

Haiti

Haiti experienced a difficult period in 2008 as the rise in the global prices of basic commodities imposed new levels of hardship on the country's struggling population and exposed the incapacity of its political institutions to provide an adequate response. In early April, a spate of violent demonstrations erupted in response to the rising cost of living in the preceding months. Although short in duration and quickly contained by military and police elements of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the demonstrations underlined the fragility of the political consensus supporting the government as well as the precarious nature of the country's social and economic circumstances. The development of events proved particularly disappointing given that the stability achieved through MINUSTAH's peacekeeping activities during 2006 and 2007 had provided hope that, after many difficult years, Haitian authorities, MINUSTAH, and the broader international community could turn their attention to long-term efforts to strengthen the state and its institutions.

The political and economic difficulties were compounded by a series of devastating tropical storms in the latter part of the year that created new hardship for Haiti's long-suffering population and halted all reconstruction work. Taken as a whole, 2008 provided a sobering view of the magnitude of the challenges facing Haiti and its international partners as they maintain their efforts to secure and support the country's stability.

Background

The military coup that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991 threw Haiti into a cycle of civil conflict interspersed with violence that



UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)

• Authorization Date	30 April 2004 (UNSC Res. 1542)
• Start Date	1 June 2004
• SRSG	Hédi Annabi (Tunisia)
• Force Commander	Major-General Carlos Alberto Dos Santos Cruz (Brazil)
• Police Commissioner	Mamadou Mountaga Diallo (Guinea)
• Budget	\$574.9 million (1 July 2008–30 June 2009)
• Strength as of 31 October 2008	Troops: 7,009 Police: 2,019 International Civilian Staff: 490 Local Civilian Staff: 1,206 UN Volunteers: 205

For detailed mission information see p. 221

4.8.1 Colombia

The Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP), undertaken by the Organization of American States (OAS), continued to operate during 2008, but its previous successes showed signs of their fragility during the year.

First deployed in 2004, MAPP is mandated to verify and monitor demobilization of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), a right-wing rebel group, as well as to provide support to communities who are victims of violence. Following a critical assessment of MAPP's performance by the OAS in late 2005, and growing criticism from Colombian nongovernmental organizations that MAPP lacked the resources to go beyond basic demobilization verification, the mission received enhanced funding, allowing it to grow from forty-four civilian staff in 2005 to eighty-three by the end of 2006. The enhanced mission

strength yielded a heightened MAPP presence and activity in the field. Since 2004, MAPP has assisted in disarming over 30,000 paramilitaries.

Despite this progress, OAS Secretary-General José Miguel Insulza warned in 2008 that several underlying challenges regarding reintegration of demobilized rebels threatened MAPP's achievements as it entered the complex postdemobilization phase of its deployment. Indeed, during the year, MAPP observed the increasing phenomenon of paramilitary "recycling"—the emergence of criminal groups composed of dismantled AUC forces. These illegal units are connected to drug-trafficking activities, which continue to have a negative impact on communities via murders and acts of intimidation. MAPP observed the presence of twenty-two of these groups in the country throughout 2008. Demobilized

individuals find themselves disaffected from large portions of Colombia's society, and find it difficult to secure employment.

Recognizing the necessity for heightened attention to reintegration of demobilized rebels, MAPP worked closely in 2008 with Colombia's Department for Reintegration. But one year since its inception, the department has yet to publish a policy on the reintegration process, an issue that MAPP officials see as cause for concern. From MAPP's perspective, Colombia's reintegration model needs to be adjusted from focusing solely on the individual, to involving communities as active subjects in the peacebuilding process. Bearing this in mind, it is clear that the more difficult task of completing the reintegration portion of the process will require the concentrated attention of MAPP and the Colombian government for some time to come.

has elicited an extraordinary range of international intervention since. In 1993 the Security Council established the UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) to assist in modernizing the country's armed forces and establish a new police force. Its objectives were never realized, though, as its deployment was blocked by the ruling military junta. In July 1994 the Security Council authorized deployment of a 20,000-strong multinational force to ensure the return of Aristide and the legitimate Haitian authorities, and to promote a stable return to civilian rule. From 1994 to 2001, Haiti witnessed a succession of UN peacekeeping missions, including the UN Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH), the UN Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH), and the UN Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH).

Presidential and parliamentary elections in 2000 saw President Aristide and his Fanmi Lavalas party victorious after a turnout of only about 10 percent of voters. The opposition contested the results, and by late 2003 called for

Aristide's resignation. In February 2004, armed conflict broke out, with insurgents quickly taking control of the northern part of the country, forcing Aristide to flee.

The Security Council authorized deployment of US-led multinational interim force (MIF), tasked with supporting local police, facilitating humanitarian aid, and promoting the protection of human rights and rule of law. MINUSTAH, the seventh peace operation to be deployed since 1993, replaced the MIF in June 2004 and oversaw the establishment of a transitional government. MINUSTAH is mandated to maintain security, facilitate the creation of a stable government, disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate all armed groups, and assist in the reform of the police and judiciary.

While the mission's mandated tasks are broad, for the first three years of its operation it was preoccupied with restoring security. A dramatic rise in violence during 2005 prompted the Security Council to adopt Resolution 1608, which approved an increase in MINUSTAH's

military and police strength from 6,700 and 1,622 to 7,500 and 1,897 respectively. The Security Council simultaneously requested that the Secretary-General begin devising a drawdown plan for MINUSTAH that would follow planned elections and reflect the security situation on the ground.

The enhanced MINUSTAH began launching operations against groups of gangs and bandits in the Cité Soleil slum of Port-au-Prince during 2005. These operations were successful in quelling violent incidents, but did not eradicate the core of the gangs. Meanwhile, MINUSTAH's traditional disarmament program proved inappropriate for the situation in Haiti and yielded slow progress, with large number of weapons remaining in circulation.

MINUSTAH oversaw presidential elections in February 2006 that brought former prime minister and Aristide ally René Prével to office. The elections were followed by a brief lull in violence, but in the context of Haiti's widespread poverty, unemployment, and corruption, the security situation quickly deteriorated. By July 2006, steady gang violence in Port-au-Prince and surrounding neighborhoods worsened, with a bloody massacre occurring in the Martissant slum, where wanton murders and widespread kidnappings by armed gangs prevailed.

With persistent instability threatening the gains from elections, MINUSTAH, alongside the growing Haitian National Police (HNP), responded to a request from President Prével to counter the gangs of the Port-au-Prince slums directly. The joint MINUSTAH-HNP operations conducted between December 2006 and July 2007 in Cité Soleil and Martissant succeeded in removing the gang leadership and their members and replacing them with MINUSTAH and local authorities, resulting in a dramatic drop in violence.

In view of the improved security situation, in the second half of 2007 President Prével requested a reorientation of MINUSTAH's heavy focus on security matters, asking that the mission dedicate more attention to building Haiti's fragile and underresourced state institutions and providing border control support. The



(UN Photo/Marco Dormino)

Jordanian members of MINUSTAH carry children through floodwaters after being rescued from an orphanage destroyed by a hurricane, Port au Prince, Haiti, 7 September 2008.

Secretary-General endorsed this request in his August 2007 report on MINUSTAH and recommended that the Security Council maintain MINUSTAH's initial mandate, but approve the reorientation of the mission commensurate to the improved security situation, altering the mission's troop and police components.

On 15 October 2007, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1780, authorizing MINUSTAH's reorientation; its military presence was to be redeployed from calm rural and urban local areas to more vulnerable border posts and maritime areas, its police component was to be increased by 140 officers, with an eye toward increased joint patrols and training for the HNP. Resolution 1780 also requested the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Haitian government, to begin devising a consolidation plan with appropriate benchmarks to track Haiti's progress, with the ultimate goal of MINUSTAH's eventual withdrawal. In early 2008, the Secretary-General laid out five benchmarks: resolution of political differences through nonviolent means and completion of the elections; extension of state authority; establishment of reliable security structures; development of

credible judicial and penal institutions; and improvement in socioeconomic conditions.

Key Developments

Hopes that the relative stability achieved in 2007 represented a turning a point in Haiti's recovery process were cast into doubt early in 2008. In February, Haiti's impoverished population initiated a series of antigovernment protests calling for relief to counter the rising costs of food and fuel. The Haitian government claimed it had no means to alleviate the pressure, a response that resulted in a vote of no confidence within the Haitian parliament on 28 February 2008 on the already divided government, led by Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis.

The Alexis government survived the no confidence vote, but the period that followed was marked by a steady escalation of protests throughout the country, highlighting deep discontent among the population. The demonstrations climaxed in early April when protesters turned violent and attacked government and MINUSTAH installations and looted private property. With the HNP incapable of containing the escalating violence, MINUSTAH moved in to quell the riots. The violence claimed the lives of several civilians, including one UN peacekeeper, and culminated in an attempt to overrun the national palace. In the wake of the riots, a second vote of no confidence ousted the Alexis government on 12 April 2008. It was only at this point that President Préval announced a subsidy program for the rising costs of food and fuel as well as measures to revive national agricultural production.

The level and scale of the demonstrations had suggested to many observers that they had been manipulated for political purposes and other ends. They triggered a political crisis that left Haiti without a government until the end of July, when Préval's third nominee for prime minister, Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis, was finally approved by the Senate. Even then, Pierre-Louis's appointment was further delayed by competition for powerful positions in the new government.

Pierre-Louis was finally able to take up the office of prime minister in early September. While the formation of a new government that has prioritized putting Haiti back on track was a welcome development, the country suffered huge setbacks during the months of turmoil.

Beyond the food riots, the security situation in Haiti remained relatively calm throughout 2008. An increase in kidnappings in the first half of the year, motivated by the possibility of ransom, led to increased MINUSTAH-HNP joint policing operations and MINUSTAH support to the antikidnapping cell of the HNP. The net effect of these measures was a decline in kidnappings. Similarly, in an effort to address a rise in crime and banditry in urban areas, MINUSTAH alongside HNP launched "Operation Blue Shield" in and around Port-au-Prince in mid-December. Reflecting the force reorganization approved by the Security Council in Resolution 1780, MINUSTAH remained focused on maintaining the integrity of Haiti's borders by deploying its maritime police component to key ports and increasing its aerial border surveillance through the use of additional aircraft.

Haiti's political turmoil paralyzed the government and obstructed MINUSTAH's activities for much of the year. With no central authority in place, government business ground to a halt, stalling the passing of new legislation, civil service reform, and the drafting of key bills such as budgets. A donor conference scheduled to launch Haiti's poverty reduction strategy paper in late April was first delayed and then canceled. Once the new government took its place, it worked with the legislative branch and MINUSTAH to pass emergency legislation and adopt a supplementary budget during October.

Unsurprisingly, the development of Haiti's security sector, which is a central element of MINUSTAH's mandate, suffered during 2008. Of the 14,000 vetted and trained HNP officers projected to be active by 2011, 8,546 were operational by November 2008. The number of serving HNP officers would have been significantly higher had the training of 700 additional recruits not been delayed due to the political crisis.

The reform of Haiti's judicial system, however, registered some progress through MINUSTAH's provision of technical advice and support to a three-year justice reform plan agreed to in 2007. It was anticipated that the judiciary's Superior Council—a body foreseen as playing an important role in the administration and regulation of the justice system—would be operational by the end of 2008. Meanwhile, on 7 July 2008, the School for Magistrates reopened, for the first time since 2004, to begin training courses for justices of the peace.

As the year drew to a close, Haiti's capacity to arrest and prosecute criminals on an independent basis remained low, and the country's security matters remained largely in the hands of MINUSTAH.

Conclusion

At the close of 2008, efforts to revamp Haitian national institutions and ensure long-term sustainable development had suffered significant setbacks. The events of the year proved detrimental to Haiti's stabilization. Meeting the benchmarks laid out by the Secretary-General for the eventual withdrawal of MINUSTAH appeared increasingly remote, and consequently the mission was extended at its current strength, for another year in October.

Haiti's difficulties were further amplified in September 2008 when the island was devastated by four tropical storms that caused an estimated \$1 billion in damage. The storms struck at the height of the harvest season, wiping out one-third of Haiti's crucial rice crop and destroying seeds needed for the coming year's planting. The subsequent flooding and mudslides left scores dead and many more homeless, outstripping MINUSTAH's resources. While steps were taken to deal with the immediate aftermath of the floods, including the development of a "recovery framework" by the UN, the EU, and the World Bank, with the Haitian government leading the process, delivery of aid was slow and it was feared that the storms would aggravate an already dire food crisis.

In November, the World Bank approved a \$20 million grant to Haiti to finance its reconstruction of key infrastructure, while the United States provided more than \$30 million in storm-related relief. But these efforts were seen by some observers as inadequate considering the magnitude of the damage and in comparison to responses to similar natural disasters in the past. Reversing the trends evident throughout the period under review will require continued and coordinated international engagement for years to come.