



Thematic Series on Building More Effective UN Peace Operations

“Reflecting on the Experiences of Major TCCs – the Case of Brazil in MINUSTAH”

Background Paper

Since the early 1990s, UN peacekeeping has become increasingly diverse and multidimensional. Nonetheless, the military component of missions remains a principle, defining element of peacekeeping. Troop contributing countries (TCCs) – and, increasingly, police contributing countries (PCCs) – are vital to the partnership which enables UN peace operations. They provide peacekeepers to implement the Security Council-mandated tasks on the ground, from establishing and maintaining basic security, to supporting the extension of state authority and protecting civilians. In addition to personnel, T/PCCs provide materiel resources and capabilities, as well as experienced and knowledgeable military and police commanders to peace operations. They are an essential source of knowledge regarding realities on the ground and can provide credible and relevant information to decision-makers in capitals and UN headquarters.

Sharing the experiences of major TCCs and PCCs with the broader UN diplomatic community can benefit decision-making processes in the Security Council and can help to better inform the planning of future operations to strengthen their efficiency and effectiveness. By sharing their knowledge and lessons learned, major T/PCCs can also provide guidance to new and potential contributors.

MINUSTAH’s Response to the January 2010 Earthquake

In January 2010, Haiti was struck by a devastating earthquake that caused widespread destruction and the loss of tens of thousands of lives. The mission acted as a crucial first responder to the crisis, despite having suffered immense losses itself, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, his principle Deputy, and the acting Police Commander. In the disaster’s aftermath, MINUSTAH, collaborating with international and national actors, helped to provide emergency shelters to over one and a half million Haitians and food and water to over four million.

The imminent disaster relief operations necessitated a rapid reorientation of MINUSTAH’s tasks and strategic planning, requiring the mission to quickly adapt from an operation in its early consolidation phase to a multidimensional disaster relief operation with an integrated approach to security and humanitarian efforts. Supporting this approach was the Joint Operations Tasking Center (JOTC) that included OCHA, MINUSTAH’s military, police and

civilian support components and military liaison officers from the US, Canada, the EU and the Caribbean Community to facilitate the prioritization of humanitarian response, coordination between humanitarian and military actors, and centralized, strategic planning.

Following the withdrawal of bilateral military operations, MINUSTAH's military component took on a greater role in security and humanitarian efforts. Built on a community-based approach – a practice that pre-dates the earthquake and focuses on fulfilling basic needs of the population – peacekeepers assisted in the establishment of medical facilities and rubbish removal, provided security for food distribution sites and in continuing their successful cooperation with the Haiti National Police (HNP) that began in 2008, sustained a visible presence in internally displaced persons camps known to be affected by gang violence. MINUSTAH military engineers played a critical enabling role by clearing debris, improving drainage and preparing alternative sites for at-risk settlements, extending their work to support humanitarian efforts.

MINUSTAH continues to make important contributions to the stabilization of Haiti: it assisted in reestablishing political order by providing a level of security that allowed for the holding of elections; assists in building the capacity of the HNP specifically and the security and justice sectors more broadly; and combats the activities and violent acts of gangs.

Brazil's Experience in MINUSTAH

Despite facing enormous operational challenges MINUSTAH has played a vital role in Haiti's disaster relief efforts and in maintaining security and stability in its aftermath. As such, the experience of the Brazilian force command can provide important guidance for peace operations elsewhere, especially at a time when the prevailing global financial crisis exacerbates the existing resource gap in peace operations, putting severe strain on missions' capabilities and capacities to execute their mandated tasks.

Though Brazil has contributed troops to UN peacekeeping operations since 1948, peacekeeping has become an increasingly important part of its foreign policy, raising the country's profile on the international stage and contributing to modernizing its army. In 2007, Brazil invested in long-term capacity building of its peacekeepers by establishing a peacekeeping center that has trained over 15,000 troops, of which 2,300 are on active duty. Brazil's experience in peacekeeping also has domestic policy benefits: National police now regularly conduct joint exercises with experienced Brazilian peacekeepers at home in urban slums that face similar security challenges, such as urban gang violence, that blue helmets frequently encounter in some operation theaters.

In 2004, Brazil became a major actor in international peacekeeping, when it took charge of the military component of the newly established UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) – with a strength of 12,000 uniformed personnel, the UN's fourth largest peace operation. With more than 2,000 troops Brazil also constitutes the largest troop contributor to MINUSTAH. As such, it has played a central role in responding both to the immediate post-earthquake recovery, and to longer term assistance.

In a recent Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2011/17), the Security Council stressed the need to improve the communication between the Council, TCCs, the Secretariat and other stakeholders and to ensure that the Council has the benefit of the views of those serving in

the field when mandating missions. The statement also underlined the importance of improving the system of consultations among stakeholders.

The *Group of Friends of Haiti*, which includes five out of the ten main TCCs to MINUSTAH (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay) and two permanent members of the Security Council (the US and France), serves as a positive example of cooperation in mandate planning. The Group supports a unified and decisive mission command structure that is further bolstered by sufficient capacities.

Further consideration should be given to how the Security Council can make better use of TCC knowledge and expertise in peacekeeping in its decision making processes, e.g., in mission planning exercises and mandate renewals.

Guiding Questions

- How can the consultation process between TCCs and the Security Council be improved to fully exploit the knowledge that TCCs can provide?
- How can the experience of TCCs be used to promote innovative approaches to strategic planning, such as the establishment of the Joint Operations Tasking Center in Haiti?
- In what ways can potential new TCCs best benefit from the experience of major TCCs? And in what ways can TCC experiences contribute to enlarging the base of contributing countries?
- What general lessons can be drawn from the experiences of major TCCs that would benefit mission planning processes?