Security Sector Reform in Haiti since 2004

Limits and Prospects for public order and stability

Gaëlle Rivard Piché
Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario

Canadian Foreign Policy Journal

Volume 23, 2017
Issue 3
Pages 292–306

Date of Publication from Ext Publisher: July 2017

Defence Research and Development Canada
External Literature (P)
DRDC-RDDC-2022-P067
February 2022

IMPORTANT INFORMATIVE STATEMENTS

This document was reviewed for Controlled Goods by Defence Research and Development Canada using the Schedule to the *Defence Production Act*.

CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY JOURNAL, 2017
VOL. 23, NO. 3, 292–306
https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2017.1341844

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Security sector reform in Haiti since 2004: limits and prospects for public order and stability

Gaëlle Rivard Piché

Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario

ABSTRACT

Security sector reform (SSR) has been at the core of the international intervention in Haiti since the mid-1990s. Following the deployment of MINUSTAH in 2004, the scope of SSR varied, with more or less consideration for non-state actors, and influenced public order and violence in the country. Under President René Préval (2006–2009), efforts were made to address the role of non-state actors in the production of public order and security provision at the local level, with positive impact on the level of public order in Port-au-Prince. After the 2010 earthquake and the election of Michel Martelly, however, this approach was mostly abandoned. International donors refocused their assistance in the security sector on the development of the national police. By 2014, despite continued international presence, Haiti registered the highest level of homicides since 2007. This article contends that state-centric SSR is unlikely to improve security and stability in this context since it ignores parts of the Haitian security sector.

RÉSUMÉ

La réforme du secteur de la sécurité (RSS) est au cœur de l'intervention internationale à Haïti depuis le milieu des années 90. À la suite du déploiement de la MINUSTAH en 2004, l'étendue de la RSS a varié, avec une prise en compte plus ou moins importante des acteurs non-gouvernementaux, et eu une influence sur l'ordre public et la violence dans le pays. Sous le Président René Préval (2006-2009), des efforts ont été accomplis pour résoudre la question du rôle des acteurs non-gouvernementaux dans la génération de l'ordre public et la mise en place de la sécurité aux plans locaux, avec un impact positif sur le degré d'ordre public à Port-au-Prince. Cependant, à la suite du tremblement de terre de 2010 et de l'élection de Michel Martelly, cette approche a été largement abandonnée. Les donateurs internationaux ont déplacé leur soutien au secteur de la sécurité sur le développement vers celui de la police nationale. En 2014, malgré une présence internationale continue, le taux d'homicides à Haïti était le plus élevé depuis 2007. Cet article soutient qu'il est peu probable qu'une RSS axée sur l'État améliore la sécurité et la stabilité dans ce contexte, étant donné qu'elle ignore certaines composantes du secteur haïtien de la sécurité.

KEYWORDS

security sector reform; intervention; stabilization; public order; non-state actors; Haiti

CONTACT Gaëlle Rivard Piché gaelle_rivardpiche@carleton.ca Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6

Since the end of the Duvalier dictatorship in 1986, Haiti has experienced chronic fragility and cyclical episodes of vivid insecurity despite successive interventions by military coalitions and the United Nations (UN). In 2004, in the wake of Jean-Bertrand Aristide's forced exile, the UN deployed the fifth peace operation in just over 10 years in the tiny Caribbean country. The *Mission des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en Haïti* (MINUSTAH) was originally mandated to stabilize the country, facilitate elections, and reform the *Police Nationale Haïtienne* (PNH). Today, while the UN is progressively withdrawing its troops, Haiti continues to face challenges in terms of security and stability. The protracted electoral crisis and violent upsurges, in combination with yet another natural disaster in the fall of 2016, showed the challenges faced by the Haitian state. While the PNH has increasingly demonstrated its capacity to ensure security and stability, the administration of justice continues to exhibit limited capacities and severe deficiencies.

The enduring volatile security environment in Haiti is due to the lack of systematic consideration for the entire security system, comprising the complete criminal justice chain as well as the informal sector, in the design and the implementation of security sector reform (SSR). Other experts have discussed at large the progress of the PNH since the beginning of the reform (Fortin and Pierre 2011, Baranyi and Sainsiné 2015, 2016). From one report to another, concerns often remain the same: the police force is strengthened, more professional, and increasingly appreciated by the population (Hauge et al. 2015, p. 279), but its development is impeded by its poor articulation with the justice sector as well as by political interference. While these conclusions are important, it is necessary to go beyond the state to fully understand Haiti's fragility and cyclical instability. The Haitian security sector is not limited to state institutions (PNH, justice system and prisons); a wide range of state and non-state actors ensure security and public order through formal and informal means.

The literature on security and non-state actors in Haiti tends to dismiss local armed groups as criminal actors spoiling security and development (Perito 2007, Cockayne 2009, Dorn 2009, Becker 2010). Other studies question the criminal nature of these groups and emphasize how they play into local competition for power and politics (Schuberth 2015, 2016). Building on this perspective, this article contends that state-centric SSR is unlikely to improve security and stability in this context since it ignores parts of the security sector. Under President René Préval, efforts were made to address the role of non-state actors in the production of public order and security provision at the local level, with positive impact on the level of public order in Port-au-Prince. After the 2010 earthquake and the election of Michel Martelly, however, this approach was mostly abandoned. International donors refocused their assistance in the security sector on the development of the PNH. Homicide numbers increased progressively after the earthquake, stabilizing in 2014 and 2015 at their highest level since 2007. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Haiti remains one of the less-violent countries of the region, according to official homicide statistics. What the numbers gathered by MINUSTAH suggest, however, is increased volatility in the country between 2010 and 2015.

I first discuss briefly how SSR, as a core component of state-building interventions, rarely takes into consideration the role played by non-state actors and informal mechanisms in the provision of security. I then turn to the case study and present a brief historical overview of security provision in Haiti. Third, I describe the complex security environment

MINUSTAH faced following its deployment in 2004. Fourth, I turn to SSR and stabilization efforts under René Préval (2006–2009), focusing on the "disarm or die" strategy. Fifth, I discuss the implications of a return to state-centric SSR on public order and security in the country under President Michel Martelly (2010–2015). I conclude by elaborating recommendations for the future of international assistance to Haiti's security sector and broader considerations for SSR in fragile states. This paper is based on field research conducted in Haiti in 2014.

Security sector reform and public order in fragile states

Progressively through the 1990s and especially after 9 September 2001, state building became the key strategy advanced by Western countries and international organizations to address state fragility around the world. State-building advocates argue that weak central governing authorities lead to authority and security vacuums (Posen 1993, Rotberg 2004). According to this perspective, reinforcing the state's security institutions to restore its monopoly on the legitimate use of violence is the main prescription to fight insecurity and chaos, as illustrated by interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Yet the state-building paradigm tends to ignore the fact that where the state is either absent or too weak to impose itself, other actors often provide security and produce public order. Fragile states are usually characterized by a plurality of armed actors who are able and willing to use coercion to impose their authority and produce public order. Neo-customary arrangements in Sub-Saharan Africa, Mexican drug cartels, and rebel governance under the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo) in Colombia are all examples of how non-state actors can produce public order through more or less formal means (Baker 2011, Knight 2012, Arjona 2014). At the same time, in fragile settings, state actors can also engage in informal public ordering, as illustrated by the presence of death squads in El Salvador after the civil war or the abuses committed by the Wolf Brigade in Iraq following the American invasion (Ladutke 2001, Thurber 2014). Hence, authority and security vacuums do not necessarily exist where there is a sovereignty gap.

SSR stands at the core of the state-building paradigm, based on the premise that there cannot be development without security. SSR seeks to improve security and justice for the state and its citizenry by improving basic security provision, ensuring the accountability of security and justice institutions, and promoting human rights (OECD-DAC 2007, UN DPKO 2012). In doing so, these reforms seek to reduce armed crime and violence in order to enable social, economic and political development (OECD-DAC 2007, p. 21). Following its emergence in the late 1990s, SSR targeted mainly state security institutions, tending to focus specifically in practice on the police and the armed forces. However, SSR fell short of its promises. Despite the colossal amount of resources invested in the reform or the creation of new security forces in different environments, results have been modest and far from the broad success envisioned. Experts initially pointed to several factors to explain these shortcomings: lack of resources and/or political will, coordination and coherence problems, and deficit in local ownership. More recently, scholars and policymakers have increasingly criticized the state-centric nature of SSR. International agencies now recognize the role played by "non-statuary," "non-state," "private" actors, as well as "customary or informal authorities" (OECD-DAC 2007, UN DPKO 2012, p. 2,

The UN Secretary General 2013). Yet, in practice, international donors and agencies still lack a clear understanding of how to interact with those players in the security realm, and little consideration is given on the ground to non-state actors and informal public ordering. Dealing with the local and the non-state is tricky. In the case of Haiti, research suggests that so-called peace-building interventions in local communities can be disruptive and undermine local governance and conflict management structures (Hauge et al. 2015). Hence, more reflection is required on how to engage the non-state and the informal in state-building and peace-building processes.

Consequently, SSR appears to be more challenging than expected where formal public ordering by state actors has historically been limited. On the one hand, by focusing only on state formal public ordering, the solutions proposed by SSR are partial at best since they only consider a portion of the security sector in fragile states. On the other hand, by increasing the formal role of the state without much consideration for non-state actors and informal public ordering, SSR can create conflicts between coercive actors when they are able and willing to compete for the control of the means of violence. The evolution of SSR in Haiti since the mid-1990s illustrates the difficulty of reinforcing state security institutions in a context where the authority of the state has historically been limited and non-state actors have played a significant role in the production of public order, which is discussed in the next section.

Historical perspective on public order and SSR in Haiti

The production of public order in Haiti has never been the preserve of the state. Through most of its history, Haiti has been a predatory state where the ruling elite has extracted resources from the population in order to benefit its supporters and ensure its political survival in collaboration with the *Forces Armées d'Haïti* (Haitian Armed Forces – FAd'H) (Fatton 2002). Elites also relied on militias and other paramilitary organizations to tame political opposition and ensure their political survival. In response, the excluded majority relied on local governance mechanisms and other community-based systems of rules and norms (Merilus 2015). Hence, the state never fully fulfilled its core security function toward its entire population. Informal mechanisms and authorities regulated daily life outside of the state's reach.

Even after the disbandment of the armed forces and the creation of the PNH under UN supervision in the 1990s, state security forces lacked incentives and resources to fulfill their mandate and provide security in a transparent and accountable manner. In the early 2000s, the PNH's strength declined quickly in the absence of regular pay. After his second election in 2000 and facing rising political tensions, Aristide encouraged police agents to adopt a zero-tolerance strategy toward crime, opening the way to extrajudicial violence against alleged criminals and political opponents. Furthermore, prior to his election in 2000, Aristide created militias called *Chimères* who violently repressed his opponents. Finally, disbanded members of the FAd'H for whom economic alternatives had not materialized after 1994 started to regroup, harassing Aristide's supporters and members of his government (Mendelson-Forman 2006).

In sum, the provision of public order and security in Haiti has historically been the responsibility of a complex web of state and non-state actors, imposing more or less formal rules and norms. Competition and tensions between these actors have influenced

security and stability over time, and democratization has not enabled the state to establish a monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive force.

2004–2006: the other Baghdad

In 2003, groups initially supporting Aristide and close to *Fanmi Lavalas* turned against him after the murder of one of their leaders in Gonaives. It was believed that Aristide had ordered his assassination. Subsequent political unrest and foreign powers' fear of a coup forced Aristide into exile in February 2004. MINUSTAH was authorized shortly after. From the start, the peace operation faced a highly volatile and fragmented environment where the interim government led by Gérard Latortue lacked the proper resources and legitimacy to fulfill its transition role. In this context, the initial mandate of MINUSTAH was threefold: supporting the Haitian authorities in stabilizing the country, organizing democratic elections, and reforming the national police.

The departure of Aristide only confirmed the collapse of the state's central authority and furthered destabilized the security situation. Through 2004 and 2005, a large number of armed groups, with or without political motives, contributed to the country's instability. In Port-au-Prince, pro-Aristide groups unified under the Rat-pa-Kaka banner, and openly contested the government of transition. The protest turned into an open conflict called Operation Baghdad in late 2004. *Lavalas* partisans confronted their opponents in the poor neighborhoods of the capital. However, the death of key leaders early in the conflict led to a rapid fragmentation of the groups and a gradual loss of their political motives. Some of these groups turned to criminal activities, undermining the contestation movement (interview, Brazilian researcher, Port-au-Prince, December 2014).

Hence, this period was characterized by the presence of multiple groups who competed over the control of neighborhoods and communities in the capital. The large number of actors with competing claims in a climate of high uncertainty contributed to the general insecurity and the high levels of violence reported by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders at the time (Amnesty International 2004, Donais 2005, Kolbe and Hutson 2006). Insecurity also fostered the formation of local brigades protecting their neighborhoods and carrying out popular justice (Mendelson-Forman 2006, p. 24).

Despite joint efforts by the PNH and MINUSTAH, it took most of 2005 to stabilize Port-au-Prince. The PNH was weak, lacking personnel, infrastructures, resources and a command structure (Fortin and Pierre 2008). Furthermore, due to abuses perpetrated under Aristide, the PNH was perceived as corrupt and distrusted by most Haitians. For its part, MINUSTAH was increasingly perceived as an occupation force. For Aristide's supporters, the United States, France and Canada had forced their president into exile and deployed MINUSTAH to advance their interest. Punctual repressive operations to fight local armed groups only reinforced this perception, while quickly revealing themselves to be insufficient to stabilize the country.

2006–2009: reinforcing the state, pacifying Port-au-Prince

The security situation in Port-au-Prince only improved after the election of René Préval in February 2006. Perceived as a candidate of compromise, he received both the support of the population and the backing of the international community. In the first months of his

presidential term, he made two significant moves to improve security in the country. First, he approved the UN-designed police reform plan in late 2006, which would become the cornerstone of the SSR process in Haiti. Second, Préval adopted a clear position toward armed bands in Port-au-Prince. He offered to negotiate with armed groups who were ready to disarm; those refusing to do so would be eliminated. Backed by MINUSTAH, this mixed strategy greatly contributed to the overall improvement of public order in Port-au-Prince until 2010. By acknowledging the presence of non-state actors and addressing their role in public ordering, the Préval administration recognized implicitly the pluralist nature of public order in Haiti. This inclusive approach improved security.

Security sector reform: improving formal public ordering by state actors

From the beginning, SSR was MINUSTAH's highest priority for the stabilization of Haiti. In resolution 1702, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) referred to "a comprehensive reform of the police, judiciary and correctional systems, to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedom, and to end impunity" (UN Security Council 2006). Then, in February 2007, the UNSC called "on the Haitian Government, in coordination with the international community, to maintain the momentum behind SSR, in particular the Haitian National Police" (UN Security Council 2007a). Hence, police reform became the main entry point for SSR. The United States and Canada had already implemented bilateral programs, and a reinforced police was an easy sale to Haitian stakeholders. However, there was little appetite from the Haitian government to support rule of law, justice and correctional reforms issues (interview, UN senior official, Port-au-Prince, August 2014).

Nonetheless, controversy surrounded the first PNH Reform Plan. The UN designed an initial strategy without the participation of the Haitian government, and in isolation from previous bilateral programs put in place since 2004. In January 2006, Prime Minister Latortue came back furious from a trip to the UN headquarters in New York City. He claimed the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for MINUSTAH had pressured him to sign the reform plan (Fortin and Pierre 2008, p. 13). PNH officers and the broader public denounced this clear violation of one of the core principles of SSR: local ownership.

As a consequence, the police component of MINUSTAH (UNPol) designed a new plan in active collaboration with the PNH leadership in order to come up with a document that would be acceptable to the national authorities and respond to the country's security needs (Fortin and Pierre 2008, p. 13). The plan included the training and vetting of new police agents to reach a force of 14,000 personnel by 2011, depending on the availability of fiscal and financial resources. The Government of Haiti would cover salary and operation costs, while the international community would finance capacity-building and infrastructures. The cost of the reform was initially evaluated at approximately US$700 million. Préval approved the plan in the summer of 2006. According to MINUSTAH's mandate, the objectives of the reform were to improve the ability of the PNH to patrol the national territory, fight gang-related violence, deter crime and improve security. Hence, SSR focused mostly on reinforcing state actors' capacity and formal public ordering, with little consideration for other security actors who were mostly perceived as threats to the stabilization process.

SSR started to reinforce the capacity of the PNH through both the training and vetting of its police agents, and the development of more transparent and democratic procedures.

Progress was slower than expected, however. Vetting, which was supposed to be completed in 2007, was delayed by the lack of public records on former PNH agents (UN Office of Internal Oversight Services 2012, p. 5). The PNH reached a force of 9000 personnel by the end of 2009, a number way under the objective of 14,000 for 2011. As a result, in spite of slow progress, the PNH remained weak and was unable to ensure public order and stability without the support of MINUSTAH (UN Security Council 2008).

Disarm or die

Eliminating spoilers

In order to address insecurity and instability deriving from the presence of multiple armed groups in Port-au-Prince, Préval adopted a strong public rhetoric. In the summer of 2006, he announced that his government would negotiate with groups that agreed to disarm, opening the way to a series of peacebuilding initiatives in marginalized communities. However, he also stated clearly that armed groups that would not disarm would be eliminated, with the support of MINUSTAH police and military components.

In December 2006, facing ramping violence, Préval authorized MINUSTAH to conduct large military operations targeting armed bands in Cité Soleil and other zones of Port-au-Prince, such as Bel Air, Delmas 2 and Martissant. The operations conducted during the first few months of 2007 in Cité Soleil enabled the PNH and MINUSTAH to take over the police station that had been abandoned in 2005, and arrest more than 500 gang members. In Resolution 1780 of October 2007, the UNSC "acknowledge[ed] significant improvements in the security situation in recent months but not[ed] that the security situation remain[ed] fragile" (UN Security Council 2007b). Reports from the Haitian Stabilization Initiative (Becker 2010) suggest that even if Cité Soleil was stabilized, tensions remained important in the communities. Furthermore, the PNH did not have the capacity and the expertise to actively police the sector and project its power beyond police stations. Therefore, the MINUSTAH Brazilian battalion in charge of this area continued to conduct most patrols.

Negotiations

Meanwhile, also in December 2006, the Government of Haiti created the *Commission nationale pour le désarmement, la démantèlement et la réinsertion* (National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration – CNDDR) to establish a dialogue and implement a peace process with different armed groups in Port-au-Prince. CNDDR was the body through which the "disarm" component of Préval's strategy would be articulated. Supported politically and financially by MINUSTAH and other bilateral donors, CNDDR put in place a variety of projects in different neighborhoods of the capital. However, the commission was not apolitical. CNDDR president Alix Fils-Aimé was a member of parliament under the *Fanmi Lavalas* banner between 1996 and 1999 and played a prominent role in the Rat-pa-Kaka movement. As a result, CNDDR was not able to engage with all armed groups, especially former Fad'H members (interview, Viva Rio Haiti employee, December 2014).

One of the key programs under CNDDR was the *Tambou Lapè* (Drums of Peace) initiative from the Brazilian NGO Viva Rio. In 2006, MINUSTAH invited Viva Rio to Haiti to develop violence-reduction programs based on its expertise acquired in the favelas of Rio de

Janeiro in the 1990s. Through community leaders and local associations, the NGO facilitated the negotiation of peace accords between local armed groups in exchange for the provision of services to the community. Every month free of homicide, Viva Rio would organize a raffle for the community. Prizes initially comprised scholarships for children; after some time, more appealing prizes for community leaders, such as motorcycles, were added to the mix. The Canadian government also mandated the NGO to develop a community policing methodology and organize activities in order to improve police–community relations in Bel Air (DFAIT 2009).

Tambou Lapè and other Viva Rio programs are one example among a wide range of initiatives targeting violence reduction and stabilization in Haiti in the late 2000s. The period 2007–2009 was one of experimentation for many donors and organizations to address problem of instability, crime and violence (Muggah 2010). In addition to domestic initiatives, donors funded and administrated a range of programs in downtown Port-au-Prince and its surroundings. Many of these initiatives targeted former armed groups and involved local authority figures, suggesting an understanding of the importance of the informal and the non-state in the organization of the Haitian society and the management of security. However, there was a clear lack of coherence and coordination between the different stakeholders and initiatives. Inside MINUSTAH itself, initiatives targeting the PNH were under the authority of the police commissioner, while the Community Violence Reduction Unit (CVR) was initially under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), making cooperation and coordination difficult.

Improvement in the level of public order

Security improved significantly between 2006 and 2009. Kidnappings dropped from more than 500 in 2006 to 162 in 2008 (International Crisis Group 2008). Homicides also remained relatively low by regional standards – five to six homicides per 100,000 population – with a national homicide rate comparable to that of the United States for the same period. SSR, while mostly limited to the PNH, contributed to the reinforcement of state security institutions. Alongside MINUSTAH, the PNH was increasingly able to fulfill its mandate, patrolling the streets of Port-au-Prince and eliminating disruptive armed groups. In parallel, by creating opportunities for dialogue with non-state armed actors, the Préval government recognized implicitly how they affected security and stability at the local level. Supported and often advanced by MINUSTAH, this mixed strategy managed to improve security in Port-au-Prince and formalize to a certain extent the production of public order. However, these arrangements remained fragile and vulnerable to disruption. For instance, in 2008, the rapid rise of fuel and food prices provoked riots, undermining the stabilization process and weakening Préval's leadership.

2010–2015: state-centric SSR and clientelism

January 2010: the shock of the earthquake

On 12 January 2010, a devastating earthquake struck Haiti, killing approximately 200,000 people and leaving 2.3 million homeless (Amnesty International 2014). The earthquake deeply affected the poor neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince that had been targeted by the

stabilization initiatives since 2006, undermining security in three major ways. First, the disaster created important migratory movements from poor neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince toward camps and communities north of the capital. In addition to the significant death toll, these movements transformed the composition of many communities in Port-au-Prince, undermining their social fabric and authority structure. Second, the earthquake severely damaged the Port-au-Prince prison, enabling 3000 inmates who had been arrested for the most part between 2007 and 2009 to escape (Delva and Brown 2010). In many cases, these inmates returned to their community and tried to regain local control, which led to conflicts with new authority figures. Third, the earthquake weakened the PNH, killing 75 agents and severely damaging its already limited infrastructures and capacities. MINUSTAH lost 102 employees, including key members of its leadership such as the SRSG and the deputy police commissioner. Finally, the disaster diverted donors' resources and attention away from existing stabilization and peacebuilding activities. Emergency relief and humanitarian assistance became central to the international response for almost two years.

A new president, a new strategy: overt state-centrism, covert clientelism

In addition to the earthquake, 2010 was a year of great political uncertainty due to presidential elections. Initially planned for February, the first round finally occurred on 28 November. Michel Martelly was elected after the second round in March 2011, despite a very low turnout. Only 23 per cent of the electorate cast a vote during the second round, and there were reports of significant fraud (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2011). Nonetheless, Martelly quickly identified SSR and the establishment of the rule of law as core priorities for Haiti's development. Declaring Haiti open for business with the support of Bill Clinton and in response to previous calls for foreign investments (Collier 2009), Martelly officially adopted a zero-tolerance policy toward corruption (Martelly 2012) and denounced Preval's close relationship with criminal groups, referring to the disarm or-die-initiative (field notes, December 2014). However, he himself faced allegations of corruption, bribery and mismanagement early in his mandate (Freedom House 2013).

A clear shift in strategy toward security and stability occurred under Martelly. While emphasizing the continuing importance of professional and capable state security forces, the new administration walked away from local peace-building and stabilization initiatives. Yet evidence suggests that members of Martelly's government maintained covert relations with local armed groups to ensure their political survival, returning to traditional clientelistic strategies observed under Duvalier and Aristide. As a result, Haiti became increasingly volatile and the level of public order declined.

SSR: a professional police in a weak security sector

In 2011, the Haitian government renewed its commitment to SSR and the development of the PNH with the adoption of a five-year (2012–2016) development plan for the national police. The plan was designed by the UNPol component, in collaboration with and with the approval of the PNH leadership. The plan emphasized the development of the PNH into a professional, capable and institutionalized police force able to project its authority, provide security, and prevent crime and violence. Most importantly, the plan intended to enable

the PNH to ensure alone the country's security and stability after the withdrawal of MINUSTAH, initially planned for 2016 (interview, MINUSTAH deputy police commissioner, July 2014).

The PNH made some clear progress in terms of manpower, professionalism and capacity. By the end of 2015, the PNH relied on fewer than 12,000 police agents, with an objective of 15,000 by the end of 2016 (UN Security Council 2016). Investments in infrastructures, capabilities and leadership development also reinforced the capacity of the PNH. Perhaps most importantly, the population perceived the PNH positively, important progress considering the history of Haitian security forces (Hauge et al. 2015). As a result, experts consider the police reform relatively successful (Baranyi and Sainsiné 2015, 2016).

Nonetheless, issues remained. First, Haiti cannot yet ensure the financial viability of its police. The PNH budget remains highly dependent on donors' contributions (International Crisis Group 2012, p. 5). Second, a lot of the PNH resources are misused. A disproportionate number of PNH agents are assigned to the close protection of politicians and members of government. It was also reported that vehicles donated to the PNH by the Canadian government to patrol the Haitian–Dominican border were used for personality protection in Port-au-Prince (interview, Canadian official, Port-au-Prince, August 2014). Third, the progress achieved in the development of the PNH has not been met in other sectors of the security system. The lack of meaningful reforms in the justice and correctional sectors undermines the sustainability of the police reform. There are important limits to what a professional police force can accomplish without a functioning and transparent justice apparatus to prosecute cases.

Beside, during the electoral campaign, Martelly promised to reconstitute the national armed forces. This certainly answered a need to reassert Haiti's sovereignty and enhance national pride (International Crisis Group 2012). However, in a fiscal context where resources are already very limited, the addition of another security institution appears misguided. Creating a new military force would divert the resources and the attention of Haiti's government from its established priority in the security sector: the PNH. Furthermore, considering the tormented history of the FAd'H and the role its former members played in the destabilization of the country in the 1990s and the 2000s, there is no national consensus on the need for and the potential role of a reinstituted military force. Nonetheless, the Martelly administration created in 2014 a civil defence force, engaged primarily in engineering projects supporting the development of infrastructures such as roads and bridges. As argued by Burt (2016), considering the *fait accompli*, the new armed forces present an opportunity to boost local ownership of the SSR process in Haiti and reinforce the governance of modern security institutions.

Dealing with non-state actors: marginalization of peace-building initiatives

Contrary to his predecessor, Martelly did not engage officially with non-state actors. CNDDR became inactive after the earthquake and was dismantled after the official resignation of its president Alix Fils-Aimé in May 2011. Despite some problems, CNDDR was a key channel through which state actors could engage in a formal and relatively transparent manner with at least some non-state actors involved in

the production of public order at the local level. Yet Martelly's refusal to "negotiate with criminals" prevented him from adopting a strategy similar to Préval's toward non-state actors.

Furthermore, the pressure placed by the earthquake and its effects on available international assistance, and donors' fatigue, reduced funding toward local peacebuilding processes. For example, Canadian funding to Viva Rio was cut in 2011, without much warning and despite an overall positive audit report. The earthquake had deeply affected the composition of Bel Air's society, and new incoming actors were putting pressure on local leaders. Without proper resources to maintain violence reduction programs, Viva Rio was no longer able to provide employment, which created frustration among the local population. The NGO lost its ability to engage with local leaders and to act as mediator during the 2012 conflict opposing local armed groups, undermining the progress accomplished between 2006 and 2009.

Hence, Martelly's administration chose to depart from the strategy adopted by the previous government, or at least to no longer engage with the specific actors who had been favored by CNDDR. The official discourse and the priorities of the Haitian government implied a refocus toward the state and its central role in the production of public order. However, events suggest that while Martelly did not engage officially with non-state actors considered criminals, members of his government maintained covert relations through clientelism and patronage linkages.

Clientelism and patronage as sources of insecurity

Despite Martelly's strong stand against corruption, evidence suggests that political figures maintained covert relations with local armed groups. Notwithstanding 20 years of democratization, some political elites still relied on patronage relations to ensure their political survival, which had a destabilizing effect on low-income communities especially during electoral periods (Schuberth 2015). In the summer of 2014, violence ramped up in the market of Croix-des-Bossales, at the limit of Bel Air and Cité Soleil. People I met on the streets, experts I interviewed, and NGO employees all pointed to the preparation for the elections as the main cause of violence. Politicians were arming local gangs to gain control over the market, which led to attacks on local merchants and an increase in thefts and robberies. According to people I met in the market in August 2014 during a patrol of the MINUSTAH Brazilian battalion, the PNH was hardly visible in the market. As a result, MINUSTAH increased its visibility in the sector, patrolling the area on a regular basis.

In Cité Soleil in June 2014, two Canadian UNPols in colocation with the PNH in Cité Soleil organized a series of joint operations against gang leaders, advising the PNH commissioner for Cité Soleil of their intention. A couple of days later, Almetis Junior Saint-Fleur, the then-legislative representative for Cité Soleil, showed up at the police station in Cité Soleil and threatened at gunpoint one of the UN police officers, telling him to not get involved in Haitian affairs (interview, Canadian UNPol, Port-au-Prince, July 2014). The gang leaders who had been arrested were protected by and worked for Saint-Fleur. Both UNPols had to be transferred to other positions as their personal security was now at risk. Members of parliament benefit from complete immunity and cannot be prosecuted under the civil or criminal code.

2010–2015: reinforced state actors and volatile security

Since the earthquake, public order in Haiti has been more volatile than during the previous period due to incoming security actors, as well as changing relations among them. According to data MINUSTAH's Joint Mission Analysis Center shared with me, the number of homicides recorded annually doubled between 2007 and 2014, from 486 to 1084. Between 2011 and 2014, homicide numbers varied widely from one month to the next, especially in and around Port-au-Prince. Homicides increased in the summer of 2015 due to the first round of the legislative elections, but the total for that year remains similar to that for 2014. Approximately 80 per cent of recorded homicides were located in Port-au-Prince and its surroundings (UN Security Council 2016).

All in all, after 2010, the SSR process remained mostly limited to the PNH, and violence-reduction initiatives have been marginalized. However, this does not imply that relations between state and non-state actors are inexistent. Evidence suggests, rather, that these relations actually undermined public order and security in Port-au-Prince. Despite important progress accomplished by the PNH, the lack of improvement in other sectors of the security and justice system and the prevalence of patronage relations between political elite and non-state actors call into question the sustainability of the state-building process in Haiti.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Haiti remains a fragile state and does not successfully claim a monopoly over the means of violence, despite 10 years of intervention in the security sector. Security remains a plural affair involving both state and non-state actors engaging in formal and informal public ordering. Clientelism continues to influence the security of local communities and might well undermine any effort to improve and formalize public order if they are not taken into consideration more systematically. In this context, Haitians living in impoverished neighborhoods still perceived the state as being mostly absent in their life (Kivland 2012).

In this context, state-centric SSR is misguided and will not improve sustainably the level of public order since it does not take into consideration the entire spectrum of actors and mechanisms providing security and producing public order. Strategies adopted under Préval strongly suggest that addressing the role and the place of non-state actors in public ordering can improve the level of public order, prevent violence, and contribute significantly to the country's stability. However, these efforts have remained *ad hoc*, relying on donors' short-term funding and priorities, as well as political will. The change of strategy under Martelly has certainly contributed to enduring volatility in Haiti, illustrated by fluctuating levels of violence.

These observations suggest that SSR should be based on a broader assessment of what constitutes the security sector. At a minimum, it should be better coordinated with other programs that address these issues, such as DDR and CVR initiatives. Rather than building and/or reinforcing state institutions in a vacuum, SSR and broader state-building strategies should be designed and implemented in accordance with the reality on the ground, and should take into consideration the composition of

the country's security environment. As noted by Dipali Mukhopadhyay, who looks at the role of warlords in state-building in Afghanistan,

> it is really important for us to look at the details, to understand the context, and to ground our foreign policy making not in the fantasy of what we hope things would be but in fact in the reality of how things actually are. (Mukhopadhyay 2013)

Questioning the state-centric bias appears to be a good place to start.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

Research for this article would not have been possible without the financial support of the International Development Research Center, and the Defence Engagement Program of the Canadian Department of National Defence.

Notes on contributor

Gaëlle Rivard Piché holds a PhD in international affairs from Carleton University, and she works as strategic analyst for Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC). In 2014–2015, she was a Fulbright research fellow in the International Security Program at the Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. The ideas presented here are the author's own and do not represent the position of DRDC, the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, or the Government of Canada.

References

Amnesty International, 2004. *Haiti: breaking the cycle of violence: a last chance for Haiti?* London: Amnesty International, AMR 36/038/2004.

Amnesty International, 2014. *Facts and figures – Haiti: displaced people still leave in despair four years after devastating earthquake*. London: Amnesty International.

Arjona, A., 2014. Wartime institutions a research agenda. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 58 (8), 1360–1389.

Baker, B., 2011. Justice and security architecture in Africa: the plans, the bricks, the purse and the builder. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 43, 25–47.

Baranyi, S. and Sainsiné, Y., 2015. Le développement de la PNH, la sécurité publique et l'État de droit en Haïti. Rapport de recherche #1 (May). Agence universitaire de la francophonie, 29p.

Baranyi, S. and Sainsiné, Y., 2016. La Police Nationale et la crise de gouvernance en Haïti. Rapport de recherche #2 (September). Agence universitaire de la francophonie, 29p.

Becker, D. C., 2010. Gangs, netwar, and the 'Community counterinsurgency' in Haiti. *Prism*, 2 (3), 137–154.

Burt, G. 2016. Haiti's army, stabilization and security sector governance. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 5 (1): 1–16.

Cockayne, J., 2009. Winning Haiti's protection competition: organized crime and peace operations past, present and future. *International Peacekeeping*, 16 (1), 77–99.

Collier, P., 2009. *Haiti: from natural catastrophe to economic security. A report for the secretary-general of the United Nations*. Oxford: Oxford University.

Delva, J.G. and Brown, T., 2010. Gangs return to Haiti slum after quake prison break. *Reuters*, 17 January. Available from: http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/01/17/us-quake-haiti-gangs-sb-idUSTRE60G0CO20100117.

DFAIT (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada), 2009. *Summative evaluation of START's global peace and security fund – Haiti*. Ottawa: Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada.

Donais, T., 2005. Back to square one: The politics of police reform in Haiti. *Civil Wars*, 7 (3), 270–287.

Dorn, A.W., 2009. Intelligence-led peacekeeping: the united nations stabilization mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), 2006–07. *Intelligence and National Security*, 24 (2), 805–835.

Fatton, R. 2002. *Haiti's predatory republic: the unending transition to democracy*. Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Fortin, I. and Pierre, Y.-F., 2008. *Haiti et La Réforme de La Police Nationale d'Haïti*. Ottawa: The North-South Institute.

Fortin, I. and Pierre, Y.-F., 2011. La réforme de la police nationale et la construction démocratique en Haïti. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue Canadienne D'études du Développement*, 32 (1), 64–78.

Freedom House. 2013. Haiti. Freedom in the World 2013. Available from: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/haiti#.VOC5bFPF9yR.

Hauge, W., Doucet, R. and Gilles, A., 2015. Building peace from below—the potential of local models of conflict prevention in haiti. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 15 (3), 259–282.

Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2011. Vote turnout data for Haiti. Available from: http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?CountryCode = HT.

International Crisis Group, 2008. *Reforming Haiti's security sector*. New York: International Crisis Group, Latin America/Caribbean Report N°28.

International Crisis Group, 2012. *Towards a post-MINUSTAH Haiti: making an effective transition*. New York: International Crisis Group, Latin America/Caribbean Report N°44.

Kivland, C. L., 2012. Unmaking the state in 'Occupied' Haiti. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 35 (2), 248–270.

Knight, Alan, 2012. Narco violence and the state in modern Mexico. *In*: W.G. Pansters, ed. *Violence, coercion, and state making in twentieth-century Mexico*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 115–134.

Kolbe, A.R., and Hutson R.A., 2006. Human rights abuse and other criminal violations in Port-au-Prince, Haiti: a random survey of households. *The Lancet*, 368 (9538), 864–873.

Ladutke, L.M., 2001. Expression for and against the vigilante death squad sombra negra. *Southwestern Journal of Law and Trade in the Americas*, 8, 283–309.

Martelly, M., 2012. Haiti: now open to foreign investors. *The Huffington Post*, 8 February. Available from: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/michel-martelly/haiti-invest_b_1260540.html.

Mendelson-Forman, J., 2006. Security sector reform in Haiti. *International Peacekeeping*, 13 (1), 14–27.

Merilus, J.-Y., 2015. Rural development: the economic potentials of Haiti's 'Lakou' system. *Focus on Geography*, 58 (1), 36–45.

Muggah, R. 2010. The effects of stabilisation on humanitarian action in Haiti. *Disasters*, 34, S444–S463.

Mukhopadhyay, D., 2013. From warlord to governor – an Afghan paradox. TEDx ColumbiaSIPA. 9 March. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v = dnCpaZy_qqc&feature = youtube_gdata_player.

OECD-DAC, 2007. *The OECD DAC handbook on security system reform (SSR): supporting security and justice*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Perito, R. M., 2007. Haiti: hope for the future. Special Report 188. United State Institute of Peace.

Posen, B., 1993. The security dilemma and ethnic conflict. *Survival*, 35 (1), 27–47.

Rotberg, R. I., 2004. *When states fail: causes and consequences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Schuberth, M., 2015. A transformation from political to criminal violence? Politics, organised crime and the shifting functions of Haiti's urban armed groups. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 15 (2), 169–196.

Schuberth, M., 2016. Growing the grassroots or backing the bandits? Dilemmas of donors support for Haiti's (un) civil society. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 20 (10), 1–6.

The UN Secretary General, 2013. *Securing states and societies: strengthening the United Nations comprehensive support to security sector reform*. New York: United Nations, A/69/970-S/2013/480.

Thurber, C., 2014. Militias as sociopolitical movements: lessons from Iraq's armed Shia Groups. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25 (5–6), 900–923.
UN DPKO, 2012. *The United Nations SSR perspective*. New York: United Nations.
UN Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2012. *Audit report. The Haitian national police development programme in MINUSTAH*. New York: United Nations.
UN Security Council, 2006. *Resolution 1702*. New York: United Nations, S/RES/1702.
UN Security Council, 2007a. *Resolution 1743*. New York: United Nations, S/RES/1743.
UN Security Council, 2007b. *Resolution 1780*. New York: United Nations, S/RES/1780.
UN Security Council, 2008. *Report of the secretary-general on the United Nations stabilization mission in Haiti*. New York: United Nations, S/2008/586.
UN Security Council, 2016. *Report of the secretary-general on the United Nations stabilization mission in Haiti*. New York: United Nations, S/2016/225.

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA

*Security markings for the title, authors, abstract and keywords must be entered when the document is sensitive

1. ORIGINATOR (Name and address of the organization preparing the document. A DRDC Centre sponsoring a contractor's report, or tasking agency, is entered in Section 8.)

Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA)
Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada
https://carleton.ca/npsia

2a. SECURITY MARKING (Overall security marking of the document including special supplemental markings if applicable.)

CAN UNCLASSIFIED

2b. CONTROLLED GOODS

NON-CONTROLLED GOODS
DMC A

3. TITLE (The document title and sub-title as indicated on the title page.)

Security Sector Reform in Haiti since 2004: Limits and Prospects for public order and stability

4. AUTHORS (Last name, followed by initials – ranks, titles, etc., not to be used)

Rivard Piché, G.

5. DATE OF PUBLICATION (Month and year of publication of document.)

July 2017

6a. NO. OF PAGES (Total pages, including Annexes, excluding DCD, covering and verso pages.)

15

6b. NO. OF REFS (Total references cited.)

46

7. DOCUMENT CATEGORY (e.g., Scientific Report, Contract Report, Scientific Letter.)

External Literature (P)

8. SPONSORING CENTRE (The name and address of the department project office or laboratory sponsoring the research and development.)

DRDC – Centre for Operational Research and Analysis
Defence Research and Development Canada
Carling Campus, 60 Moodie Drive, Building 7S.2
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K2
Canada

9a. PROJECT OR GRANT NO. (If appropriate, the applicable research and development project or grant number under which the document was written. Please specify whether project or grant.)

9b. CONTRACT NO. (If appropriate, the applicable number under which the document was written.)

10a. DRDC PUBLICATION NUMBER (The official document number by which the document is identified by the originating activity. This number must be unique to this document.)

DRDC-RDDC-2022-P067

10b. OTHER DOCUMENT NO(s). (Any other numbers which may be assigned this document either by the originator or by the sponsor.)

11a. FUTURE DISTRIBUTION WITHIN CANADA (Approval for further dissemination of the document. Security classification must also be considered.)

Public release

11b. FUTURE DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE CANADA (Approval for further dissemination of the document. Security classification must also be considered.)

12. KEYWORDS, DESCRIPTORS or IDENTIFIERS (Use semi-colon as a delimiter.)

Security Sector Reform; Intervention; Stabilization; Public Order; Non-state Actors; Haiti

13. ABSTRACT/RÉSUMÉ (When available in the document, the French version of the abstract must be included here.)

Security sector reform (SSR) has been at the core of the international intervention in Haiti since the mid-1990s. Following the deployment of MINUSTAH in 2004, the scope of SSR varied, with more or less consideration for non-state actors, and influenced public order and violence in the country. Under President René Préval (2006–2009), efforts were made to address the role of non-state actors in the production of public order and security provision at the local level, with positive impact on the level of public order in Port-au-Prince. After the 2010 earthquake and the election of Michel Martelly, however, this approach was mostly abandoned. International donors refocused their assistance in the security sector on the development of the national police. By 2014, despite continued international presence, Haiti registered the highest level of homicides since 2007. This article contends that state-centric SSR is unlikely to improve security and stability in this context since it ignores parts of the Haitian security sector.