

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 186th Period of Sessions

CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS

HEARING ON WIDESPREAD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN HAITI

March 8, 2023 | 8:45 AM

Petitioners appeal to this honorable Commission to fulfill its mandate and utilize all mechanisms at its disposal to protect the rights of Haitian women and girls via the robust Inter-American system of human rights.

We provide the following specific recommendations:

1. Issue a public statement acknowledging the dire situation facing Haitian women and girls and directing the Haitian government to do the following:
 - a. Strengthen the capacity of the Haitian police to reduce widespread insecurity and protect women and girls;
 - b. Build and strengthen the capacity of Haiti's judiciary to support and protect victims, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, including by confronting corruption and safeguarding competence and ethics within the judiciary, enforcing laws against gender-based violence, and taking due care with victim safety through appropriate notifications;
 - c. Direct and empower Haiti's judiciary to investigate the massive human rights violations and corruption that continue to take place;
 - d. Reduce the use of illegal and arbitrary preventive detention against women and girls;
 - e. Ensure women's equal participation in leadership and decision-making roles across all levels of government;
 - f. Center the specific needs of women and girls across all government policies and collect gender-disaggregated data;
 - g. Provide critical services for victims of SGBV, including reproductive care, psychosocial support, and access to livelihoods;
 - h. Support and empower women's rights organizations, including those focused on women's empowerment and broad policy advocacy to support, protect, and empower Haiti's women and girls.
2. Conduct a fact-finding in loco visit to Haiti to investigate its human rights situation, especially as it affects women and girls, with a focus on engagement with civil society and grassroots organizations, especially those comprised of and representing individuals from marginalized communities.
3. Document and issue a public report about the situation of women and girls in Haiti, including especially the incidence and causes of sexual violence directed at women and

girls, as well as the underlying structural inequalities affecting their home and public lives, including but not limited to political participation, economic access and opportunities, and socio-cultural status. The preparation of the report must include discussions with and considerations of women and girls with further marginalizing identities and grassroots women's organizations. Further, all future reports by the Commission should require a dedicated focus on the situation of Haiti's women and girls.

4. Extend and expand precautionary measures MC 340/10 on behalf of women and girls at risk of sexual violence as recently requested by petitioners in that case. And, in light of the ineffective implementation of the existing measures and the broader situation facing Haitian women and girls in Haiti, request—pursuant to articles 25 and 76 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure—that the Inter-American Court adopt provisional measures to avoid further irreparable harm to Haitian women and girls.
5. Issue a public statement (i) directing all countries within the Organization of American States (OAS) to comply with their obligations to respect the rights of the Haitian people to democracy and self-determination; (ii) acknowledging that no advancement can be made on substantive human rights in Haiti until the underlying governance crisis is addressed, which can be accomplished only through Haitian-led solutions free from foreign interference; and (iii) directing all countries within the OAS to desist from actions to prop up Haiti's illegitimate, corrupt, and repressive de facto government at the expense of Haiti's pro-democracy movement.
6. Ensure that all Commission communications and meetings are accessible to Haitians, including those from marginalized backgrounds by providing Haitian Creole language materials and interpretation as relevant.