

ACTION DS-00

RELEASED IN PART

B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AF-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	USNW-00
	CIAE-00	INL-00	DNI-00	DODE-00	WHA-00	EAP-00	OIGO-00
	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	M-00	NRC-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OES-00	OIC-00	NIMA-00	PC-01	PM-00
	FMPC-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	ASDS-00	EPAE-00	IIP-00
	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/002W				

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R 101908Z AUG 05  
 FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0633  
 INFO HAITI COLLECTIVE  
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
 AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
 AMCONSUL QUEBEC  
 HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL  
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
 CCGDSEVEN MIAMI FL//OLE/OI//

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 002032

WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS  
 SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
 DEPT FOR DS/IP/WHA  
 DS/DSS/ITA  
 DSERCC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/25/2014  
 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, ASEC, HA  
 SUBJECT: UN SHIFTS FOCUS FROM DISARMAMENT TO VIOLENCE  
 REDUCTION

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Douglas M. Griffiths, reasons 1.  
 4 (B) and (D)

1. (C) Summary: MINUSTAH's Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-Insertion (DDR) group has shifted its focus away from ex-soldiers towards the gangs and other at risk youth in Port-au-Prince slums. Conventional DDR programs targeting the ex-FADH have foundered due to the absence of political will and a diminution in the perceived threat posed by the former military. Instead, MINUSTAH DDR is pursuing a "Violence Reduction" program that attempts to remove actual and potential gang members from the scene and provide work options to entice youth to relinquish arms and abandon the life of crime. The program aims eventually to establish community-based Conflict Reduction Centers that would direct

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re-insertion activities. With the shift in focus from conventional DDR to a more flexible violence reduction program, the UN has virtually given up on necessary efforts to reduce the profusion of weapons in Haiti.

2. (U) Poloffs met with [redacted] and [redacted] on August 4. [redacted] summarized the failure of the DDR process to date. MINUSTAH's original plan was to set up a series of reintegration centers for ex-FADH, associated combatants, and other armed elements. In return for disarmament, participants would receive training and state jobs. Because of the role played by the ex-FADH rebels in the departure of President Aristide and the presumed organized threat they still posed to the IGOH, the initial priority was the reintegration of the former FADH soldiers.

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3. [redacted] admitted that the conditions never existed for conventional DDR, and from the beginning, the program foundered. Many of the ex-FADH inductees did not turn in any weapons, even when the MINUSTAH lowered the requirement to one gun for every five demobilized soldiers. Meanwhile, the IGOH began paying the ex-FADH indemnity payments, money that became a distraction to the overall process of disarmament and reinsertion. Urgency to demobilize the soldiers evaporated when rebel leader Ravix Remissainthe was killed April 9 and many of his followers dispersed. The political process collapsed, state jobs promised by the government never appeared, and the National Disarmament Commission faded from attention. Most ex-FADH now focus hopes on further indemnity payments and possibly the election of a pro-military government this fall that would reinstate their original jobs. [redacted] except for a few measures designed to maintain conditions promised to pockets of soldiers in the countryside, MINUSTAH's DDR program for the ex-FADH is now on hold until the arrival of a new government. (Note: In response to the breakdown in DDR, the USG reprogrammed our original \$3 million pledge for DDR to initiatives in violence-ridden slum communities. End note).

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4. (U) However, just as the potential threat from the ex-FADH appeared to recede in April, gang violence exploded in Port-au-Prince. It quickly became clear, [redacted] that the gangs were better armed and more willing to shoot than any other target group. Unfortunately, the level of violence in the slums was so overwhelming that MINUSTAH DDR was unable to mount any response.

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5. [redacted] said the death of Dread Wilme July 6 and the pacification of Bel Air in this summer opened a door of

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opportunity into the slums. In the last several weeks, gang members and political leaders from the slums have approached MINUSTAH [redacted] supposedly to negotiate the surrender of certain armed elements. These emissaries speak mostly for so-called "political militants" outside the violent criminal networks. Nevertheless, they do represent a significant support network to the gangs that, if removed, would further isolate the really bad guys. [redacted] has admitted that military action in Cite Soleil is unlikely before September so negotiations with potential surrender, amnesty and disarmament are MINUSTAH's intervening priority.

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6. (C) As a result, [redacted] DDR group has shifted its focus away from ex-soldiers towards the gangs and other at risk youth from the slums. MINUSTAH DDR's goal is now "Violence Reduction" rather than disarmament, and the target is not the

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hardened criminals responsible for much of the murders, rapes, and kidnappings, but instead the manipulated youth used by gang leaders for transporting weapons, sentry duty, or other logistical support for the criminals. [redacted] hopes to encourage kids (and their families) to leave the armed gangs -- giving up weapons if they have them -- and enter a reinsertion process that includes training, counseling and vocational possibilities. The idea, he said, is to remove the relatively non-violent gang soldiers from the field and isolate the criminal leaders who will then be targeted for arrest by the Haitian National Police and MINUSTAH after a "final warning." [redacted] emphasized that there would be no amnesty for those who had committed major violent crimes.

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7. (C) So far, MINUSTAH DDR has been scrambling to respond to the opportunities created by MINUSTAH's more robust military action in the slums. [redacted] secured agreement from Cite Soleil gang leader Amaral to release 50 youth from his neighborhood. Lavalas Bel Air cell leader Samba Boukman asked MINUSTAH to provide assistance to 59 kids he had identified. Gangs in Gran Ravine originally volunteered to surrender 50 members (with weapons) to participate, although the number has since dropped as MINUSTAH learned many of the volunteers were wanted criminals. [redacted] is negotiating with the HNP Inspector General Jean Francois to identify some "less criminal" individuals from the current HNP list of the 250 most wanted that might be able to join the project.

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8. (C) Minister of Health Josette Bijoux offered to donate an abandoned hospital site in Bon Repos (Croix des Bouquets) to establish a halfway house for these and other youth, and

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their families. There would be no stipulation that those who participated in the Bon Repos project would need to surrender weapons. Youth relocated to the Bon Repos center would receive counseling and training before eventually returning to their homes, presumably once the HNP had arrested more criminal leaders and the UN's larger Violence Reduction program generated results. (Note: The Bon Repos site remains mired in ownership squabbles and the UN has indicated it would require significant repair, lacking water, sanitation, windows, doors and electricity. USAID contractor International Office of Migration said the site had the potential to house up to 1,000 people. End note).

9. (C) Separately, MINUSTAH DDR has prepared a one million USD plan to realize its larger vision of creating the conditions for less violence in the slums, particularly Cite Soleil. The project would begin with a massive influx of labor intensive programs, followed by capacity building, the creation of a community network and finally the construction of a "Conflict Reduction and Development Center" where community leaders would manage gang demobilization and reinsertion schemes. [redacted] already has USD 300,000 in work projects identified for the first phase of the program, and is looking for support from others, including the World Food Program, UNICEF, IOM and USAID, among others. Donors have raised several concerns, including the criteria for how individuals are selected to participate, the lack of any tie-in to weapons disarmament, and the potential for halfway houses like Bon Repos to turn into permanent camps.

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10. (C) Comment: Any long-term project that attempts to address the root causes of the violence and disorder in slum areas is certainly welcome. But MINUSTAH DDR's strategy raises several concerns. First, the plan lowers if not removes the requirement that participants surrender weapons, thereby eliminating entirely the "disarmament" task of the DDR group with respect to gangs. Secondly, while there is nothing wrong with attempts to get at-risk youth out of harm's way, the plan does not address the real armed criminals and political agents responsible for the violence. For that MINUSTAH's military forces need to step into the breach. End comment.

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