

Haiti

On 12 January 2010, Haiti was struck by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake in what amounted to the largest urban natural disaster in recorded history, killing more than 200,000 people and leaving 1.5 million homeless. The Haitian people suffered immensely, as did the UN. While the earthquake did not destroy the previous gains made in peace and stability in Haiti, it did damage them and left in its wake new obstacles. Nevertheless, despite the tragic losses, the Haitian people, the UN, and the international community coalesced in a remarkable demonstration of resilience. Through the combined international and national response to the mounting humanitarian catastrophe in the immediate emergency phase, large-scale crises were averted: over one and a half million Haitians received emergency shelters, and over four million, food and water.

This reality was partly due to the activities of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, MINUSTAH quickly adapted to the crisis throughout the year, effectively transitioning from a mission at the beginnings of its consolidation to a multidimensional disaster-relief operation, once again acting as the primary guarantor of security and political stability. Meanwhile MINUSTAH continued its logistical, security, economic, and political support to the Haitian state and people.

Nevertheless as time wore on, a growing cholera epidemic that began in October, which killed over one thousand, has highlighted the dire humanitarian situation nine months after the earthquake. Outbreaks of violence directed at MINUSTAH peacekeepers, whom many have blamed for bringing cholera into the country, only compounded tensions and uncertainty ahead of the presidential elections held on 28

November. Indeed, the cholera outbreak posed not only a public health crisis, but a threat to security and the future of the mission.

With the recovery still in progress at the end of 2010, and widespread turmoil and discontent from the disputed presidential election, the continued need for MINUSTAH's deployment could be seen clearly. Overall, the disaster served to reinforce the reality that Haitians and the international community must overcome both new and old problems facing the country with redoubled efforts and resources.

Background

In 1991, a military coup ousted the then-president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, setting in motion political, economic, and social turmoil that continues to this day. The breakdown of civilian rule was



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met with violence and insecurity, prompting a series of international interventions and peace-keeping operations.

In 2000, after President Aristide and his Fanmi Lavalas Party swept presidential and parliamentary elections with some 10 percent voter turnout, the opposition parties contested the results. Three years later, they were calling for his resignation and refusing to recognize his government. In February 2004, armed conflict broke out, insurgents gained control of the north of the country, and Aristide again fled.

In response to this crisis, the Security Council authorized a US-led multinational interim force (MIF) to support local police, facilitate humanitarian aid, and promote the rule of law and human rights. By June 2004, the follow-on UN mission, MINUSTAH, replaced the MIF to oversee and facilitate the establishment of a transitional government, disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate all armed groups, and assist in the reform of the police and judicial sectors.

MINUSTAH contended with a precarious security situation for its first few years. However, despite the insecurity bred by gangs and simmering conflict, MINUSTAH helped support elections, which saw President René Préval

(Aristide's former prime minister) elected as Haiti's president during 2006.

As gang violence increased in and around Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, President Préval requested increased MINUSTAH support to tackle the growing threat. Joint MINUSTAH and Haitian National Police (HNP) operations in the slums, the gangs' strongholds, eliminated much of the gang leadership and by mid-2007 had brought some stability to the country. This allowed MINUSTAH to transition from purely security operations to assisting Haitian authorities build their security and justice capacity.

In early 2008, the Secretary-General proposed a consolidation plan for the mission, whose ultimate goal was MINUSTAH's eventual drawdown. The five-point benchmarks he proposed were the resolution of political differences through nonviolent means and completion of elections; extension of state authority; establishment of reliable security structures; development of credible judicial and penal institutions; and improvement in socioeconomic conditions.

Progress in meeting the benchmarks was plagued by the combined effects of three devastating hurricanes during 2008, a steep rise in food prices and the global financial crises, and a political stalemate. Nevertheless, there were signs for progress in 2009. The UN Secretary-General appointed former US president Bill Clinton as his special envoy to Haiti after \$350 million in aid was pledged for Haiti's economic recovery. The security situation also improved considerably, with a decrease in gang violence and kidnappings.

Thus while slow institutional development and high levels of poverty continued to be obstacles to MINUSTAH's efforts at the end of 2009, there was reason for cautious optimism about continued progress at the start of 2010.

Key Developments

The Earthquake

On 12 January 2010, the 7.0 magnitude earthquake wreaked unimaginable destruction on the Haitian state and its people: 222,570 people

UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)

Authorization Date	30 April 2004 (UNSC Res. 1542)
Start Date	1 June 2004
SRSG	Edmond Mulet (Guatemala)
Force Commander	Major-General Luiz Guilherme Paul Cruz (Brazil)
Police Commissioner	Geraldo Chaumont (Argentina)
Budget	\$380.0 million (1 July 2010–30 June 2011)
Strength as of 31 October 2010	Troops: 8,651 Police: 3,146 International Civilian Staff: 493 Local Civilian Staff: 1,215 UN Volunteers: 226

For detailed mission information see p. 194

were killed; many thousands more were injured or disabled; and some 1.5 million were left homeless. The earthquake caused an estimated \$7.8 billion in damage. MINUSTAH also suffered tremendously: 102 personnel were killed, including the Special Representative, Hédie Annabi, his principal deputy, and the acting UN police commissioner. For the UN, it was a tragic event: the organization suffered the highest number of casualties ever in a single incident.

The earthquake greatly diminished the already weak capacity of the Haitian state. Nearly one-third of the country's civil servants died and many government buildings were leveled or heavily damaged. The main provider of security, the HNP, also suffered heavy losses with seventy-seven officers killed and hundreds injured. One-half of Haiti's 8,535 prisoners, many of whom were held for gang-related activities, escaped.

On 19 January, UN Security Council Resolution 1908 authorized 1,500 additional police and 2,000 military personnel for MINUSTAH. A month later, some 1,500 troops and nearly 500 police had been pledged with additional commitments continually coming in. Some 300 volunteer staff from UN headquarters and other peacekeeping missions were temporarily redeployed to Haiti in the immediate postearthquake period. A battalion from Brazil, engineering companies from Japan and the Republic of Korea, military police from Guatemala, and infantry from Argentina and Peru arrived in the months following the earthquake to supplement MINUSTAH's capacity.

In the days following the catastrophe, UN agencies and programs, MINUSTAH, member states, Haitians, including the HNP, and NGOs began search-and-rescue operations and provided life-saving emergency and humanitarian assistance. Edmond Mulet, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping (and former SRSG in Haiti), was officially appointed on 26 March 2010 to Haiti to serve as the acting Special Representative and head of MINUSTAH.

In the largest humanitarian operation in response to a natural disaster, the US deployed more than 20,000 personnel to Haiti as a part of



UN Photo/Sophia Parris

Argentinean peacekeepers with the MINUSTAH carry containers of water into the town of Grande Saline, in Haiti's Artibonite region, 28 October 2010.

Operation Unified Response, which provided critical logistical support and supplies. The Joint Task Force-Haiti (JTF-H) was then established by the Americans as a part of the operation to exercise command and control of the disaster-relief efforts, which forty-three countries participated in. American troops in the JTF-H assisted in reopening both the Port-au-Prince airport (the day after the earthquake) and the seaport (22 January).

By 24 January, MINUSTAH and the Office of the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) had established a joint operations and tasking center with liaison officers from the United States, Canada, the EU, and the Caribbean Community to act as the focal point for tactical planning of the relief operations. By early March, as troop contributions increased, MINUSTAH's military component and the mission took on an increasing role in the security and humanitarian efforts. Bilateral military operations began reducing their presence.

At a 31 March Conference on Haiti, donor governments pledged \$5.3 billion over the following two years and a total of \$10 billion over the following ten years in support of President Préval's Action Plan for the Reconstruction and

Development of Haiti. The plan is based on the idea of “building back better” by decentralizing economic development outside of the capital and forging a more resilient state. A new Interim Recovery Commission was set up to oversee and manage the recovery and reconstruction process. Co-chaired by Clinton and prime minister Belleville, it is in charge of reviewing and approving projects and monitoring progress.

Reassessing MINUSTAH

Before 12 January, Haiti’s prospects appeared promising: legislative, presidential, and municipal elections were scheduled for 2010; crime, gang activities, and kidnappings had been brought under better control; and international attention was on Haiti, with hundreds of millions of dollars pledged for development. Meanwhile, MINUSTAH was preparing for a drawdown based on the Secretary-General’s five benchmarks laid out in 2008. While there were setbacks in 2009, the mission expected to make achievable progress toward those benchmarks and enter a period of consolidation. The earthquake altered all of this.

In the immediate emergency phase, search-and-rescue, relief operations, and humanitarian assistance were paramount. MINUSTAH and the HNP acted as first responders, providing critical and life-saving support to those most affected by the disaster. While there were initial fears of widespread looting and crime following the breakdown of the fledgling state capacity to provide order, the HNP maintained patrols, in partnership with MINUSTAH, around key areas such as warehouses and banks, to ensure stability. A joint HNP and MINUSTAH presence in two of the largest camps in Port-au-Prince, at the Pétion-Ville club and in Cité Soleil, provided a visible show of force deterring potential criminal and violent acts.

Despite suffering immense losses themselves, HNP officers continued to work in the hours and days after the earthquake. At just over 8,000 active officers on the eve of the earthquake, more than 90 percent of officers were back on duty by the end of February, demonstrating their resilience, professionalism, and

the progress that has been made in police reform.

Because of the scale of the disaster, it was clear that there needed to be a reorientation of MINUSTAH’s strategic planning. To this end, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative, Edmund Mulet, has been tasked by the Secretary-General to lead a field-based integrated planning process with the UN country team for the first stage. The results and recommendations of the review, endorsed by the UN Haiti Integrated Strategic Planning Group, laid out an integrated approach in five key areas and a surge for MINUSTAH.

Specifically, it proposed an integrated approach that focused on fostering political stability, through constitutional reform, elections, and democratic governance; coordinating and enabling the postearthquake disaster-relief effort; maintaining a secure and stable environment, while strengthening the rule of law, human rights and protection, and Haiti’s police, judicial, and corrections institutions; supporting the government in implementing its vision of strengthened state capacity and decentralization; and helping Haiti build social capital through a balanced social agenda.

The review also recommended a “surge effort” for the coming eighteen months to two years, requiring an increase in activities within MINUSTAH’s current mandate and providing more logistical, technical, and operational assistance to the Haitian government and authorities.

The Security Council authorized an additional 680 police to augment the UN police force and continue the training of the HNP. The Council did not, however, alter the authorized strength of MINUSTAH’s military component (having previously authorized an additional 2,000 military personnel).¹ The additional police reached full deployment ahead of the 28 November presidential and legislative elections.

In September, the Secretary-General said that the November elections, the formation of a new government in early 2011, and an assessment of the security situation will be the considerations that will determine future deployment of the additional “surge” personnel in

MINUSTAH. It remains unclear whether or not MINUSTAH can return to its preearthquake planned consolidation phase. In the second stage, the process of designing the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) according to the revised Integrated Missions Planning Process (IMPP) guidelines commenced and was finalized in December 2010. The ISF also serves as the UN country team's interim UNDAF and must therefore be endorsed by the government of Haiti.

Activities of MINUSTAH

Military and Police Components

In the days and months following the earthquake, MINUSTAH conducted search-and-rescue efforts, provided security escorts for humanitarian operations, and engaged in clearing debris from roads to enable humanitarian access. Since the mission headquarters was badly damaged, the MINUSTAH logistics base in Port-au-Prince became a temporary operations center for UN and many non-UN actors participating in emergency relief activities.

The military component of the mission supported the World Food Program (WFP) food distribution in both mobile and static sites, enabling the WFP to reach nearly 600,000 people with more than 16 million meals within little more than two weeks of the earthquake. Engineering units engaged in clearing access to roads and clearing debris from government buildings and canals and helping rebuild the national penitentiary and the National Police Academy. In early August, a Japanese engineering company repaired the Ouanaminthe Bridge between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

The 1.3 million displaced persons residing in crowded camps because of the earthquake resulted in increased incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). To address this, MINUSTAH trained its troops, UNPOL, and HNP officers on how to prevent and respond to and record SGBV in the camps, setting up a referral system and a dedicated reporting mechanism and data collection. In response to increasing reports of rape in the camps, a 200-strong team of UNPOL was created in September 2010 with a presence in six of the highest risk camps

and daily patrols in seventy other camps. This campaign was in addition to the Internally Displaced Person Camp Unit, composed of nearly 470 officers and a gender unit of six UNPOL female officers.

MINUSTAH also continued its community violence-reduction program. Eight months after the earthquake, the program had more than one hundred projects totaling \$14 million to address those most in need. The program also employed 44,000 Haitian workers to rebuild and repair damaged infrastructure, including dams, canals, the Jacmel prison, and the national penitentiary. In preparation for the rainy season and future hurricanes, MINUSTAH rehabilitated more than sixty drainage canals and fifteen watershed areas at risk of flooding.

In October, nine months after the earthquake, cholera began spreading along the Artibonite River. In response, MINUSTAH assisted humanitarian agencies and the Haitian government to contain the disease to prevent its spread from reaching IDP camps and major cities. This included helping the National Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation (DINEPA) to distribute more than 800 kilograms of chlorine powder to piped water distribution points near the heaviest infected areas near the Artibonite River; increasing the number of cholera treatment centers; training authorities to manage, transport, and bury bodies safely; and distributing water purification tabs and soap.

However, because cholera had not been present in Haiti for many decades, anger quickly spread toward MINUSTAH peacekeepers after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the specific strain of cholera in Haiti was South Asian. A base near the Meille River, a tributary to the Artibonite River, which houses Nepalese peacekeepers for the mission, was blamed by many for bringing the disease to Haiti. The UN-collected samples from the base have tested negative for the disease.

Often viewed negatively by the population and used as a scapegoat for the political elite, MINUSTAH is no stranger to outbreaks of discontent at their presence. However, in this case, the tensions reached a fevered pitch. On 15

November MINUSTAH troops returned fire on a group of Haitian demonstrators during a series of chaotic and violent protests in Cap-Haitien and Hinche. One armed protester was shot dead in self-defense by a MINUSTAH peacekeeper and another died from gunshot wounds. In total, six peacekeepers were injured in what the UN described as “politically motivated” violence. The protest erupted as the cholera death toll and infection rate increased and public frustration mounted. By 19 November, the disease had reached the national prison in Port-au-Prince and protests against the UN became commonplace countrywide.

No matter the disease’s origins, the public sentiment and violence against the UN was enough to hamper international efforts to fight the spreading epidemic. By 17 November MINUSTAH canceled flights carrying medical supplies and soap to Cap-Haitien and Port-de-Paix, and Oxfam and the World Health Organization (WHO) halted water chlorination projects.

On 8 December, a report by a French epidemiologist conducted on behalf of the French and Haitian governments said that human waste dumped in Meille River at a UN peacekeepers’ base was most likely the source of the disease. On 15 December, the UN announced that it would set up an independent commission to examine the cause of the outbreak. By 21 December, more than 120,000 had been affected by cholera, which has spread to all of Haiti’s ten provinces; more than 2,500 people have died.

Elections

As Special Representative Edmund Mulet said to the Security Council on 13 September 2010, the path to stability in Haiti is adherence to the timetable for elections and the constitutional transfer of power to a new government in February 2011. In the run-up to the presidential and parliamentary elections, MINUSTAH provided essential security, technical, and logistical support.

To help cover the costs of the elections, the Haitian government, the Provisional Electoral Council, UNDP, and MINUSTAH agreed on a project document with a budget of \$28.9

million USD. MINUSTAH also undertook a comprehensive inspection of 1,483 voting centers around the country and determined new locations for centers that had been badly damaged or destroyed because of the earthquake. The HNP and MINUSTAH also began conducting security assessments in preparation for national and regional security plans for the elections. These preparations, which began in mid-June, handled protection for election officials, materials, and polling centers.

On 28 November, presidential elections were held. The OAS and the UN hailed the polls as valid, despite “irregularities.” Nevertheless, twelve of the eighteen presidential candidates called for the vote to be canceled. Tensions soon mounted and protesters took to the streets demanding annulment of the elections. On 7 December, preliminary results announced that the governing party’s favorite, Jude Celestin, would be in a runoff with former first lady Mirlande Manigat. Michel Martelly, a popular musician who came in third, was excluded from the runoff prompting violent protests from his supporters. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) expected to release the final results on 20 December, but it was delayed indefinitely. The OAS sent an experts mission to help authorities verify the results.

Security, Justice, and the Rule of Law

Although widespread disorder and chaos did not ensue following the earthquake and the situation remained relatively calm until the outbreaks of violence surrounding the cholera epidemic, establishing rule of law and effective and accountable judicial and security sectors remained a priority. The earthquake caused an increase in crime and sexual and gender-based violence in IDP camps and cross-border narcotics trafficking. With the weakening of state authority, cocaine shipment also dramatically increased.

MINUSTAH continued security and justice sector reform, although the immediate period after the earthquake witnessed a shift in emphasis away from longer-term reform and toward immediate security needs. A key challenge is to restore progress to the goal of achieving a

14,000-strong HNP force by 2011, especially since police buildings and essential records, including copies of the vetting files, were destroyed in the earthquake.

In July, the tribunal of Port-au-Prince resumed hearings in temporary buildings. MINUSTAH, in partnership with other organizations, assisted the Ministry of Justice and Public Security to establish three legal-aid offices targeted toward the poor and vulnerable in the IDP camps. There are now more than a dozen offices in operation throughout the country. Corrections reform was also deeply affected by the earthquake. Prison administration was rendered next to impossible after the loss of infrastructure, files, and registries. Nevertheless, the MINUSTAH Corrections Unit continued training hundreds of new Haitian corrections officers. In October, a prison riot at the national penitentiary was ended only after a forceful UN police intervention.

Achieving progress on the establishment of rule of law will likely continue to plague Haiti's long-term recovery effort—as it did before the earthquake. The issues of resettlement of IDPs, land titles, and economic recovery are all related to achieving clear, uniformly applied laws that are respected by the population. In particular, resettlement will remain an obstacle

to progress on other fronts. Even before the earthquake only around 5 percent of Haiti's land was officially recorded. Now, with the loss of land titles, property owners, and more than a million homeless, the problem is even more acute. The uncertainty prevents progress in not only long-term areas such as encouraging foreign investment and achieving economic development, but also short-term areas such as deciding on responsibility for rubble removal and determining designated dumping sites.

Conclusion

MINUSTAH was confronted with a drastically changed operational environment at the start of 2010 and will similarly enter 2011 with an entirely different scenario. MINUSTAH, and the UN broadly speaking, exhibited a significant level of flexibility in transitioning to face a changed paradigm in the aftermath of the January earthquake. As Haiti continues in its recovery and reconstruction amid political uncertainty and a ravaging cholera epidemic, a similar operational fluidity on the part of MINUSTAH and its international partners will be crucial to getting back onto the track disrupted by natural disaster.

Note

1. S/RES/1908 (19 January 2010).