

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1241

Calling for the establishment of a comprehensive, long-term development program to rebuild the Republic of Haiti.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 17, 2024

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, and Ms. CLARKE of New York) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling for the establishment of a comprehensive, long-term development program to rebuild the Republic of Haiti.

Whereas Haiti's revolution was the first successful slave revolt in the Americas and led to the establishment of Haiti as the first independent Black empire under the Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines in 1804, then, in 1806, the first independent Black republic in the Western Hemisphere in 1804;

Whereas, prior to the Haitian Revolution, the United States was Haiti's second-largest trade partner;

Whereas Haiti has played a pivotal role in African struggles toward freedom in America, the Caribbean, and African countries;

Whereas Haitian American leaders like W.E.B. Du Bois, co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, have contributed to the civil rights movement both in the United States and Africa;

Whereas, in 1825, Haiti was forced to pay a “ransom” to France for its independence, amounting to at least \$21,000,000,000 in current value;

Whereas the United States only recognized the newly independent nation of Haiti until 1862, and then militarily occupied the country from 1915 to 1934;

Whereas Haiti has endured a long and troubled history marred by political instability, economic underdevelopment, natural disasters, and external interference;

Whereas, despite this proud heritage, Haiti has struggled to consolidate democratic governance, with multiple coups, foreign interventions, and lapses in the rule of law undermining the country’s development;

Whereas, in 2010, a devastating earthquake killed hundreds of thousands and displaced more than a million Haitians, prompting countries from across the world to pledge more than \$10,000,000,000 for relief and reconstruction efforts;

Whereas the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021 exacerbated the ongoing political crisis, leaving the country without an elected government to date;

Whereas the power vacuum created by the lack of stable, democratic governance and the absence of a social contract has enabled criminal armed groups to seize control over large swaths of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and surrounding areas, perpetrating heinous acts of violence in-

cluding kidnappings, murders, rapes, and blocking the delivery of vital humanitarian aid;

Whereas, according to United Nations estimates, there are approximately 200 active criminal armed groups operating in Haiti, many of whom have longstanding connections with the political and economic elite;

Whereas this unprecedented violence has displaced over 500,000 civilians, created a severe humanitarian crisis, and crippled the country's already fragile economy and public services;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), since the beginning of the year, there have been more than 2,500 deaths and injuries related to gang violence, a 53-percent increase from October through December 2023;

Whereas a 2023 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report found that most illegal firearms seized in Haiti came from the United States, notably Florida, Arizona, Georgia, Texas, and California;

Whereas, in 2024 alone, kidnappings have risen to at least 504 victims, 294 of these being women, 11 girls, and 9 boys, in addition to the 3,000+ persons reportedly kidnapped in 2023;

Whereas the United Nations, and other experts, report that the raping of women and girls is routine, and these groups of individuals disproportionately suffer from the crisis in their country, and at least 64 women and girls suffered from sexual violence;

Whereas gangs are using sexual violence to create fear, obtain money, gain power, and punish local communities,

and this violence includes trafficking, sexual exploitation, and sexual slavery;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Populations Fund, at least 380,000 people have been internally displaced, including more than 180,000 children who are facing severe malnutrition;

Whereas approximately 5,000,000 Haitians, including 1 out of 2 children, are facing acute levels of food insecurity;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, 30 to 50 percent of armed groups have minors in their ranks;

Whereas the complete breakdown of law, order, and functional governance in Port-au-Prince now poses a direct threat to regional security and stability in the Caribbean;

Whereas the Haitian people have shown remarkable resilience in the face of these compounding crises;

Whereas the United States has longstanding historical, economic, and cultural ties to Haiti, with millions of Americans tracing their heritage to the country, and has a vested interest in Haiti's stability and development;

Whereas the restoration of democratic governance through free and fair elections is an essential condition for reestablishing lasting security, economic development, and the national interests of Haiti and the United States;

Whereas, in April 2024, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), with the backing of the United States and the international community, supported the establishment of a Transitional Presidential Council in Haiti with broad political representation and the objective of restoring security and holding free and fair elections;

Whereas Haitian Americans have contributed to the cultural diversity of the United States through their vibrant traditions, music, dance, cuisine, and literature, and Haitian art, literature, and music have influenced United States culture, and events such as Haitian Carnival celebrations have become popular in some United States cities;

Whereas, according to the World Bank, remittances to Haiti totaled over \$3,000,000,000 in 2020, accounting for approximately one-fifth of the country's gross domestic product, and these remittances play a crucial role in Haiti's economy, providing a steady source of income for many families and contributing to poverty reduction and household consumption; and

Whereas Haitian Americans play a vital role in Haiti's development efforts, leveraging their resources, expertise, and networks to support education, technology, sustainable development, resilience, and prosperity in their homeland: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) marks 220 years of Haitian independence;

3 (2) recognizes that Haiti has contributed sig-
4 nificantly to the abolition of slavery and the struggle
5 for human rights in Latin America and in the
6 United States;

7 (3) recognizes that Haitian culture, religion,
8 art, and literature contributes significantly to United
9 States cultural diversity;

1 (4) recognizes the Haitian diaspora’s contribu-
2 tion to the economy of Haiti and the critical role it
3 plays in the future;

4 (5) acknowledges that the United States and
5 international community have played a large role in
6 Haiti’s instability;

7 (6) acknowledges the need to improve United
8 States financial assistance to Haiti by reforming the
9 foreign aid system and ensuring foreign assistance is
10 being distributed to Haitian-led communities;

11 (7) recognizes the United States and the inter-
12 national community’s moral obligation to support
13 Haiti’s struggle for democracy;

14 (8) recognizes that Haitian democracy, sta-
15 bility, and economic prosperity is important to the
16 region and to United States strategic interest;

17 (9) recognizes that the restoration of demo-
18 cratic governance through free and fair elections is
19 an essential condition for reestablishing lasting secu-
20 rity, economic development, and the national inter-
21 ests of Haiti and the United States; and

22 (10) expresses the sense that Congress should
23 establish the Louverture Investment Plan, a 10-year,
24 \$50,000,000,000 development program to rebuild
25 Haiti to stabilize the country, strengthen democratic

1 and judiciary institutions, invest in critical infra-
2 structure, spur economic growth, and improve oppor-
3 tunities for women and youth to secure the welfare
4 of the Haitian people, which should be designed and
5 implemented in consultation with all stakeholders in-
6 cluding the Haitian diaspora, and include, but not
7 be limited to, the following components:

8 (A) Supporting the restoration of demo-
9 cratic governance through free and fair elec-
10 tions, strengthening the rule of law, and build-
11 ing the capacity of Haiti's security forces in-
12 cluding a disarmament, demobilization, and re-
13 integration program for youth formerly enrolled
14 into gangs.

15 (B) Investing in the reconstruction and
16 modernization of Haiti's physical infrastructure,
17 including health care, roads, bridges, ports,
18 power grids, and water and sanitation systems.

19 (C) Promoting sustainable economic devel-
20 opment through agricultural modernization and
21 food security.

22 (D) Supporting small businesses and en-
23 trepreneurs, especially small- and medium-sized
24 entrepreneurs, women, and youth.

1 (E) Improving access to quality health
2 care, education, and social services to address
3 Haiti's acute humanitarian needs.

4 (F) Enhancing Haiti's resilience to natural
5 disasters through improved disaster planning,
6 environmental conservation, and climate change
7 adaptation measures.

8 (G) Encouraging regional integration and
9 greater economic cooperation between Haiti, the
10 United States, and other Caribbean countries.

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