



SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN HAITI'S IDP CAMPS: RESULTS OF A HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2011, the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at NYU School of Law conducted a survey of households in four camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in and around Port-au-Prince, Haiti. This briefing paper presents preliminary data from the survey, focusing on reported incidents of sexual violence. An alarming 14% of households surveyed reported that, since the earthquake, one or more members of their household had been victimized by rape or unwanted touching or both.¹

CHRGJ designed the survey to capture information about gender-based violence and its potential links to economic and social rights violations. The survey is one element in a larger CHRGJ study combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Due to resource constraints, the sample size—365 households—is relatively small by social science standards. It was collected using a modified systematic sampling method and is not representative of the whole IDP population. Despite these limitations, CHRGJ's results are likely indicative of patterns and trends. Specifically, the data presented here may suggest the scope of the human rights problem and its contours in a way that traditional human rights case collection methods cannot. CHRGJ will publish its complete results, in-depth analysis of the connections between gender-based violence and violations of the right to food and water, and recommendations in a report later in 2011.

BACKGROUND

More than one year after the earthquake, the situation in Haiti remains bleak. It is estimated that more than 810,000 people are still living in some 1,000 displacement camps in Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas.² Most live in camps without enclosed shelter,³ and many camps still have either no lighting at all or inadequate lighting at best.⁴ Recent reports suggest that large proportions of camps still do not have access to a safe water supply, leading many to drink untreated water.⁵ Hunger remains a chronic problem.⁶ Many displacement camps lack toilets or latrines of any kind, and where toilets are provided, they are often used by hundreds—sometimes thousands—of people.⁷ Serious health problems have taken root in these conditions. As of January 28, 2011, cholera had killed more than 4,000 individuals, with more than 200,000 cases reported since the outbreak was first confirmed in October 2010.⁸

Service providers and human rights organizations have documented hundreds of cases of sexual violence since the earthquake, and report that fear of rape and other sexual violence within the camps is high.⁹ Sexual violence is one form of gender-based violence that abrogates fundamental human rights.¹⁰ The U.N. Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences recently denounced the vulnerability of women to sexual and domestic violence in Haiti's displacement camps, noting that "in the aftermath of an emergency, pre-existing vulnerabilities and patterns of discrimination and human rights violations are often exacerbated."¹¹ In November 2010, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights granted a request for Precautionary Measures concerning gender-based violence in Haiti, urging the government of Haiti to take immediate action to prevent sexual violence against women and girls in IDP camps.¹²

METHODS

Researchers administered the survey in four camps spanning three different communes in the greater metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince: Terrain de Golf (Delmas), Place St. Pierre (Pétionville), Champs de Mars (Port-au-Prince), and Parc Jean Marie Vincent (Port-au-Prince). CHRGJ selected this set of camps to include both large and small camps, camps with official camp management agencies (CMAs) and those without, and camps within the commune of Port-au-Prince and in the nearby communes of Delmas and Pétionville.

Surveys were administered using a systematic sample design, surveying every *n*th household.¹³ Interviewers were instructed to approach one household after counting a specified number of shelters and to commence this procedure again after every completed survey. Depending on the size of the camp, interviewers approached every three shelters, every five shelters, or every ten shelters for a specified period of time. Interviewers administered the survey to the first available and consenting resident over 18 years of age in each household they approached, whether male or female. In total, there were 264 female respondents, 99 male, and 2 in which gender was unreported. Early efforts to administer a number of surveys in each camp proportional to the size of the camp population were abandoned when they proved impractical given logistical and security concerns. While the systematic design was followed as carefully as possible, the method was adjusted when necessary due to logistical or security issues. For example, when interviewers felt their safety was compromised, time spent in one camp was reduced from a full day to a half day. This and similar adjustments resulted in some problems maintaining the desired sampling strategy. The resulting sample is thus a convenience sample collected in a modified systematic manner.

Each survey took between fifteen minutes and one hour to complete and all surveys were administered in Haitian Kreyòl. Haitian interviewers were trained to note commentary outside the parameters of the response options while administering each survey. This additional qualitative data will augment quantitative data. The interviewers were also trained to note signs of distress and to talk through detailed referral options with respondents who expressed the need for legal, medical, and/or psychosocial services related to gender-based violence.

CHRGJ staff and students enrolled in the Global Justice Clinic at NYU School of Law made up the core NYU research team that designed the study and trained the Haitian survey team. The interview team was made up of Haitians trained in field research methods, many experienced in collecting survey data. A Haitian field manager with extensive experience conducting surveys supervised the interview team, and a Haitian project advisor worked with the core research team on site. Data

analysis was performed by the NYU research team, with input from data specialists at NYU and elsewhere.

The NYU research team designed the survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data on the experiences and opinions of displaced Haitians concerning sexual violence, access to food, and access to water and sanitation services. Members of the research team piloted a draft of the survey in Port-au-Prince in October 2010 and collected feedback from Haitian experts and women living in IDP camps. This feedback informed the structure of the survey, the phrasing of questions about rape and forced sex, and the content of categorical answers. The NYU University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects reviewed and approved the study design.

FINDINGS

Experience of Sexual Violence since the Earthquake

14% of respondents reported that, since the earthquake, one or more members of their household had been victimized by either rape or unwanted touching or both (referred to together here as “sexual violence”). 9% of all respondents surveyed reported that one or more members of their household had been “raped or forced into having sex when they did not want to” since the earthquake.¹⁴ 8% of respondents reported that one or more members of their household had been “touched in a way you or they did not want to be touched, not including rape or forced sex”¹⁵ since the earthquake.¹⁶

Not all survey respondents who reported an incident of sexual violence provided the gender and age of the victim. However, of those who reported gender, the vast majority (about 86%) were women and girls.¹⁷ Notably, men and boys made up about 14% of victims whose gender was reported.¹⁸ Most sexual assault victims whose gender was reported were women in their early twenties. There were a number of female victims in their early teens. The youngest victim whose age was reported was a 4-year-old boy.

FIGURE 1.

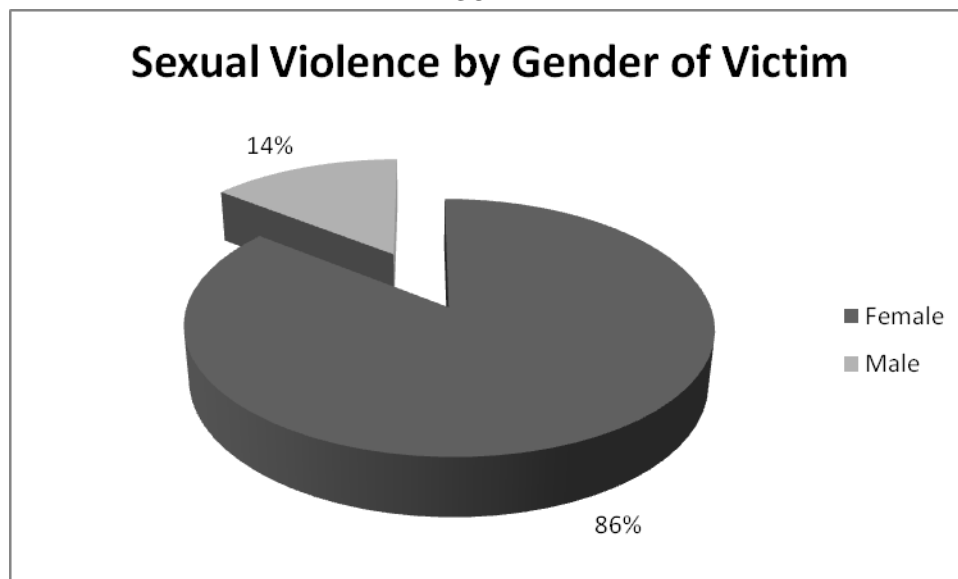
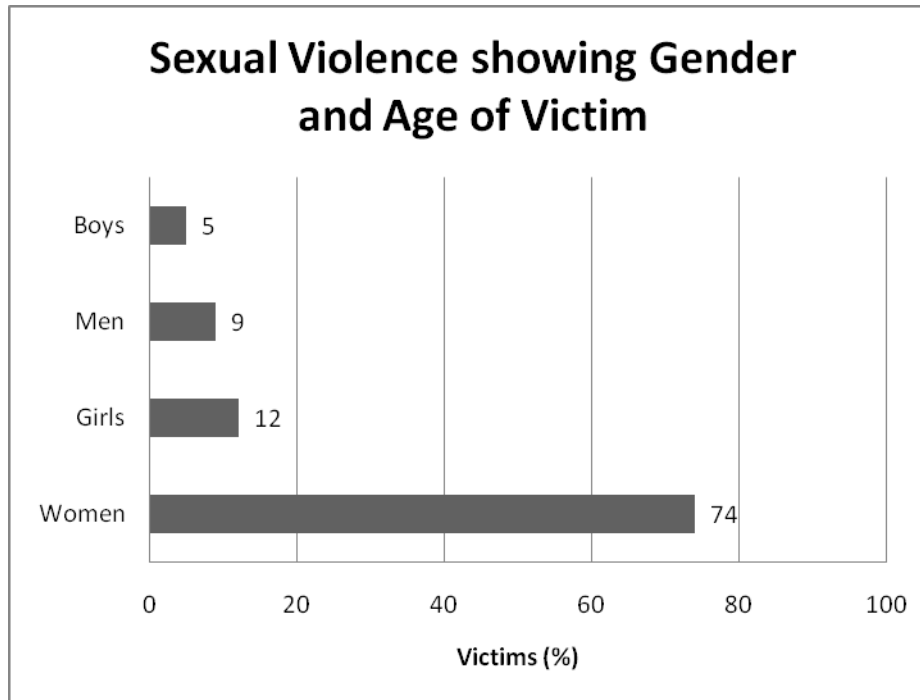


FIGURE 2.

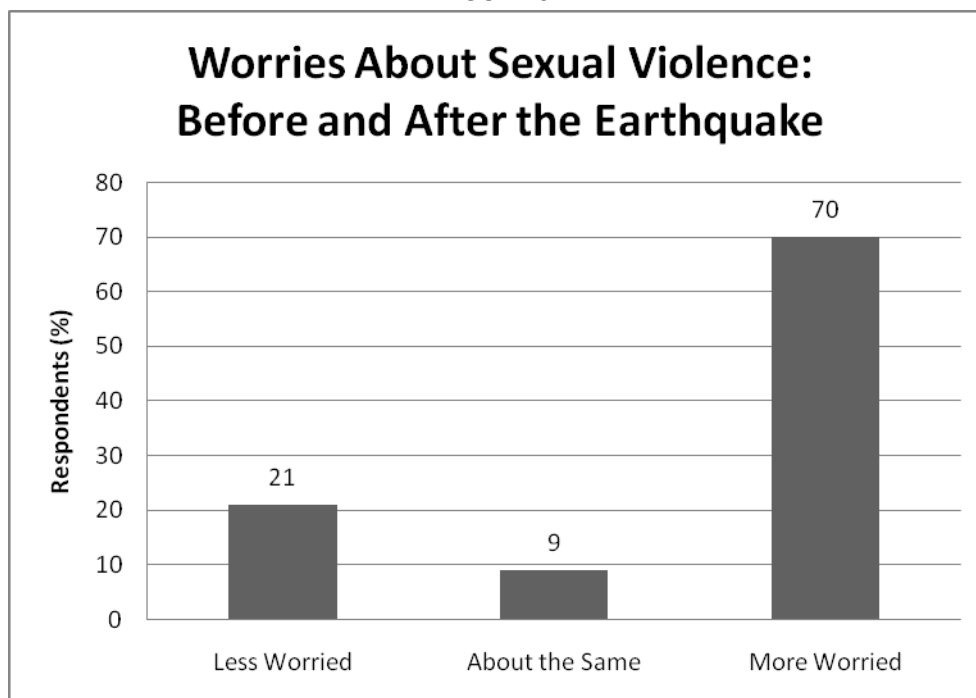


Many survey respondents did not provide data on the location of the incidents of sexual violence. Among respondents who provided details, the victim's shelter was the most common, followed by going to or coming from gathering water. Respondents reported that incidents occurred both during the day and at night.

Fear of Sexual Violence One Year after the Earthquake

Almost 60% of respondents said they were afraid of sexual violence against themselves or members of their household in the preceding month.¹⁹ There was very little difference between male and female respondents on this question. 70% of the respondents reported being more worried about sexual violence after the earthquake than before.²⁰ Here, the gender divide was notable, with about 72% of female respondents expressing increased worry compared to about 61% of male respondents.²¹ About 7% of female respondents said they experienced about the same amount of worry about sexual violence as before the earthquake, as compared to about 13% of male respondents.²² 26% of male respondents and 20% of female respondents reported feeling less worried after the earthquake than before.

FIGURE 3.



SEXUAL VIOLENCE DATA IN CONTEXT

The proportion of households in the CHRGJ survey reporting incidents of sexual violence are higher than other studies conducted in Haiti before and after the earthquake. Although it is impossible to directly compare data gathered using different techniques and varied definitions of sexual violence, data from other studies of sexual violence in Haiti provide context for understanding the CHRGJ data. A 2005 survey conducted in Port-au-Prince using random GPS coordinate sampling found that 3.1% of households surveyed had been victims of sexual violence during the 22-month period under assessment.²³ A study conducted using similar methods in Port-au-Prince following the earthquake found that about 3% of the individuals in the sample had experienced sexual violence during the first two months after the earthquake.²⁴ Another study conducted in one IDP camp, Parc Jean-Marie Vincent, found that 4.1% of the respondents in a stratified random sample reported that members of their household had been victims of forced sex during the 12-week period since the earthquake.²⁵ In the CHRGJ survey, which covered a full year following the earthquake, 14% of households reported having members who suffered one or more instances of sexual violence, and 9% who suffered rape or forced sex.²⁶ Because each study used different methods and different definitions of sexual violence, direct comparison across these studies is not possible. However, the CHRGJ study appears to confirm the concern voiced by both grassroots and international NGOs—that sexual violence against individuals living in camps is occurring at alarming rates.²⁷

Findings concerning the pervasiveness of sexual violence, however, must be interpreted with caution. There are many reasons for under-reporting. To encourage candor and to avoid putting respondents at risk, CHRGJ did not include questions about the identities of perpetrators. In Haiti,

studies suggest that shame, fear of retaliation, and very low prosecution rates for sexual violence contribute to underreporting.²⁸ In addition, respondents may not have known about all acts of sexual violence that had been inflicted on members of their household, leading to accidental underreporting. Even if they had complete knowledge of such incidents, some respondents may have been reluctant to report such incidents, perhaps especially to male interviewers.²⁹ Other studies have suggested that intrafamilial sexual violence is likely to go unreported in Haiti,³⁰ and may be particularly prevalent in households where other forms of domestic violence are taking place.³¹ Finally, while studies often survey only respondents over age 18, reports indicate that significant numbers of victims of sexual violence in Haiti are under 18,³² meaning that data collected from respondents over 18 may tend to understate the full extent of the problem.

It is well documented that sexual violence often increases in post-disaster settings, where infrastructure is damaged, security services are overstretched, and living conditions are poor. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, for example, reported cases of sexual violence more than tripled.³³ After the South Asian tsunami in 2004, studies similarly reported an increase in sexual violence.³⁴

EMERGING ISSUES

This briefing paper focuses on survey results pertaining to household experiences with sexual violence. The survey addressed a wide range of additional issues, including perceptions of vulnerability and access to food, water, and sanitation services. Preliminary analysis of the survey data suggests some pressing issues for further research and discussion. Many of these issues will be explored in the next—qualitative—phase of the project. The full results of the study, including analysis of additional survey data, data collected through qualitative methods, and detailed recommendations, will be explored in a detailed report to be published at the closure of the project.

Potential Correlation between Food Insecurity and Sexual Violence

Responses to questions aimed at assessing levels of hunger suggest alarmingly high levels of food insecurity, with a large proportion of respondents indicating that they had gone at least one full day in the past week without food. Preliminary analysis also suggests there may be a correlation between levels of hunger and sexual violence. Survey respondents who reported having experienced sexual violence themselves were also notably less likely to report having eaten every day in the past week than respondents who were not victims of sexual violence.

Perceived Increases in Transactional or “Survival” Sex

Also striking was the high level of agreement about the prevalence of—and commentary about—the practice of young girls and adult women trading sex for food, money, protection, or shelter since the earthquake (a phenomenon often called “transactional” or “survival” sex). A difficult issue to address given both existing practices and issues of stigma, the survey results suggest that camp residents believe that trading sex for basic needs has become a more common survival strategy for women and girls in the camps since the earthquake.

Differing Levels of Vulnerability in Managed as Compared with Unmanaged Camps

Previous assessments have suggested that conditions in camps without official camp management agencies (CMAs) tend to be worse than those in camps with CMAs.³⁵ CHRGJ's preliminary data indicate that a similar dynamic may be present concerning sexual violence in the camps surveyed.

For example, 18% of households in one unmanaged camp in the sample, Champs de Mars in Port-au-Prince, reported experiencing sexual violence compared with 10% of households in Terrain de Golf, one of the managed camps in the sample.³⁶ This may be a particularly significant finding given that as of January 2011, more than 50% of all camps still lacked official NGO management.³⁷

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¹ Sample size is 365 unless otherwise noted. Statistics presented in this briefing paper were rounded to the closest percent. Detailed data is on file with CHRGJ.

² News Release, International Organization for Migration, Much Achieved but Durable Solutions for the Displaced Remain Biggest Hurdle to Haiti's Recovery (Jan. 11, 2011), <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/media/news-releases/newsArticleEU/cache/offonce?entryId=29002>.

³ Bill Quigley & Jeena Shah, *Million Plus Remain Homeless and Displaced in Haiti: One Year After Quake*, COMMON DREAMS (JAN. 11, 2011), http://articles.cnn.com/2010-12-31/world/haiti.cholera_1_cholera-cases-cholera-outbreak-health-ministry?_s=PM:WORLD.

⁴ *Security After the Quake? Addressing Violence and Rape in Haiti*, U.S. INST. FOR PEACE BRIEF (U.S. Institute for Peace), Jan. 7, 2011, at 2, available at http://www.usip.org/files/resources/PB73-Security_After_the_Quake.pdf; Tracy Wilkinson, *Rape Flourishes in Rubble of Haitian Earthquake*, L.A. TIMES, Feb. 4, 2011, available at <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/feb/04/world/la-fg-haiti-women-20110204>.

⁵ INST. FOR JUSTICE & DEMOCRACY IN HAITI, BUREAU DES AVOCATS INTERNATIONAUX, & LAMP FOR HAITI, ONE YEAR AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE – HAITIANS STILL LIVING IN CRISIS 4 (2011), available at http://www.lampforhaiti.org/sites/default/files/Camp%20Conditions_Final.pdf.

⁶ *Id.* at 2.

⁷ MARK SCHULLER, YORK COLLEGE, CITY UNIV. OF N.Y., UNSTABLE FOUNDATIONS: IMPACT OF NGOS ON HUMAN RIGHTS FOR PORT-AU-PRINCE'S INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE 11 (Oct. 4, 2010), available at <http://ijdh.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Report-unstable-foundations-final-2.pdf>.

⁸ *Haiti Cholera Death Toll Tops 4000*, ABC NEWS, Jan. 28, 2011, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/01/28/3123904.htm>.

⁹ In testimony delivered before the UN Human Rights Council on June 7, 2010, KOFATIV representative Malya Villard-Apollon said her organization had recorded at least 242 cases of rape since the January 12 earthquake. *See* Malya Villard Apollon, Co-founder, KOFATIV, Oral Intervention at the 14th Session of the Human Rights Council (June 7, 2010), *available at* <http://ijdh.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Malya-Geneva-Testimony-english.pdf>. By January 2011, KOFATIV had recorded some 640 cases of rape. MADRE, CUNY SCH. OF LAW, & INST. FOR JUSTICE & DEMOCRACY IN HAITI, BUREAU DES AVOCATS INTERNATIONAUX, OUR BODIES ARE STILL TREMBLING: HAITIAN WOMEN CONTINUE TO FIGHT AGAINST RAPE (2011) 6, *available at* http://www.madre.org/images/uploads/misc/1294686468_Haiti_Report_FINAL_011011_v2.pdf. Another Haitian women's group, SOFA, reported that it had documented 718 cases of GBV in its clinic between January and June 2010. *See id.* at 6 (citing SOFA, RAPPORT BILAN 10, CAS DE VIOLENCES ACCUEILLIES ET ACCOMPAGNÉES DANS LES 21 CENTRES DOUVANJOU DE LA SOFA DE JANVIER A JUIN 2010 (2010)). For a comprehensive analysis of GBV following the earthquake, *see* OUR BODIES ARE STILL TREMBLING, *supra*. *See also* AMNESTY INT'L, AFTERSHOCKS: WOMEN SPEAK OUT AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN HAITI'S CAMPS (2011), *available at* <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR36/001/2011/en/57237fad-f97b-45ce-8fdb-68cb457a304c/amr360012011en.pdf> (describing incidents of sexual violence within displacement camps after earthquake); *Haiti: Still Trapped in the Emergency Phase*, FIELD REPORT (Refugees Int'l), Oct. 6, 2010, at 2, *available at* http://www.refintl.org/sites/default/files/100710_haiti_still_trapped.pdf (noting "significant increase in reports of sexual violence" since the earthquake); Rashida Manjoo, Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, Statement at the 65th Session of the General Assembly Third Committee (Oct. 11, 2010), *available at* <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/documents/ga65/vaw.pdf> (noting "numerous reports on the rise in violence against women and girls, in particular rape and domestic violence in IDP camps" in Haiti following the earthquake).

¹⁰ *See* Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, General Recommendation No. 19 (1992).

¹¹ Statement by Rashida Manjoo, *supra* note 9.

¹² Press Release, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, IACHR Expresses Concern Over Situation in Camps for Displaced Persons in Haiti (Nov. 18, 2010), *available at* <http://www.cidh.org/Comunicados/English/2010/115-10eng.htm>. These precautionary measures focus on participation of women's organizations in efforts to combat gender-based violence, health measures, and security. The petition for precautionary measures was filed by the Women's Human Rights Clinic of CUNY Law School, MADRE, the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, Bureau des Avocats Internationaux, Morrison & Foerster LLP, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and Women's Link Worldwide.

¹³ Plans to conduct random GPS cluster sampling were abandoned due to the extreme logistical challenges presented by camp layout and density. For example, shelters were so densely packed in some camps that it would have taken hours to get from one GPS waypoint to the next since interviewers would have been required to zig-zag up and down rows of shelters.

¹⁴ This phrasing was based on a question that had been developed and tested in Haiti by Partners In Health. *See* M.C. Smith Fawzi et al., *Factors Associated with Forced Sex Among Women Accessing Health Services in Rural Haiti: Implications for the Prevention of HIV Infection and Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 60 SOC. SCI. & MED. 679, 681 (2005) ("The variable 'forced sex' was based on the following question: 'Have you ever been forced or pressured into having sex when you did not want to?'").

¹⁵ Based on discussions with partner organizations who work directly with sexual violence survivors, the research team chose this phrasing for the question regarding sexual assault outside the parameters of rape. The phrasing in Kreyòl was "Depi tranblemandetè a, eske ou menm osinon yon moun lakay ou te gen yon moun ki manyen nou dwol nan yon fason nou pat renmen san ke se pat oblije yon atak kadejak?"

¹⁶ N = 351.

¹⁷ N = 42. 31 women and 5 girls. "Girl" was defined as a female under 18.

¹⁸ N = 42. 4 men and 2 boys. "Boy" was defined as a male under 18.

¹⁹ 59%. N = 361.

²⁰ N = 346.

²¹ For female respondents, N = 254; for male respondents, N = 90.

²² For female respondents, N = 254; for male respondents, N = 90.

²³ Athena R. Kolbe & Royce A. Hutson, *Human Rights Abuse and Other Criminal Violations in Port-au-Prince, Haiti: A Random Survey of Households*, 368 THE LANCET 864, 868 (2006). Kolbe and Hutson conducted a random household survey that asked respondents about human rights abuses that had occurred between February of 2004 and December of 2005.

²⁴ Athena R. Kolbe et al./Small Arms Survey & University of Michigan, *ASSESSING NEEDS AFTER THE QUAKE: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM A RANDOMIZED SURVEY OF PORT-AU-PRINCE HOUSEHOLDS* 23 (2010).

²⁵ See Kimberly A. Cullen & Louise C. Ivers, *Human Rights Assessment in Parc Jean Marie Vincent, Port-Au-Prince, Haiti*, HEALTH & HUM. RTS. 61, 65 (2010, Vol. 2) (covering period from January 12th earthquake to late March). Other studies have shown lower numbers. See Athena R. Kolbe et al., *Mortality, Crime and Access to Basic Needs Before and After the Haiti Earthquake: A Random Survey of Port-au-Prince Households*, 26 MED., CONFLICT & SURVIVAL 281, 289 (2010) (finding 0.4% of residents of Port-au-Prince experienced sexual assault in six week period following earthquake).

²⁶ A recent study of pregnancy rates since the earthquake—conducted by UNFPA and the Haitian Ministry of Public Health—found that urban pregnancy rates had tripled since the earthquake, soaring from 4% to 12%. See Daraine Luton, *Haiti's Rate of Fertility Tripled - Report*, JAMAICA GLEANER, Oct. 22, 2010, available at <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20101022/news/news1.html>.

²⁷ See *supra* note 9 (describing various sources reporting increase in sexual violence after earthquake).

²⁸ See Cullen & Ivers, *supra* note 25, at 67 (noting that in Haiti, “[c]ases of rape go largely unreported due to fear of retaliation, shame, and an extremely low prosecution rate”).

²⁹ See Kolbe & Hutson, *supra* note 23, at 871 (suggesting possible underreporting from participants interviewed by all-male research teams).

³⁰ See Kolbe & Hutson, *supra* note 23 (noting possibility that survey participants could have been reluctant to report sexual assaults against household members).

³¹ Several studies conducted prior to the earthquake found rates of domestic violence and intimate partner sexual violence to be close to 10%. For example, a 2008 USAID report found that 12% of those surveyed had “ever experienced” domestic physical violence, 11% had “ever experienced” domestic sexual violence, and 19% had “ever experienced” both domestic violence that was physical and sexual in nature. MICHELLE J. HINDIN ET AL., DHS ANALYTICAL STUDIES, INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AMONG COUPLES IN 10 DHS COUNTRIES: PREDICTORS AND HEALTH OUTCOMES 20 (2008) (analyzing 2005 DHS data for Haiti) available at <http://www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/AS18/AS18.pdf>. Similarly, the 2006 DHS study conducted by the Haitian Ministry of Health in conjunction with its international partners concluded that 27% of Haitian woman had experienced domestic violence since the age of 15 and that 11% of those cases had been sexual in nature. MICHEL CAYEMITTES ET AL., MINISTERE DE LA SANTE PUBLIQUE ET DE LA POPULATION, ENQUETE MORTALITE, MORBIDITE ET UTILISATION DES SERVICES, HAITI 2005-2006, at 299 (2007) available at <http://www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/FR192/FR192.pdf>

³² Kolbe et al., *supra* note 24, at 294 (reporting that “more than half of [victims of sexual violence whose age was reported] were 17 or under”).

³³ Michael Anastario, Nadine Shehab & Lynn Lawry, *Increased Gender-Based Violence Among Women Internally Displaced in Mississippi 2 Years Post-Hurricane Katrina*, 3 DISASTER MED. & PUB. HEALTH PREPAREDNESS 18 (2009) (“The crude rate of new cases of GBV among women increased from 4.6/100,000 per day to 16.3/100,000 per day in 2006, and remained elevated at 10.1/100,000 per day in 2007. The increase was primarily driven by the increase in intimate partner violence.”).

³⁴ See Madhavi M. Ariyabandu, *Gender Issues in Recovery from the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami: The Case of Sri Lanka*, 20 EARTHQUAKE SPECTRA S759, S765 (2006) (“Women affected by the tsunami were observed to be at greater risk for sexual violence . . . [and their] increased vulnerability to domestic violence persisted beyond the initial emergency phase.”); Eileen Pittaway et al, *Gendered Dimensions of the 2004 Tsunami and a Potential Social Work Response in Post-Disaster Situations*, 50 INT'L SOC. WORK 307, 309-11 (2007) (drawing connection between post-disaster rise in sexual violence and underlying “social pressures and gender inequalities,” as well as “breakdown in the family support structures and justice systems that can traditionally offer [women] protection”).

³⁵ Schuller, *supra* note 7, at 18 (reporting that “Data shows that camps with NGO managers are far better serviced than camps without managers.”).

³⁶ For Terrain de Golf, N = 116; for Champs de Mars, N = 176.

³⁷ At present, 46% of the total IDP population is covered by a CMA. This represents an increase from 29% coverage in October 2010—a change likely partially attributable to overall decline in the displaced population. See Camp Coordination & Camp Mgmt. Cluster, Int'l Org. of Migration, *Displacement Tracking Matrix*, http://www.cccmhaiti.info/pdf/dtm_summary_idps_january_2011.pdf (last visited Mar. 14, 2011).