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THEDIALOGUE

FEATURED Q&A

Has Haiti Advanced in the Decade Since the Earthquake?

Haiti's catastrophic earthquake on Jan. 12, 2010 is estimated to have killed more than 100,000 people and destroyed numerous buildings, including the National Palace, which sustained heavy damage and was demolished two years later. // Photo: U.N. Development Programme.

Q This month marks the 10th anniversary of an earthquake that devastated Haiti, killing tens of thousands of people and seriously damaging the country's infrastructure. In the wake of the disaster, international donations poured in, and organizations such as the United Nations and the International Red Cross sent doctors, relief workers and supplies. Ten years later, how far has Haiti come? What are the main challenges that it continues to face as a result of the earthquake? How has the role of international entities, including the United Nations, and foreign actors in Haiti's rebuilding changed since 2010?

A Francois Pierre-Louis, professor of political science at Queens College, City University of New York: "Survivors, like me, can never forget the afternoon of the quake: the chaotic scenes of corpses everywhere, the weeping and the aftershocks that sent everyone into panic. People from every background, class and color came together to offer their solidarity. It was a rare occasion when goodwill and tremendous desire to survive defeated powerlessness. Days after this terrible disaster, aid came from every corner of the globe. Billions of dollars were donated to help in the rebuilding. Ten years later, all these billions have transformed Haiti into a nightmare. The United Nations brought cholera that killed more than 10,000 people. The Interim Haiti Reconstruction Committee (CIRH) co-chaired by President Clinton and former Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive never provided a clear accounting for the billions of dollars they awarded to foreign

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Venezuelan Agents Raid Guaidó's Office in Caracas

Venezuelan intelligence agents raided the office of Juan Guaidó while the opposition leader was on a trip to Europe.

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Ex-Vale CEO Among 16 Charged With Homicide After Dam Failure

Brazilian prosecutors charged Fabio Schvartsman, a former CEO of mining giant Vale, and 15 others with homicide in connection with last year's deadly dam collapse.

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POLITICAL

Corruption is Latin America's 'Most Important Challenge': Gurría

Corruption is a "terrible cancer" that afflicts Latin America, and ridding the region of graft is its top challenge, said Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Secretary General Ángel Gurría.

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Gurría // File Photo: OECD.

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POLITICAL NEWS

Intelligence Agents Raid Office of Venezuela's Guaidó

Venezuelan government intelligence agents on Tuesday raided the office of opposition leader Juan Guaidó, the Associated Press reported. The raid happened while Guaidó was in London during a foreign tour to bolster support for his efforts to oust Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Masked agents from Venezuela's Sebin police intelligence unit blocked the entrances of the building housing the opposition leader's office and barred allied politicians from entering. At least one legislator, Manuela Bolívar, was allowed to go inside the building and confirmed the raid on Guaidó's third-floor office as she stood by its door as agents remained inside. Another opposition politician, Ángel Torres, expressed concerns that the agents might have planted evidence to be used against Guaidó. "We don't know what they've stolen or what they've brought with them," said Torres. "They usually enter without a judge's order and set up a show saying they found this or that or any artifact they might have planted." Tuesday's incident was not the first raid targeting the opposition. Last November on the eve of planned street protests against Maduro, armed, masked men raided the headquarters of Guaidó's political party, seizing cellphones, computers and identification cards from staff members. On Tuesday, Guaidó met with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and told reporters that he would not engage in talks with Maduro, CNN reported. "The dictatorship killed that opportunity," said Guaidó, whom Britain, the United States and dozens of other countries recognize as Venezuela's legitimate interim president. Guaidó is in Europe in defiance of a travel ban imposed by Venezuela's Supreme Court. On Monday, Guaidó was in Colombia, where he met with President Iván Duque and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. On Thursday, he plans to travel to Davos, Switzerland for the World Economic Forum, where he hopes to meet with U.S. President Donald Trump. On Tuesday, the Trump administration sanctioned 15 planes used by Maduro's government, CNBC reported. The U.S. Treasury Department identified the aircraft operated by Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA and that transport senior members of Maduro's government. The aircraft also were operated unsafely and in proximity to U.S. military aircraft while in international air space, the Treasury said. The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, or OFAC, prohibits U.S. citizens from using assets that have been sanctioned.

Mexico Sends Hundreds Back to Central America

Mexico on Tuesday sent hundreds of Central American migrants back to their home countries after Mexican troops blocked them from entering the country at its southern border with Guatemala, the Associated Press reported. The migrants had been part of a caravan of migrants who had set out from Honduras last week in hopes of reaching the United States. Fewer than 100 migrants remained in a no man's land along the Suchiate River, which forms part of the border between Guatemala and Mexico. Last weekend, some 2,400 migrants entered Mexico legally, said Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard. About 1,000 members of the group requested Mexico's help in returning to their home countries, he said, adding that the rest were being held in immigration facilities and were starting the process of legally seeking refuge in Mexico. Another 1,000 migrants attempted to enter Mexico illegally on Monday, said Ebrard. Mexican National Guard troops detained hundreds of them, the AP reported. Immigration officials said Monday night that about 500 members of that group had evaded capture. Mexico has sent 110 of the migrants back to San Pedro Sula, Honduras on a flight, and it has sent back 144 by bus, said Ebrard. Honduras' deputy foreign minister, Nelly Jerez, said Mexico was planning to deport 500 Hondurans daily on buses from Wednesday through Friday of this week, the AP reported.

NEWS BRIEFS

Brazilian Prosecutors Charge Greenwald With Cyber-Crimes

Brazilian prosecutors on Tuesday charged U.S. journalist and activist Glenn Greenwald with cyber-crimes in connection with the hacking of Justice Minister Sérgio Moro's cellphone last year, The Wall Street Journal reported. Federal prosecutors allege Greenwald, who co-founded The Intercept news site and lives in Rio de Janeiro, pressed a group of hackers to gain access to Moro's cellphone and online accounts to obtain messages from Moro's time as a judge in the Car Wash corruption probe. The messages, published in The Intercept last year, appear to show Moro guiding prosecutors in the investigation.

Corruption Is Latin America's 'Most Important Challenge': OECD Chief

Corruption is "the most important challenge" Latin America faces, Ángel Gurría, the secretary general of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD, said Tuesday during the World Economic Forum conference in Davos, Switzerland, CNBC reported. "Discontent is linked to corruption, [and] corruption is a terrible cancer," he said. "We have to get the confidence bank … This is the single most important challenge we have," he added.

Pan-American Life Taps Edwards as Senior VP & Chief Information Officer

Pan-American Life Insurance Group, which has operations in several countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, on Tuesday named Miguel Edwards as senior vice president and chief information officer. Edwards will join the New Orleans-based insurer's executive management committee, the company said in a statement.

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ECONOMIC NEWS

Peru Plans Nearly $2.34 Bn in Spending on Infrastructure

Peru plans to award infrastructure projects via public-private partnerships worth nearly $2.34 billion by the end of President Martín Vizcarra's term next year, the country's investment promotion agency said Tuesday, El Comercio reported. "Our goal is to contribute to closing the infrastructure gap through structured projects under the public-private partnership scheme … and improve Peruvians' quality of life," Rafael Ugaz, the executive director of the agency, ProInversión, said during a presentation. Among the 44 projects up for auction are the construction of a railway in the Andes for $227 million and the potential development of a major natural gas network, Ugaz said, Reuters reported. The investment plan will also include a $720 million drinking water project for Lima and a highway in the central area of Peru worth $464 million. "We will focus all our energies on these projects. We are obsessed about them," Ugaz said in the speech. ProInversión awarded just $414 million worth of projects last year, as compared to $3.1 billion of projects in 2018, Reuters reported.

BUSINESS NEWS

Homicide Charges Filed Against Ex-Vale CEO in Dam Collapse

Brazilian prosecutors on Tuesday charged the former CEO of mining giant Vale, Fabio Schvartsman, and 10 others from the company with homicide for the deaths of 270 people in last year's dam collapse in the town of Brumadinho in Minas Gerais state, The Wall Street Journal reported. State prosecutors also brought homicide charges against five people at German auditing company TÜV SÜD, which certified the dam's safety months before it ruptured nearly a year ago. All 16 people, including directors and other high-level executives at Vale, were also charged with environmental crimes, as were both companies as entities, The New York Times reported. After a 12-month investigation into the disaster on Jan. 25, 2019, prosecutors said it was clear that the dam had presented a critical structural risk since at least two years prior and that Vale and TÜV SÜD had both been "fully aware" of its safety problem. An attorney for Schvartsman, who resigned in March, said the charges were unjust, adding that his client had taken measures to improve safety at the company's dams and that he was never made aware of problems at the Brumadinho structure. TÜV SÜD did not comment on Tuesday's charges but said it was cooperating with authorities, according to the report. [Editor's note: See related Q&A in the Feb. 12 issue of the Advisor.]

THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES

Can Bolsonaro Shrink the Size of Brazil's Government?

Q Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro told reporters Jan. 6 in Brasília that he intends to shrink the size of the country's government as part of his administration's efforts to reduce public expenditures. Among the changes, Bolsonaro wants to cut spending on social, cultural and labor programs. Which programs are facing cutbacks, and what effect will the budget reductions have on Brazil? Which reforms in order to rein in the budget should be prioritized, and how will the stakeholders and interest groups respond? How much of Bolsonaro's plans are subject to legislative approval, and will Bolsonaro succeed in pushing through the reforms?

A Peter Sufrin, independent Washington-based analyst: "Bolsonaro's recent efforts to shrink the size of Brazil's government represent both a realistic and symbolic crossroads for his administration—realistic, because he intends to overturn many of the policies of the Workers' Party, and symbolic, because he is defining the fundamental framework of his executive authority. Bolsa Família and Minha Casa Minha Vida, along with labor laws, workplace safety, health inspection, and access to technical education and employment, are nobly conceived policies aimed at improving the lives of ordinary Brazilians. In fact, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's popularity was based on the success of this anti-political approach, embracing the primacy of social programs and cultural enrichment. By making a paradigm shift in policy away from previous administrations, Bolsonaro reveals himself as the reactionary 'Trump of the Tropics,' flexing his political muscle at the expense of this societal agenda. Ultimately, Bolsonaro's policies reveal the unfortunate reality of economic stagnation, by which the government must place social security and government salary concerns above social and cultural ones. With the problems of high deficits, low productivity, poor health and security issues, economic interests must clearly determine the path for any administration--any effort to shrink the government must also address the problems of clientelism and patronage, which remain embedded in Brazil's political system. With a fissure between polity and populace, the fundamental efficacy of Bolsonaro's government has been called into question. Only time will tell if the Brazilian president can craft a future for ordinary Brazilians, addressing economic inertia, while simultaneously promoting the social and cultural agenda of the nation."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The comment above is a continuation of the Q&A published in the Jan. 17 issue of the Advisor.

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FEATURED Q&A / Continued from page 1

companies that did not fulfill their contracts. The Red Cross built only six houses from the $300 million it collected for the people. While most of the victims lived in overcrowded and crime-infested tents, Red Cross employees were housed on a cruise ship off the coast of Port-au-Prince. A decade after, Haiti is a no man's land with gangs killing each other for control of the capital's neighborhoods. The United Nations and the NGOs have left. The government, implicated in the massacres of hundreds of people, is ruling by decree because it failed to hold elections."

Georges Fauriol, senior associate in the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies: "The tragedy of the 2010 earthquake has now been compounded by a decade of lost opportunities, wasted goodwill and disappearing development resources. This indictment is directed at Haiti's national leadership as much as its interlocutors among the international community. The sparseness of permanent indicators of the post-earthquake rebuilding efforts, in tandem with the parallel timeline of the PetroCaribe corruption scandal, contribute to paradoxical notions that the international community is a source of the country's endless predicament—let alone 'meddling' in Haitian affairs. This should trigger some serious reflection among Haiti's governing classes. How did this happen? The semblance of political normality since December after months of increasingly violent protests against the presidency of Jovenel Moïse cannot hide the growing levels of citizen insecurity, economic uncertainties and a deepening political crisis with no institutional guardrails. This may actually provide opportunities for Haiti's own leadership to define a clear path forward, which could include: 1.) an agreement on a truly consensus prime minister; 2.) an understanding with the IMF and other international institutions on how to resume stalled reforms and credit flows; 3.) a timetable for parliamentary elections—requiring foreign assistance; 4.) constitutional reforms, tackling specific issues—rather than open-ended constitutional reforms proposed by Moïse and others; and 5.) some form of civil society consensus and ensuing task force working with counterparts among the Haitian diaspora and other actors on a core agenda of mid-term issues—which could have the virtue of centering efforts and ensuing accountability within Haiti."

Bianca Shinn, public health expert, and Simon Desras, former president of the Haitian Senate Commission of Foreign Affairs: "Haiti remains in peril 10 years later. Despite the travesty of climate change, the Haitian people remain resilient. The main challenges that continue as a result of the earthquake are access to water and health care. Before the earthquake, only 69 percent of the population had access to improved water sources, and 17 percent had access to improved sanitation facilities. Currently, access to water has drastically decreased, and access to improved sanitation is nearly nonexistent. For a country and its people to thrive, the conditions to prevent infectious diseases must be met with strategic planning and funding. Public health has to remain a central priority among the agenda of the government of Haiti and its international stakeholders. The international community is an important partner; however, we must always remember, 'you have to plan with us and not for us.' The public health crisis in Haiti is a ringing reminder that we are on the brink of being vulnerable to another disaster. We must adopt the growth mindset of being proactive rather than reactive."

The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta at **gkuleta@thedialogue.org**.

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