

Over 20,000 displaced by gang violence in Haiti: UN agency

AFP- More than 20,000 people have been displaced across Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince in four days, a UN agency said Saturday, as residents flee gang violence that has crippled the troubled Caribbean nation.

"The isolation of Port-au-Prince is amplifying an already dire humanitarian situation," said Gregoire Goodstein, Haiti chief for the International Organization for Migration.

"Our ability to deliver aid is stretched to its limits. Without immediate international support, the suffering will worsen exponentially," Goodstein added in a statement.

The IOM said that around 17,000 of the roughly 20,000 people recently forced to relocate were already in temporary housing, with many having been displaced multiple times.

"Such a scale of displacement has not been observed since August 2023," the migration agency said in a news release.

Haiti saw Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aime sworn in on Monday, replacing outgoing premier Garry Conille, who was appointed in May but became embroiled in a power struggle with the country's unelected transitional council.

Violent crime in Port-au-Prince remains high, with well-armed gangs that control some 80 percent of the city routinely targeting civilians, even though a Kenyan-led international force has been deployed to help the outgunned Haitian police restore order.

Gang-related violence has caused nearly 4,000 deaths this year, according to the UN human rights office.

Haiti lost major links to the rest of the world this past week when the United States banned all civilian flights to the

country for a month, after three jetliners approaching or departing Port-au-Prince were hit by gunfire.

AFP

U.N. begins polio vaccination in Gaza, as fighting rages

Reuters – The United Nations, in collaboration with Palestinian health authorities, began to vaccinate 640,000 children in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, with Israel and Hamas agreeing to brief pauses in their [11-month war](#) to allow the campaign to go ahead.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) confirmed last month that a baby was partially paralysed by the [type 2 polio virus](#), the [first such case](#) in the territory in 25 years.

The campaign began on Sunday in areas of central Gaza, and will move to other areas in coming days. Fighting will pause for at least eight hours on three consecutive days.

The WHO said the pauses will likely need to extend to a fourth day and the first round of vaccinations will take just under two weeks.

Children, escorted by members of their families, crowded a UN-run clinic in the central Gaza city of Deir Al-Balah, where around one million people were sheltering, according to Palestinian officials. Medical staffers marked children who got the drops with a pen on their fingers.

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“I came to the UNRWA clinic today to vaccinate my daughters against polio and God willing we won’t see any more diseases other than the diseases we are already experiencing. I hope we will go back to our homes safe and sound,” said Gaza mother Afnan Al-Muqayyad.

Polio was just one of many of Al-Muqayyad’s concerns.

“Skin diseases are widespread, there are no detergents,

detergents are very expensive and we can't afford them. Also, the food is very expensive, everything is expensive, and the children's weight is dropping, they were fine before but now they're becoming very thin. I hope God will set things straight," she said.

'COMPLEX' CAMPAIGN

Juliette Touma, communications director of UNRWA, the U.N. Palestinian refugee agency, said the vaccination campaign was massive and "one of the most complex in the world."

"Today is test time for parties to the conflict to respect these area pauses to allow the UNRWA teams and other medical workers to reach children with these very precious two drops. It's a race against time," Touma told Reuters.

Reuters