

Haitians struggle with the costs associated with crime

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(Phys.org)—As violent crime continues to rise in Haiti, more households are helping their children cope with the trauma as well as deal with burdensome funeral and burial costs, a new University of Michigan report indicated.

[Violent crimes](#) were more common in densely packed zones in Haiti's largest urban communities, including Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes and

Gonaives.

Researchers released the new survey that looks at the [economic costs](#) of violent [crime](#) in Haiti. The report is the second in a monthly series that features longitudinal surveys of 3,000 households from August 2011 and July 2012.

"There is a risk that the silent poor are suffering a double burden that could set back development gains for generations," said Athena Kolbe, U-M doctoral candidate in social work and political science and the report's lead author.

The costs associated with crime include medical and nonmedical expenses, including lost wages.

Despite an increased international investment in restoring the capacities of the Haitian National Police, Haitians still struggle to access basic policing services, Kolbe said. Thus, many residents do not report assaults and property crimes because they feel nothing would be done about it or a bribe would be expected by police.

Some of the findings were:

- The murder rate for Port-au-Prince, the capital and largest city in Haiti, increased to 76.2 from 60.9 per 100,000 people between February and July 2012.
- The costs of a physical or sexual assault on a household member amounts to nearly 20 percent of the household's annual income.
- After a family member is victimized, children are vulnerable to adverse outcomes, such as being sent to live with other families as an unpaid domestic servant or withdrawing from school.
- Many households took out loans to pay for funeral and burial

costs, which averaged nearly \$5,000. Interest charged on loans from financial lenders and morticians ranged from 50 to 150 percent.

- Police bribes increased as victims and families were asked to pay to facilitate the progress of their case. Bribes also were related to real or perceived law infractions. Nearly half of the respondents reported paying a bribe at a police roadblock in an urban area for not having proper documentation for their vehicle. Two-thirds of those who reported this type of incident said the accusation against them was false.

More information: For a copy of the report: igarape.org.br/wp-content/themes/igarape/2012-08-haitians-struggle-crime.pdf

Provided by University of Michigan

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