



Annex B

Case study: Floods and tropical storm Jeanne, Haiti, 2004

The responses to two natural disasters that occurred in Haiti in 2004 were in some ways unique among the cases presented here. Extremely weak domestic infrastructure and institutions, poor governance and a violent political crisis that broke out in February 2004 left the country with virtually non-existent civilian disaster relief capabilities. Thus, foreign troops deployed under United Nations mandate to restore security and stability and to facilitate the provision of humanitarian relief, among other tasks, became the main actors for disaster relief. At the same time, the relief operation became intertwined with the larger question of domestic insecurity. The natural disasters caused by flooding in May 2004 and tropical storm Jeanne in September–October 2004 differed in their nature but together marked a turning point in disaster relief management in Haiti.

Background

Weak domestic infrastructure and institutions

Haiti is one of the world's poorest countries. Endemic violence and failed governance have led to a continuous decline in development and investment and to a high dependency on foreign aid and security. These weaknesses have had a long-term negative effect on several critical areas such as food security, water and sanitation, and health and nutrition. Deficiencies in these areas are not conducive to a normal and efficient national response to severe humanitarian needs. Non-governmental organizations and other civilian humanitarian actors also have serious difficulties operating normally in an environment of such widespread insecurity. Haiti's weaknesses reinforced its vulnerability to natural disasters. In 2004 the military had to provide escorts, transport and logistics as well as deploy troops. Some capabilities—ranging from helicopters to night vision goggles—are indispensable for an effective response, as the local and international NGOs and other civilian humanitarian agencies were well aware. Since 2004, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has taken measures to better meet such needs.

The Haitian infrastructure remains extremely weak, especially at the local level, and it is unable to respond adequately to damaging hurricanes. Without an army and a significant police force, Haiti has to rely on foreign troops to respond to emergencies. Its civilian infrastructure is also too weak to cope with disasters. The lack of transport is particularly significant. Currently, assessment teams must rely on foreign helicopters to transport them to affected areas, and even the president and the interior minister are dependent on foreign logistics.

The National Committee for Risks and Disasters Management (Comité National de Gestion des Risques et des Désastres), directed by the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for dealing with natural disasters. Each community is supposed to designate a local committee; and this is also the case for each of the 10 departments into which Haiti is divided. During a crisis, the president may choose to coordinate relief efforts himself. The Centre for Emergency Operations (Centre d'Operations d'Urgence) coordinates its activities with those of the local authorities, usually relying on the Red Cross network. However, it does not have sufficient capabilities in terms of logistics, communications and knowledge. During the flooding in May 2004 it was not activated because of the suddenness of the event and the volatile political situation at the time. The centre was activated for tropical storm Jeanne, but its effectiveness was limited. The true command authority lies elsewhere: at the United States Embassy, at US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) or with MINUSTAH, institutions that have the capacity to effectively respond to disasters.

Vulnerability to natural disasters

Haiti is particularly vulnerable to natural hazards because of its location on the trajectory of hurricanes and tropical storms. It is also in one of the areas of the world with the most seismic activity. Poverty, overpopulation, unplanned urbanization and the weaknesses of government institutions greatly increase the chance that such events will result in disasters. Environmental destruction, specifically deforestation, is the most significant problem. Haiti now has only around 1 per cent forest cover, which makes it particularly vulnerable to rainfall and high winds. The impacts of deforestation are made even more catastrophic by the fact that 63 per cent of Haiti's territory is on a slope greater than 20 per cent.¹³ According to a UNDP report, Haiti suffered an average of 0.81 flooding disasters every year between 1980 and 2000.¹⁴

Floods and mudslides are particularly lethal in Haiti. In urban centres, unplanned construction is spreading in unsafe areas. Entire neighbourhoods are being built on unsafe hillsides, posing a danger to the inhabitants and to those living below such structures. In these precarious conditions, even normal rains are a serious hazard. Endemic violence has also contributed to the displacement of people to remote and hazardous areas. Unless environmental destruction and other basic problems are addressed, natural disasters will continue to affect Haiti frequently. As an official of a leading local NGO stated: 'without a policy of urban planning, land management and safety regulations, Haiti is doomed to suffer again from natural disaster'.

The disasters in 2004 caused the death of more than 5000 people in Haiti, a figure that is disproportionate to the severity of the events that caused them. Although it did not reach

¹³ See Diamond, J., *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (Viking Press: New York, N.Y., 2005); Preeg, E. H., *The Haitian Dilemma: A Case Study in Demographics, Development, and US Foreign Policy* (Center for Strategic and International Studies: Washington, DC, 1996), p. 35; UN Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), 'Haiti: poverty generates disasters', Press release UN/ISDR 2004/09, 24 Sep. 2004.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, *Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development* (UNDP: New York, N.Y., 2004).

hurricane strength, tropical storm Jeanne was particularly lethal, resulting in the deaths of 3000 people. Only 11 deaths were reported in the neighbouring Dominican Republic, even though the force of the rains there was even greater.¹⁵

Reliance on international assistance

Haiti relies on foreign aid and assistance to meet its basic needs—a situation not unlike that during disaster relief. The USA is one of the most important contributors, through USAID and USSOUTHCOM. These two institutions are essential for disaster management; the relationship between the US Embassy in Haiti and USSOUTHCOM is particularly close. US dominance in the Caribbean extends to a wide range of issues, several of them critical to Haiti.¹⁶

At the April 2001 Summit of the Americas, US President George W. Bush presented the Third Border Initiative, which aims to increase cooperation in HIV/AIDS prevention and in mitigating the negative effects of globalization for developing countries. The initiative also aims to enhance capabilities to respond to natural disasters. After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the USA, trafficking, border control and terrorism became the highest priorities for the USA. This shift in focus strengthened the role that USSOUTHCOM plays in Haitian affairs and has also affected the way that the USA perceives its humanitarian efforts in general. As an official from the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) noted: ‘assistance has become a means to an end, less an end in itself’.

Other international contributors are also crucial to Haiti’s existence. The European Community Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) has allocated more than €11 million in humanitarian aid to Haiti since 2002.¹⁷ Among UN agencies, the UNDP and the WFP are essential components of the international humanitarian effort. Several international NGOs are also active in the country, in particular Oxfam Quebec, CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 2000 established the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) to respond more effectively to natural disasters in the Caribbean and Latin America. PADRU’s role is twofold: when a disaster occurs, it coordinates and facilitates the international response of the Red Cross in the Caribbean and Latin America; and when it is not responding to disasters, it contributes to strengthening the local and regional disaster response capacity of its national societies.

Haiti’s dependence is also accentuated by its relative isolation in the region. Its membership in the Caribbean Community was suspended after President Jean-Bertrand

¹⁵ UN Inter-Agency Secretariat of the ISDR (note 13).

¹⁶ Between 1995 and 2003, USAID provided a total of \$850 million in direct bilateral assistance to Haiti for programmes in several areas, including health; democracy and governance; education; and economic growth. This assistance was channelled through NGOs, most notably CARE (which was very active in Gonaïves after tropical storm Jeanne) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). USAID provided food and food-related assistance to 650 000 Haitians annually. USAID, ‘Food, water and medical assistance to Haiti’, Press release, 23 Feb. 2004.

¹⁷ Of the €1.8 million earmarked by the European Commission for Haiti in Mar. 2004, €200,000 were dedicated to the funding of an OCHA office in Port-au-Prince. European Commission, ‘ECHO’s response to the crisis’, <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/field/haiti/echo_en.htm>.

Aristide's departure from power in February 2004. Although Haiti was formally reinstated as a member in July 2006, its relations with CARICOM are minimal. Haiti is also not part of CARICOM's Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, which further reinforces the dominance of the UN and US forces in responding to disasters there.

Political instability

Haiti has suffered from dictatorship and political instability for decades and has a long history of violence. President Aristide's second term of office, which followed controversial elections held in 2000, saw a marked increase in human rights violations and extrajudicial killings that fed a vicious cycle of vengeance, violence and unrest. Haiti suffered political deadlock, with opposition groups refusing to negotiate as long as Aristide remained in power. The Organization of American States (OAS) and CARICOM made several fruitless attempts to bring the opposition and the government to the negotiating table. International aid was also suspended.

In early 2004 this dangerous situation became even more unstable. On 5 February armed rebels seized control of Gonaïves, Haiti's third largest city, and then took Cap-Haïtien, the second largest city. Subsequently, they expanded their control throughout most of the northern region. Widespread violence erupted in other areas, including Port-au-Prince. On 18 February 2004, US Ambassador James Foley issued a disaster declaration and the transport and distribution of emergency relief supplies began.¹⁸ In a standard initial response, the USA provided \$50 000 through USAID/Haiti for the transport and distribution of these supplies.¹⁹ USAID, the ICRC, the UN and the NGOs assessed the humanitarian situation. Widespread violence and looting; the collapse of Haiti's infrastructure, including its hospitals; the quadrupling of the price of fuel; and the lack of electricity led them to decide that the use of military troops was necessary in order to deliver assistance. USAID's short-term response amounted to more than \$2 million. The ICRC appealed to donors for 4.6 million Swiss francs to cover relief operations in the months to come.²⁰ UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed John Reginald Dumas of Trinidad and Tobago as his special adviser on Haiti on 26 February, and the UN established an Inter-Agency Humanitarian Mission to assess the situation. A task force made up of representatives from the UN agencies involved—the WFP, the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the UN Children's Fund, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the UN

¹⁸ This assistance included medical, surgical and hygiene kits. Additional assistance was provided for emergency medical and immunization activities, emergency cash grants to local institutions caring for vulnerable populations, emergency relief kits, cash-for-work initiatives, electricity generation and emergency air transport. USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance and USAID/OFDA, 'Haiti—complex emergency', Fact sheet no. 1, 23 Feb. 2004.

¹⁹ USAID/OFDA used Air Serv International, a non-profit humanitarian aviation organization, for relief operations and personnel transport. Due to the precarious security situation and the temporary closure of many areas, Air Serv International provided only 3 aircraft which flew less than half the 200 hours requested.

²⁰ Margesson, R., 'Humanitarian crisis in Haiti: 2004', CRS report to Congress, updated 5 Mar. 2004.

Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UNDP—was established to coordinate emergency relief and negotiate corridors through areas controlled by rebel groups for the safe passage of humanitarian convoys.

On 29 February 2004, President Aristide fled into exile. In Port-au-Prince, Aristide's departure was met with gunfire and looting, while gangs loyal to Aristide patrolled the streets and shot randomly at local residents. The same day, UN Security Council Resolution 1529 authorized the deployment to Haiti of a Multinational Interim Force (MIF-H) for three months to help the provisional government to restore order. President Bush ordered the dispatch of a 2000-strong task force. Its immediate mission was to secure key sites in the Haitian capital, to contribute to a more secure and stable environment, to restore the constitutional political process and to assist and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Its medium-term objective was to prepare for the arrival of the multinational force.²¹ By late April, the MIF-H comprised about 3800 troops from Canada, Chile, France and the USA.²²

On 30 April the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1542, establishing MINUSTAH. The new mission's mandate was to support the constitutional and political process in Haiti, to help maintain a secure and stable environment, and to assist in the protection and promotion of human rights. On 25 June MINUSTAH took over operational responsibilities from the MIF-H. The French and US MIF-H forces left the country on 30 June, while the Canadian and Chilean contingents joined MINUSTAH as UN peacekeepers, alongside a large Brazilian contingent and smaller national contingents, mostly from Latin America.

Military and humanitarian missions

In a complex emergency, troops face a wide range of challenges. The first priorities are force protection and restoring basic security so that humanitarian and other essential work can take place safely. However, both of these tasks entail the risk of casualties, which can be counter-productive when the focus is meant to be performing humanitarian tasks. However, without security, there can be no sustainable relief effort. The MIF-H imposed order mostly by deterrence. There was no widespread or violent opposition to the presence of foreign troops, only sporadic and limited fighting when the force confronted rebels and armed gangs. This meant that the MIF-H could relatively quickly focus on humanitarian work, which included the day-to-day provision of food, water, sanitation, education, healthcare and assistance with community building.²³

²¹ UN Security Council, 'Security Council authorizes deployment of multinational force to Haiti for 3 months, unanimously adopts Resolution 1529', Press release SC/8015, 29 Feb. 2004.

²² The US contingent had expanded into Les Cayes in the south and Hinche in the central plateau. The French expanded their security zone in the northern part of the country.

²³ As an illustration of the humanitarian work carried out by MIF-H, it provided day-to-day food, health, water, sanitation, education and community-building assistance. It delivered more than \$850 000 of excess medical supplies from USSOUTHCOM to hospitals; it distributed hundreds of hygiene kits to schools and families in Port-au-Prince; the Marine Ground Task Force conducted a water distribution programme and cleared drainage canals in the Cité Soleil and Bel Air slums of Port-au-Prince; Chilean forces distributed 12 tonnes of medicine and equipment from Chile to hospitals; French forces repaired schools and public buildings in Cap Haïtien; and Canadian forces were also involved in repairing schools and orphanages.

MINUSTAH continues to face the same dilemma today that the MIF-H faced at this time: using force to pacify insecure areas on one hand and helping local populations on the other. MINUSTAH has succeeded for the most part. In general, response to natural disaster provides an opportunity to gain the trust and the cooperation of local populations. In the relatively benign environment in Haiti, the involvement of foreign militaries in delivering aid and humanitarian assistance during natural disasters was a natural extension of their ongoing tasks. However, because of the UN mandate and national constraints, using military assets for natural disasters was not straightforward.

Haiti's political instability had major consequences for humanitarian assistance. The social unrest throughout the country and the troubled security situation—with ongoing looting and sporadic violence, including gun battles—meant that it was not possible for humanitarian agencies to travel safely to monitor and assess needs. The UN, various NGOs (among them CARE, CRS, Save the Children and World Vision), USAID and PAHO were all seriously hampered in monitoring the situation. There were only 15 Red Cross ambulances in the country at the beginning of May 2004. USAID/OFDA conducted an assessment mission on 9–11 Feb. 2004 and sent a permanent three-person team to Haiti on 24 February. Moreover, the interim government had not yet appointed most elements of the National Committee for Risks and Disasters Management. In the spring of 2004 Haiti was a failed state on the verge of widespread political chaos leading to insurgency. Paradoxically, this helped in the response to the flooding of May 2004 because US and international attention was focused on Haiti.

Disaster response: the floods of May 2004

In the period 18–25 May 2004, unusually heavy rains (exceeding 500 millimetres) fell along the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The worst flooding occurred along a river system that drains the northern flank of the Massif de la Salle and in a poorly drained area along the southern slope of those mountains. The flooding destroyed entire communities, caused massive loss of life and displaced tens of thousands of people on both sides of the border. In Haiti, the flooding affected more than 15 000 people, displaced 1600 families, and damaged or destroyed 3000 houses. According to OCHA data, the flooding in Haiti killed 1059 people and injured 153, affected 6226 families, destroyed 1698 houses, and damaged another 1687. The floods destroyed 50–70 per cent of the agricultural production of five villages in the area of Mapou and approximately 80 per cent of the wells in the area were contaminated.

Severe by itself, the flooding caused immense damage in part because of the already precarious situation. Before the rains, Haiti's Centre d'Operations d'Urgence was not activated, and no warning was issued to local populations. The immediate response of the Haitian Government was to ask for foreign assistance. The first priorities were search and rescue and the delivery of safe water and food. NGOs had to operate in an extremely precarious environment because the local police force was overwhelmed by the event. The MIF-H, which did not hand over full authority to MINUSTAH until the end of June, had to secure entire areas before food and water could be delivered. Port-au-Prince, the point of arrival for aid, was also not secure, and convoys departing from the capital had

to be given protection. Humanitarian corridors were set up to ensure the safety of the convoys. Food depots had to be protected against looting. The dispatch of military assets from abroad, primarily the USA, focused on reinforcing the MIF-H, supplementing air transport capabilities and providing emergency survival kits. At the time of the flooding OCHA had only recently been established in Haiti and its infrastructure was too weak to play a role. Relief efforts were coordinated by direct dialogue between the MIF-H and local and international NGOs. In the insecure situation existing at that time, the MIF-H command rapidly became the sole authority in managing the disaster response. A list of foreign military assets that took part in the flood relief operations is given in table A.2.

The US and international response

On 26 May the US ambassador to Haiti declared a disaster because of the damage caused by the flooding. USAID/OFDA provided the standard \$50 000 in emergency relief finance to support relief activities in Haiti.²⁴ Funds were also provided to the IRFC to support relief activities and to the WFP for air transport of relief supplies and personnel. Total US Government humanitarian assistance to Haiti in response to the flooding amounted to \$1 763 909. The US Department of Defense contributed a total of \$335 209 to the MIF-H for flood assistance in Haiti. This paid for the use of CH-47 Chinook and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, flown by the MIF-H, which delivered 155 000 kilograms of relief supplies to affected areas and transported 443 people to the affected areas to conduct damage assessments and give first aid, at a cost of \$258 791. The European Union was also an important contributor of aid. ECHO earmarked €2 000 000 for response to the flooding in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.²⁵

The role of the MIF-H

The floods severely damaged highways and village roads and isolated communities. For the first 36 hours all roads were impassable and the affected area was only accessible by air. It took five days before trucks could reach the devastated zone. The MIF-H used 12 helicopters (Chinook and Black Hawk) to support humanitarian relief in the area of Fonds-Verrettes, a village approximately 50 km south-east of Port-au-Prince. The village of Mapou, some 15 km away from Fonds-Verrettes, was only accessible by air. The MIF-H delivered 18 000 litres of bottled water, 500 boxes of fresh fruit and 500 boxes of bread to residents of Fonds-Verrettes. It also provided transportation to members of the Haitian Government, UN officials and representatives of NGOs to enable early assessment of the situation. Helicopters, the protection of convoys and security on the ground were crucial elements of the humanitarian effort: without the involvement of the MIF-H, it would have been impossible to reach the affected area and deliver assistance.

From 1 to 10 June the MIF-H returned to its primary mission of ensuring the security of Port-au-Prince and ceased its flights to Mapou. The official reasons given for withdrawing this support were linked to the MIF-H's mandate, the availability of other helicopters

²⁴ This included the purchase and distribution of hygiene kits, cooking sets, blankets and water containers, and the direct procurement of fuel for use by the Ministry of Public Works to repair roads in affected areas.

²⁵ This was in addition to the €7 200 000 in response to the Aristide crisis. European Commission (note 17).

from NGOs and the overall security situation—which required the MIF-H to focus on Port-au-Prince. According to the NGOs and the UNDP, delivering assistance became extremely difficult without the support of the MIF. The WFP in particular badly needed these flights, and precious time was wasted finding a civil alternative. Most importantly, the MIF-H's decision was taken unilaterally and the NGOs did not have time to find an alternative immediately. The MIF-H argued that the urgent situation had been addressed and that, from a military perspective, maintaining security in Port-au-Prince was a higher priority for the use of MIF-H assets. However, humanitarian agencies suggested that force protection was the main reason for stopping the flights. OCHA's assessment was that a strong police presence was required in Fonds-Verrettes to ensure the effective distribution of relief supplies. Without national police in Mapou the MIF-H could not guarantee the safety of the helicopters and, as it had a zero-risk policy, it decided to stop using them.

There was also a problem of succession between the MIF-H and MINUSTAH. The Brazilian commander of MINUSTAH at this stage, General Heleno Ribeiro, did not receive an effective transfer of authority from the MIF-H on 1 June, as was originally anticipated in Resolution 1542. This made it impossible to mobilize Canadian and US helicopters under UN authority. As the general stated: 'The U.S., French and Canadian forces suspended helicopter flights and will be taking those machines with them when they leave the country, and I have absolutely no influence on that decision.'²⁶

This episode illustrates the difficulty of coordinating military activities with those of civil humanitarian actors. A dialogue between the MIF-H, the Haitian Government and the NGOs was difficult. The fact that OCHA was not effectively operational in Haiti meant that civil–military coordination was not ensured. In fact, as one official from the UNDP stated, 'the situation was chaotic, including among UN agencies themselves'. Nonetheless, the MIF-H fulfilled 21 of 24 requests either to escort humanitarian shipments or to provide troops to ensure the security of supplies. MIF-H helicopters were used again after 10 June to assist the WFP to deliver 15 tonnes of food assistance to the Mapou area. Subsequently, WFP-chartered helicopters, partially funded by USAID/OFDA, took over this task.

As noted above, the floods of May 2004 occurred in a complex and unstable political and security environment, the country was in a state of emergency, and the international community was already heavily involved in daily humanitarian operations. Even if the security problems should not be overestimated, it seems clear that this was the primary concern of the MIF-H commander. Because assets were limited, and because security in Port-au-Prince was deteriorating, restoring order was deemed a priority. Natural disaster relief was not part of the MIF-H's original mission and could not be allowed to endanger the overall mission. As a USSOUTHCOM officer acknowledged, the MIF-H 'had to make some trade off between order and relief, but ultimately restoring the first conditioned the efficiency of the second'. It is worth noting that, in general, the active involvement of military forces helped to mitigate the consequences of the flooding and enabled the civil humanitarian actors to operate. The problems that occurred were minor compared to the benefits of military participation.

²⁶ 'Brazilian general heading UN forces complains', *Granma Internacional*, Havana, 11 June 2004.

Disaster response: tropical storm Jeanne

Tropical storm Jeanne caused devastating mudslides and floods in northern Haiti on 17 and 18 September 2004, killing some 3006 people and affecting some 300 000 more, leaving thousands homeless, and destroying crops and livestock. Heavy rains totalling about 330 millimetres in the northern mountains of Haiti caused severe flooding and mudslides in the Artibonite region of the country, causing particular damage in the coastal city of Gonaïves, 80 per cent of which was flooded. About 2800 people were reported to have died in Gonaïves, and 160 000 out of a population of 250 000 required food aid.²⁷ This extensive damage occurred even though, when it struck Haiti, Jeanne had been downgraded from a category 1 hurricane to a tropical storm.

The Center for Emergency Operations was activated in advance, and MINUSTAH also spread information and issued timely local warnings. However, because Gonaïves is not usually affected by hurricanes, the region in which it is located was not put on high alert. The security situation in Gonaïves was also strained. The city had been a stronghold of opposition to Aristide and its people and the local gangs openly opposed the authority of the state. At the same time, the security situation had also deteriorated in Port-au-Prince. In September 2004 a wave of violence spread to the capital, and armed gangs began a campaign against the Haitian National Police. Food depots in Port-au-Prince had to be protected and aid convoys escorted. Checkpoints also had to be set up on Road 9, which led to the devastated area in the north, but it was impossible to secure its entire length. Rapidly, however, the military brought in local engineering assistance and made the roads accessible. It took five days for the first truck to reach Gonaïves. In the first week, 61 trucks were escorted by MINUSTAH from Port-au-Prince. The national airport remained under military command. A list of foreign military assets that took part in the response after tropical storm Jeanne is given in table A.3.

The US and international response

On 21 September the US ambassador to Haiti declared the situation a disaster owing to the magnitude of the effects of tropical storm Jeanne in the Artibonite and north-west departments of the country. In response, USAID/OFDA provided an initial \$50 000, through USAID/Haiti, to CARE for the distribution of hygiene kits, cooking sets, blankets, water containers and other relief supplies to those most affected by the floods. OFDA secured an aircraft from the non-profit humanitarian aviation organization Air Serv International to undertake aerial assessments and transport personnel and relief commodities as required. On 23 September USAID/OFDA, using the Air Serv International aircraft, airlifted 300 rolls of plastic sheeting, more than 5000 ten-litre water jugs and 3660 hygiene kits from Port-au-Prince to Gonaïves. Through its partner organizations USAID delivered \$3 million worth of emergency food aid. A USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) team was dispatched to assist with damage assessment and evaluation. During the emergency phase, the US Government contributed approximately \$11.3 million for

²⁷ Congressional Research Service (CRS), 'Temporary protected status option for Haitians affected by tropical storm Jeanne', Memorandum to the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims, 18 Oct. 2004.

immediate relief items and emergency food assistance. The focus of this first phase of assistance was on saving lives and providing emergency relief to those in greatest need. With the aid of partner organizations, USAID provided logistical and air support through its civil partner, Air Serv International, as well as health, shelter, water and sanitation, and cash-for-work clean-up activities.

The flash appeal issued on 1 October 2004 sought \$32 million to cover emergency relief and early recovery operations related to tropical storm Jeanne until March 2005. Short-term US assistance in response to Jeanne totalled approximately \$2.2 million. In October 2004 the US Congress appropriated \$100 million in emergency assistance for the Caribbean, of which \$38 million was designated for Haiti.²⁸ The EU allocated €1.5 million to the victims of tropical storm Jeanne in Haiti, most of which was to be distributed by the Red Cross. In addition, ECHO earmarked €2.5 million for humanitarian assistance after tropical storm Jeanne. The focus was on long-term reconstruction, primarily water distribution, the rehabilitation of water systems, promoting access to health care, food distribution and agricultural recovery.²⁹

The role of MINUSTAH

In the aftermath of tropical storm Jeanne, MINUSTAH, although still in the early stage of its deployment, fully mobilized its forces in support of the humanitarian effort, relocating them to Gonaïves.³⁰ MINUSTAH mobilized its entire fleet of helicopters in support of the humanitarian effort, ferrying aid and staff to the affected areas and conducting aerial surveys. Communication with the capital was possible only via a satellite used by MINUSTAH and USSOUTHCOM. Local radio was used to deliver messages to the populace. All of the NGO representatives interviewed for this report acknowledged the value of MINUSTAH's work in the first few days after the catastrophe. While there was some local resistance to the presence of military assets, MINUSTAH allowed the creation of a relatively safe humanitarian space and undoubtedly helped to save lives.

The Argentinian MINUSTAH battalion already stationed in Gonaïves was severely hit by the disaster and the decision was immediately taken to send Uruguayan troops to provide humanitarian assistance. The Uruguayan civil–military cooperation (CIMIC) team advised the local population and helped to evacuate people in need of medical assistance. Forty Brazilian soldiers were also sent to reinforce the Argentinian battalion and to help rehabilitate the base. Cuban civilian aid workers were also present in Gonaïves.

The Argentinian battalion regrouped in one of the few usable structures in the city, the local university, transforming it into a field hospital and emergency centre. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Médecins du Monde (MDM) and 14 Cuban doctors ran three other small field hospitals. The use of a university by foreign troops was not welcomed by the

²⁸ Sullivan, M. P., 'Caribbean region: issues in U.S. relations', CRS report for Congress, updated 25 May 2005.

²⁹ European Commission, Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), 'Continued emergency assistance to flood victims in Haiti', Emergency humanitarian aid decision 23 02 01, Nov. 2004.

³⁰ At the time of tropical storm Jeanne, MINUSTAH was composed of 3092 troops from 5 countries: 552 from Argentina, 448 from Brazil, 129 from Nepal, 128 from Sri Lanka and 573 from Uruguay. This was less than half of the mandated maximum force size of 1622 civilian police and 6700 troops.

local people at the start of the operation, but the field hospital that was set up there saved a substantial number of lives by preventing a major epidemic. The Argentinian battalion, which played a crucial role in early search-and-rescue activities, and was given the difficult task of managing the disposal of corpses. This required balancing urgent public health concerns with the local people's wish to bury their dead with traditional rites. MINUSTAH airlifted body bags to the site and the Argentinians tried to hand over corpses wherever family members could be identified. Nevertheless, common graves had to be used in many cases to prevent disease outbreaks, which offended some local people.

On 23 September a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, comprising four personnel on site and two in Port-au-Prince, set up an On-site Operations Coordination Centre in the university building secured by the Argentinian battalion.

Aid from the capital sent by road was unable to reach its destination in the first five days after the tropical storm; only MINUSTAH helicopters were able to reach the people in distress. Search-and-rescue operations began almost immediately after the storm. The first massive distribution of food took place on the fifth day when, according to CARE, 40 tonnes of food were delivered to Gonaïves, where the security situation was very tense. Much of the city was under a metre of water and mud, and in the first few days only three dropping points, with few mobile chains of distribution, were available for use. There were almost no police officers on duty in Gonaïves—the local police station had been destroyed—and the food deliveries were assaulted by mobs. Troops from the Argentinian battalion were used to secure the area. After this first attempt the UNDAC team called for 'aid convoys to be escorted by MINUSTAH. . . we recommend that all deliveries be notified to the MINUSTAH Joint Operations Centre in the UN compound in Port-au-Prince'.³¹

The existing security environment in Gonaïves made operating there particularly difficult. For example, former Haitian soldiers were denied entry to Gonaïves, even to deliver humanitarian aid, because they refused to relinquish their arms. Maintaining humanitarian space required neutralizing the threat various armed gangs, political camps and rebels. MINUSTAH greatly facilitated the works of the other humanitarian agencies by securing the convoys and dropping points. At the food distribution points, MINUSTAH deployed additional platoons and civil police units to reinforce the peacekeeping troops. The use of force was not often necessary, and MINUSTAH's presence functioned mostly as a deterrent.

By September 2004 OCHA was far more functional than it had been in May. Every day in the immediate aftermath of the flooding, two meetings took place between MINUSTAH, UN agencies and NGOs. Aid efforts were coordinated, but once it had started providing security for aid deliveries, MINUSTAH had the last word on their timing. Coordination greatly facilitated the relief efforts. At times, MINUSTAH and the UNDP did not agree on the approach to be taken; this was particularly the case regarding the use of helicopters. MINUSTAH largely adopted a sectoral approach and, as an Oxfam official noted, 'by playing along, there was no sense of competition with the military'. For example, a water committee comprising NGOs and the Haitian authorities was set up to avoid looting

³¹ UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Haiti: Situation Report—Gonaïves, 1800hrs, 22 Sep. 2004.

during distribution of bottled water. This was done in close cooperation with MINUSTAH. The Haitian Protection Civile also played a role: in the first five days after the tropical storm it provided four doctors, three generators, 20 000 packets of food and 383 pieces of plastic sheeting to Gonaïves.³²

The military had been instrumental in opening access to and securing locations so that the civil humanitarian agencies could operate. According to the UN special representative and head of MINUSTAH, Juan Gabriel Valdés, ‘This was not part of the original mandate of MINUSTAH, but if MINUSTAH was not there, the situation would have been much worse’.³³

Lessons learned

Tropical storm Jeanne was instrumental in altering the approach to disaster relief in Haiti. First, MINUSTAH has changed. Since 2006 disaster relief has been included as one of its main tasks. An emergency centre created at MINUSTAH’s headquarters in Port-au-Prince will make the mission better able to respond to emergencies. Following recommendations in a November 2004 UN report on MINUSTAH, an engineering company has been added to its military component to undertake repair of roads and bridges and to allow the other forces to focus on peacekeeping tasks.³⁴ In June 2006 MINUSTAH adopted a plan for natural disaster response that, in effect, makes the mission the cornerstone of disaster management in Haiti. Second, OCHA’s presence in Haiti has been strengthened since 2004, and its coordinating role with the military structure is now well established. Although MINUSTAH’s emphasis remains on security and force protection, the cluster approach and coordination with OCHA are now also being emphasized. OCHA has become the necessary interface between the Haitian Government, MINUSTAH, other UN agencies and NGOs.

A cautionary word is in order: Haiti is an unusual case. Since 1995, Haiti has had no national army. Through successive international missions, foreign military assets have been continually present and are likely to remain so. Thus many of the usual questions regarding foreign military assets—whether and when to deploy them, how to use them alongside domestic military assets, and which countries’ troops are acceptable—do not have to be asked. MINUSTAH’s assets offer unique availability, particularly in the emergency phase of a disaster response. With violence and instability still major problems in Haiti, MINUSTAH’s forces play a vital role in securing humanitarian space. MINUSTAH offers a range of other capabilities, particularly transport, that are nearly unique. MINUSTAH also has the unique advantage of having its own resources, giving it a high degree of autonomy. In Haiti the cost and availability of fuel are always a problem.

³² UN Humanitarian Coordinator (note 31).

³³ UN News Centre, ‘Concerned at mounting bloodshed in Haiti, UN envoy urges dialogue’, 4 Oct. 2004.

³⁴ ‘The humanitarian crisis ensuing from tropical storm Jeanne has demonstrated that the vulnerability of Haiti to natural disasters is greater than anticipated at the establishment of the Mission, as is the need for international assistance and capacity-building. In view of this, my Special Representative has recommended a modest strengthening of the humanitarian and development coordination pillar of MINUSTAH’. Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, UN S/2004/908, 18 Nov. 2004.

During the 2004 disasters, the scarcity of fuel was a critical problem throughout the country, particularly in the north, and civilian humanitarian relief operations suffered as a result. MINUSTAH has no such concerns, and the same is true of its communications capacity. All of these factors ensure that MINUSTAH will remain the main disaster relief actor in Haiti.

This raises the question of an exit strategy. Haiti's domestic capacity remains largely insufficient to cope with natural disasters. Even if progress has been made, notably in managing information and knowledge, for the foreseeable future MINUSTAH will remain the main actor that is able to respond to disasters. According to a MINUSTAH official interviewed for this study, 'the government, the population and NGOs will always request military support to solve those problems'. As an adviser to the Haitian president noted: 'It is a catch-22 game. Without MINUSTAH, the government is unable to function properly. But with it, there is no incentive to start essential reforms'.

Civil–military coordination

NGOs in Haiti have learned to work, coordinate and cooperate with MINUSTAH. Such activities are an essential part of their daily routine and are even more so in times of emergency. All the NGOs interviewed for this report consider that MINUSTAH is crucial for assistance. Only one NGO, MSF France, refused to work with the military and chose to leave the country. Nonetheless, there are problems.

NGO staff are sometimes surprised by the way the military operates. Two different and, at times, opposing cultures are involved. Among the most disagreeable of these differences is the hierarchy of missions that the military tends to follow. In the case of disaster relief assistance in a complex emergency, force protection comes first. This militarizes the delivery of aid and tends to antagonize civil humanitarian workers. There is no obvious solution to this dilemma. However, the fact that contingency planning and disaster response are now conducted from a single emergency centre at MINUSTAH headquarters should help to build the necessary trust among various humanitarian organizations and the military. MINUSTAH has learned to work in concert with NGOs and vice versa. The cluster approach has helped, as has the role played by OCHA.

In addition to its force protection imperative, the military tends to adapt the needs of humanitarian missions to meet its own security requirements, using a zero-risk approach. While NGOs are willing to accept that some assistance may not reach its final destination or may fall into the wrong hands, the military will generally not allow convoys to depart in dubious conditions.

The military has its own lists of priorities and NGOs has no say in defining. As noted above, the decision to stop MIF-H flights was taken without consultation with the civil humanitarian actors, although it was well understood that helicopters were crucial to their work. In the same vein, in the military, logistical support is dispatched according to security needs and this is not always well understood by civil agencies.

In Haiti, there is no real competition between the military and civilian actors in operational terms. However, there may be some vying for visibility. NGOs operate in a competitive global environment and visibility is essential for their fundraising. Donors and international organizations also wish to promote their public image. This affects the

national components of MINUSTAH. As one NGO representative ruefully noted, ‘flag posturing is becoming the norm, including with MINUSTAH’. In this desire for visibility, both the civil and the military are to blame.

NGOs are reluctant to see the military become involved in a long-term disaster response extending beyond emergency relief. Infrastructure rehabilitation and engineering activities may be an integral part of a military plan, and in the aftermath of a disaster they may be necessary—especially in a country with such limited domestic capacity. However, NGOs tend to regard these activities as their domain, and the military’s involvement in them as an illegitimate encroachment. An example is the NGO response to USSOUTHCOM’s Caribbean-wide New Horizons programme. This long-term development programme, which involved US military units exclusively,³⁵ carried out a range of humanitarian tasks (referred to as ‘exercises’ by the Pentagon). A four-month component worth \$15 million was agreed between the USA and the Haitian Government, focused on engineering activities such as the drilling of wells. The NGOs operating in Haiti were not consulted at the planning stage and perceived it as an unnecessary ‘militarization’ of humanitarian assistance.

The military and the local population

Soldiers are not humanitarian relief workers, and their weapons are often perceived as threatening—especially in a country where the use of force by the state has not always been legitimate. As previously noted, force protection is the top priority for the military. In keeping with its overall strategy, MINUSTAH has moved cautiously into sensitive areas. MINUSTAH contingents have suffered fatalities while restoring orders in violent areas. In such an environment, it is not surprising that security comes first. However, during its first two years MINUSTAH’s role was questioned. The population had expected more security and dubbed the mission ‘Tourista’. It was not until early 2007 that the Haitian Government was able to restore order to sensitive areas such as Cité Soleil in Port-au-Prince. Natural disaster relief helped MINUSTAH to strengthen its legitimacy on the ground and to build the trust of local people.

Troop rotation remains a problem. Institutional memory barely exists and each new contingent has to relearn many of the lessons of the past. Language, too, is a problem. While Latin Americans dominated MINUSTAH early on, there are now sizeable contingents from elsewhere including, currently, Jordan and Pakistan. Cultural sensitivities in this Catholic country are sometimes difficult to grasp for soldiers from the Middle East. Local traditions have not always been respected, for example in the task of burying the dead after tropical storm Jeanne. In the same vein, the requisition of a university by the military in Gonaïves was perceived locally as an inappropriate, although there was no realistic alternative.

The military sometimes creates its own problems and, because of its relative inflexibility, it cannot always deliver tailor-made aid and assistance. For example, after

³⁵ The units involved were mostly national guards, supported by Helicopter Combat Support Squadron Six and ships of the Saipan Expeditionary Strike Group.

tropical storm Jeanne, five tonnes of food was delivered in one location to feed 200 000 people. This was an invitation to trouble, and deliveries of smaller packages had to be used instead in order to prevent riots, gangs control and violence.³⁶

Haiti lacks domestic assets and foreign troops are heavily represented on its soil. The military cannot replace professional aid workers, but in Haiti MINUSTAH has proved essential for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. For Haiti, the issue of military assets is not one of balancing the choice between civil and military assets but one of capacity and availability. MINUSTAH has a monopoly on capacity, especially transport, and it is essential for security. In these conditions, the question remains not whether to use military assets but how to use them more efficiently.

³⁶ A system using a chain of women, who distributed the food, was later put in place to avoid looting and violence.

Table A.2. Foreign military assets contributed to the flood relief operation in Haiti, May 2004

This list of assets should not be taken as definitive.

Contributing countries	Asset type	Asset name	Asset quantity	Number of personnel	Type of support	Method of channelling	Date of arrival	Date of departure ^a	Location
Canada	Helicopter	CH-146 Griffon	6		Theatre airlift	MIF-H	24/05/2004 ^b	30/05/2004	Various ^c
France	Helicopter	AS-565 Panther	1	..	Theatre airlift	MIF-H	24/05/2004	30/05/2004	Various ^c
	Helicopter	AS-330 Puma	2	..	Theatre airlift	MIF-H	24/05/2004	30/05/2004	Various ^c
USA	Helicopter	CH-47 Chinook	Theatre airlift	MIF-H	24/05/2004	30/05/2004	Various ^c
	Helicopter	UH-60 Black Hawk	Theatre airlift	MIF-H	24/05/2004	30/05/2004	Various ^c
MIF-H ^d	Personnel			..	Various ^f	MIF-H	24/05/2004	30/05/2004	..

MIF-H = Multinational Interim Force-Haiti; WFP = World Food Programme; .. = information not supplied

^a The date of arrival given is the date on which MIF-H forces started flood relief operations. MIF-H forces were withdrawn temporarily from flood relief between 30 May and 10 June 2004 because of the deteriorating security situation in Port-au-Prince. No date of departure is given because international forces remained in Haiti to fulfil their primary missions.

^b Helicopters provided theatre airlift in the areas of Fonds-Verrettes, Mapou and Thiote.

^c MIF-H comprised about 500 Canadian, 330 Chilean, 1000 French and 1900 US troops.

^d MIF-H personnel provided aid distribution, communications, medical, search and rescue and security support.

Source: Combined Joint Task Force, Haiti, 'Accomplishments of the Multinational Interim Force-Haiti', News release, 10 June 2004, <<http://www.southcom.mil/PA/Media/Releases/040610a.htm>>.

Table A.3. Foreign military assets contributed to the tropical storm Jeanne relief operation in Haiti, 2004

This list of assets should not be taken as definitive.

Contributing countries	Asset type	Asset name	Asset quantity	Number of personnel	Type of support	Channelling	Arrival ^a date	Location
MINUSTAH	Helicopter	Mi-8	2		Various ^b	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
	Helicopter	Bell 212	3		Various ^b	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
	Helicopter	UH-1 Huey	1		Various ^b	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
	Helicopter	AS-330 Puma	3		Various ^b	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
	Personnel				OSOCC	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
Argentina	Field hospital		1		Medical	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
	Personnel			552	Various ^c	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
Brazil	Personnel			448	Various ^c	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
Nepal	Personnel			129	Various ^c	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
Sri Lanka	Personnel			128	Various ^c	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves
Uruguay	Personnel			573	Various ^c	MINUSTAH	18/09/2004	Gonaïves

MINUSTAH = UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti; OSOCC = On-Site Operations Coordination Centre

^a No date of departure given because MINUSTAH forces remained in Haiti to fulfil their primary missions.

^b Helicopters provided reconnaissance, search and rescue, and theatre airlift support. Information about which aircraft performed which tasks was not supplied.

^c Personnel contingents contributed through MINUSTAH provided aid distribution, airfield control, evacuation, medical, and search and rescue support. Information about which contingents performed which tasks was not supplied.

Source: Various secondary sources.