

First Slide:

- Hello everyone and welcome to my presentation.
- I am Daniel Craig, an International Studies and Spanish double major with a focus on Latin America.
- Today I will be presenting on Luis Abinader, the new president of the Dominican Republic and how he may possibly be the change that Dominicans of Haitian Descent need.

Second Slide:

- To start, the Dominican Republic exists on the island of Hispaniola with their sister country Haiti.
- The Dominican Republic receives a lot of immigration from Haiti, especially in times of hardship.
- So when the government under president Leonel Fernandez rewrote the constitution in 2010 it scared a lot of people.
- Being a country that has a contentious history with Dominican-Haitian relations, there was bound to be something that affected citizens of Haitian descent.
- Under the new constitution, those who had parents who were not citizens were also not considered citizens.
- This ruling has allowed the Dominican government to denaturalize many citizens of haitian descent.
- To denaturalize a citizen is to take away the citizenship of a person.
- One can only imagine how citizens of haitian descent must have felt when hearing this.

Third Slide:

- To give an overview of what I will be discussing today, I split up the main points of the presentation into three parts.
- In the first part, I will be giving a brief history of how Dominicans of Haitian descent were treated under the Trujillo regime.
- Understanding a bit of the role of the government in anti-haitianism can inform the present and possibly the future.
- Then I will be discussing what the prior president to the current one has done in regards to the anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic.
- This will help to inform how similar or different the present is to the past and how this administration was different from what we are expecting from Luis Abinader.
- Finally, I will be conducting an analysis of some of the points made during President Abinader's first speech and how they compare to what he has already done.
- I will conclude with a call for future research and what I expect to see from President Abinader as he moves further into his presidency.

Fourth Slide:

- Knowing that Luis Abinader is an outsider candidate from a different party, he may have different ideas from the past presidents who all had come from the same party.
- Despite these past presidents also preaching equality and liberty, they all had the tendency to fall flat on issues regarding equality and liberty.
- That being said, Abinader is from a separate party and already has shown promising effort.

- Therefore I argue that Dominicans of Haitian descent may possibly experience a change in rhetoric used and policies proposed, in regards to achieving equity and a better standard of living in the Dominican Republic, under the new president Luis Abinader.

Fifth Slide:

- Before we can fully understand how much of a change Abinader will make for Dominicans of Haitian descent we must first acknowledge a deep history of racism and anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic
- Rafael Trujillo, a Dominican dictator from the years 1930 to 1960, gained his power via military coup.
- He maintained this power by giving aid to the poor and lower class through welfare programs.
- At first glance, he seems like he would be the first ever philanthropic dictator.
- Trujillo believed the Dominican-Haitian border to be a weak point in the Dominican frontier.
- His reasoning was that many dominicans and Haitians on the Dominican-Haitian border would intermingle and would not pay taxes.
- Over the years he increasingly became worried about political adversaries coming in through the border to overthrow him.
- In response to this, he progressively increased military presence at the border.
- Later he would denaturalize haitian citizens living in the Dominican Republic, which would allow him to deport them.
- Though he did not stop there, he ordered for the killing of those who chose to try and stay on the frontier.

- Around 5,000-10,000 people died in this massacre.
- It would later be called Le Massacre de Perejil.

Sixth Slide:

- A little under a hundred years later, there would be a president doing similar things for similar reasons.
- Danilo Medina, president of the Dominican Republic from 2012 to 2020 and member of the Partido de la liberación dominicana or (PLD), would implement one of the harshest immigration policies since the Trujillo regime.
- Under the new constitution, it would allow the Constitutional Court, the highest Court in the land, to make a ruling that citizens born from the year 1929 and on whose parents were not citizens, would no longer be a citizen as well.
- This ruling would be considered La Sentencia and As a result, 200,000 people would be deported from the Dominican Republic back to Haiti.
- Many of these people had never been to Haiti or lived there. The country they called home was the Dominican Republic.
- As mentioned before, this would be a direct reflection of the Trujillo regime.
- Though luckily there was no massacre this time.

Seventh Slide:

- After the end of Danilo Medina's presidential term, it was evident that the Dominican people needed a fresh new face from a different party.
- Luis Abinader, born July 12th 1967, would be the first president in 16 years to not be part of the PLD.
- He is a businessman, economics, and politician.

- The party he belongs to is the Partido Revolucionario Moderno, a center left party with a social democratic ideology.
- He would also be the first president to not be born under the Trujillo regime.

Eighth Slide:

- During his first speech, Abinader made many points, though those mentioned that would directly affect Dominicans of Haitian descent would be those to do with education accessibility, haitian-Dominican relations, and police reform.
- Primarily education during the pandemic has been difficult, so for him to offer tablets and laptops for all students would even the playing field for Haitians living in the Dominican Republic.
- As of recent, the Dominican Republic has aided in giving Haitians residing in the country documents.
- Haitians of Dominican descent would be recognized by the government, allowing them to participate in this program.
- Next on his list was the importance of haitian-Dominican relations.
- He believes that both countries are inherently intertwined. When one is suffering so will the other.
- The Dominican government, along with the aid of the US and other countries will be giving aid to Haiti.
- This is major considering the history that both countries have together.
- Improving relations between both countries is a sign that past feelings towards Haitians in the Dominican Republic may get better.

- If the Dominican Republic is willing to bring aid to Haiti, it is more than likely that they will be interested in treating Dominicans of haitian descent better within their own country.
- Finally, Abinader states that the police are important to the country, though a corrupt force will protect no one.
- The police force in the Dominican Republic have a history of targeting Dominicans of haitian descent.
- Targeting most people due to their dark skin color.
- So a reform of the police could mean better treatment by the police for dominican-haitian citizens.

Ninth Slide:

- Despite only referencing Haiti once, many of the policies and programs Abinader wants to implement during his presidency will directly affect them.
- As far as things getting better, it is unsure, though if he is able to implement what he says, it could mean a move towards equity for Haitians of Dominican descent.
- One worrisome thing that he has already implemented is the construction of a border wall.
- The purposes of the border wall is to prevent illegal immigration, drug trafficking and robberies on the border.
- Despite this being detrimental to the Dominican perceptions of Haitians living in the country, as cited by BBC mundo, this could just be Abinader's way of appeasing conservative constituents.

- This way he will be able to implement more progressive policies, like giving Haitians identification cards and improving relations between countries.
- It is believed by many scholars, despite the wall, he will be a turning point in Dominican-haitian relations.

Tenth Slide:

- It seems like Abinader is moving in the right direction.
- Despite backing a conservative talking point it is important to also note that he wants to implement leftist policies to help the entire welfare of the state.
- He also wants to improve relations with Haiti.
- So what does this mean for Dominicans of haitian descent?
- It looks like life for Dominican-Haitians may improve as they gain access to identification cards and better education.
- It also looks like as the police structure is reformed, Dominican-Haitians will slowly be able to stop living in fear of the police.
- Despite all this being nice, it is important to note that these policies have not been implemented yet.
- So the description of these policies is nice on paper, though will they be equally applied to all peoples in the Dominican Republic?
- If so, I can see a better future for Dominican Haitians in the Dominican Republic.
- For future research, I suggest that there be a comparison of what Abinader wanted to get done during his presidency versus what he actually got done and how it affected haitian-dominicans.
- Thank you for coming to my presentation today.

- I hope you have learned at least a little bit more about Dominican Haitian relations.
- If you have any questions about things not covered in this presentation, be sure to ask me in the live zoom.
- See you there!