

EVAP Episode 46_ Pascale Solages

📅 Thu, Aug 21, 2025 2:54PM ⌚ 47:02

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Haitian feminism, human rights, sexual violence, gang violence, displacement, political crisis, economic vulnerability, feminist policy framework, international community, structural change, women's rights, atrocity prevention, grassroots organizing, crisis response, leadership.

SPEAKERS

Pascale Solages, Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall



Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 00:12

Welcome to Expert Voices on Atrocity Prevention by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. I'm Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall, Director of Policy and Research at the Global Centre. This podcast features one-on-one conversations with practitioners from the fields of human rights, conflict prevention and atrocity prevention. These conversations will give us a glimpse of the personal and professional side of how practitioners approach human rights protection and atrocity prevention, allowing us to explore challenges, identify best practices, and share lessons learned on how we can protect populations more effectively. Today, I'm joined by Pascale Solages, a renowned Haitian grassroots feminist organizer and human rights advocate, as well as a founding member and general coordinator of Nègès Mawon, one of Haiti's most active feminist organizations. Thank you for joining us today, Pascale.



Pascale Solages 01:03

Thank you for the invitation, and I'm so happy to be there. Thank you.



Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 01:08

Pascale, can you tell us a bit about your background in Haitian feminism and human rights advocacy? What inspired you to found your organization and how has its mission evolved in today's crisis context?

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Pascale Solages 01:20

In 2008, I met with Nadine Louis and other people leading a women's organization in Haiti, Fondation TOYA, and I became a member of this organization. And, you know, I started to educate myself, working in communities, trying to understand better women's rights, human rights and all you know, the interconnected relationships between the rights of women, as Haitian women, but also black women. So since 2008, since my, you know, my journey with Fondation TOYA, I left Haiti to have a certificate in gender and development in Belgium, and I went back to Haiti, and I start working at Fondation TOYA as a program manager. And since this moment, it was important for me to continue to work and to continue to advocate for women rights in Haiti. But in 2015, I felt the need to create another space, a space where I can express myself as an activist, as a creator in other ways. And the first idea was to create a festival for feminists in Haiti. It was to create a space where I can use art and activism. At this moment, I was working with television in my country, with many media in my country, and I wanted to have the opportunity to do my activism in a different way, artistic way, creative way, and to also talk and walk about other issues that were important for me at this period, not necessarily issues where I can find in Fondation TOYA at this period. So at this moment, I decided to create Nègès Mawan, and you know, to have this feminist festival in Haiti in 2016, the first edition. And after that, you know, ideas after ideas, project after project. So with a friend Gael Bien Aimé, we decided to continue to create projects in this organization with a very innovative vision. You know, doing things, doing things differently, with different people, with different communities talking about different kinds of issues, because we were so young at this period, and so many issues where weren't priorities for, you know, the other organizations. So yeah, and also, I think it's a personal journey. Also, I'm a survivor of sexual violence. I saw really early in my life, violence in my home, with my mom, my dad and, you know, friends and everything, but also all the violent context in my country. I think it was also a personal call to find a place to do something, to act, to fight, to talk, to speak, to advocate. So I think all of this, my personal journey and this need also to express myself in different ways, where the reason I decide to create, to build this new organization, Nègès Mawan, in 2015.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 05:25

That's an incredible path, even if you know it's the twists and turns kind of brought you to maybe a different place than what you originally envisioned, but still an incredible opportunity to advocate for yourself, for your family, for your community and others. And I know you've briefed the UN in many different forums on what's happening in Haiti. You know, since February 2024, we've seen a sharp deterioration in the human rights situation, with populations enduring likely crimes against humanity due to widespread violence perpetrated by gangs to terrorize and control communities. Can you describe what's happening on the ground, particularly for women, girls and other vulnerable groups?

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Pascale Solages 06:14

As you said, there is a really big crisis in Haiti, multidimensional crisis, because there is the political aspect, the economic aspect, the social aspect, but I think the security aspect is really an important one, because we are seeing now all the control of territories by gangs, all the killings by gangs, all the violence by gangs, and the lack of response and will, action to fight

this kind of situation. For example, for now, we have more than 1.3 million of displaced people in Haiti and more than half of this number are women and girls. We have, you know, so many territories controlled by gang, people forced to flee their communities, their homes, people killed by the gangs. But in this context, what we are seeing also is the sexual violence as a weapon. In this context, because the gangs are using sexual violence, you know, to oppress, to kill, to destroy women and girls in this context. Yes, you have all the violence, you know, the killings. It's thousands of people already killed for only the first six months of the year. But yes, we have displaced people. Yes, we have people killed. We have the kidnappings. We have, you know, all this kind of violence, but the sexual violence, all kind of violence, actually against women and girls, but also the these aspects, specifically the sexual violence, the rapes, the gang rapes, the collective rapes is a really hard aspect of the crisis now, and we know that in this kind of context, this kind of situation, women and girls, women and children are the first victims of this kind of crisis in the world, you know, political crisis and all the kinds of crisis. So this is the result of this crisis in the country now. So it's thousands of rapes, women raped, girls raped, but also unwanted pregnancies, women infected by, you know, all kinds of diseases, displaced women, and in this kind of situation, when they are displaced, they are more vulnerable to violence and all kinds of situations in the country because they are poor, you know, they don't have a place to go, they don't have a place to hide. They don't have, you know, people to protect them and to defend their rights. And also, what we can see is the lack of services they have access in this kind of situation. Today, having access to health, having access to security, having access to homes, having access, you know, all kind of services, it's really difficult for women and girls in this country. So what we are seeing is that the rights of women to have this kind of, you know, services, but also the rights globally, in this situation, what we can see is they are losing it day after day, and they are in danger in their communities, but also in the camps where they try to find, you know, safety, because we are receiving women and girls, victims of violence in the camps, you know, in the streets, when they are trying to flee the communities, when they are trying to flee the control of the gangs. In the same space they think they can find, you know, a sense of safety, they are also facing violence in this kind of camps and other, you know, shelters or spaces after they have to flee their homes. So also the economic aspect, because women can have freely resources and economic activities in this crisis, and we have a big inflation in the country also, so women in Haiti were already struggling with, you know, economic vulnerability. But with this situation, it's worse. The social aspect I talk about at the the access to services, access to their rights, the access to leadership, also, because we talk about the fact that with this kind of violence, women are, you know, the first target and first victim when they try to be involved in politics or in leadership spaces to try to resolve the crisis in the country. But also, we can see all the migration aspect of the problem. We can see what happened to women in Dominican Republic, pregnant women in Dominican Republic, women in other kinds of countries, trying to to find other places where they can be safe, where they can be free, where they, you know, they can find, you know, the best living conditions. So they are interconnected. All these situations are the result of the political crisis, and now they are talking about elections, they are talking about here we have a new president with the Presidential Council, Konsèy Prezidansyèl, but we, we didn't see results for women and girls with this transition, unfortunately, and with all the work of the international community, but also the local organizations, the civil society, unfortunately, it's not enough to, you know, give to the women and girls in Haiti what they need, to feel safe, to feel free, and, you know, to live in better conditions.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 12:23

Since you mentioned the political crisis and a lot of these sort of systemic issues, can you give a brief overview for anyone who's maybe not familiar, as familiar with Haiti of you know what key events and systemic issues led to this crisis point? Because obviously the the rise in gang violence is the reason women are being targeted now, but there, there was kind of a path towards that moment.

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Pascale Solages 12:52

So historically, we saw so many crises in Haiti, political crises, you know, maybe we can talk about the period of dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier, and after this terrible period of dictatorship, we saw political crisis after political crisis, you know, but also government without the will to really change the situation in Haiti, but also a big influence of the international actors, of the international community, of some countries like the US, Canada, France and other ones with big influence in politics in Haiti, doing a kind of action and policy that doesn't work for the Haitian populations. So all the decisions, political decisions, but also economic decisions during the dictatorship period, but also after the dictatorship period. But we can go also, you know, before the dictatorship period, it was decision after decision. You know, action after action. Influence of actors that create this kind of context, this kind of country, also after the dictatorship we can talk maybe about the period of Lavalas, with President Aristide. We can talk about the period with President Preval. We can talk about all this period with the PHTK Group, you know, has Michel Martelly, Jovenel Moise and everything. So the action of political actors, but also action of economic actors against the wellbeing of the Haitian population, you know, are the reasons of this crisis today, but it's also a lot of corruption, a lot of impunity, a lot of institutional weakness, a lot of bad governance and bad decisions. But also the lack of listening of the population and what this population needs and what this population asks. So we can consider maybe so many actors, as I said, political, economic, but also the international actors. We have to remind people that, yes, it's a responsibility of local actors, of national actors in the country, but with big influence of the international actors, especially the US in Haiti that led to this crisis. Today, we can consider, by example, the period after the earthquake. We can consider the period of, you know the scandal of Petrocaribe, we can talk about so many times where the international community forced the national actors and institutions to take action or decisions against the population. And today we can see the result. But we have to remember also that Haiti is a country that was colonized in the past. And after the colonization, we have also all this period of oppression by other countries, especially France, when you consider by example, the independence debt in the country, with real economic impacts on a new nation, on a new country. And today we are paying this, you know, the consequences of this independence that today in the country. This is why it's a conversation today, when you are an activist. I was in the Security Council, and I was asking about reparation for this debt, because it was a big, big factor in the economic failure of this country, of this new country, this new nation, because we were colonized, especially by France. So I think people have to learn about the, you know, this country, learn what happened in this country. And as I said, it's really important for me that we recognize that it's a national responsibility. We are the first ones with the responsibility of what we are living today as a country. But we have to remember also that we are not alone. We were not alone to create this context, this crisis, this specific one, but also all the crises we saw in the past.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 17:30

Absolutely, and you know, I'm glad you brought up the lack of listening, because I think that's so so key to how many crises evolve. And you know, you've talked already about the access to services and leadership, the lack of listening. And I know Haitian civil society organizations like yours have often stepped in to fill the gaps left by the government, kind of taking on those service delivery roles. But you're also playing a kind of key part in policy planning, agenda setting, mobilizing around critical issues. One powerful example of this is your involvement in the development of the policy framework for an effective and equitable transition. Can you explain what this policy framework is and how civil society came together to create it, and, you know, maybe what some of its recommendations are?

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Pascale Solages 18:26

Since day one, when we created this organization, we were clear. We didn't want to be an organization or only doing, you know, some small programs, small projects in communities. We understood that changing the condition of living of people is to influence, you know, institutions, to influence policies, to influence all kind of factors, to denounce them, to, you know, to do all this kind of work, but also to propose, you know, and as feminists, we have a vision of the society we want to live in. We have a vision of the country we want to see. We have a vision of the country we want for women and girls in Haiti, but also globally. We have a vision of the world we want to see as feminists, as women, but also as black women. So a part of our work was always to influence, to denounce, but also to propose to the actors and to give this contribution for what we want to see as a society, as a world. And unfortunately, they failed us. They failed us again and again, because national actors, international actors, institutions, individuals, they are not listening. They don't have the, you know, they don't understand that they can do, they can create the solution without the people that need the solution. We need to be part of it. We need to be part of the people saying what we want, what we need, and we are saying every day that we don't want anything for us, without us. And we are doing our work. We are doing our part. And the policy framework, the feminist policy framework, was months of work with, you know, incredible feminists, incredible UN rights activists, incredible institutions to try to influence this transition. Because Mawon was an organization trying to work for this transition in the Akò Montana. So we were part of that. We were trying to build this transition to propose the kind of transition we wanted to see after the assassination of Jovenel Moïse and before the assassination of Jovenel Moïse. So when we worked with Akò Montana, yes, we were activists, working with all kind of people and institutions, but after that, it was important for us to have a feminist perspective on this transition and to impose a feminist agenda to this transition, because it's always like, you know, by example, we can talk about, you know, the independence struggle. We were there, fighting and everything and fighting for this new nation, but after that, after 1804, you know, the women didn't have the right to vote in this new country, by example. So in April 3, 1986 when you know women, feminists decide to march and saying that this is a democracy now, and we don't want a democracy without women. We understand this struggle at this time, you know, and this is the same one today. So we decided that we want to influence this transition and to put a feminist agenda on this transition. And we work on this policy. We worked, by example, have to say, thank you, by example, to Sasha from IJDH. We work for months on this document, and we advocate to other people, other organizations, other feminists in the world, asking them to endorse this document, saying that this is what we want to see for women and girls during this transition. And after that, we met with, you know, the Prime Minister, we met with all kinds of political actors. We met with

international actors to say that, can you do that in this transition? This is our recommendation for the transition. This is what women and girls need during this transition, and you can also use it after the transition. So, yeah, so it was important for us to propose something, not to be there waiting for what they want to do for us, what they want to propose for us, saying that, yeah, we are here, and we know what we are living, and we know what can be the solution for it. So this is a document that can help you, and it was a beautiful adventure, actually, you know, doing all the brainstorming, talking to each other, sharing ideas, sharing vision, but also asking for people to understand this vision and to share it after it was a beautiful initiative, and it was one of them. A few years ago, we had this letter, this call for action, feminist action, and we had, you know, hundreds of organizations and feminist activists in the world endorsing also this letter a few years ago. So we always had the support of, you know, global organizations, and we were so grateful. And yeah, this feminist framework, they published, we published a letter to Laurent Saint-Cyr, the new president of this transition, to say that, yeah, this is the policy framework. You can use it during this transition, blah, blah, blah, but unfortunately for now, we didn't see any follow up, any result, any will to use this document, to use this tool, to improve the transition and to improve also the condition of women and girls in this country.

 Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 24:07

Well, I hope it's at some point they start taking on your ideas. It's very inspiring and powerful, this kind of women uplifting women around the world that you've just described. And you know, we've seen it time again and again working on atrocity situations that there's so much, even though your contexts are at times very different, there's so much commonality and so much that can come from having that shared voice together.

Okay, no, no, yeah, as I said, not only for this initiative, but in so many moments, Haitian feminists receive full support, you know, from other organizations, other feminist activists, other human rights activists and working as a feminist in Haiti, being a feminist in Haiti is literally life or death work, not when you are doing only some small project or small, yes, this is important, but when you are doing the political work, when you are denouncing corruption, when you are denouncing the impunity, when you are denouncing the individuals killing women or having met with people killing women, when we are denouncing the political actors, when you are denouncing the economic actors, when you are putting light on so many, many cases of, you know, corruption and violence in the country, it can be really dangerous for you as an activist, but also as a feminist activist. So the support and the solidarity we received, you know, is a way to protect ourselves. Also my personal experience when I had to flee Haiti a few years ago, when I arrived here in the US, it was a call from a feminist friend here, saying, Pascale is here in this country now. She's alone. She has nothing. We need help for her. We need a house for her. We need a place where she can be safe and think about the next step. We need help for a family in Haiti. We need help for a colleague in Haiti. And for months I was here in the US, in a house paid by feminist activists in the US. We had support for my colleagues in Haiti. They had to hide in other regions, leaving Port-au-Prince. We received support for them, using helicopters for them. At a moment they were in the Dominican Republic because they had to flee and she didn't have she didn't have US visa or other kind of visa, but she had the access to go in the Dominican Republic. So I received support from feminist friends and feminist activists for my little brother when they attacked my family. So I think, I don't think, I know from my personal experience that feminist activists saved my life, the sorority I received from feminists all over the world saved my life, saved my family's life, and saved my colleagues lives. So it gives me also sometimes to thank, to hear, to heal and to organize myself in a new country because of this support, I took the time to cry, to think about what I was doing because I had to flee, to think about what I can do for my little brother in a new country, and today, my little brother continues to receive support from feminist friends in the Dominican Republic. So in Canada, we received some support. My friend, my colleague, was in France. She has to stay for a few months more because she couldn't return to Port-au-Prince, so she received also support there. So feminist support, so it saved my life. It's a personal experience, and I will say it, you know, every day, and I can say that this support is not only on paper, it's not only by endorsing documents, it's not only by writing policies. It's not only in big events, doing beautiful pictures, being on social media, beautiful, you know, it's not only that, it's a personal experience. Living this sorority, and it's a personal experience in a different way, in so many ways. And I'm so grateful, and I will always, always advocate for having this kind of sorority globally, with other countries, with other women everywhere in the world, because we are doing dangerous work. We are trying to destroy systems, and we need safety from you know each other to to survive this, to survive this kind of work we are doing every day.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 29:21

You know you mentioned that you have the policy framework, but they haven't taken on some of your recommendations yet, but there have been recent decrees creating two specialized judicial units, including one focused on mass crimes, which seems like a step forward, but you know, as you just said, you're trying to really change systems, not just create units that, you know, fix things piecemeal. What structural changes are truly needed to address the endemic sexual violence and impunity? And how do you see this moment of crisis as an opportunity to be transformational for women's rights in Haiti?

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Pascale Solages 30:05

What we need for that structural, for the structural change, systemic change is to transform words, documents in actions. Haiti signs so many documents, we create, you know, we have so many plans, but the challenge is when we have to transform all this discourse, all these documents to actions and resources into the institutions to have real change. We have, by example, the Ministry of Human Rights today. We have, you know, all the kind of institutions that can help with, you know, this fight for women's rights, for women's safety, for women's autonomy, etc. But we need a government. We need actors who really want to fight and to act for this change. And this is why, in the past years, Neges Mawon has to denounce the lack of action, by example of the Ministry of Human Rights, because when you have a government, this Ministry can do all the work by itself. So we need a government with a vision for women and rights, and this government will give the resources and the power to this ministry to really work for women and girls. In Haiti, for example, this ministry has less than 1% of the national budget. In this kind of context, the last report, we had, all the money arriving in Haiti for now, we have only 10% of all this money fighting for gender based violence, in this kind of situation. So today, the feminist organizations, the local organizations, as you said, has to, you know, fill in the gap left by the institutions like Ministry of Human Rights, because they are not doing the work. It's so much corruption, so much impunity, but also there is not a will to really, you know, work for women and girls. So it's the first thing we need. We need people in place with the vision to act for women and girls, because you can have the policy framework. You can have all this, you know, Belém do Pará, all kind of international documents. But if you don't have people in place, who will do the work actually, we will advocate. We'll do pressure, because we need pressure. How can we have only 10% of the budget for gender based violence, this kind of situation, who can see, who can say the truth, who can really be in place and tell the truth to people and to fight for it? And we can see the change. Unfortunately, by example, in the new Presidential Council, we have only one woman in the Presidential Council, and she can't vote. So she's there to observe, you know, and she's not even observing, you know, she's not even observing, because for all the period of the Transitional Council, she didn't say anything. She did, you know, she did nothing. And she's the only woman in the Presidential Council. We have less of the 30% in the government of Didier Fils-Aimé. It's in the Constitution, each place we're supposed to have a minimum of 30% of women in place of leadership. The government of Didier is less than 30% and unfortunately, the women in this government, you don't see, you know, all this, all the action we need to see to push for Haitian women and girls, but also the international community. It's so beautiful, the narrative about women and girls, you know, in big places, big, even big consortium, big blah, blah, blah. But when it's time to take real action, when it's time to support the institutions, when it's time to really advocate for what they are saying are priorities. We don't see no one. By example we can take the example of the MMS, the multinational force in the country, when they decide to have to take this security decision

for Haiti, we said that Haitian women and girls, we have experiences with peacekeeper missions. We have experiences with this kind of military solution. And what we are living now has women and girls in this country, it can be a solution for us. It can be a solution for Haitian women and girls, and we are the first victim of this insecurity, and more than one year after, we can see the result, more territories control, more women killed, more women raped, more blah, blah, blah, more everything. And it's a lot of money that we could spend in real solutions for women and girls in the country. So we need to put the pressure where the policies, the actions, the solutions, are discussed, and those women try to influence that. Yes, we can continue to act in the communities. We will continue to do work as civil society. We'll continue to work as feminist organizations. We'll continue to help the women because they need that. We are literally in the community daily to help them survive another day. Now we are receiving so many women from Plateau Central, before it was from Port-au-Prince, the West department, but now from Sud-Est, from Nippes, from other region in the country, because gangs are trying, you know, to kill, to keep control of those communities also now we are receiving so many women from the other departments of the country, and we don't have the kind of resources to do this kind of work. Neges Mawon can only receive 30 women at the same time, for four months. We don't have this kind of resources. So we need people who will really do the work to change the living condition. So we will, we will stop doing this work of surviving every day, because it's also a trap. Doing the work of surviving every day keep us from doing the work of advocating for the future, for policies, because we have to survive. So many people in Neges Mawon are displaced people. They are helping women survivors, but they are also survivors. So when you are in this kind of trap, this kind of situation, it's really difficult to be focused on policies, even the women you try to help. We, we had a, you know, a group a few weeks ago say, you know, they are talking about the election. So you are here. We have to discuss about, you, about election, constitution, and they are there. We don't have nothing to eat. We have children starving in the camps. We are not interested about talking about the elections. And you can understand that. You can understand the situation. So, yeah, it's a trap, and it's really hard when people are not seeing that. What we need to do now between either systemic work, the policy work, the political work, the all kind of work, yes, the humanitarian aspect is really important, because people need help. Women and girls need help. So the humanitarian, the emergency aspect, the response aspect, it's really important, but we have to create situations where we don't have to work on emergency, we don't have to work on response, we don't have to work on humanitarian aspect. We don't have to work on fighting crises day after day, we have to do the work to eliminate crises, period.

J Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 38:26

You know, as someone who advocates so hard for the rights of women, for Haiti itself, you obviously believe in, you know, better conditions for the country, a better future, despite the crisis and challenge that you're currently facing. For a very long time, media portrayals of Haiti have often focused on chaos, extreme poverty and violence, and that's all you see of Haiti. And you know, how can we shift narratives to center Haitian dignity, resistance and solutions? You know, especially from the perspective of women and grassroots communities who, as you said, are victims themselves, but who are still fighting against, you know, the abuses that they're facing and abuses they're seeing and other people.

P Pascale Solages 39:17



Each time I have to talk in a space and I have to write something, and at the end, you know this sentence, Haitian women are not only victims, are not only survivors, you're also they don't say Haitian, or say Pascale, you already said that the last time. Can you change? Can you say something differently this time? I said, no, no, no, I have to remind them that, to say that again. Maybe they don't listen the first time. You know, I'm trying to repeat that each time, each time. Yes, we are victim of the crisis. Yeah, we are surviving the crisis every day, but we are more than that as Haitian women. The work we are doing in the crisis is really important. So the leadership wall, the, you know, the healing, the community wall, the all the work we are doing at the center of the crisis, it's important for me to remind people that we are not, and we don't want to play the world of victims every day. What we want people to understand is what we are, leaders, you know, citizens, human beings, Haitian women, what we are in our diversity, and to help us destroy this identity of victims. So help us, you know, be in all these kind of beautiful things we already are. And with that, we can, you know, eliminate this aspect of survivors or victims, because we don't want to be in this continuity of surviving every day. You know, the word resilient. We are resilient. We don't want to be that. We want to be happy. We want to be free. We want to be joyful. We want to be so many things. And we want to, we want to stop being associated to, you know, ah, they're surviving so much. You know? They are. We are so more than that. So, yes, I think we are trying to work on the narratives in international media, national media, but sometimes you can feel guilty to not, you know, give voices to so many women and girls suffering. Last year, I wrote, I think, six articles of women surviving gangs violence, sexual violence, and it was important for us, because the experience we had in the past, they completely silenced the experience of women during the crisis. It was completely forgotten, and for example, the movie of Rachèle Magloire, *Les enfants du coup d'État*, in French, but how to say that, *The Children of Coup d'Etat*? I don't know. It was stories of women pregnant from sexual violence, you know, and how they have to deal with this consequence of sexual violence. And this is, you know, something we use to make people understand that each time women and girls are victims, when we are seeing this kind of crisis, it's not the first time. You know, it's a pattern. So it's challenging to decide how it's important to give voices to the survivors, to help people not forgive their stories, their realities, but also not to be completely associated only to that. It's really challenging, and this is why, by example, Neges Mawon, we have our festival last week. We have our, you know, festival for three days being in the streets, dancing, singing, you know? And it's personal, having this festival every year. Last year, we had it only online, but it's personal that between the narrative about Maison Claire was the narrative about sisterhood program, the narrative about we need money for helping women. We have three days of festival. We have women marching together, dancing together, healing together, singing together, having fun together, creating together, doing together together, reading together. It's personal to have this festival in this context, because it's the goal. We are not only here to do this work, but we are only here also to say that women in Haiti we are actors, we are writers, we are artists, we are all kind of things. We are creating every day, even if we are in this context, we are creating every day. I want to say thank you to the committee that work on the festival for one year. It's a committee of five or six wonderful members of Neges Mawon, they work with more than 21 artists for one year to create this festival. And so, yeah, we have so many events during three days. Before it was seven days of festival, but because of the crisis, we have to do only three days, because we don't have enough money, we don't but it's also difficult to mobilize people to go, you know. So they worked for one year, especially Gaelle Bien Aimé, she's the artistic director of the organization. She's doing amazing work. And I know how it is sometimes to, you know, to just have a way or so before this, when they're struggling, and now you have to come today. We have to do this way also. We have to work. We have to create together. So I know how it's it can be hard. So I want to say thank you to you know, more than 30 people that work for one year for this festival. So we are trying to

balance what we are doing. The work we are doing for abortion, by example, is with Danta. It's, you know, three artists on stage talking about abortion. We are creators at Neges Mawon, we are artists and creators at won. So we hope, we hope that it balances. You know, the narrative about it's only poverty, it's only this, it's only violence, it's only crisis, it's only corruption, it's only this, it's only that, but when we are so, when it's this everyday struggle. Sometimes it can be difficult, you know, it can be difficult to have more narrative than the narrative of, you know, surviving everyday, but we are trying, and we hope that it will be enough one day, and we are trying to do our part. So we are grateful.

 Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 46:28

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