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SECURITY SECTOR REFORM MONITOR

INSIDE

Cover Photo: Supporters of Haitian presidential candidate Rene Preval shout in front of a UN armored vehicle during a demonstration in Port-au-Prince. (WALTER ASTRADA/AFP/Getty Images)

FROM TRADITIONAL DDR TO COMMUNITY VIOLENCE REDUCTION

Some complex issues, both highly sensitive and political, sit at the nexus of security and development. In post-conflict contexts, peacebuilding programs generally prioritize activities that fall under the rubric of security governance to achieve stability, such as the development of the capacity of the security forces and the strengthening of national governance and the rule of law. Many observers and institutions are now recognizing the innate linkages between security sector reform (SSR) and other important facets of stabilization, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), small arms control, gender equality and human rights promotion.[1] Although many would argue that Haiti is not a post-conflict setting, few would contest that the current polarized nature of Haitian politics and society makes such issues essential elements of the security equation.

In 1994, upon his return from exile, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide demobilized the Haitian army and created a new non-military security force under the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. The new Haitian National Police (HNP) was based on a US urban police model. DDR programs were implemented with very limited impact. Since its first mandate in Haiti in 2004, the United Nations Stabilization Mission (MINUSTAH) has sought to implement, without much success, a comprehensive

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1 Bryden (2007). See also, OECD–DAC (2007).

ABOUT THE SSR MONITOR

The *Security Sector Reform Monitor* is a quarterly publication that tracks developments and trends in the ongoing security sector reform (SSR) processes of five countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Timor-Leste, Haiti and Southern Sudan. Every quarter, there will be separate editions for each case study country. Adopting a holistic definition of the security sector, the *Monitor* will cover a wide range of actors, topics and themes, from reforms in the rule of law institutions and armed forces to demilitarization activities and the role of non-statutory security and justice actors.

Research for the *Monitor* is field-based: a resident researcher in each case study country leads data collection and analysis, with support from desk-based analysts at The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). The same research guidelines are employed for each country. All editions of the *Monitor* are subjected to an external peer review process in addition to our internal editorial review.

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DDR program (senior NCDDR member, 2009a).[2] Although existing best practices for DDR implementation, which emerged over the past decade from experiences in other post-conflict settings, would eventually form a foundation for the UN's DDR thinking in Haiti, it took some time for MINUSTAH to develop a coherent approach tailored to fit the Haitian context. In the end, violence reduction initiatives were identified as better suited to the local environment.

Along with the National Commission for Disarmament, Dismantlement and Reintegration (NCDDR), many agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have developed programs aimed at reducing violence in affected communities; these generally address the specificity of the context with some measure of success, although they sometimes overlook gender-specific needs. Some of the programs also touch on the question of reconciliation, but because many funders situate these types of projects in the grey area between security and development, they tend to experience difficulty attracting funding.

This issue of the *Security Sector Reform Monitor: Haiti* analyses the programming shift undertaken by MINUSTAH and some donors from a traditional DDR to a violence reduction approach, underlining the problems of coordination and knowledge sharing that emerged.

HISTORY OF DDR IN HAITI

Coercive and voluntary disarmament have been attempted in Haiti's recent history. In 1994 the US-led mission, Operation Uphold Democracy, launched a large-scale disarmament initiative designed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Office of Transition Initiatives, implemented through the

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2 All reports of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council comment on DDR and show clearly the evolution in thinking and related approaches promoted by the UN. See United Nations Secretary-General (2004a–c; 2005a–d; 2006, para. 23).

International Organization for Migration. It aimed to demobilize the Haitian Armed Forces (FAd'H), collect firearms and assist the reintegration of fighters into civil society. Some 15,236 weapons were seized while a buy-back program was able to collect 10,196 others (Muggah, 2005: 34). Some weapons were given to the HNP, some were returned to their civilian owners and those of poor quality were destroyed.

While these numbers might seem impressive, overall the disarmament and demobilization aspects of the program were judged a failure by a number of analysts. The buy-back program was in many respects merely a revolving door, as many purchased weapons leaked back into the community, raising serious questions about weapons management and storage (Muggah, 2005: 35). Reintegration programming also produced disappointing results for a number of reasons related to an overarching lack of national will. The population largely rejected the notion that their former abusers would benefit from training and reintegration and the political leaders of the time did not want to be seen as willingly associating with such programs. Projects directed towards reintegrating former FAd'H members into civilian life found little if any funding support from stakeholders, whether national actors, international donors or NGOs.[3]

In 2002, the Organization of American States (OAS) proposed another coercive disarmament process under Resolution 822, which allowed the HNP to launch a series of collection initiatives, weapon seizures and search operations in several areas of Port-au-Prince. Some voluntary disarmament was also sought through violence reduction programs that focused on addressing the root causes of conflict and the strengthening of social capital in neighborhoods suffering from high levels of violence. These national, donor-supported initiatives yielded equally poor results, perhaps because, as one analyst suggested,

they focused primarily on the supply of small arms with little attention paid to reconciliation and conflict resolution (Fitzpatrick, 2006).

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3 See Dworken, Moore and Siegel (1997); Stromsen and Trincellito (2003); and Muggah (2005).

MINUSTAH AND DDR: A SLOW LEARNING PROCESS

The highly polarized nature of Haitian society is well documented by academics such as Robert Fatton, Michel-Rolph Trouillot and Robert McGuire, to name a few.[4] Numerous actors participated in the violence and upheaval that ultimately led to Aristide's departure in 2004. All parties were well armed and shared few common interests.

In 2004, when the UN deployed its mission, Security Council Resolution 1542 gave MINUSTAH the mandate:

> to assist the Transitional Government, particularly the Haitian National Police, with comprehensive and sustainable Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes for all armed groups, including women and children associated with such groups, as well as weapons control and public security measures (UNSC, 2004).

The first attempts at DDR in Haiti applied traditional DDR formulas used in war-torn countries, transposing programs implemented in settings such as Sierra Leone despite the sharp contextual differences. Over time, the MINUSTAH–UN Development Programme (UNDP) integrated DDR section came to accept the inapplicability of traditional DDR doctrines in Haiti and "recognized the need for a fresh approach that prioritized community violence reduction" (UN Secretary-General, 2007). The shift was made clear when the integrated DDR section changed its name to Community Violence Reduction in 2007. This change of focus produced divisions within the UN mission. While the Department of Peacekeeping Operations–MINUSTAH component of the unit wanted to continue focusing primarily on the reintegration of ex-FAd'H soldiers and gang leaders, UNDP began promoting community violence prevention and sought financial support through bilateral donors (Muggah, 2007).

The Government of Canada initially supported UNDP's initiative. However, a lack of results due to unrealistic program objectives and the inability of the program to align its strategy with national approaches and goals prompted Canada to curtail support before the project reached its conclusion (UNDP–DDR staff, 2009).

The surge in gun-related criminality can be attributed to the growing industry in drug and human trafficking; the general absence of the rule of law; poverty and inequality; and the deteriorating conditions in poor urban slums (UNODC and World Bank, 2007). According to a former FAd'H colonel who has been reintegrated into the public sector, the remaining ex-FAd'H members no longer constitute a serious threat as their central demands surrounding pensions have largely been met by both the Transitional Government and the Préval administration (former FAd'H colonel, 2009).

NATIONAL DDR INITIATIVES

The Transitional Government (2004–06) established a National Commission on Disarmament, Dismantlement and Reintegration (NCDDR), but it lacked clear objectives, which, along with a few controversial actions and poor initial results, undermined its credibility.[5] With the election of René Préval in May 2006, a new NCDDR was nominated. Although human rights groups objected to some of its members,[6] the commission had more political credibility than its predecessor and set out to develop a national strategy better adapted to what it called the unique conditions of armed violence in Haiti. Noting the disappointing results of MINUSTAH's DDR approach, the NCDDR concluded that it was not adequately adapted to the Haitian context because it focused too much on ex-

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4 See Fatton (2002); Trouillot (1990); and Maguire (1997).

5 During a peak in violence in 2006, the Transitional Government's national DDR commission considered entering into dialogue with gang members, which raised a general outcry from diverse sectors of Haitian society.
6 One NCDDR member was heading an organization in the high-risk Port-au-Prince neighbourhood of Bel Air and was denounced by human rights organizations as being a gang leader.

FAd'H soldiers, did not understand Haiti's shifting socio-political conditions and lacked institutional and logistical support as well as political will (NCDDR, 2006: 8).

According to the NCDDR, the security situation is defined by "low intensity, chronic violence aggravated by arms and drug trafficking" and can only be addressed with a holistic approach. Just as critical as the disarmament and demobilization of armed actors is their reinsertion and reintegration into civilian society and the development of security institutions to fill any security vacuums that emerge. In the NCDDR's view, the government has to support conflict mediation capacities in communities vulnerable to gang activity and must seek to improve daily living conditions for youth of both sexes (NCDDR, 2006: 3).

The first element of the NCDDR strategy aimed to dismantle territorial gangs, break up their operational bases, arrest gang leaders, and reintegrate former soldiers. This confrontational phase was completed with the support of several joint HNP–MINUSTAH operations in high-risk areas in 2006 and 2007. Weapons of different calibre were seized, most gangs were dismantled and, in collaboration with the HNP, the arms registry was reestablished.

But with the continuous flow of drugs and arms smuggling in Haiti, the number of illegal and legal weapons in the country remains high. Robert Muggah's study on the small arms issue in Haiti estimated the total number of weapons at 170,000 in 2005. Although these numbers have been questioned by numerous national actors (senior NCDDR member, 2009a), it is still the only existing assessment of this type. Regardless of whether these figures are accurate, it is safe to assume that on the basis of the failure of several disarmament initiatives undertaken in recent years, a great many weapons are still in circulation and continue to pose a serious threat.[7]

Based on a cumulative assessment of a number of sources, Christopher Fitzpatrick has estimated that for every 48 Haitians there is one gun in circulation, which would give Haiti one of the most heavily armed populations in the region (2006: 23) (see Figures 1 and 2).
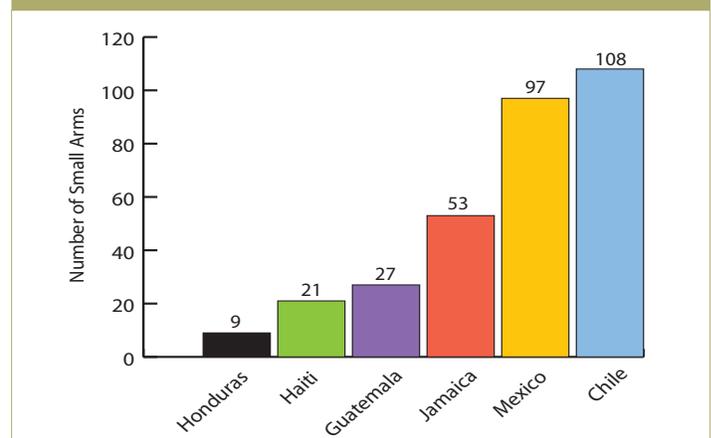
The second element of the NCDDR strategy, running simultaneously with the first, targeted gang members and consisted of two training modules. The first was micro-credit for the start-up of small enterprises for the wives of reintegrating ex-gang members; the second was vocational training — including mechanics, masonry, and truck driving — for the former gang members themselves.

FIGURE 1: CIVILIAN-HELD SMALL ARMS
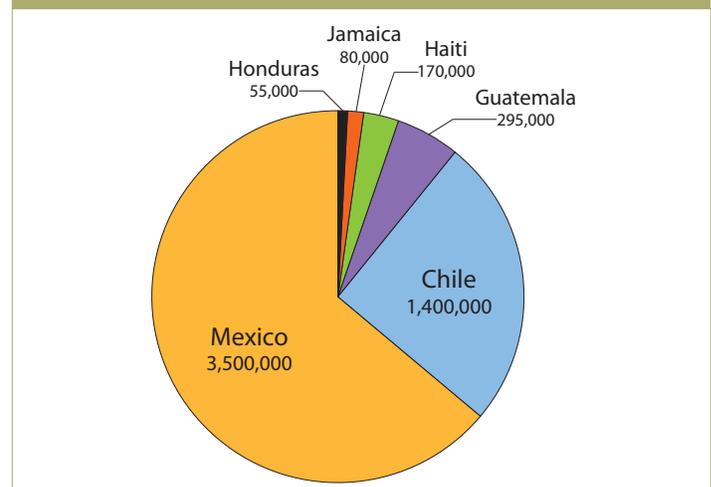
Source: Fitzpatrick (2006: 23)

FIGURE 2: SMALL ARMS PER 100,000 INHABITANTS

Source: Fitzpatrick (2006: 23)

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[7] As of April 2009, 400 weapons of different calibre have been seized (senior CNDDR member, 2009).

Numerous scholars have debated the extent to which crime and violence are causally rooted in poverty or inequality.[8] This debate has also taken place regarding Haiti, with a broad consensus emerging that it would be too simplistic to conclude that poverty is the predominant determinant of violence. Increased levels of violence can also be attributed to the interrelated processes of globalization, structural adjustment and a rapid democratization process riddled with violent setbacks and external interventions.[9] For the NCDDR, the daily living conditions of the urban poor heighten the potential for the emergence of conflict, crime and violence. For violence reduction efforts to be sustainable, populations in high-risk neighbourhoods would need to collectively reject the presence of criminality and the use of violence as a way to achieve their socioeconomic or political objectives[10] (senior NCDDR member, 2009b).

The third element of the program thus aimed at alleviating the political and social exclusion and disenfranchisement suffered by Haiti's poor, the slum dwellers and shantytown inhabitants. Through community forums, it sought to build the capacity of locally elected individuals, equipping them with the tools to identify socioeconomic problems and select appropriate development actions to address them.

This wide-reaching strategy depended on the coordination of key state actors in the targeted areas. A task force was created in 2007, at the prime ministerial level, composed of the NCDDR, key program funders and MINUSTAH, but the body has not met since since late 2008.

But this is only one of the many obstacles the NCDDR strategy has faced and continues to face. The UNDP–

MINUSTAH DDR section has had a complicated relationship with the NCDDR due to differences in strategy, clashes of personality and incompatible operational modes (MINUSTAH–UNDP/DDR senior personnel, 2009; senior Canadian government official, 2009a; NCDDR member, 2009). Indeed, an evaluation report commissioned by Canada's Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force recognizes the difficulties affecting the governance of the NCDDR project, including an initial lack of standard operating procedures and disagreements on methodological approaches.[11]

After the split of the UN–DDR section, the NCDDR sought to continue work with UNDP on community violence prevention and reduction. However, collaboration between the actors fell apart due to the NCDDR's concerns over UNDP's failure to properly engage local elected officials in its program.

The NCDDR deplores the apparent lack of recognition of the state's authority by the many national and international non-governmental actors engaged in DDR and community violence reduction initiatives. Yet some NGOs have sought to coordinate their actions with the NCDDR and draw some lessons from the different approaches to violence reduction that have been employed in recent years.[12] Canada is supporting increased coordination and facilitates meetings with donors on questions of community violence reduction.[13]

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8 See, for example, Moser (2004; 2006a; 2006b) and Briceño-León and Zubillaga (2002).

9 For a more detailed argument see Shamsie (2004). The author outlines the marked contradictions emerging in Haitian society as external actors work to promote a democratic order while supporting and facilitating a profoundly undemocratic economic and trading system.

10 The first wave of increased violence and kidnappings (2004 through mid-2006) was largely politically motivated, with profit becoming the main driver in later phases. With large segments of the population having fled the high-risk neighbourhoods, those remaining were drawn into the violence.

11 Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (2008: 5).

12 The NGO Concern Worldwide organized a meeting in April 2009 to bring together peacebuilding and violence reduction program managers with the intention of comparing and evaluating methodologies and approaches. The NCDDR, MINUSTAH–DDR, UNDP, Viva Rio and the Haitian Stabilization Initiative (a USAID project) were among the participants.

13 The first of a series of meetings was organized by a senior official at the Canadian Embassy on June 8, 2009.

NGO APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY VIOLENCE REDUCTION

In 2004, the UN Mission stigmatized some neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince and other cities suffering from high levels of violence as being high-risk, no-go red zones. This has constrained the freedom of movement of many UN bodies, donor agencies and NGOs in those areas, thereby limiting the feasibility of effective programming. In spite of these security concerns, which are very real in some areas, a number of NGOs decided to continue or start community violence reduction programs in high-risk areas beginning in 2005.[14] Variations in their program approaches are interesting to note. One general distinction between the various programs surrounds whom they work with or think they work with.

Given the precarious security conditions in some vulnerable communities, gangs were able to assert control, leaving little social capital or space for community leaders and NGOs to operate. Accordingly, many NGOs chose to partner with local community leaders with known links to gang leaders (Program manager, Viva Rio, 2009; Program manager, Concern Worldwide, 2009). Others sought to rebuild community social capital, identifying and partnering with members of the community who were able to publicly dissociate themselves from gang leaders.[15] While positive results have been achieved with both approaches, the security situation is still precarious in most of the targeted areas (Senior Canadian official, 2009b; Senior NCDDR member, 2009c; Program manager, Viva Rio, 2009; Program manager, Concern Worldwide, 2009; Senior Haitian government official, 2009).

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE REDUCTION

A representative from the Ministry of Women's Affairs was appointed to the new NCDDR in 2006 to ensure that the needs of women would be reflected in the DDR strategy. Haitian women's organizations have established that politically motivated rapes have been perpetrated, especially during the 1991 coup d'état.[16] Similarly, during more recent repressive periods (including the Aristide presidency) a high number of collective rapes were committed by gang members, with some gangs known for rape.

A study published in 2006 by the Gender Unit of MINUSTAH found that women had multiple roles in gangs: they were used as cooks; forced into sexual relations with gang members or prostitution; used as bait in kidnappings; and, in a limited number of cases, they were gang leaders themselves. They were both victims and perpetrators.

DDR programs have only reached a limited number of women due to the perception that they are either victims of violence or dependents of gang members (Merlet, 2006). Moreover, violence reduction programs implemented by NGOs have not sufficiently addressed the specific needs of women. Following the successful joint HNP–MINUSTAH operations against gang violence in various neighbourhoods, several organizations increased the scope of their interventions within communities. Positive results were achieved in terms of a general reduction of violence, but gender-specific violence remained largely unaffected (Program manager, Viva Rio, 2009). Collective rapes decreased, but women reported an increase in domestic violence, including rape (Senior national women's rights specialist, 2009). In its 2008/2009 report, Viva Rio notes

14 These NGOs include Viva Rio in Bel Air (Port-au-Prince), Concern Worldwide in St. Martin and Martissant (Port-au-Prince), the Pan American Development Foundation in Cité Soleil (Port-au-Prince), and USAID's Haiti Stabilization Initiative in Cité Soleil (Port-au-Prince).
15 This is the case for the programs of the Haiti Stabilization Initiative and Pan American Development Foundation.

16 An International Tribunal on Violence against Women was held in Port-au-Prince, in November 1997. The tribunal was symbolic but allowed numerous women to testify to the gender-based violence that they suffered during the military coup of 1991. Paramilitary groups and the military used rape against women as a weapon of repression in 1991–94.

that violence in the streets has decreased in its working area but that petty criminality and rapes persist (Viva Rio, 2009: 4). These findings are supported by statistics from women's organizations that indicate that the bulk of violence against women is occurring within their homes. None of the violence reduction programs implemented in Haiti adequately address this problem (Senior national women's rights specialist, 2009). UNIFEM is now seeking to increase its collaboration with UNDP to fill this gap (UNDP Senior program manager, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The international community's insistence on depicting Haiti as a traditional post-conflict setting has been a serious impediment to an effective DDR response. Nevertheless, national as well as international analysts have contributed to a gradual shift in approach that has facilitated the emergence of new programming on violence reduction and reconciliation, including gender-based violence.

Thorough, in-depth analysis comparing the different approaches of all actors — the Haitian government, donors and NGOs — is urgently needed. While all agree that a more holistic approach is required, the Haitian government needs to affirm its leadership and implement it through concrete policies and intergovernmental mechanisms.

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