

COUNTRY SUMMARY REPORT

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Throughout my time at the General Board of Church and Society, my work has primarily focused on the areas of global poverty and economic justice. While these two areas encompass a range of issues, their prevalence around the world cannot be understated. While I have studied these issues, I have examined the following countries/regions: Haiti, Cuba, West Africa, Ukraine, Kenya, and Honduras. While these countries vary in their government structures and specific issues, they all can benefit from our aid. In this report, I will be doing an overview of some of the issues faced by each country, as well as documenting the work being done, and recommending policies and actions that can be taken.

Description

- Haiti functions as a multiparty constitutional republic. On July 7th, 2021, Jovenel Moise, the President for the past four years, was assassinated. Since then, Moise's pick for Prime Minister, Ariel Henry, has been acting as the Prime Minister and President. Presidential and legislative elections that were supposed to occur in 2021 have been delayed, leaving the government in a precarious position. Along with this, many issues concerning human rights have plagued Haiti. Regarding prisons, many have detailed the unsafe conditions they have experienced. Some concerns that have been raised include overcrowding, a lack of basic services such as plumbing, serving an inadequate amount of food, and high rates of transmittable diseases. With the crimes of sexual and domestic violence, victims did not always receive justice, with their perpetrators often being released and legal recourse being difficult to access. Women faced workplace discrimination, often being relegated to secretarial and custodial jobs, and being underpaid compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, women were more susceptible to behaviors such as workplace harassment. Regarding racial minorities, the Syrian-Lebanese community experienced discrimination and was targeted by various gangs. The LGBTQ+ community endured violence that was propagated by the police. Legal protections for the LGBTQ+ community were supposed to come into effect in 2022, but resistance delayed this progress.

What's Been Done There

- In 2022, it was announced that Haiti, along with other various countries and regions, was partnering with the United States government to further implement the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability under the Global Fragility Act. The ten-year Strategy aims to address the climate crisis, improve human rights, encourage democracy, and more through diplomatic and developmental efforts. Integral to the Strategy is partnership with local actors in Haiti to target the underlying issues contributing to the destabilization and violence in the country.
- One of the most involved groups within Haiti is the Montana Accord, a Haitian civil society group whose main goal is to establish a two-year transitional government that can oversee Haiti and hold national elections in 2023. An interim President and Prime Minister would lead this transitional government structure, while a larger transitional council would play a role in the process. The Montana Accord's proposed candidates for President and Prime Minister are Fritz Jean and Steven Benoit. While the Montana Accord strives to make these changes, meetings between Henry have not been successful. The efficacy and success of the Montana Accord, if they were to achieve their goals, has been questioned by other organizations interested in aiding Haiti.
- One of the most integral pieces to establishing a safer Haiti is holding a national dialogue. This would allow for multiple actors, both local and international, government and civil, to decide Haiti's future. However, with this national dialogue comes a variety of questions. Who would lead the dialogue? How involved would the Henry administration be? What communities would be represented and who would represent them? How would the international community be involved? Questions such as these and more plague all efforts at accomplishing a national dialogue. However, to accomplish advanced goals of equality, economic and political stability, and nonviolence within Haiti, this step must occur first.

Recommendations

- Insight from Social Principles, from the Book of Discipline (2016)
 - 163E (Poverty): "To begin to alleviate poverty, we support such policies as: adequate income maintenance, quality education, decent housing, job training, meaningful employment opportunities, adequate medical and hospital care, humanization and radical revisions of welfare programs, work for peace in conflict areas and efforts to protect creation's integrity."
 - 163K (Trade and Investment): "Trade agreements must include mechanisms to enforce labor rights and human rights as well as environmental standards. Broad-based citizen advocacy and participation in trade negotiations must be ensured through democratic mechanisms of consultation and participation."
 - 163M (Public Indebtedness): "We ask that governments that lend money to reduce significantly the interest rates on the money borrowed. We ask that public officials, when making financial adjustments, remember first and foremost obligations that promote the well-being of society such as the funding of schools and other opportunities that foster the growth of the individual, as well as agencies that care for the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and the disenfranchised."

- 164A (Basic Freedoms and Human Rights): “We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to free and fair elections and to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, communications media, and petition for redress of grievances without fear of reprisal; to the right to privacy; and to the guarantee of the rights to adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care.”
- 165B (National Power and Responsibility): “We affirm the right and duty of people of all nations to determine their own destiny. We urge the major political powers to use their nonviolent power to maximize the political, social, and economic self-determination of other nations rather than to further their own special interests. We applaud international efforts to develop a more just international economic order in which the limited resources of the earth will be used to the maximum benefit of all nations and peoples.”
- 165D (Justice and Law): “Peoples and nations feel secure in the world community when law, order, and human rights are respected and upheld.”
- Insight from Resolutions, from the Book of Resolutions (2016)
 - 4053 (Global Debt Crisis: A Call for Justice): “We need to examine patterns of greed that may cause us as individuals and nations to become debtors and lenders. Debt cancellation and relief should be fashioned in a way that benefits the poor and helps move debtors nations to sustainable human development.”
 - 6101 (Haiti Reconstruction and Development): The United Methodist Church “urges nongovernmental and peacekeeping organizations working for development in Haiti to use a Rights-Based Approach respecting the dignity of all people; strengthening governmental, corporate, and community sectors; and giving equal voice and value to women, children, and young people.”
- Policy/Actions
 - Construct an inclusive national dialogue that prioritizes marginalized Haitians
 - Ensure that countries who are financially invested in Haiti utilize fair lending practices
 - Restructure the government in a way that promotes election security and democracy
 - Protect the rights and freedoms of all of Haiti’s citizens in an improved constitution
 - Reform the Haitian National Police
 - Support local actors and organizations campaigning for progress
 - Collaborate with other organizations
 - Advocate for economic, political, and social change in Haiti locally, nationally, and internationally

Description

- Cuba functions as an authoritarian government controlled by the Communist Party, which is the sole political party in Cuba. Since April of 2021, Miguel Diaz-Canel has ruled Cuba as its President and as the First Secretary of the Communist Party following the rule of Raúl Castro. The government is extremely strict regarding what media citizens consume, often censoring and imprisoning those who openly criticize the government or those who are suspected of criticizing the government. Multiple activists have been reported as missing for various lengths of time, ranging from days to weeks. An inquiry by the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances regarding the status of 187 people who had disappeared went unanswered by the Cuban government. While Cuban law permits the freedom of assembly and association, the government does not. Political parties besides the Communist Party regularly had their attempts to assemble suppressed and undercover government officials harassed individuals who peacefully assembled. Regarding national elections, the government restricted opposition candidates from campaigning, and citizens are restricted in their ability to participate in the election process. Afro-Cubans experienced racial discrimination, including racist job advertisements, and experienced some of the highest levels of economic stress. Those with disabilities did not receive adequate aid due to inattention from the government and struggled to survive.

What's Been Done There

- In May of 2022, the Biden Administration resumed the Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program, allowing families to be together and for Cuban immigrants to the United States to reside there while waiting for their opportunity to apply for permanent resident status. This program has the capacity to relieve some Cubans of the danger they face in Cuba.
- An embargo has been placed on Cuba since 1962, allowing for trade and financial interactions between the United States to be virtually nonexistent. While this embargo has hurt the Cuban citizens for decades, the Biden Administration has expressed a desire to relax some restrictions, including removing the \$1,000 family remittance cap per sender per quarter and trying to increase U.S. access to the Cuban market.
- While these advances in diplomacy are notable in US-Cuba relations, there is still work to be done. The Biden Administration has stated that it will not remove businesses associated with the Cuba Restricted List and has not taken any action considering the removal of the embargo. Cuba is also on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list, which creates additional issues for the country. While the Biden Administration has taken some steps to improve the economic situation of Cubans, the measures they have taken are not comparable to those that are still harmful and continue to be enacted.

Recommendations

- Insight from Social Principles, from the Book of Discipline (2016)
 - 163K (Trade and Investment, see page 2)
 - 164A (Basic Freedoms and Human Rights): “The form and the leaders of all governments should be determined by exercise of the right to vote guaranteed to all adult citizens. We also strongly reject domestic surveillance and intimidation of political opponents by governments in power and all other misuses of elective or appointive offices. The use of detention and imprisonment for the harassment and elimination of political opponents or other dissidents violates fundamental human rights.”
 - 164F (Civil Obedience and Civil Disobedience): “But governments, no less than individuals, are subject to the judgment of God. Therefore, we recognize the right of individuals to dissent when acting under the constraint of conscience and, after having exhausted all legal recourse, to resist or disobey laws that they deem to be unjust or that are discriminately enforced. Even then, respect for law should be shown by refraining from violence and by being willing to accept the costs of disobedience.”
 - 165B (National Power and Responsibility, see page 3)
 - 165D (Justice and Law, see page 3)
- Insight from Resolutions, from the Book of Resolutions (2016)
 - 4062 (Create a Worldwide Peace Economy): “We call upon world leaders to reinvest those financial resources, which derive from taxes and borrowing, in societal improvement programs such as food security, health care, clean energy, housing, education, and the development of infrastructure.”

- 6043 (Guidelines for the Imposition of Sanctions): “Those countries and entities who impose sanctions of any kind must always take care to protect the suffering and the innocents by means of the basic, uncompromised modicum of international human rights and humanitarian laws. We must guarantee the right to protection of human life, human rights, and civil liberties; sanctions should not be imposed at the expense of the vulnerable.”
- 6060 (Lift the US Embargo of Cuba): “... the economic embargo has for over fifty-five years created unnecessary suffering and many hardships on the people of Cuba while preventing US citizens from traveling freely to Cuba in the exercise of their constitutional rights and curtailing the ability of churches to provide missional support freely to its sisters and brothers on the island.”
- Policy/Actions
 - Campaign for the reform, if not the removal, of the embargo
 - Petition for Cuba’s removal from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list
 - Aid organizations and actors in Cuba who advocate for human rights
 - Support the improvement of US-Cuba relations
 - Encourage bipartisan legislation that benefits the Cuban people
 - Work with the Cuban government to allow for increased citizen participation in the political process
 - Amplify Afro-Cuban voices and representation
 - Encourage diverse political, social, and cultural expressions of opinion

Description

- The region of West Africa is comprised of many countries, including but not limited to, Nigeria, Benin, Guinea, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. In general, countries in this region face issues related to climate change, food insecurity, and unstable governments. In Mali, armed organizations have not only spread violence in the country due to a lack of security, poverty, and unemployment but have also appeared in Burkina Faso and Niger. In the Sahel region, which includes a plethora of countries and includes some of those in West Africa, many people have fled their home countries. This has caused some 2,000 deaths as migrants attempt to reach Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. Additionally, the Sahel region will be severely affected by the rising temperatures spurred by climate change. This will exacerbate conflicts between farmers and nomads who depend on land for their animals. In general, many countries in West Africa suffer from a lack of strong governance, which has led to coup d'états in places such as Guinea. All these factors have stalled any economic progress that can be made.

What's Been Done There

- In April of 2022, the Biden Administration partnered with five West African countries to further advance the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability. These countries are Benin, Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea. The partnership strives to encourage economic and governmental stability, bolster democratic institutions, and confront other issues such as climate change and the COVID pandemic. As the Strategy and the Global Fragility Act are long-term plans spanning over a ten-year period, there have not been any reports on the success of the efforts in West Africa so far.
- USAID began partnering with the Global Shea Initiative to sustainably expand the shea industry. This partnership has helped train women to enter the shea industry in countries such as Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana. Not only has this aided the economy, but it has also provided a regular income for over 16 million women.
- The West Africa Trade and Investment Hub of the USAID collaborates with financial institutions to lend financial support and business development with the goal of preparing businesses to be fruitful and export ready.

Recommendations

- Insight from Social Principles, from the Book of Discipline (2016)
 - 163K (Trade and Investment, see page 2)
 - 164A (Basic Freedoms and Human Rights, see page 3)
 - 165B (National Power and Responsibility, see page 3)
 - 165D (Justice and Law, see page 3)
- Insight from Resolutions, from the Book of Resolutions (2016)
 - 4057 (Protecting Health Care, Labor, and Environment in Trade Negotiations): "The United Methodist Church supports economic development around the globe, but we insist that economic development be sustainable, safeguard human beings and the environment, support the health of workers and communities, and provide a safety net for the most vulnerable among us."
 - 4061 (Enabling Financial Support for Domestic Programs): "Contemporary challenges in all our nations would be served by governmental spending in areas that address immediate and long-term human need and invest in solutions that overcome inequalities currently based on dividing characteristics like race, socioeconomic level, and region."
 - 6081 (Africa Growth and Development): "Africa is blessed with people of remarkable energy, spirit, and ingenuity. The continent is rich in natural resources needed by the entire world. The spread of democracy and the growing strength of African civil society offer a real chance to tackle the root causes of poverty and conflict. Social movements and organizations throughout the continent have developed to hold governments accountable and to build societies where public institutions and policies will guarantee cultural, economic, political, and social rights of all citizens."
- Policy/Actions
 - Invest in local communities
 - Build better trade relations with African entrepreneurs and businesses
 - Help strengthen national security
 - Support reforms that will bolster democratic institutions

- Implement policies that allow governments to function for the benefit of their citizens
- Empower youth and women by elevating their voices
- Encourage sustainable agricultural practices
- Find solutions to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change

Description

- Ukraine functions as a republic with three government branches: a unicameral legislature, an elected President that leads with a Prime Minister, and a judiciary. Prior to the February invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces, the country was struggling with human rights issues. One of the most pressing issues was the censorship of journalists. The Ukrainian government would regularly restrict access to media that was deemed to have a “pro-Russian slant” and would limit freedom of expression. Journalists would be attacked, and inaction often accompanied these crimes. Authorities of the government would both be active in and allow these attacks. Additionally, the government took a vague approach when it came to censoring content that was deemed to be a threat to national security interests. Police regularly failed to implement laws that protected racial and ethnic minorities regarding investigations on attacks of members of these groups. The Romani community was often the most targeted minority group. Not only were there violent attacks on Roma, but 60% of them were unemployed and only 1% had obtained a university degree in 2021. Regarding COVID, the informal and seasonal employment of Roma led to their unemployment during lockdowns. Due to a lack of personal identification documents, many in the Romani community could not access formal employment, medical services, and social services. Following the Russian invasion, Ukraine has been desolated by the effects of war. Civilian killings and displacement have left families torn apart and no community is safe from the effects of this war. During COVID, the global supply chain was already massively disrupted, but the war exacerbated this problem. Ukraine, which is mostly known for its abundance of wheat, cannot provide that to countries that need them. Conversely, Ukrainians have been experiencing food insecurity as well, which has been worsened by inflation.

What’s Been Done

- In May, Congress passed a \$40 billion bill to aid Ukraine that appropriated \$760 million “to prevent and respond to food.” This bill should aid in supplying the Ukrainian people with the food they need. This bill also appropriated \$350 million in humanitarian funding that would aid migrants, refugees, and other Eastern Europe countries who have been affected by the war.
- Through USAID, the Media Program in Ukraine has existed since 2018 and serves to give citizens access to quality media while also improving the role of media institutions in the democratic process. The four key goals of the Media Program are to grow the amount of better-quality news content, increase the public demand for better-quality news content, reform the media, and bolster critical media institutions. The Program is set to end in September of 2023.
- In March 2022, the State Department announced a project titled Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): DRL Promoting Roma Inclusion in Central Europe. This project aims to increase the civic and political participation of Roma and other ethnic groups in Central Europe. This project awards almost \$1 million to a domestic or international NGO, higher education institution, or for-profit business or organization that submits the best proposal for how to best increase the representation of Roma in the political process through political advocacy engagement training, networking with minority leaders, and more. The winner of the project has not yet been announced, but the development of this program could bring equality and meaningful change for Roma.

Recommendations

- Insight from Social Principles, from the Book of Discipline (2016)
 - 163K (Trade and Investment, see page 2)
 - 164A (Basic Freedoms and Human Rights, see page 3)
 - 165B (National Power and Responsibility, see page 3)
 - 165C (War and Peace): “We insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to work together to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them. We advocate the extension and strengthening of international treaties and institutions that provide a framework within the rule of law for responding to aggression, terrorism, and genocide.”
 - 165D (Justice and Law, see above)
- Insight from Resolutions, from the Book of Resolutions (2016)
 - 3281 (Welcoming the Migrant to the US): “Denounce and oppose the rise of xenophobic, racist, and violent reactions against migrants in the United States, and support all efforts to build relationships among people, instead of building walls among diverse ethnicities and cultures.”

- 6025 (Globalization and Its Impact on Human Dignity and Human Rights): “Ending violence and wars, and checking impunity and disregard for international human rights and humanitarian laws will require more than political will and moral courage. Concrete programs and mechanisms are needed to realize the totality of human rights: civil, political, social, economic, and cultural. We must offer peace by advocating for its concrete manifestation in the availability of nutritious food to eat and clean water to drink, for decent work and living wage for everyone, and health, housing and education for all.”
- 6028 (Global Migration and the Quest for Justice): Advocate for the “protection for uprooted women and children from all forms of violence and abuse, including full legal protection of children in situations of armed conflict” and for the “unification of families divided by borders and legal status wherever this occurs.”
- Policy/Actions
 - Ensure Ukrainian refugees are welcomed with the resources they need
 - Invoke protection for Roma and other ethnic minorities
 - Advocate for journalists’ rights and their protection
 - Continue support of the Ukrainian people during the war
 - Give aid to Ukrainians still in the country
 - Support efforts to reunite Ukrainian families separated by the war
 - Find ways to ensure that all countries affected by the disruption in the global food supply chain obtain the goods they need
 - Amplify the concerns of Ukrainians

Description

- Kenya functions as a republic with an elected President who leads the executive branch, a bicameral legislature comprised of a Senate and National Assembly, and a judiciary. Regarding human rights, the police were involved in many corrupt practices. These ranged from extrajudicial killings, excessive uses of force, and general misconduct. During COVID, a strict curfew was enforced, and police used violent tactics to ensure individuals were punished for breaking it. This resulted in twenty-three deaths and eighty injuries resulting from cruel treatment. Prisoners were assaulted by police and prison guards via battery, electric shock, bondage, and more. Police officers were rarely held accountable for the actions they perpetrated against the public. Regarding refugees, they too suffered abuse both from the police and in general. Gender-based violence occurred, with domestic violence, physical assault, and female genital mutilation occurring. Most refugees could not work due to complications with securing work permits and had a challenging time accessing government services. The most recent presidential election was voided by the Supreme Court, and another was held as Uhuru Kenyatta won with a suspiciously high margin against the other candidate. Another election was held with Kenyatta winning again, but this result was considered fair. However, this incident underscores serious election security problems within Kenya's political process. Women faced significant human rights challenges in Kenya, with the most prevalent being the practice of female genital mutilation. Though it is illegal to practice FGM in Kenya, it still occurs regularly. According to one report from 2021, a county in Kenya had 61% of girls under the age of five who had undergone the practice. While there is no racial or ethnic majority in Kenya, fighting often occurred between racial groups due to the limited availability of water and pasture resulting from climate change. These conflicts sometimes resulted in death.

What's Been Done

- The United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF established the Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation in 2008. This program collaborates with seventeen countries and grassroots organizations to end FGM. Some of the goals of the program are to encourage the development of policies and legislation, embolden youth to end FGM in their communities and urge medical professionals to recognize FGM as a human rights violation. 5.5 million women and girls in the countries supported by the program (including Kenya) have been aided by protection and care services.
- In 2018, the Kenyan government released a National Climate Change Action Plan for 2018-2022. Regarding the area of Food and Nutrition Security, they desire to "increase productivity in the livestock sector through the implementation of priority climate-smart actions" and "improve crop productivity through the implementation of climate-smart actions." Regarding Water and the Blue Economy, the government strives to "improve access to good quality water" and "increase annual per capita water availability through the development of water infrastructure." A study found that this plan, along with others, has seen some significant progress, though most of the mitigation strategies have not been completed yet.
- The Refugee Consortium of Kenya is a nongovernmental organization that seeks to "promote and protect the rights and dignity of refugees." They do this by offering legal services, psycho-social counseling, advocating for policy change, and raising awareness. In 2020, 7,208 individuals received aid from RCK.

Recommendations

- Insight from Social Principles, from the Book of Discipline (2016)
 - 160A (The Natural World): "We urge development of international agreements concerning equitable utilization of the world's resources for human benefit so long as the integrity of the earth is maintained. We are deeply concerned about the privatization of water resources, the bottling of water to be sold as a commodity for profit, and the resources that go into packaging bottled water."
 - 161F (Women and Men): "We call upon women and men alike to share power and control, to learn to give freely and to receive freely, to be complete and to respect the wholeness of others. We seek for every individual opportunities and freedom to love and be loved, to seek and receive justice, and to practice ethical self-determination."
 - 162C (Rights of Children): "Moreover, children have the rights to food, shelter, clothing, health care, and emotional well-being as do adults, and these rights we affirm as theirs regardless of actions or inactions of their parents or guardians. In particular, children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse."

- 162H (Rights of Immigrants): “We affirm the right of all persons for employment, access to housing, health care, education, and freedom from social discrimination.”
- 164A (Basic Freedoms and Human Rights, see page 3)
- 165B (National Power and Responsibility): “Upon the powerful rests responsibility to exercise their wealth and influence with restraint. We will promote restorative justice strategies to support positive social change and peace building.”
- Insight from Resolutions, from the Book of Resolutions (2016)
 - 1033 (Caring for Creation: A Call to Stewardship and Justice): “We are to tend God’s land and care for all creation’s creatures as faithful trustees with a commitment to preserve its goodness and diversity for future generations.”
 - 3202 (Health and Wholeness): “Other practices such as female circumcision can result in pain and the spread of infection.”
 - 5031 (Humanizing Criminal Justice): “A justice system that reflects God’s desires for the world is one that is healing and restorative. Those who have been victimized by crime and the communities in which they reside need healing.”
 - 5038 (Caring for Victims of Crime): “Many victims feel frustrated because there often seems to be no provision for them to be heard. Their injuries are not redressed, and they are not always notified of the court procedures. Victims should have a greater voice within the criminal-justice system.”
 - 6025 (Globalization and Its Impact on Human Dignity and Human Rights): “While protections for human rights are increasingly enacted by governments and international bodies like the United Nations, grave threats to and gross violations of human rights are also on the rise.”
- Policy/Actions
 - Advocate for a centralized database that documents police misconduct
 - Petition for more effective police training
 - Encourage reporting of those performing FGM
 - Teach land management and cultivation processes
 - Curb violence spurred by a lack of environmental resources
 - Strengthen the efficacy of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
 - Ensure refugees have access to secure, safe housing and work opportunities
 - Continue implementing mitigation and adaption strategies to combat the effects of climate change

Description

- Honduras functions as a republic that is constitutional and consists of multiple parties. The widespread prevalence of gangs ensured that their presence lingered among several types of crimes. Gangs were involved in homicides, threats against journalists, human trafficking, and more. The two most prevalent gangs in Honduras are 18th Street and MS-13. Gang violence occurred in prisons and so did other criminal activities. Refugees were susceptible to abuse and sexual exploitation by criminal organizations. Impunity regarding gangs and their illegal behavior was a regular occurrence. Prison conditions, in general, were poor, as overcrowding, violence, and abuse from fellow inmates and prison officials transpired. The prison system in Honduras was built for 10,600 inmates, but the prison population total in 2021 was 20,768. Disease spread easily throughout the prisons, as those who were sick usually were not separated from the rest of the prison population. Regarding the status of women, domestic violence was not criminalized, though one could serve up to 12 years in prison for injuring a family member given that the severity of the alleged assault matched the severity of injuries suffered. Women did not seek legal justice for domestic violence or withdrew their charges due to fear and economic reliance on their abusers. The indigenous communities in Honduras were diverse but had little representation in the government which meant their input was limited in decisions affecting their lands and aspects of their culture. Indigenous communities experienced violence against them due to competition over natural resources, corruption, and more. Human rights activists stated that the government failed to rectify conflicts in which indigenous communities and farmers were targeted by government officials, citizens, and businesses attempting to seize their land.

What's Been Done There

- In November 2020, USAID published “A Study of Gang Disengagement in Honduras.” The study relayed the reasons why individuals join gangs, when they intend to leave them, and what happens when gang members do leave. The study found that most adolescents who joined gangs desired friendships or some recreation and did not join because of an interest in criminal activity. Additionally, most adolescents are recruited in the streets, as their families do not supervise them regularly. When individuals are in gangs, many intend to leave after a few years, but the desire lessens until they become adults. Outside support is crucial for someone attempting to leave a gang, which may come from church, family, or another social organization. The study also found that former gang leaders do not have faith that the government can solve the issue of gangs in Honduras besides utilizing law enforcement.
- In April 2022, the UN Fund to End Violence Against Women supported Centro de Estudios de la Mujer–Honduras in a project to avert violence faced by women and girls. CEM-H, along with a network of other organizations, is informing other organizations on how to encourage context-specific solutions to end this violence. CEM-H has implemented training that enables young women to learn how to advocate for women’s rights, educated teachers on how to prevent violence against women in the classroom, and energized local women’s movements to publicly campaign for justice regarding femicide victims.
- The Center for the Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and their Families was “created in 1995 to combat the persistence in Honduras and other places of torture.” CPTRT used to operate as a clinic but now focuses on how torture in prisons affects survivors and their families, on those who have been displaced, and those who have been threatened by internal and forced displacement. CPTRT guides policies regarding peace, social justice, and human rights.

Recommendations

- Insight from Social Principles, from the Book of Discipline (2016)
 - 161A (Culture and Identity): “Through relationships within and among cultures we are called to and have the responsibility for learning from each other, showing mutual respect for our differences and similarities as we experience the diversity of perspectives and viewpoints.”
 - 161H (Family Violence and Abuse): “We recognize that family violence and abuse in all its forms—verbal, psychological, physical, sexual – is detrimental to the covenant of the human community.”
 - 163A (Property): “We believe, therefore, governments have the responsibility, in the pursuit of justice and order under law, to provide procedures that protect the rights of the whole society as well as those of private ownership.”

- 164A (Basic Freedoms and Human Rights): “Furthermore, the mistreatment or torture, and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment of persons by governments for any purpose violates Christian teaching and must be condemned and/or opposed by Christians and churches wherever and whenever it occurs.”
- 165D (Justice and Law, see page 3)
- Insight from Resolutions, from the Book of Resolutions (2016)
 - 5031 (Humanizing Criminal Justice): “A justice system must be first and foremost about humanization since God’s justice always works to bring reconciliation. Systems of retribution breed only violence and isolation.”
 - 6025C (Globalization and Its Impact on Human Dignity and Human Rights, Indigenous Peoples: Toward Self-Determination): “Indeed, it will be hard for indigenous peoples all over the world to exercise their fundamental human rights as distinct nations, societies, and peoples without the ability to control the knowledge and resources they have inherited from their ancestors and reside in their ancestral domains.”
 - 6025D (Globalization and Its Impact on Human Dignity and Human Rights, Impunity: The Case for an International Criminal Court): “The prevailing culture of repression, oppression, and exploitation has no place in this culture of peace. Only the pursuit of a just peace, which includes the search for truth and justice for victims will bring about forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing in many rural villages, towns, cities, nations, and regions of the world that are scarred by conflict and war.”
- Policy/Actions
 - Establish restorative rehabilitation centers or programs for low-level offenders
 - Advocate for legislation to aid victims of domestic violence in achieving justice
 - Ensure indigenous lands are protected from those who try to usurp them
 - Improve prisons with increased access to medical services
 - Collaborate with government officials to offer gang members job training and employment opportunities
 - Create outreach programs to deter youth from joining gangs
 - Educate children on the signs of domestic violence
 - Protect indigenous communities from violence

After completing my analysis and research on these countries and regions, I have found that there are many overlapping issues affecting them. Whether it is a country mistreating women, refugees, persons with disabilities, prisoners, indigenous communities, the LGBTQ+ community, and more, these countries all suffer from human rights issues and struggling governments. However, while it is instinct to pity these countries or compare them to our own, neither of these options is correct. The issues that these countries are facing do not exist in a vacuum, and developed countries have a responsibility to aid these countries in becoming a just place for their citizens. Additionally, developed countries also struggle with many of the same problems and must take steps domestically to correct them. Overall, this report enlightened me not only on the ways in which these countries can improve but also on how we as a world community must improve to overcome these issues as well.

- <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/haiti/>
- <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/apr-1-2022-us-strategy-prevent-conflict-and-promote-stability-priority-countries>
- <https://www.csis.org/analysis/haiti-betting-montana-accord>
- <https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-break-stalemate-haiti>
- <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-haiti/>
- <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/cuba/>
- <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2022/06/09/fact-sheet-dhs-resumes-cuban-family-reunification-parole-cfrp-program-and-haitian>
- <https://www.state.gov/biden-administration-expands-support-to-the-cuban-people/>
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