

# *Children in Haiti are trapped in a vicious circle*

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By Maria Josefina Arce

Armed conflicts and natural disasters hit children especially hard, who in many cases see their dreams and future aspirations cut short. They face the sad reality of seeing their homes, schools and communities

destroyed and the loss of family members.

In Haiti, where gang violence is rife, this sector of the population is seriously threatened. The UN has stated that each report it issues on the situation of children in the Caribbean nation is more alarming than the last.

The international organization noted that children are victims of atrocities perpetrated by criminal gangs ranging from murder and kidnapping to rape and forced recruitment into their ranks.

In the last few days UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, denounced that gangs looted a container with essential aid for minors, who are deprived of medical attention due to the collapse of the health system, in the main port of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

It is a fact that the situation of children in Haitian territory has been deteriorating in recent years. They were the main victims of the strong earthquake of 2010, which left thousands of orphans in addition to many dead or injured children.

Eleven years later, in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic, another earthquake of great magnitude came to deepen the vulnerabilities already existing in the country ranked as the poorest in the hemisphere.

Added to this, the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021 triggered violence, which escalated over the months to reach the current critical situation.

Already in the middle of last year, UNICEF had warned that some three million children, the highest number ever recorded, were in need of humanitarian aid.

The threat to the welfare of children is growing by the hour. The longer the chaotic scenario persists, the greater the physical and mental damage to this segment of the population.

Children in Haiti are caught in a vicious cycle. Violence, hunger, poverty and unhealthy conditions have long been part of their lives. They urgently need protection and support.

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