believe their basic rights are protected, the lowest level in the region



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

After reaching a high in 2021, the percentage of Haitians who believe that basic rights are protected returned to previous levels



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2006-2023

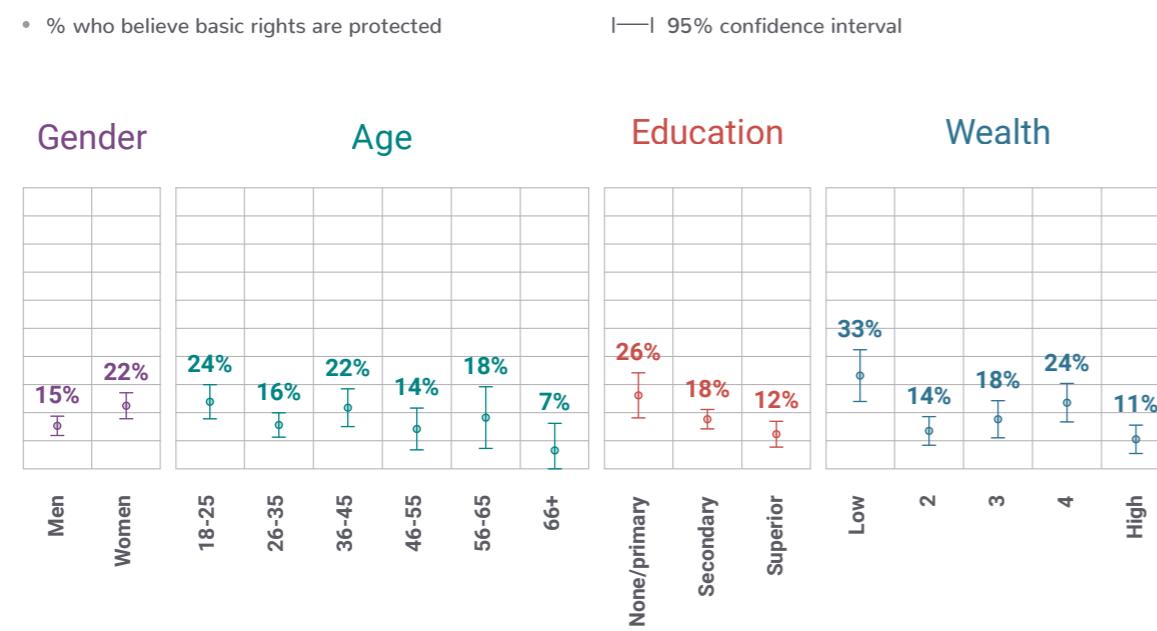
**33%**

of the poorest  
Haitians  
believe their  
rights are  
protected.

What characteristics predict the perception that basic rights are protected in Haiti? On average, perceptions that basic rights are protected are highest among women, younger individuals (18-25 years old), less educated individuals (with primary or no education), and less wealthy individuals.<sup>3</sup> Place of residence is not a significant predictor of perceptions that basic rights are protected in Haiti in 2023.

Considering Haiti's devolving security situation, less than one in five (19%) Haitians feel the political system is protecting their basic rights. This figure constitutes a decrease from 2021, in which more than one in four (27%) Haitians felt their basic rights were being protected. As the international community deliberates on how to address Haiti's instability, gang violence, and interconnected humanitarian crises, Haitians continue to express consistent levels of concern about the protection of their basic rights.

Women, younger, less educated, and less wealthy Haitians are more likely to believe that their basic rights are protected



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

As the international community deliberates on how to address Haiti's instability, gang violence, and interconnected humanitarian crises, Haitians continue to express consistent levels of concern about the protection of their basic rights.

## Notes

1

Mérandourt, Widlore, and Coletta 2023.

2

Specifically, responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable by focusing on responses 5 through 7 while placing the remaining responses (1 through 4) into a baseline category.

3

I performed a logistic regression where the dependent variable is coded as 1 if a respondent perceives that his or her basic rights are protected by Haiti's political system and 0 if not. I include sociodemographic predictors in the model—gender, age cohorts, wealth, place of residence and education (none/primary vs. secondary vs. superior).

In Haiti in 2023, there were not enough cases to report out on those who responded, "neither man nor woman" or "no response." Since these categories are exclusive, I do not collapse categories. In Haiti in 2023, 0.04% of respondents identified as a gender other than man or woman and 0.07% gave no response

# Factors Shaping Migration

Gregory J. Love

This chapter explores the evolving patterns of Haitian migration, tracing its roots from the aftermath of the 1991 coup to contemporary waves influenced by crises such as the 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew in 2016. The United Nations' (UN) recognition of a new migration wave since 2021, marked by perilous sea crossings, sets the stage. The significance of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians in the United States is highlighted, offering legal residency, and facilitating remittances back to Haiti.

The 2023 AmericasBarometer data reveal high intentions to emigrate amid food, fuel, and security crises, with the United States as the most desired destination. Legal barriers and financial resources emerge as pivotal factors influencing migration decisions, reflecting a nuanced interplay of intentions, expectations, and socio-economic factors among Haitians.

## MAIN FINDINGS

- Four in five Haitians (79%) intend to emigrate in the next three years. In the face of Haiti's food, fuel, and physical security crises, the desire to migrate to another country to work and live is widespread.
- Although intentions are high, fewer Haitians expect to emigrate in the next three years. Most do not think it is likely they will leave.
- Haitians who intend to leave are increasingly taking steps toward emigrating. Three in five Haitians in 2023 (59%) say they have taken one or more steps to prepare to emigrate, a substantial increase from 2021 (50%).
- The United States is the most desirable country for emigration. Among those who wish to emigrate, most (69%) want to move to the United States.
- Haitians who expect to emigrate are wealthier. Having financial resources does not affect who wants to emigrate but does predict who is likely to leave.
- The desire and expectation to emigrate are greater among Haitians receiving remittances. Having strong links to people working in other countries increases the intention and likelihood of emigrating.

**79%**

intend to  
emigrate in  
the next five  
years.

The modern wave of Haitian migration to the United States, Canada, and countries in the LAC region began in the wake of the 1991 coup and the political and social unrest that followed. From 1991 to 1994, thousands of Haitians left the country by attempting dangerous sea crossings in small rafts and boats. Since that period, events such as the 2010 earthquake, a subsequent cholera outbreak, and the destruction of Hurricane Matthew in 2016 have produced additional waves of emigration.<sup>1</sup> The UN notes that starting in 2021, conditions in the country have created a new wave of migrants leaving Haiti, often in unsafe rafts.<sup>2</sup>

**18%**

say it is  
“very likely”  
that they will  
emigrate.

Since the 2010 earthquake, many Haitians in the United States have been covered by a TPS order, allowing them to remain and work legally in the country. Since 2010, the United States government planned for the end of the TPS program for Haiti, but it has not been terminated for all groups. In 2023, the TPS order was renewed and expanded to cover Haitians living in the United States as of February 24th, 2023, highlighting the widespread recognition of the deep crisis in the country.

The TPS program also allows Haitians in the United States to provide substantial remittances to people living in Haiti. This assistance can be valuable to improve the lives of Haitians and facilitate emigration.

While the United States has the largest Haitian migrant community, it is not the only country to receive Haitian migrants. The two other links that often predict where Haitians migrate are language and location. The francophone Canadian province of Quebec increasingly receives Haitian migrants along with neighboring island countries in the Caribbean.<sup>3</sup> However, countries in the LAC region increasingly serve as transit rather than destination countries. Since 2021,

the number of Haitians attempting to emigrate to the United States from South America over land has risen dramatically. Previously, almost no Haitians attempted the dangerous route through the Darien Gap, but in 2021, nearly 80,000 crossed the border into Panama.

### FOUR IN FIVE INTEND TO EMIGRATE, BUT A MINORITY EXPECT TO DO SO IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS

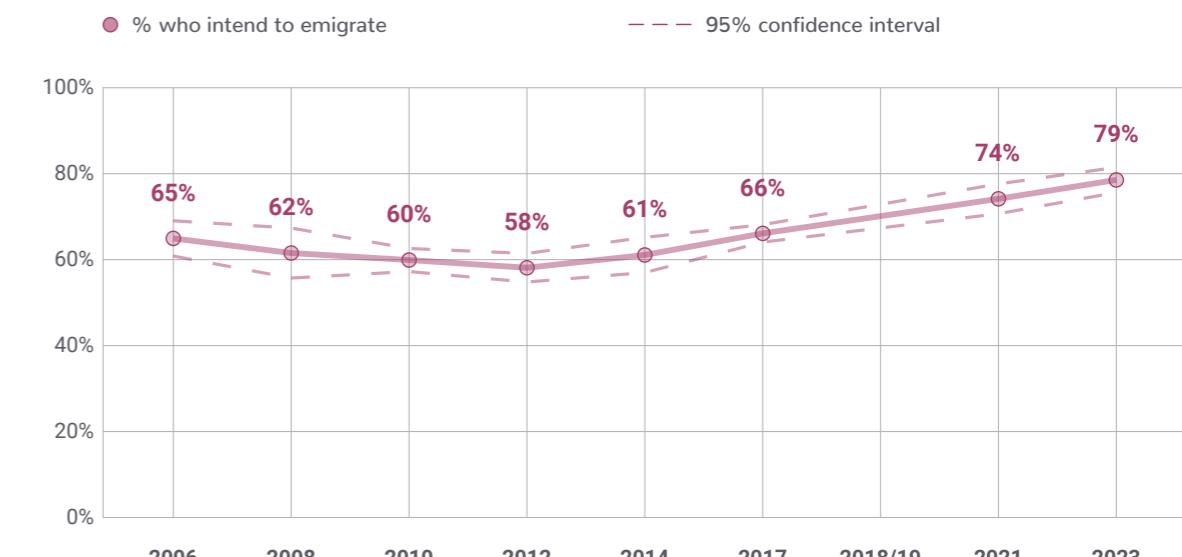
In a continuing trend over the past decade, an increasing number of Haitians say they plan to emigrate to another country to live and work (Figure 3.1). In 2023, almost four in five Haitians say they intend to emigrate. Since the start of the AmericasBarometer in Haiti in 2006, a majority of Haitians have always expressed an intention to emigrate, but 2023 was the highest level recorded.

In the LAC region in 2023, Haitians are much more likely to intend to emigrate than any other country (Figure 3.2). While 79% of Haitians say they intend to emigrate, in the next highest country, Jamaica, 57% of residents express a desire to emigrate. Overall, Haitians intend to emigrate at a rate 46 percentage points higher than the LAC regional mean (33%).

Because the desire to emigrate is so widespread in Haiti, almost no demographic or social factor differentiates between those who wish to emigrate and those who do not. Neither age, wealth, gender, education, crime victimhood, nor food insecurity shape who wishes to emigrate. The only factor that correlates with the desire to emigrate is receiving remittances from abroad.<sup>4</sup> We explore the factors shaping emigration attitudes in the second section of this chapter.

Figure 3.1

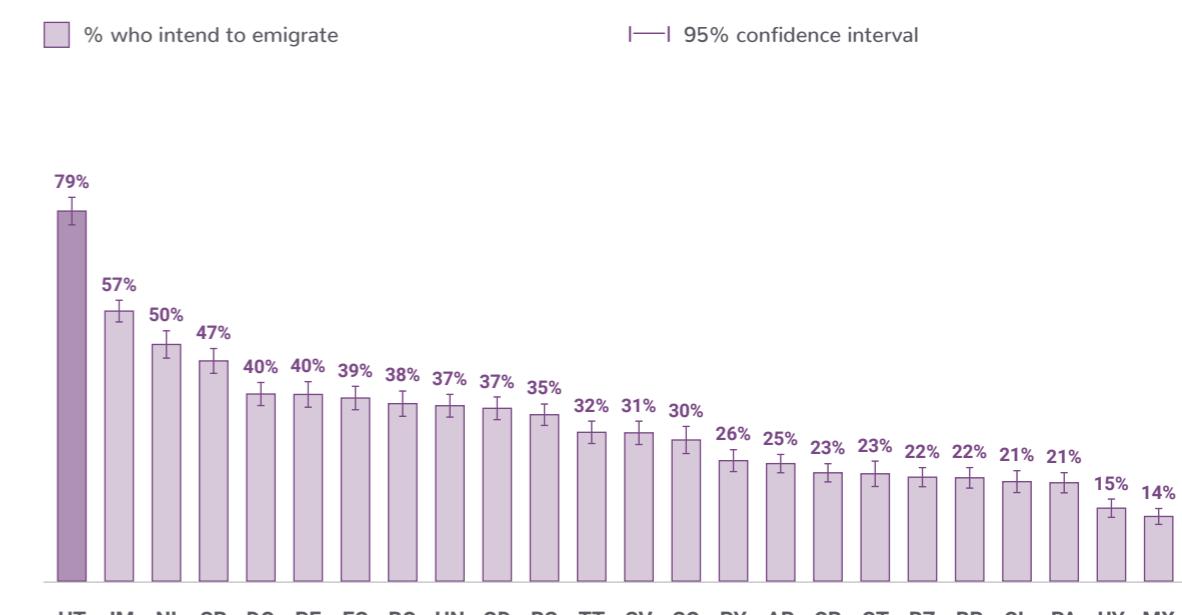
Haitians increasingly intend to emigrate, with intentions reaching a record high of four in five in 2023



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2006-2023

Figure 3.2

Haitians have the highest intentions to emigrate in the LAC region in 2023



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

**59%**

have taken  
steps toward  
emigrating.

While 79% of Haitians say they intend to emigrate, fewer say they expect (that is, say they are somewhat or very likely) to emigrate within the next three years (Figure 3.3). Most say they are either "not likely" (36%) or "a little likely" (31%) to move to another country. Few (18%) say they are "very likely" to move to another country within the next three years. Combining the "very likely" and "somewhat likely" categories, about one in three Haitians expect to emigrate to work or live abroad in the next three years.

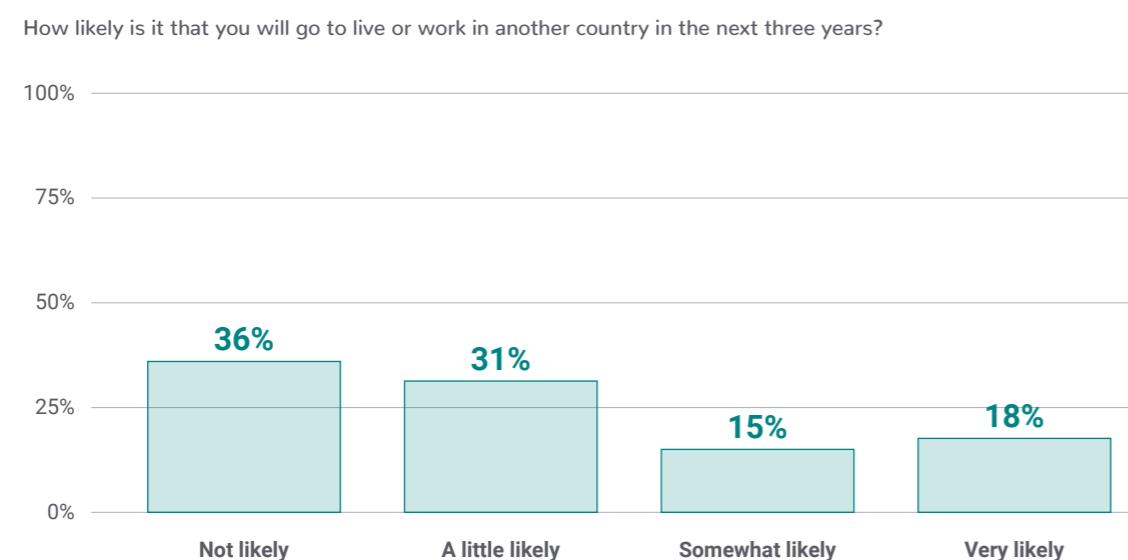
When asked if they would emigrate if they had the financial resources but lacked legal documentation to enter and work in a foreign country, most Haitians are either "not likely" (47%) or only "a little likely" (25%). Figure 3.4 highlights that while resources and personal networks may be

important factors in shaping who is likely to emigrate, which we explore below, legal restrictions on immigration strongly shape attitudes about emigration. Many Haitians say that they need both the resources to leave and the legal right to work in a new country.

While most Haitians say they are unlikely to emigrate without some legal status, many are taking steps to prepare to emigrate (Figure 3.5). Three in five Haitians in 2023 who intend to emigrate say they have taken one or more steps to prepare to emigrate, a substantial increase from 2021 (50%). This provides evidence that Haitians have little hope that the country's conditions will improve in the near future and are increasingly preparing to move abroad.

Figure 3.3

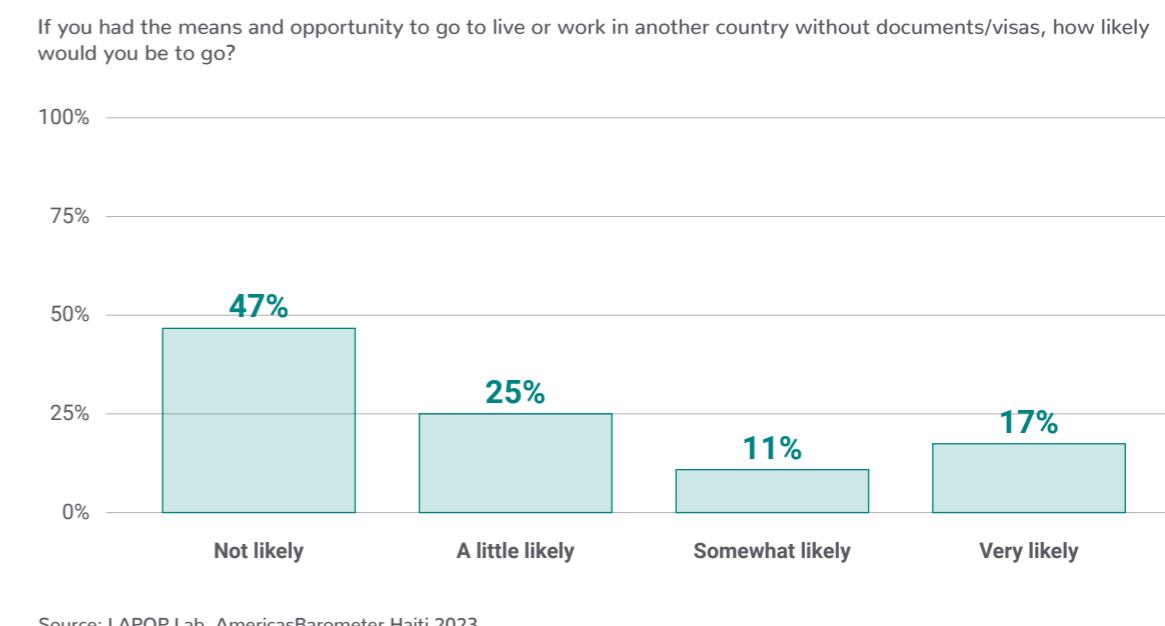
Although most intend to emigrate, a minority of Haitians think it is likely they will leave within the next three years



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

Figure 3.4

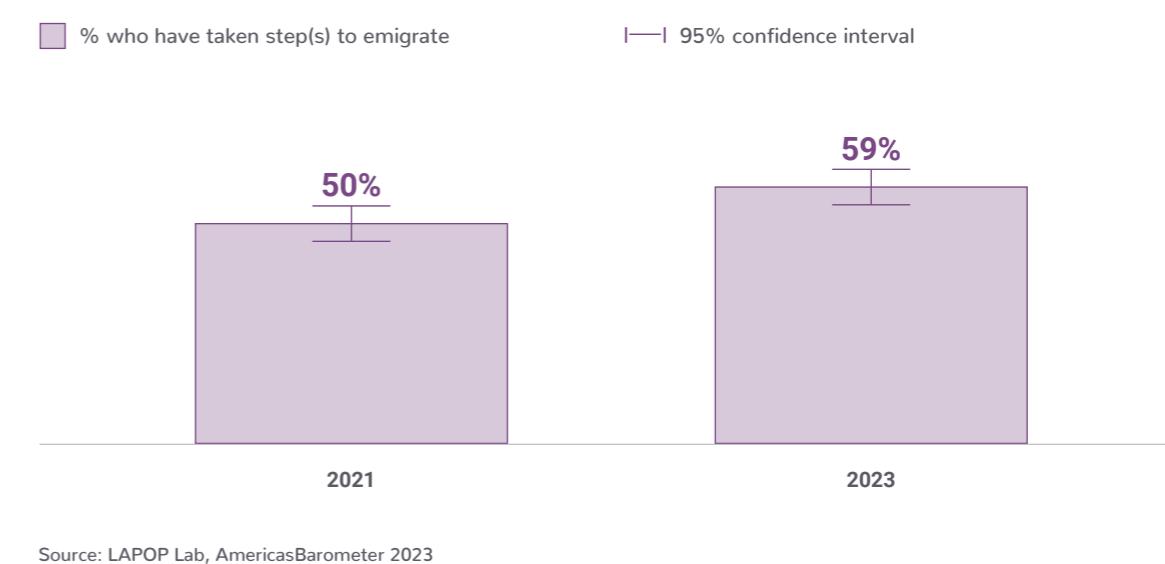
Even if they had the resources to leave, most Haitians would not emigrate if they did not have a visa/papers



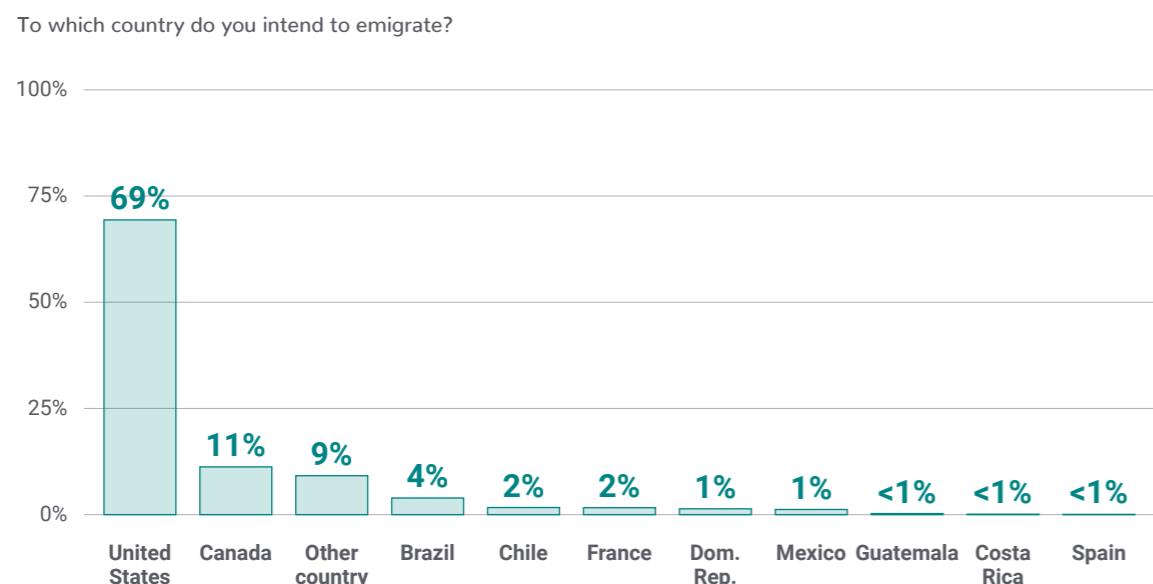
Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

Figure 3.5

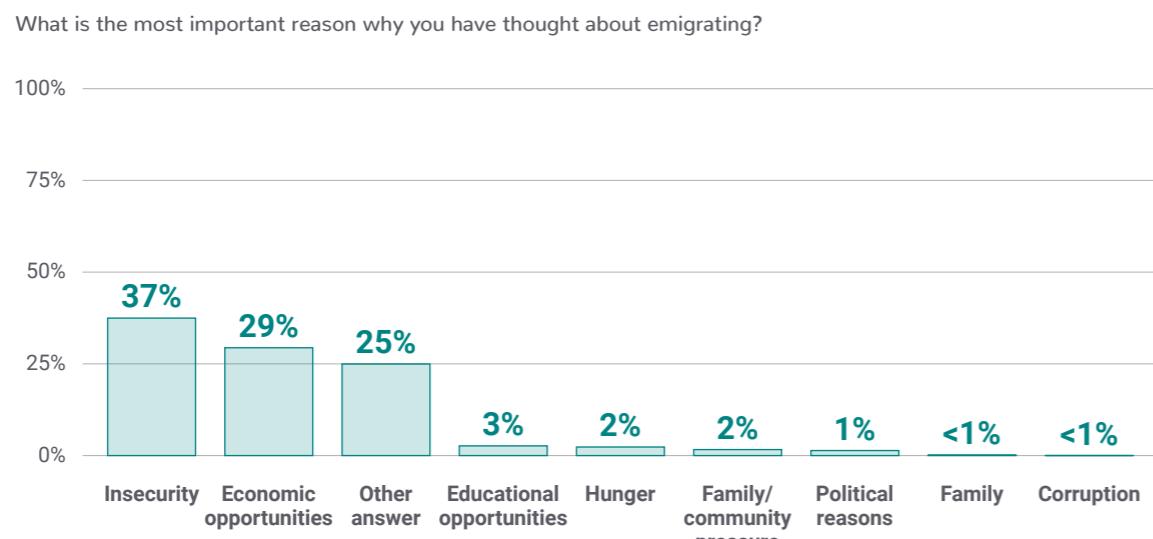
Three in five Haitians who intend to emigrate report having taken a step toward emigrating in the past year, an increase from 2021



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

**Figure 3.6** Among those who intend to emigrate, most Haitians plan to go to the United States

Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

**Figure 3.7** Haitians most commonly cite insecurity as the primary reason they intend to emigrate, followed by the lack of economic opportunities

Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

Of the 79% of Haitians who intend to emigrate in the next three years, the vast majority wish to move to the United States (69%), with the second most popular country being Canada (11%). This result is expected in part because of the migration linkages between the United States and Haiti going back over 50 years. This history of migration has made the United States home to the largest Haitian diaspora community, providing social and familial linkages that facilitate migration.<sup>5</sup> The other factor shaping the choice of destination country is economic opportunity. While the Dominican Republic shares a land border with Haiti and hosts the second-largest Haitian migrant community, it offers few economic opportunities for Haitians and has a history of substantial anti-Haitian discrimination and violence.<sup>6</sup> Recent moves by the Dominican Republic government have made emigration more difficult. As part of an ongoing dispute over a water canal, in September 2023, the Dominican Republic closed all air, water, and land borders with Haiti.<sup>7</sup> The border partially opened in early October 2023, despite the Dominican Republic no longer issuing visas to Haitian nationals.

### HAITIANS WANT TO EMIGRATE TO BETTER ECONOMIC AND SECURITY CONDITIONS, AND IT IS THOSE WITH GREATER RESOURCES WHO EXPECT TO EMIGRATE

While no demographic differentiates between who intends to emigrate and who does not, Haitians do express several key reasons why they want to live and work in another country (Figure 3.7). Top of the list, and in line with the results from Chapter 1, Haitians most often say they wish to emigrate due to insecurity and violence. While many Haitians wish to move because of insecurity, being a victim of crime, as noted above, is not correlated with intending to emigrate.

The second most expressed reason for intending to emigrate is the economic situation. With 30% of Haitians living in extreme poverty and international organizations warning the country is highly vulnerable to famine,<sup>8</sup> the widespread desire to emigrate for economic opportunities is reasonable. However, the desire to emigrate is so common that we do not find either wealth or food insecurity to be reliably correlated with emigration intentions.

While the desire to emigrate is so widespread that wealth does not affect the intent to emigrate, it does appear to influence who expects (who is somewhat or very likely) to emigrate. Haitians in the wealthiest group are significantly more likely to say it is likely that they will emigrate (Figure 3.8).

Similarly, wealthier Haitians are also more likely to have taken a step toward emigrating (Figure 3.8). But having resources also makes it less likely that someone would emigrate without legal status.

Haitians cite insecurity as the most important reason they have thought about emigrating.

The other factor that distinguishes between who expects to emigrate and who does not is having a link to a foreign country. As shown in **Figure 3.9**, Haitians who receive remittances are more likely to intend to emigrate, a trend that has been consistent since 2006.<sup>9</sup>

### HAITI'S POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SECURITY CRISES AND THE FUTURE OF MIGRATION

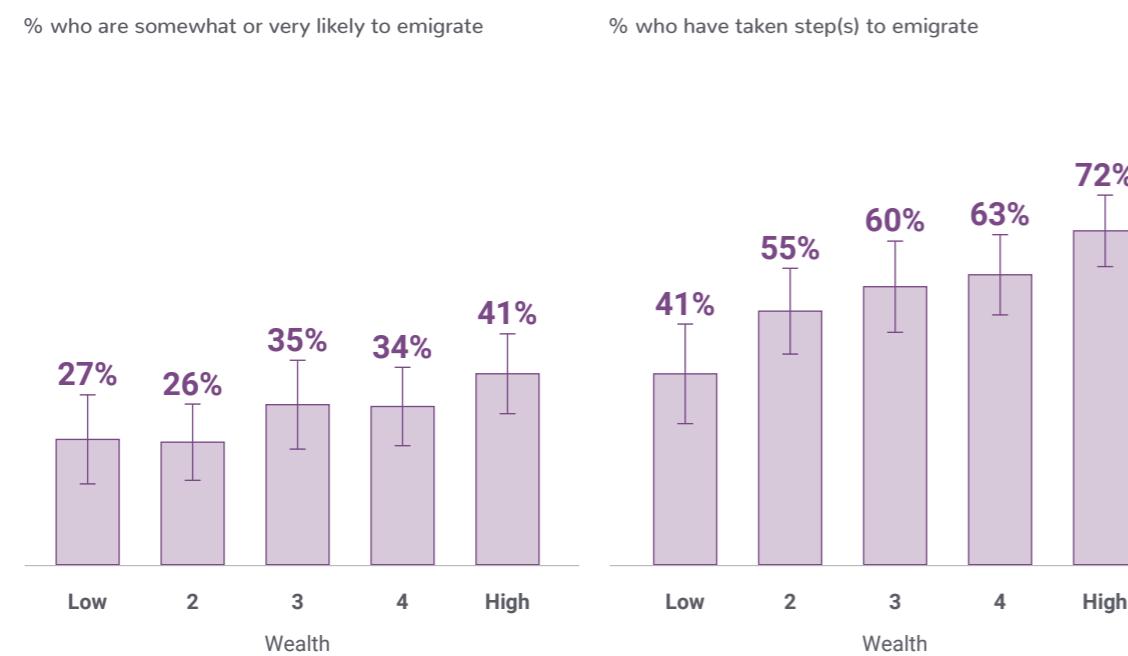
There appears to be little evidence that the conditions in Haiti are likely to improve to a level that dramatically reduces emigration from the country. Haitians report that they desire to emigrate to improve their situation in terms of both physical and economic security. This mirrors the findings in Chapter 1, which shows Haitians are most

concerned about crime and violence. As gang activity has continued to spread throughout the country and with both the security forces and political leadership remaining weak, there is a growing appeal for seeking said safety abroad.

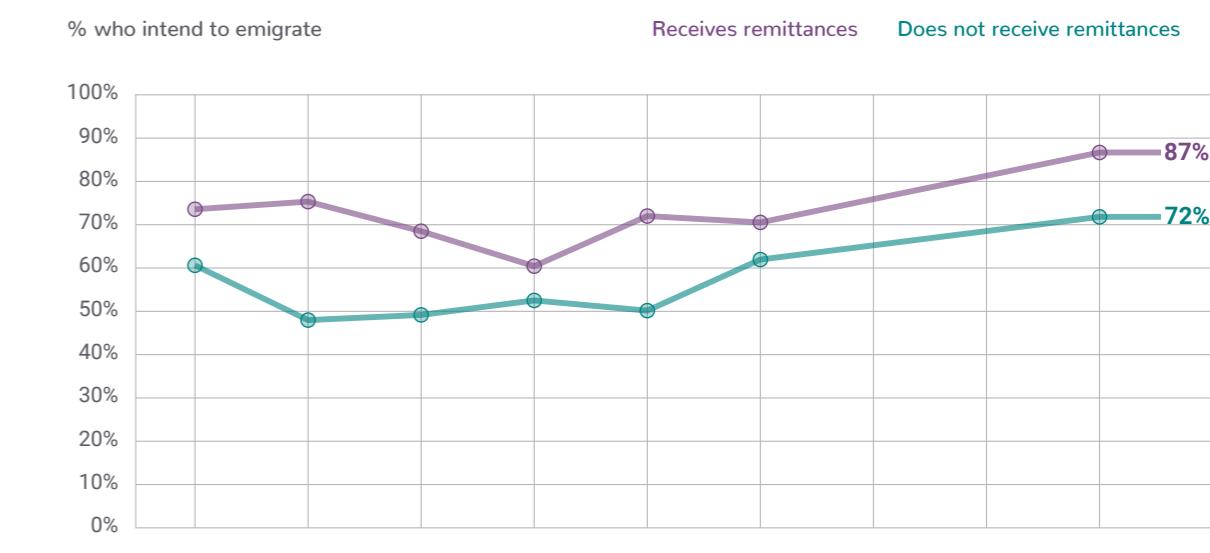
The opinions of Haitians also reflect the deteriorating conditions in the country, which are driving emigration intentions. The 2023 AmericasBarometer survey in Haiti indicates that in the coming years, emigration from Haiti is likely to continue as a salient, international concern. The desire to emigrate is higher than when the survey began in 2006, and more Haitians report taking steps toward emigrating in 2023 than in 2021. This is particularly true for Haitians who receive remittances. The persistence of these trends suggests a sustained and pressing challenge for Haiti in the near future.

**Figure 3.8**

Haitians with greater wealth are more likely to expect to emigrate and to take steps toward emigrating



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2023

**Figure 3.9** Haitians who receive remittances are consistently more likely to intend to emigrate

Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2006-2023

### Notes

- 1 Douyon 2023.
- 2 UN News 2022.
- 3 Gavigan 1997.
- 4 Receiving remittances is the only factor significantly and substantially correlated with desire to emigrate in a multivariate regression with remittances, gender, age, wealth, education, crime victimhood food insecurity, and region.
- 5 Yates 2021.
- 6 Brookshire Childers 2021.
- 7 Adames Alcántara 2023.
- 8 The World Bank 2023; OCHA 2023.
- 9 Receiving remittances is the only factor significantly and substantially correlated with desire to emigrate in a multivariate with remittances, gender, age, wealth, education, crime victimhood food insecurity, and region.

## Food Insecurity

Stanley Zhao<sup>1</sup>

Haiti experienced the largest increase in food insecurity in the LAC region between 2012 and 2023.

Currently in Haiti, there are heightened concerns related to securing fundamental human necessities such as food, housing, and education. The recent political and social upheaval marked by escalating gang violence and crime has inflicted devastating consequences on Haitians' day-to-day lives. This turmoil has significantly exacerbated the challenges of obtaining affordable and nutritious foods, impacting individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Since 2012, the AmericasBarometer has measured experiences with food insecurity using the following question:

*In the past three months, because of a lack of money or other resources, did your household ever run out of food?*

In 2023, more than three in four Haitians (78%) say they experienced food insecurity. Between 2012 and 2021, rates of food insecurity increased by 20 percentage points. Since 2021, Haiti has seen an additional 16-percentage point increase in food insecurity between 2021 and 2023. This more recent spike can be attributed to both the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a deteriorating economy, climate-related factors, armed violence, and the lack of government response.<sup>2</sup>

**78%**  
report having suffered food insecurity.

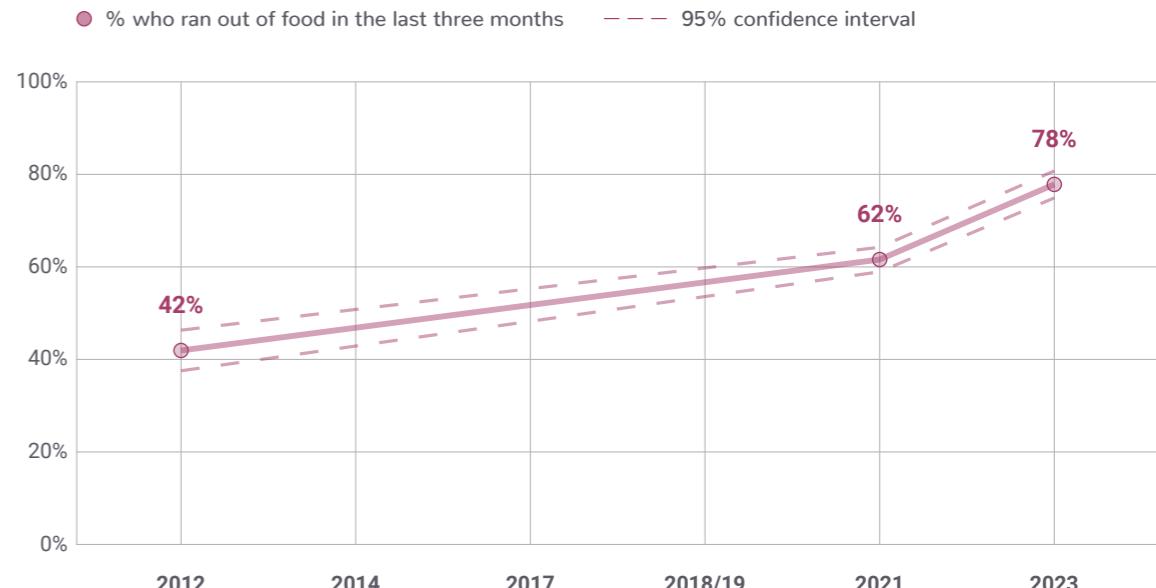
Food insecurity in Haiti is not an isolated problem. The AmericasBarometer reveals that between 2012 and 2023, almost all surveyed countries across the LAC region experienced increased food insecurity. In 2023, the average regional rate of food insecurity is 32%, which is 13 percentage points greater than the 2012 average of 19%.<sup>3</sup> Among the surveyed countries in 2023, Haiti has the highest percentage-point increase in the rate of food insecurity, followed by Suriname and Honduras.

In analyses not shown here, I do not find statistically significant relationships between food insecurity

and sociodemographic and economic characteristics such as gender, age, education, wealth, or place of residence.<sup>4</sup> This finding highlights the pervasiveness of food insecurity in Haiti.

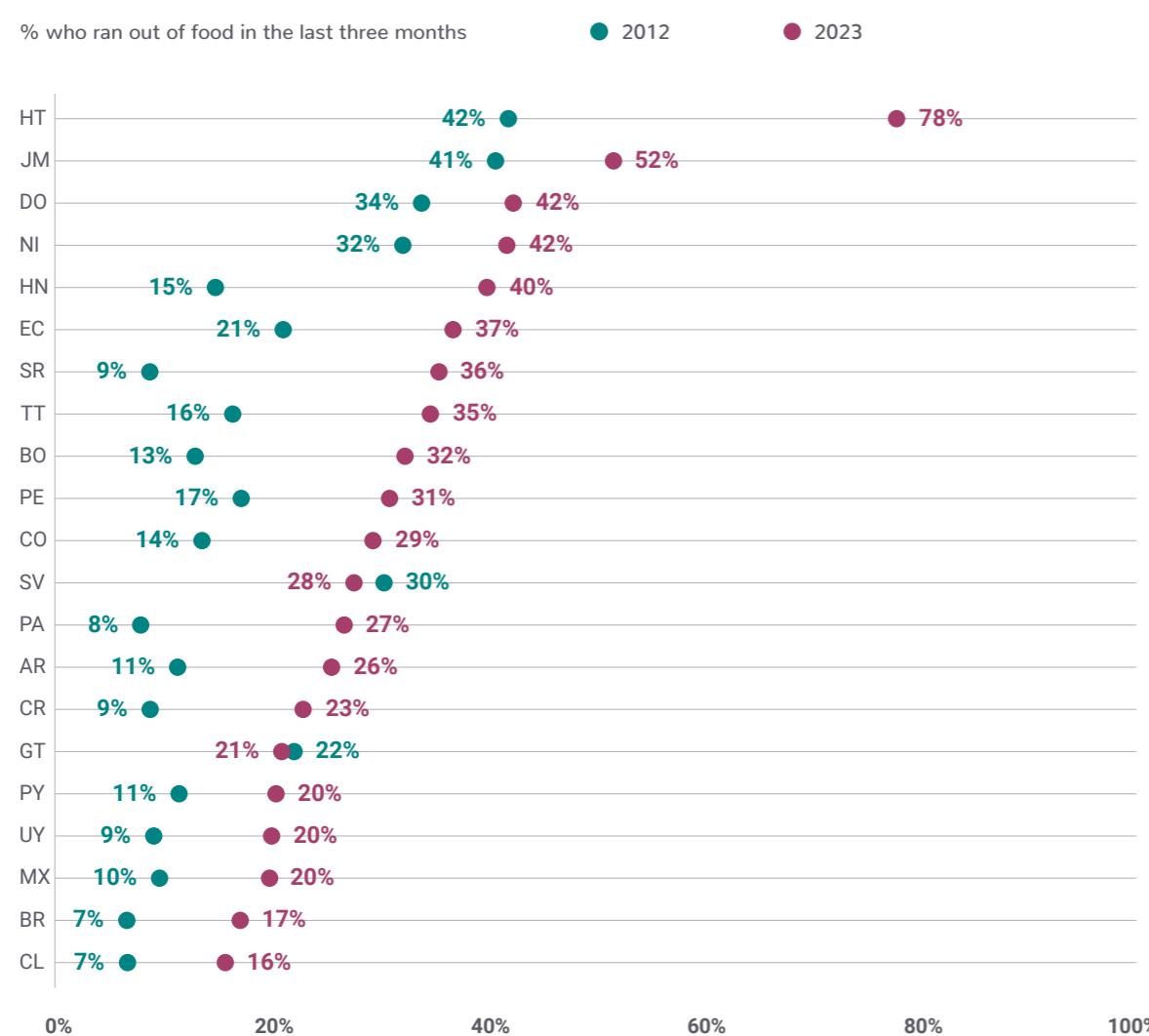
Overall, cross-time and cross-country analyses reveal that Haiti's food crisis is unprecedented and severe. Humanitarian assistance from nongovernmental organizations and foreign governments is further complicated by the fact that delivering aid requires cooperation with rival gangs that control many parts of the country.<sup>5</sup> Alleviating high food insecurity will be dependent on efforts to restore political and social stability.

Food insecurity among Haitians increased by 36 percentage points since 2012



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Haiti 2012-2023

Food insecurity has increased in most LAC countries between 2012 and 2023, but it has done so by the largest margin in Haiti



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2012-2023

## Notes

- 1 Stanley Zhao was an undergraduate research assistant at LAPOP Lab in 2023. He is currently a fourth-year student of Public Policy and Economics at Vanderbilt University .
- 2 World Food Programme 2023.
- 3 These percentages include only those countries shown in the figure.
- 4 However, when recoding the education variable into a binary variable, where 1 is the category of respondents who reported that they have a high school education or less and 2 is the group of respondents with at least some college education, I find that education has a statistically significant relationship with food insecurity.
- 5 Buschschlüter 2023.

Haiti experienced the largest increase in food insecurity from 2012 to 2023. Solutions to the food security crisis in Haiti must first focus on establishing security and political stability.

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## TECHNICAL INFORMATION FOR THE 2023 AMERICASBAROMETER IN HAITI

This survey was carried out between May 4 and June 5, 2023, as part of LAPOP's 2023 AmericasBarometer. It is a follow up to LAPOP's AmericasBarometer Haiti surveys of 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2021. The 2023 survey fieldwork was carried out by DAGMAR on behalf of LAPOP. Key funding came from USAID and Vanderbilt University.

Questionnaire cognitive pretesting took place on March 9 and 11, 2023, and interviewer training took place on March 27 and 29, with a refresher course on April 25, 2023. Pilot surveys were conducted on March 29 and 30, and April 26, 2023. A full copy of the 2023 AmericasBarometer Haiti questionnaire can be found at LAPOP's website at [www.LapopSurveys.org](http://www.LapopSurveys.org).

The survey collects information from a nationally representative sample of voting-age adults, who are 18 years of age or older, are citizens or permanent residents of Haiti, and have access to a functioning mobile phone. The study excludes individuals with no access to mobile phones or with only landline phones. Participation in the AmericasBarometer survey is voluntary.<sup>1</sup>

Eligible respondents who agree to participate in the survey are administered the questionnaire after giving their consent to interviewers.<sup>2</sup>

The sampling frame corresponds to all possible mobile phone numbers available in the country, drawn from the National Telephone Numbering System. A sample with 150,000 mobile phone numbers was generated by the firm. A third party pre-validated the telephone numbers in order to identify active numbers.<sup>3</sup> The survey firm used a manual dialing system to call the pre-validated mobile phone numbers. LAPOP Lab approved a final dataset of 1,611 complete interviews. All calls were conducted in Haitian Creole and data was collected with SurveyToGo© (STG) software.

With a confidence level for the national unweighted sample at 95%, the estimated margin of error is 2.44%, assuming a 50/50 response distribution on dichotomous variables. The final sample obtained in the survey is weighted.

For more details on the methodology used in Haiti, see the complete technical report at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/haiti.php>.

<sup>1</sup> No incentives (cash or in-kind) are provided to respondents for participating in the survey.

<sup>2</sup> For an informed consent process, interviewers are required to read a letter containing details about the study and participation before starting the interview.

<sup>3</sup> The third party sent SMS pings to all mobile phones to identify active and inactive numbers.

## AMERICASBAROMETER DATA AND REPORTS AT A GLANCE

### DATA

The AmericasBarometer datasets feature a common core set of questions that have been asked from 2004 to present day. In addition, LAPOP has datasets that date back to the 1970s. Data files are free and publicly available for download.

Users can also access AmericasBarometer data through our Data Playground. This data analysis tool is free and interactive. It is particularly useful for those individuals unfamiliar with advanced statistical software programs. Data Playground users can analyze AmericasBarometer data through tabulations of a single variable, cross-country comparisons on a map, and cross-tabulations of two variables.



### REPORTS

LAPOP produces numerous reports on the AmericasBarometer and other projects. Our goal is to provide analysis and evidence for scholars and practitioners on public opinion and democratic governance.

*Insights* reports are short briefs produced by students, network affiliates, our researchers, and our faculty. The series is used by journalists, policymakers, and scholars.



*Standard Insights* engage social science research and AmericasBarometer data to develop and assess theories regarding links between public opinion and democracy.

*Topical Insights* use project data to provide evidence and context on a current event.

*Methodological Insights* offer windows into our cutting-edge approaches, report on our innovations, and engage scholars who work at the survey research frontier.

*Global Insights* introduce findings from LAPOP-affiliated research outside the Americas.



*Spotlights* present quick snapshots of AmericasBarometer questions across countries, time, and subgroups.



**Subscribe to receive reports from the *Insights* series for free here.**

Country reports are book length, contain more extensive analyses, and are organized thematically to address findings relevant to democratic governance, strengthening, and stability. They include a focus on topics that stakeholders, especially USAID Missions, identify as important in the local context.

The following AmericasBarometer datasets (■) and reports\* (●) are available for free download on our website ([www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop)):

	2004	2006	2008	2010
Regional	●	●	●	●
Mexico	●	●	●	●
Guatemala	●	●	●	●
El Salvador	●	●	●	●
Honduras	●	●	●	●
Nicaragua	●	●	●	●
Costa Rica	●	●	●	●
Panama	●	●	●	●
Colombia	●	●	●	●
Ecuador	●	●	●	●
Bolivia	●	●	●	●
Peru		●	●	●
Paraguay			●	●
Chile			●	●
Uruguay			●	●
Brazil				●
Venezuela			●	●
Argentina				●
Dominican Republic	■	●	●	●
Haiti			●	●
Jamaica			●	●
Guyana		■	●	●
Trinidad & Tobago				●
Belize				
Suriname				
The Bahamas				
Barbados				
Grenada				
St. Lucia				
Dominica				
Antigua and Barbuda				
St. Vincent and the Grenadines				
St. Kitts and Nevis				
United States				
Canada				

	2012	2014	2016/17	2018/19	2021	2023
Regional	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mexico	●	●	●	●	●	●
Guatemala	●	●	●	●	●	●
El Salvador	●	●	●	●	●	●
Honduras	●	●	●	●	●	●
Nicaragua	●	●	●	●	●	●
Costa Rica	●	●	●	●	●	●
Panama	●	●	●	●	●	●
Colombia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ecuador	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bolivia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Peru	●	●	●	●	●	●
Paraguay	●	●	●	●	●	●
Chile	●	●				
Uruguay	●					
Brazil						
Venezuela						
Argentina						
Dominican Republic	●	●	●	●	●	●
Haiti	●	●	●			
Jamaica	●	●	●	●	●	●
Guyana	●	●	●			
Trinidad & Tobago						●
Belize						●
Suriname						●
The Bahamas						●
Barbados						●
Grenada						●
St. Lucia						
Dominica						
Antigua and Barbuda						
St. Vincent and the Grenadines						
St. Kitts and Nevis						
United States						
Canada						

\*2023 AmericasBarometer country reports will be available in early 2024.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY FOR THE 2023 AMERICASBAROMETER

The AmericasBarometer is a multinational, multiregional, and multicultural (3MC) public opinion survey of democratic values and behaviors of voting-age citizens and permanent residents in the Western Hemisphere.

Respondents are selected through national probability samples in Latin America and the Caribbean, and through nonprobability panels in the United States and Canada. The project uses a standardized core questionnaire and country-specific modules to collect data via face-to-face household surveys, except in Haiti and Nicaragua, where the project uses computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), and in the United States and Canada, where the project uses self-administered Web surveys. The per-country average sample size of 1,512 respondents enables national and subnational estimations of key population variables.

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### QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The AmericasBarometer survey instruments consist of a core questionnaire and country-specific modules that measure attitudes regarding, experiences with, and behaviors within political, economic, and social systems. The core questionnaire is a set of structured items that permit valid comparisons across time and space. Country-specific modules measure opinion on context-specific sociopolitical phenomena. As in every round, new questions are designed through workshops with input from country experts and leading scholars in the field. While the average face-to-face questionnaire includes 152 questions and lasts 45 minutes, the average CATI questionnaire includes 77 questions and lasts 20 minutes. The main questionnaire topics in 2023 are democratic values, system support, the rule of law, gender, and migration intentions.

### COGNITIVE PRETESTS

The core questionnaire and country-specific modules are thoroughly pretested with a three-stage iterative cognitive interviewing process. First, LAPOP cognitive interviewers carry out a handful of in-depth tests of new modules to develop early drafts of questionnaire items. Second, LAPOP extensively trains research assistants and consultants to conduct cognitive interviews of the full core questionnaire in selected countries from different regions of the Americas to ensure context variation. Third, a similar process is carried out in all countries for each country-customized questionnaire. For the 2023 AmericasBarometer, local survey institutions recruited pre-test participants, and, in some cases, a small incentive was offered for their participation. Most cognitive interviews were conducted remotely using video or phone calls.

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**SAMPLING**

LAPOP uses a stratified, multistage, and clustered sampling strategy to draw national probability samples in countries where the survey is administered face-to-face. LAPOP-trained enumerators interview any eligible respondent available at the time of the survey. A single respondent is selected in each household and no revisits are required. In face-to-face studies, LAPOP uses “frequency matching,” a technique that ensures that the samples achieve mirror the national distributions of age and gender in the sampling frame. Frequency matching is implemented at the cluster level. In countries where the survey is conducted via CATI, LAPOP uses random-digit dialing (RDD) of mobile phones. In cases of unanswered calls, each number selected into the sample is called at least five times before it is discarded.

**WEIGHTS**

The 2023 AmericasBarometer sample design strategy in face-to-face studies produce self-weighted observations, with a few exceptions. Datasets in Ecuador, Trinidad & Tobago, The Bahamas, and Brazil use calibration weights to compensate for sample size deviations. LAPOP computes these weights using population distributions by strata for urban and rural population, gender, and age. Weights for Haiti and Nicaragua (CATI) are calculated by estimating baseline probabilities adjusted for eligibility and non-response, then calibrated to the 2018/19 AmericasBarometer country samples on gender, education, age, and region. Cross-time and cross-country weights are standardized so that each country/year has the same effective sample size.

**INTERVIEWER,  
SUPERVISOR,  
AND AUDITOR  
TRAINING**

In the 2023 AmericasBarometer is designed as an opportunity for fieldwork personnel to grow their knowledge base and to standardize data collection and monitoring practices. Training workshops include an in-person component, where LAPOP-trained fieldwork personnel instruct interviewers and quality control auditors on logistics, security protocols, and fieldwork monitoring; a virtual component, where LAPOP representatives review the full questionnaire and country samples with each team; a set of pre-recorded training videos that review best practices in survey research, ethical principles, and operations with the data collection platform; and a full pilot of the survey, where fieldwork personnel practice what they have learned before launching the actual survey. Training sessions typically last two full days and all trainings conclude with a learning assessment that interviewers have to pass (>80% correct answers) in order to be certified to work on the project.

**QUALITY  
CONTROL**

The 2023 AmericasBarometer uses LAPOP’s Fieldwork Algorithm for LAPOP Control over survey Operations and Norms (FALCON). FALCON collects multiple types of paradata, including voice recordings and interviewer images, question and questionnaire timing, and interviewer performance indicators. These paradata indicators are monitored daily during data collection so that any corrections or cancellations resulting from a failure to meet quality control standards are made while fieldwork is in progress. Final datasets include high-quality interviews only. Each technical report for an AmericasBarometer survey summarizes the results of this process.

## Acknowledgements

The AmericasBarometer emerges from collaborations among hundreds of individuals involved in its design and implementation. We thank all the members of the public who generously shared their beliefs and experiences with our survey teams. We are also grateful to our dedicated partner survey organizations and fieldwork teams across the region.

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One way LAPOP achieves its mission of knowledge transfer and capacity building is by involving students in all aspects of the AmericasBarometer. While they gain experience with cutting-edge survey methodologies, they also contribute to the project's success. At the graduate level, the project benefited from engaging the Vanderbilt political science comparative politics graduate student community in various discussions and activities; these students are Sofia Berrospi, Lucas Borba, Shashwat Dhar, Guilherme Fasolin, Margaret Frost, Martin Gou, Facundo Salles Kobilanski, Preeti Nambiar, Emily Noh, Mariana Ramírez, Sofía Rivera, and Alexander Tripp. This round also benefited from the involvement of undergraduate students, including Daniel Ardit, Danni Chacon, Ade Forrest, Audrey Heffernan, Jazmín Los, Adin McGurk, Marco Navarro Stanic, Tomás Majevsky, Chase Mandell, Krishna Podishetti, Allie Rounds, William Royster, Hedid Rojas Salinas, Samuel Schulman, Carson Viggiano, Evan Wilkerson, and Stanley Zhao.

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Noam Lupu  
Liz Zechmeister  
Nashville, Tennessee  
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The AmericasBarometer is carried out by LAPOP Lab, a center for excellence in international survey research based at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. LAPOP has deep connections to the Latin America and Caribbean region, established during more than five decades of public opinion research. The AmericasBarometer is possible due to the activities and support of a network that spans the Americas. To complete each round, LAPOP partners with individuals, survey firms, universities, development organizations, and others in up to 34 countries within the Western Hemisphere.

Project efforts are informed by LAPOP's mission: to produce objective, non-partisan, and scientifically sound studies of public opinion; to innovate improvements in survey research; to disseminate project findings; and, to build capacity.

The AmericasBarometer project receives generous support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Vanderbilt University. Other institutions that have contributed recently to multiple rounds of the project include Environics Institute, Florida International University, and the Inter-American Development Bank. Over the years, the project has benefited from grants from the United States National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development in Brazil (CNPq), the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, and numerous academic institutions across the Americas.

The 2023 AmericasBarometer was carried out via face-to-face interviews in 22 Latin American and Caribbean countries, phone surveys in Haiti and Nicaragua, and online surveys in Canada and the United States.

All samples are designed to be nationally representative of voting-age adults. In all, more than 41,524 individuals were interviewed in this latest round of the survey. The complete 2004-2023 AmericasBarometer dataset contains responses from over 385,000 people across the region. Common core modules, standardized techniques, and rigorous quality control procedures permit valid comparisons across individuals, certain subnational areas, countries, regions, and time. AmericasBarometer data and reports are available for free download from the project website: [www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop). Individuals can also use that website to query the data via an interactive Data Playground. Datasets from the project also can be accessed via "data repositories" and subscribing institutions across the Americas.

Through such open access practices and an extensive network of collaborators, LAPOP works to contribute to the pursuit of excellence in public opinion research and ongoing discussions over how programs and policies related to democratic governance can improve the quality of life for individuals in the Americas and beyond.