



Billions invested in Haiti since 2010 earthquake have not improved country: 'We're still working'

Description

US : The U.S. has committed hundreds of millions of dollars to renewed initiatives to help Haiti during its crime crisis in the country, but concerns remain about whether the country will properly utilize the money, according to an expert.

Haiti received around \$13.5 billion in the years following a devastating 2010 earthquake, thanks to an international effort led by the U.S. and the United Nations, around 120% of the country's GDP at the time.

"They never rebuilt Port-au-Prince. You're talking about a city that doesn't have a sanitation system, doesn't have basic plumbing and electricity, no basic infrastructure ... people can't get anywhere, they're walking up and down the dirt," said Jack Brewer, a former NFL player and philanthropist who has pursued initiatives to help rebuild Haiti.

Brewer told Fox News Digital that he felt the funding provided after the 2010 earthquake "wasn't properly spent."

"I got a chance to watch a lot of the things that happened on the ground," Brewer said. "After the earthquake in 2010, I worked with the NFL Players Association, and we partnered with the Clinton-Bush Haiti Fund ... it was called the Clinton Haiti Fund ... and we raised a lot of money through that, and it started to be allocated."

"Then other countries came in and started to allocate a lot of money," he added. "You would think that the long-term goal was to rebuild the city of Port-au-Prince and the surrounding areas that were impacted by the earthquake, but I was there, and a few years went on, and we're still working."

The U.S. has committed to contribute the bulk of funds for a multinational security mission from East Africa to Haiti, led by Kenya and comprised of police from various countries.

The Biden administration will pledge another \$33 million in general humanitarian aid to the country, bringing the total committed for the effort to \$333 million – as America's national debt tops \$34.5 trillion.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday said the crisis “has been a long unfolding story” and will require the international community to help stabilize the country as gangs continue to run rampant.

“Having done all this work, we should be in a place where that mission goes forward,” Blinken said. “It will, we believe, help reestablish security and take back control of the country from gangs.”

Jimmy Cherizier, known by the nickname “Barbecue,” [runs a gang](#) coalition called the G9 Family and Allies, rising to a level of influence that allows him to block sitting Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry from returning to the country until he agrees to resign.

Brewer said he feels that many Haitians “believe that America is one of the roots of the problem,” going back to the Clintons and their rebuilding efforts following the earthquake.

“They think Washington, D.C., is controlling these leaders that are coming into the country, and, as you can see, most of the leaders are corrupt,” Brewer claimed. “They’re in, and it’s kind of the culture in Haiti: As a politician, once you get there, you get that power so you can enrich yourself.”

When asked about their role in the Haiti recovery, [spokespersons](#) for the former president and the secretary told Fox News Digital: “The Clintons worked tirelessly to address the needs of the Haitian people in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake.

Even as their detractors have distorted and obfuscated the facts, they have never shied away from doing all they could to lift people up. It’s easy to point fingers from afar for political gain, but it impedes progress, and that’s tragic.”

An expert on Haiti told The Associated Press that after President René Préval left office in 2011, he found subsequent Haitian leaders were at best easy on the gangs and at worst tied to them.

The gangs have gained influence throughout the previous decades, but their increasing influence and ties with the country’s political leadership allowed them to gain money through a mix of extortion, kidnappings, and drugs and weapons smuggling.

Brewer worries that even without the fear of diverting the funds, he does not have confidence that the new money will prove effective, citing the post-earthquake humanitarian aid and lack of long-lasting improvements.

In a 2016 review of some of the initiatives applied to Haiti following the natural disaster, ABC News found that a \$400 million garment factory that promised to create plenty of jobs

for the area had ultimately “underdelivered.”

“They’re building infrastructure with no coding,” he said. “They don’t have coding, so if they get hit with another earthquake, the same thing is going to happen.”

The country struggled to cope with a cholera outbreak that started after U.N. peacekeepers accidentally introduced the disease to the island. Around 10,000 people died as a result of the disease.

Part of the issue was that money given to Haiti had already been earmarked for a number of necessary services, such as paying the Red Cross for their on-the-ground assistance, as well as other rescue services.

“The actual funds left on the ground, a lot of them got into the hands of the wrong people or the folks in power,” Brewer added, calling the recovery effort “the worst handling of a natural disaster in the history of the planet.”

“It’s been very disappointing to see the level of corruption, particularly around things that involve children and youth, and trying to get medical supplies in and out of the country ... it has been very difficult,” he said.

Regarding the \$333 million headed for Haiti in the coming months, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) told Fox News Digital that “any interference in, or diversion of, humanitarian aid is unacceptable.”

“USAID takes its duty as a steward of U.S. taxpayer funding seriously and holds implementing partners to the highest standards to ensure that taxpayer funds are used wisely, effectively, and for their intended purposes,” a USAID spokesperson said.

“We require our partners to have robust safeguards and risk-mitigation systems in place to ensure that principled humanitarian aid reaches those who need it most.”

The agency noted that it works with humanitarian partners with “extensive experience working in challenging environments” and who have “demonstrated their commitment to stay and deliver life-saving assistance with impartiality, neutrality and independence while ensuring the safety of their staff and facilities.”

The United Nations did not respond to a Fox News Digital request for comment by the time of publication.

By Peter Aitken

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