



Poll of the Haitian Diaspora on the Earthquake

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This public opinion research study was sponsored by New America Media. The results and findings in this executive summary are based on a poll of Haitian-American adults residing in the United States. The sample was designed to be representative of the adult Haitian population of the United States according to the latest US Census data. The 400 interviews were conducted between January 22 -24, 2010 via telephone using professionally trained multilingual interviewers. Respondents were interviewed in English or Haitian Creole depending on their language of preference.

Major Findings

1. The Haitian community of the United States has been deeply affected by the earthquake that struck the island nation earlier this month. Three-fifths of all Haitian respondents told our interviewers that they had lost some of their "loved ones." Two-thirds of them feel the situation in their country is so dire that they are willing to move back to Haiti for a period of time to help with the reconstruction.
2. Seventy-eight percent of Haitian adults in the United States report having sent a financial contribution (average: \$75) to help the victims of the earthquake. And the large majority of those that have been sending remittances to their family members in Haiti on a regular basis say that they are now willing to increase the amount they send every month. Moreover, 62 percent indicate that they are willing to adopt or foster a Haitian orphan from the earthquake.
3. Haitians in the United States appear to have lost confidence in the current Haitian government and its handling of the aftermath of the earthquake. Three-fifths of the respondents agree that the Haitian government has practically disappeared since the earthquake and 63 percent disapprove of the reaction of President Rene Preval and the Haitian government to the earthquake. The concern about the ability of the Haitian government to deal

with the crisis is so strong that a majority of Haitians in the United States feel that officials from the United Nations and the international community should govern Haiti “at the very least until it recovers from this catastrophe.” And the poll reveals that most Haitians are not concerned about the large American military presence in their country.

4. President Barack Obama and his government (96 percent) and the United Nations (88 percent) receive very high approval marks from the Haitian diaspora for their reaction to the earthquake. Nevertheless, more than three-quarters of the poll respondents feel that the \$100 million pledged by the United States to help Haiti recover will not be enough. The majority of Haitians in the United States would like to see more than \$1 billion invested in Haiti. And more than three-fifths feel that the United States should welcome at least 50,000 new Haitian refugees to alleviate the catastrophic situation in the island nation.

5. The Haitian community in the United States indicates that – for them - the most important long-term need of their country is improving the country’s health and education systems (37 percent) while a significant percentage preferred strengthening the security and safety of the Haitian people (24 percent). A majority also agreed that Haiti would benefit from the opening of American markets to Haitian agricultural produce and manufactured goods.

6. The Haitian diaspora in the United States is split on the viability of the Haitian state. Forty-six percent agree that Haiti will never be able to govern itself while 41 percent disagree that Haiti is a failed state. There is also great concern about the aid money being sent to Haiti. One-third of the poll respondents say that most of the aid money will end up in the hands of corrupt government officials.

7. The Haitian earthquake and its aftermath have captured the attention of most Haitians in the United States. More than 90 percent say that they are following events in Haiti “closely” mostly through English-language television. They mostly characterize coverage of the earthquake by CNN, Fox News, ABC, CBS and NBC as fair and comprehensive (87 percent) while less than one-tenth feels it has been “unbalanced and sensationalistic.”

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