

Ministry Attacks Haitian Sex-Trafficking Travesty With the Gospel

The Dominican Republic was the most-visited country in the Caribbean with over 8.5 million tourists in 2022, making it the most popular tourist destination overall in the region. But that influx contributed to a spike in sex trafficking in the island nation, and Haitian migrants are some of the most vulnerable.

The D.R. has an immigration issue. Haiti's conditions have caused the number of Haitians fleeing to spike. Today, Haitians make up 25% of the population of the D.R. CBN News drove to a remote border crossing to get a sense of the problem.

A barrier between Haiti and the Dominican Republic is something the Dominicans call their version of the Trump wall, and it was put here starting in 2019 to keep a flood of Haitians from coming in after their own country descended into chaos. It remains an ongoing problem, and the D.R. has to have soldiers out here in order to guard this fence because otherwise people will cut right through it or jump right over it.

Haitians live in *bateys*, the poorest slums. Many work in sugar cane farms, one of this tropical country's biggest industries. It's hot, hard work, and low-paying.

"When the police come, we just have to run away," migrant Malteno Sanvida said.

The government is rounding up and deporting Haitians who are here without the proper documents. Last year, a record 162,000 Haitians were sent back to their country.

Ministering to Victimized Girls

Working under the table is often the only option, and many do so serving the 8 million tourists who visit the D.R.'s white-sand beaches every year. Unfortunately, gringo money and desperate poverty have made the Dominican Republic a global hotspot for sex tourism, and over 20% of girls here are pregnant by age 18.

Keith Falde of Parakaleo Ministries told us, "There are so many families who put their young girls out into prostitution in order to just make a little bit of money because it's so difficult. And then the girls end up getting pregnant, and so you've got moms who are sometimes only 12 years old, 13, 14, and then they have an extra mouth to feed, so they kind of get kicked out."

-  Parakaleo Ministries is building a home for single moms right in the middle of the batey outside of Santo Domingo.

The ministry's website explains, "*Parakaleo* is a Greek word meaning 'called to one's side.' Since this word is often translated into English as 'encourage,' Parakaleo International comes alongside brothers and sisters in Christ to help and encourage them with the ultimate goal of reaching the world with the glorious news that Jesus Christ saves."
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